



**Ratoath College**

# **Senior Cycle Options Handbook**

**2026-2027**



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## 1. Introduction to Senior Cycle

When choosing Options for Senior Cycle, students and parents should be advised of the following:

- **All Subjects, except for Higher Level Maths, are the same for calculation of points** for University/College entry. Points are calculated on your best 6 subjects.
- Bonus **points for Higher Level Maths** were introduced in 2014. Students can attain 25 bonus points once they achieve a grade of H6 or above at Higher Level. (See more information on grades on page 37).
- **Higher Maths is very demanding.** It is recommended that you have achieved a Merit or higher at Junior Cycle to take higher level at Leaving Cert.
- **When choosing subjects remember:**
  1. Choose subjects that you are **interested in** and **enjoy**.
  2. Pick subjects that you have an aptitude for and will therefore give you the **highest possible grades**.
  3. Choose subjects where you **have achieved good grades**.
  4. Choose subjects that meet the entry requirements of courses you may be interested in.
- Subjects such as Physics, Chemistry and Accounting require a high level of mathematical aptitude.
- It has also been noted that extremely good grades have been achieved in the Applied Sciences, Art, Exam Religion and Music. Students seeking high point's levels often overlook these.
- Ratoath College offers a wide variety of **Leaving Certificate subjects** including Economics, Religion, Classical Studies and Applied Maths. Note that, where there is insufficient demand for a subject, the school may not be able to run a class in that subject.

We would also recommend that you:

- Study this booklet
- Do research ([www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie) and [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie))
- Consult textbooks and past papers of subjects you are interested in
- Talk to students who have been, or are presently, studying the subjects which interest you.
- Discuss Subject Choice with your teachers, parents/guardians



- Eliminate the subjects you know you do not want to do and then research and evaluate the others to make informed decisions.

Choose your subjects to satisfy your interests and to keep as many career options open as possible. Keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Ensure that you have the essential subjects for your job/college course/training (check Qualifax and college/training/job websites for minimum entry requirements and specific course requirements)
- Select your remaining subjects to maximise your results. Look back over previous school reports to see what subjects you did well in. (If you like a subject, you are more likely to do well in it).
- Check college prospectuses/websites and career websites

## Revised Leaving Cert Subject Specifications

From September 2025, the process of transition to new specifications for all Leaving Cert subjects will begin. **Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Business** began working from new subject specifications in September 2025 and **Geography, Construction Studies and Engineering** will move to their new specifications in September 2026. The sections on these subjects below have been updated to reflect this.

Alongside some changes to the content of the courses in these subjects, perhaps the most significant change in the revised specifications relates to assessment, and the introduction of **Additional Assessment Components** in all subjects. This means that each subject will have coursework or a project that is submitted in advance of the Leaving Cert exam and will be worth at least 40% of the final grade.

For more information on the Senior Cycle redevelopment process, [click here to visit the NCCA website](#).

To view the subject specifications for all subjects, including the revised ones mentioned above, [click here to visit Curriculum Online](#).

In the end...

**Do not pick a subject (or Senior Cycle Programme) solely because your friends are doing that subject or course. Follow your own interests when making your decision**



## 2. General Requirements for Third Level

There are **certain subjects that are essential for entry** into particular courses, colleges, and careers. It is the **student's responsibility** to research these. Particular attention should be paid to Science and Engineering courses at third level as these may require a science subject or Higher Level Maths.

**The requirement of a third language applies to study courses at certain Universities.** It is important that students have fully researched, or talked to the Guidance Counsellor, about the implications of not studying a language before making a choice. For more information on how to find out about entry requirements, see **page 37** below.

## 3. PLCs, Apprenticeships and Other Routes

### PLC Courses

Post-Leaving Cert courses, often called PLCs, are one year long (some have a second year option) in a range of specialised areas and are available in schools and Colleges of Further Education nationwide.

PLCs offer a mixture of "hands-on" practical work, academic work and work experience and they help students develop vocational and technological skills in order to get a job or to go into further education and training. They are designed as a step towards skilled employment and, as such, they are closely linked to industry and its needs. Post Leaving Certificate courses adopt an integrated approach, focusing on technical knowledge, core skills and work experience. Almost 50% of the time spent on these courses is devoted to knowledge and skill training related to employment, with a further 25% on relevant work-based experience.

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

The qualification you receive at the end of your training will depend on the type of course you have chosen. Many of the one-year PLC courses offer Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) accreditation at Level 5 which can lead to further studies at third level, through a system known as the Higher Education Links Scheme. This



scheme provides access to a reserved number of places on a variety of courses in educational institutions including universities and institutes of technology.

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are another popular progression route after Leaving Cert.

Apprenticeships are available in a wide range of sectors, including:

- Construction (such as carpentry, plumbing and scaffolding)
- Electrical (such as electrician, aircraft mechanic and industrial electrical)
- Engineering (such as pipefitting, sheet metalworking and manufacturing)
- Finance
- Hospitality and Food
- ICT
- Logistics
- Motor

Visit [www.apprenticeship.ie](http://www.apprenticeship.ie) for more information on Apprenticeships.

Various other courses are also offered by independent bodies such as Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc and the Defence Forces.



## 4. Senior Cycle Programme Choices

Ratoath College offers **three different programmes** to Senior Cycle students as outlined below, including two Leaving Certificate options that cater for the different interests and abilities of the students in our care.

### 1. Transition Year

This is an optional one-year programme for students who have completed Junior Cycle. (Please note that the application process for TY will be completed before students choosing option 2 below make their subject choices).

### 2. Established Leaving Certificate

A two-year programme for Leaving Cert students.

### 3. Leaving Certificate Applied

A two-year Leaving Certificate programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life.

## What are my choices?

**Students currently in 3<sup>rd</sup> year** can opt for 1 of the below:

1. TY
2. Established Leaving Cert
3. Leaving Cert Applied

**Students currently in TY** can opt for 1 of the below:

1. Established Leaving Cert
2. Leaving Cert Applied

Students who choose Established Leaving Cert must **choose 4 options subjects**. Information about these subjects is outlined in detail [below](#).



## 5. Leaving Cert Applied

### What is the LCA?

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a two-year Leaving Certificate, available to students who wish to follow a practical or vocationally orientated programme.

The word “applied” is used because the programme is designed to allow the students to apply the learning and experiences they gain over the two years of the programme to practical educational tasks, at school, in the workplace and in the wider community.

### What is different about the LCA?

The Leaving Certificate Applied is different in a number of ways:

- It is distinct from the established leaving cert and is a self-contained programme made up of a number of courses
- It is a practical programme that makes wide use of active and student centred learning methodologies
- It includes seven assessed student tasks that bring together the different learning experiences that the students have gained from the courses they have taken
- It uses a unique system of assessment. The students’ work is assessed over the two years of the programme and they gain credits as they go along. Practicals, interviews and terminal written papers are among the different forms of assessment used. The students’ communication, problem solving and practical skills are also assessed.

### LCA Course Outline

The programme is divided into four main areas highlighted in the table [on page 9](#).

- Each of the courses mentioned are designed on a modular basis.
- A module is of thirty hours duration.
- Students must take a **total of 44 modules** over the two-year programme.

### How is LCA assessed?

As students complete their LCA course work they collect credits. In other words, the LCA adopts a continual assessment approach.

It is possible to collect a total of 200 credits. The maximum mark is made up of the following 3 elements:

1. Satisfactory completion of Modules: 62 Credits (31%) (See table above for modules)
1. 7 Student tasks: 70 Credits (35%)  
(Tasks are completed in various subjects. Students must submit a report and sit an interview with an external examiner for each task)



2. Final examinations: 68 Credits (34%)  
(Written exams conducted along with the Established Leaving Cert.)

Total: 200 credits (100%)

Based on these credits, the Leaving Certificate is then awarded at one of 3 levels:

- Pass 120 - 139 credits (60-69 %)
- Merit 140 - 169 credits (70-84 %)
- Distinction 170 - 200 credits (85-100 %)

## Attendance

**Please note that attendance is hugely important in LCA.**

A student's attendance must be at least 90% for credits to be awarded.

## Post LCA options

There are a number of options available to students including the following:

### **Further Education:**

Graduates of the Leaving Certificate Applied do not have direct access to Higher Education through the Central Applications Office (CAO).

However, graduates of the Leaving Certificate Applied who progress to an appropriate further education award (i.e. a Post Leaving Cert qualification) can become eligible for admission to some third level courses in the Institutes of Technology and following that to some degree courses in the Institutes of Technology and in the Universities, nursing for example.

A student who completes the LCA can apply to complete a 'Pre Nursing' PLC course in Dunboyne College of Further Education. If a student achieves the required grades then they are then eligible to study General Nursing in DCU.

### **Training:**

LCA graduates will be sufficiently prepared to take up an apprenticeship with SOLAS.

### **Careers:**

The programme places particular emphasis on preparation for the world of work. This Leaving Certificate is generating a good degree of interest among employers, who regard Leaving Certificate Applied students as being eligible to apply for many career vacancies in their organisations



## LCA Modules

1. Vocational Preparation	Number of Modules
Vocational Preparation & Guidance	8
English & Communications	4

2. Vocational Education	Number of Modules
Vocational Specialisms (Office Admin or Engineering or Craft & Design)	8 (4 x 2)
Mathematical Applications	4
Introduction to Information and Communications Technology	2

3. General Education	Number of Modules
Social Education	6
Languages:	4:
Gaeilge	2
Modern European Language	2
Arts Education (Drama, Music, Visual Art)	2
Leisure & Recreation	2

4. Elective Modules	Number of Modules
Graphics & Construction	2
Hotel, Catering & Tourism	2

<b>Total number of modules</b>	<b>44</b>
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## 6. Established Leaving Certificate

### A. Subject Choice

In the established Leaving Cert, students generally study **seven** subjects.

- Each student will study the **3 Core Subjects**:
  - Irish (unless exemption granted)
  - English
  - Maths
- Students can then choose **4 more Options subjects**.
- Students can, if they wish, choose to study Applied Maths as an extra, 8<sup>th</sup> subject. Some Applied Maths classes are scheduled outside the normal school day.
- Some students also choose to study other additional subjects on their own outside school.

*Please Note: If you are considering taking an additional subject on your own outside school, you must consult with your Moltóir and a Guidance Counsellor beforehand as some subjects, including subjects with projects, must be completed under the supervision of a teacher.*

### What subjects should I choose?

Selecting subjects can be difficult if you are unsure about any further education or careers steps you wish to take in the future. The process is made easier by the students completing Eirquest assessment, meeting with a Guidance Counsellor and doing some independent research. If you are unsure about what you would like to do in the future, then one way to keep your opportunities for 3<sup>rd</sup> level study as varied as possible would be to make a choice similar to the below:

- French or Italian
- One from Physics/Chemistry/Biology
- Any other 2 subjects

However, it is still vital that you choose the subjects that appeal to you the most whether it is for personal or academic purposes.

Base your choice on the following guidelines:

- **You must have a keen interest in the subject.**  
If your talent is in the area of Science, choose one or two Science subjects. The same applies for subjects in the social category
- **You should choose subjects that give you the best chance of achieving high grades.**



## Leaving Cert Subjects

Leaving Certificate Subjects are grouped as follows:

(Please note that it is possible to choose more than one subject from each group/area.)

Group	Compulsory	Options Subjects
<b>Languages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Irish</li> <li>➤ English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ French</li> <li>➤ Italian</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Maths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Biology</li> <li>➤ Chemistry</li> <li>➤ Physics</li> <li>➤ Applied Maths</li> </ul>
<b>Artistic &amp; Creative</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Art (including Crafts)</li> <li>➤ Music</li> <li>➤ Drama, Film &amp; Theatre Studies</li> </ul>
<b>Business &amp; Finance</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Accounting</li> <li>➤ Business</li> <li>➤ Economics</li> </ul>
<b>Humanities</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ History</li> <li>➤ Classical Studies</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Geography</li> <li>➤ Home Economics (social &amp; scientific)</li> <li>➤ Religious Education</li> <li>➤ Physical Education</li> </ul>
<b>Practical &amp; Technology</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Construction Studies</li> <li>➤ Engineering</li> <li>➤ Design &amp; Communications Graphics</li> </ul>

The following pages give a brief account of the type of courses provided in the subjects on offer in the school.



## B. Core Subjects

Alongside your four assigned Options Subjects, all Leaving Cert students are required to study the following subjects for examination:

- English
- Gaeilge (unless exempt)
- Maths

All students also have the following non-exam subjects each week:

- PE
- Religious & Ethical Education
- SPHE
- Career Guidance

## English

What will I learn?

In Leaving Certificate English, you will develop your skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking. You'll study a wide range of texts—novels, poetry, drama, and film—learning how writers use language to create meaning, shape ideas, and influence readers.

You will also improve your own writing: crafting well-structured essays, personal pieces, and analyses. Through class discussion and independent study, you'll learn to interpret themes, compare texts, and express your views with clarity and confidence.

How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

Your learning is assessed through two written examinations (for both Higher and Ordinary levels) that test your ability to analyse unseen texts, write creatively or discursively, and explore studied texts, including your chosen poet, comparative texts, and single text. The exams take place on the first two days of the Leaving Cert in June of Sixth Year.

In your LC English exams, you are assessed on clarity, structure, accuracy, insight, and your ability to respond critically, maturely and personally to ideas and language.



## Careers & Further Education & Training Links

English is a gateway subject that strengthens communication, creativity, and analytical thinking—skills valued in nearly every career. It provides an excellent foundation for pathways such as:

- **Arts and Humanities**, including English, History, Philosophy, Media, and Cultural Studies
- **Teaching and Education**
- **Journalism, Publishing, Creative Writing, and Communications**
- **Law, Public Service, and Social Sciences**, where strong argumentation and writing skills are essential
- **Marketing, Advertising, Public Relations**, and other roles that rely on effective messaging

Whatever route you choose—university, apprenticeships, or the workplace—strong literacy and communication skills will support you throughout your adult and professional life.

## Gaeilge

### What Will I Learn?

Leaving Certificate Gaeilge provides you with the opportunity to develop your fluency, confidence and appreciation of the Irish language as it is spoken, written and used today. Throughout the course, you will deepen your understanding of Irish culture, heritage, literature and communication. Whether you have a strong foundation from Junior Cycle or you feel ready to make significant progress, the course is designed to strengthen your skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing.



### Course Content:

You will engage with a broad range of texts including contemporary short stories, poetry, extracts from novels or plays. These texts help build vocabulary and comprehension while also exposing you to different dialects and styles. At Higher and Ordinary Level, you will study a prescribed literary course, including poetry and prose, which encourages reflection on language, imagery and cultural themes.



Spoken Irish is central to the course, counting for 40% of your Leaving Certificate result, so you will practice communication in a variety of contexts: personal, social, cultural and topical. Discussions, debates, role-plays and descriptive tasks help you become comfortable expressing your ideas clearly in Irish.

### **Skills Developed:**

By the end of the course, you will have developed:

- **Oral communication skills**, enabling you to converse confidently and naturally on a wide range of topics that interest you.
- **Listening skills**, including the ability to follow conversation, news bulletins and interviews in Irish.
- **Reading comprehension skills**, such as identifying key information, interpreting meaning, recognising tone and analysing literary features.
- **Writing skills**, from personal narratives and descriptions to opinion pieces, letters and short essays.
- **Critical thinking**, especially when evaluating themes in poetry, character development in prose or language choices in texts.
- **Cultural awareness**, gained through exposure to Irish traditions, contemporary issues and the modern use of the language across the country.



Overall, Leaving Certificate Gaeilge aims to prepare you to use the language with independence, accuracy and appreciation, both in exams and in real-life situations.

### **How Will My Knowledge and Skills Be Assessed?**

Your knowledge of Gaeilge will be assessed through a combination of a written examination, an aural (listening) task, and a significant oral examination. While the exact structure varies slightly between Higher and Ordinary Level, the general pattern is similar.

### **Structure of the Oral Exam:**

You will engage in a conversation of approximately 12–15 minutes with an examiner. The exam usually includes:

- **Fáiltiú:** 5 short questions introducing yourself. **(5 marks)**



- **Poetry Reading:** You read one of the prescribed poems, focusing on phonetics and punctuation. **(35 marks)**
- **Conversation:** You speak about yourself, your interests, your family, school life, local area, hobbies, technology, the environment and current affairs. **(120 marks)**
- **Sraith Pictiúr (Picture Sequences):** You describe and discuss a story based on images and have a short Q & A about the story afterwards. **(80 marks)**

### **Written Examination:**

The written paper is comprised of 2 papers. Paper 1 includes the Aural comprehension and the essay style question. Paper 2 comprises of reading comprehensions and literature.

### **Paper 1: Aural (Listening) Examination & Essay**

The aural test evaluates your ability to understand spoken Gaeilge. You will listen to dialogues, announcements, interviews and short narratives. Questions may require you to identify key facts, interpret meaning, or summarise information. The listening exam typically lasts about 20–25 minutes and the essay is completed in the remaining 1 hour 55 mins.

### **Paper 2: Reading Comprehension & Literature**

- **Reading comprehension** typically features several texts, including factual, opinion-based and literary passages. You must answer questions that test understanding, analysis and interpretation.
- **Written responses to prescribed literature** may include short functional writing, longer essays, personal responses to texts, descriptive passages or opinion pieces.

This written exam is usually 2.5 to 3 hours long, depending on level. You will need to manage your time carefully to complete all sections.

### **Assessment Weighting:**

The Leaving Certificate Gaeilge examinations are notable in that a very high percentage of your overall grade comes from continuous and practical assessment. Typically:

- **Oral Examination: 40%**
- **Written Paper: 50%**
- **Aural Exam: 10%**



## Careers

Irish is not only part of Ireland's heritage but also an increasingly valuable skill in workplaces where cultural competency and bilingual communication are highly valued. Studying Leaving Certificate Gaeilge can lead to a variety of career opportunities:

- **Education:** Primary and post-primary teaching, early childhood education, speech and language support.
- **Media and Communications:** Radio, television, journalism, translation, content creation and broadcasting—especially within Irish-language media such as TG4 or Raidió na Gaeltachta.
- **Public Service:** Many roles in government departments, the civil service, and state agencies value or require competency in Irish.
- **Business and Marketing:** Companies in Ireland and abroad often seek bilingual staff for communication, customer engagement and cultural outreach.
- **Cultural and Community Work:** Arts organisations, museums, heritage centres, and community development programmes frequently use Irish.

## Maths

### What Will I Learn?

Leaving Cert Maths focuses on developing mathematical understanding, logical reasoning, and problem-solving skills. The course is divided into five strands:

Strand	Topics Included
<b>1. Statistics &amp; Probability</b>	Data analysis, probability rules, distributions, random variables, correlation & regression.
<b>2. Geometry &amp; Trigonometry</b>	Constructions, theorems, coordinate geometry, transformations, trigonometric identities & applications.
<b>3. Number</b>	Complex numbers, sequences & series, financial maths, arithmetic & geometric growth.
<b>4. Algebra</b>	Functions, inequalities, polynomials, factorisation, algebraic manipulation.
<b>5. Functions</b>	Calculus (differentiation & integration), graphing, limits, rates of change, area under curves.

Strands 1 and 2 above are on Paper 2, while Strands 3-5 are on Paper 1.

### Skills You Will Develop



- Logical and critical thinking
- Problem-solving and mathematical modelling
- Interpreting graphs, diagrams, and real-world data
- Applying mathematical techniques to practical scenarios
- Using mathematical language to communicate ideas clearly

Higher Level additionally develops:

- Advanced algebraic manipulation
- Complex problem-solving strategies
- Deeper understanding of calculus and proofs

Question Types at HL:

- Multi-part structured problems
- Real-world modelling questions
- Longer unfamiliar problem-solving questions requiring explanation and method
- Some internal choice within questions

Each paper typically consists of a mix of short and long questions, with students attempting the majority (choice at both HL and OL)

## Careers

Mathematics is one of the most versatile subjects for future study and employment. It is essential or highly beneficial for careers such as:

### **STEM & Technology**

- Engineering (all branches)
- Software development
- Data science
- Cybersecurity
- Artificial intelligence & machine learning
- Computer science

### **Science & Health**

- Physics, chemistry, biology
- Medical and health sciences (radiography, medical physics, pharmacy)
- Environmental science
- Research & academia

### **Business & Finance**

- Accounting
- Economics



- Finance & investment
- Actuarial science
- Business analytics

## Everyday Life & Transferable Skills

Maths develops:

- logical decision-making
- budgeting & financial literacy
- analytical thinking
- confidence with numerical information

Many college courses require a minimum grade in Maths, and Higher Level Maths offers 25 bonus CAO points for H6 or above.

## PE

What will I learn?

Non-Exam PE will help you develop the knowledge, understanding, and habits needed for lifelong physical activity. You will explore fitness, movement skills, games, personal wellbeing, teamwork, and how physical activity supports overall health. You will also learn how to plan, participate in, and reflect on physical activity to improve performance and wellbeing.



How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

PE is **not an exam subject**. Your learning will be assessed through ongoing participation, engagement, personal goal-setting, and reflection on your own progress. Feedback will focus on effort, skill development, teamwork, and your ability to apply knowledge in practical settings

Assessment may include:

- Participation records and personal activity logs
- Reflection tasks on health, fitness, and wellbeing
- Group projects or performance tasks
- Self-assessment and peer feedback activities



## Careers

Non-Exam PE supports skills valuable in many fields, especially those related to health, fitness, sport, and wellbeing. It helps build teamwork, communication, leadership, and personal management skills that are useful in careers such as:

- Sports coaching and development
- Fitness instruction and personal training
- Health promotion and wellbeing roles
- Physiotherapy, sports rehabilitation, and sports science
- Teaching and youth work

## SPHE

The Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum, introduced in 2024, provides a minimum of 60 hours of learning over 5th and 6th year. Its aim is to support students in becoming healthy, resilient, confident, and empathetic young adults. The course focuses on three key strands:



1. Health and Wellbeing – promoting physical, mental, and emotional health.
2. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) – fostering respectful, caring relationships and understanding consent, equality, and diversity.
3. Substance Use – developing informed, responsible decision-making about alcohol, drugs, and related issues.

The programme uses active, student-centered learning to build life skills, critical thinking, and personal responsibility, preparing learners for life beyond school.

## C. Languages

Students should be aware that a modern language is required for many courses in Maynooth University, UCD, UCC, and the University of Galway. However, some faculties in Maynooth and UCD, including Business, Engineering, Law and Science, no longer require a modern language.

All NUI colleges require at least a pass grade in Irish.

The language entry requirements for other universities and courses vary. For example, Trinity accept Irish as a modern language, while DCU and TUD accept English or Irish.

The language requirements for third level can be confusing. See page 52 below for more information on how to find out about entry requirements for third level courses or consult your Guidance Counsellor for further information and assistance.

### French

#### What will I learn?

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, in order to provide a context for communication. Students learn about everyday topics such as themselves, where they live, pastimes, school and holidays while also learning to discuss and give their opinion on topics that affect their daily lives like immigration and addiction. Senior Cycle French builds on the knowledge acquired for the Junior Certificate.



#### How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

Students' knowledge will be assessed across the different competencies; reading comprehension, written expression, aural comprehension, and oral expression. This allows students to pick up marks and show strengths in different areas of learning.

	Reading Comprehension	Written Expression	Aural Comprehension	Oral Expression
Higher Level	30%	25%	20%	25%
Ordinary Level	40%	15%	25%	20%



## Additional Information

This subject may be a requirement for entry to third level and can be used as a third language for entry to a number of courses. Make sure to verify entry requirements for individual colleges before choosing your Senior Cycle options.

## Careers

This subject is a useful foundation for students with an interest in studying French at third level or considering a career in a French speaking environment or country. Knowing French can open doors to many careers—both in French-speaking countries and internationally. Here are some of the most common (and well-paid) paths:

- 1. Diplomat / Foreign Service Officer:** French is one of the main languages of international diplomacy (UN, EU, African Union, NATO).
- 2. NGO / Humanitarian Worker:** Many NGOs operate in Francophone Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe.
- 3. International Business / Trade: Companies** dealing with Europe, Canada (especially Quebec), and Africa value French-speaking employees.
- 4. Translator or Interpreter:** For businesses, governments, media, conferences, etc.
- 5. Customer Support / Client Relations: Global** companies hire bilingual agents to handle French-speaking customers.
- 6. Marketing & Communications:** Brands need people who can write and communicate for French markets.
- 7. French Teacher:** At schools, universities, or through private tutoring.
- 8. Language Coach / Cultural Trainer:** Helping travellers, students, or professionals work in French-speaking areas.
- 9. Flight Attendant:** Airlines favour multilingual staff.
- 10. Travel Guide / Tour Operator: Especially** in cities with high French tourism.
- 11. Writer / Editor / Journalist:** For French publications or bilingual media.
- 12. Voice-over actor:** For French-language content.
- 13. Immigration / Customs Officer: Helps** when dealing with newcomers or travellers who speak French.
- 14. Social Worker:** Useful in communities with French-speaking populations.



**15. Medical / Healthcare Professional:** Hospitals value bilingual staff for serving French-speaking patients.

**16. Engineers / IT Specialists:** Many tech firms operate in France, Belgium, Switzerland, and Canada.

## Italian

### What will I learn?

In Leaving Certificate Italian, you will develop practical listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. You will learn to communicate in everyday situations, describe past and future events, give opinions, and participate in discussions on personal and cultural topics. The course also introduces you to Italian life, traditions, festivals, cuisine, and society, helping you to understand and engage with the language in real-world contexts.



In Ratoath College, you can also do an Italian exchange from TY to 6<sup>th</sup> year. This is a valuable opportunity to meet Italian friends and experience life with an Italian family. You also get to visit an Italian school while also getting to see some of Northern Italy.

### How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

Your progress in Italian will be assessed through three main components: the **oral examination**, the **written paper**, and the **listening exam**. The oral exam tests your spoken Italian through conversation, role-plays, and picture sequences. The written paper includes reading comprehension and writing tasks such as emails, diary entries, and opinion pieces. The listening exam evaluates your ability to understand spoken Italian in a variety of everyday and cultural contexts. This combination ensures you develop and demonstrate all four language skills.

### Additional Assessment Component(s)

- Oral Exam (Speaking): 25%
- Written Exam (Reading & Writing): 50%
- Aural Exam (Listening): 25%

## Careers & Further Education & Training Links

Studying a modern European language is valued by universities, employers, and global industries. It opens the door to a wide range of careers, including tourism, hospitality, business, translation, teaching, fashion, design, and working in the EU.

It can also provide the opportunity to study abroad for example through the ERASMUS programme. This experience gives you the chance to improve your language skills, meet friends from different places, immerse yourself in the culture, and see if you would be interested in moving or working abroad after university.



## D. Science

Students should be aware that a Science subject is required for most science and medicine courses (eg. to study Medicine you must have at least 1 science subject). You also require a Science for most engineering, pharmaceutical and dietetics programmes.

However, some science and engineering faculties (particularly in IT colleges and the new Technological Universities) do not require a science subject and therefore students who find science difficult should consider other subject choices.

See page 52 below for more information on how to find out about entry requirements for third level courses or consult your Guidance Counsellor for further information and assistance.

## Biology

Biology is the scientific exploration of the vast and diverse world of all living organisms from the smallest microorganisms to the most developed organisms - humans. It is an area of science that has expanded enormously within the last four decades revealing a wealth of knowledge about ourselves



and about the millions of other organisms with whom we share this planet. Biology plays a crucial role in our everyday existence and is a vital component of the solutions



to many problems facing our civilization from human health and disease to loss of biodiversity and the responsible management of our environment.

Advances in new technologies, such as genetic engineering and genomics have already had a great influence on our lives. We can now use genetics to identify and treat diseases, to catch criminals, to grow organs, to develop disease resistant plants.

## **New Leaving Cert Biology Specification - introduced September 2025**

### **Introduction**

The Leaving Certificate Biology course, starting in September 2025, helps students understand the natural world. It aims to make biology interesting and prepare students for future challenges and opportunities.

### **Course Rationale**

Biology is the study of life, including how living things are organized, how they work, and how they interact. The course combines practical and theoretical learning, making students aware of human impact on the environment and the importance of biology in everyday life.

### **Aims**

The course aims to:

- Build knowledge of key biological concepts
- Develop skills to apply this knowledge in different situations
- Encourage inquiry and practical skills
- Understand the societal and ethical implications of biology

### **Continuity and Progression**

The course builds on knowledge from earlier education, focusing on scientific inquiry and evidence-based understanding. It prepares students for higher education and various careers in science and related fields.

### **Strands of Study**

The course is divided into four strands:

1. Nature of Science: Understanding scientific knowledge, inquiry, and the role of science in society.
2. Organisation of Life: Characteristics of living things, classification, cellular basis of life, and genetic inheritance.
3. Structures and Processes of Life: Enzyme activity, cellular processes, cell division, protein synthesis, and response systems.
4. Interactions of Life: Ecology, biodiversity, nutrient cycling, and genetic engineering.



## Examples of Topics

Students will explore a variety of topics, including:

- Cell Biology: Structure and function of cells, cell division, and cellular respiration.
- Genetics: Mendelian genetics, DNA structure and replication, genetic engineering, and biotechnology.
- Human Biology: Human anatomy and physiology, including the circulatory, respiratory, and nervous systems.
- Plant Biology: Photosynthesis, plant structure and function, and plant reproduction.
- Ecology: Ecosystems, energy flow, nutrient cycles, and environmental conservation.

## Teaching and Learning Approaches

The course uses different methods, including inquiry-based learning, group discussions, and models. Digital technology is used to enhance learning and develop digital literacy.

## Assessment

Assessment includes a written examination (60%) and a Biology in Practice Investigation (40%).

## Biology in Practice Investigation:

- Purpose: This part allows students to do scientific research and experiments, applying their knowledge and skills in a practical way.
- Process: Students will choose a topic, create a research question, and design an experiment to investigate it. They will collect and analyze data, draw conclusions, and present their findings.
- Skills Developed: This investigation helps students develop critical thinking, problem solving, and scientific inquiry skills. It also improves their ability to communicate scientific information effectively.
- Assessment Criteria: The investigation is assessed based on the clarity and relevance of the research question, the design and execution of the experiment, the quality of data analysis, and the presentation of findings.

## Conclusion

The Senior Cycle Biology course offers a comprehensive and engaging curriculum that prepares students for future academic and career opportunities while fostering a deep understanding of the natural world and its complexities. Careers open to students who study biology include medicine, environmental science, biotechnology, education, research, agriculture, and forensic science, among others. These fields offer exciting and

rewarding opportunities for those passionate about understanding and improving the living world.

## Chemistry

Chemistry is a fascinating field of study. As it is fundamental to our world, chemistry plays a role in everyone's lives and touches almost every aspect of our existence in some way. Chemistry is essential for meeting our basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, health, energy, and clean air.

Chemical technologies enrich our quality of life in numerous ways by providing new solutions to problems in health, materials, and energy usage. Thus, studying chemistry is useful in preparing us for the real world.

Leaving Certificate Chemistry aims to stimulate and sustain students' interest in, and enjoyment of, chemistry. It aims to encourage an appreciation of the scientific, social, economic, environmental and technological aspects of chemistry and to give students an understanding of the historical development of chemistry. It also aims to outline how humanity has benefited from the study and practice of chemistry.

The inclusion of the applications of chemistry emphasises the vocational aspects of the subject and allows students to see where it applies in the world of work.



### Content

The revised chemistry syllabus is practically and experimentally based. This is emphasised by the specification of mandatory experiments.

The revised syllabus has the following components:

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

Subject content is presented under the headings:

1. Periodic Table and Atomic Structure
2. Chemical Bonding, Stoichiometry, Formulas and Equations
3. Acids and Bases and Volumetric Analysis
4. Thermochemistry



5. Organic Chemistry
6. Chemical Equilibrium
7. Environmental Chemistry: Water

The chemistry course also contains the following options:

- 1A: Additional Industrial Chemistry, 1B: Atmospheric Chemistry, 2A: Materials, 2B: Additional Electrochemistry and the Extraction of Metals
- Ordinary level students must study one of Options 1A and 2A or one of Options 1B and 2B as outlined below. Higher level students must study, in its entirety, either Option 1 or Option 2.

### Assessment

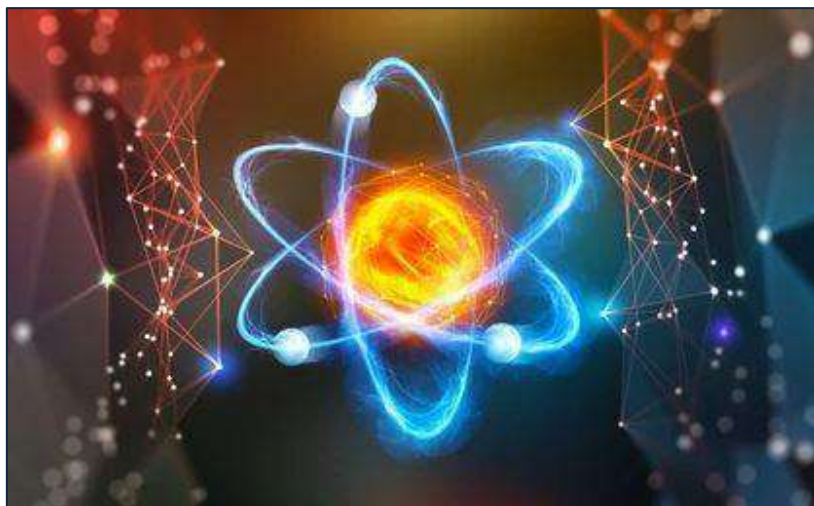
Leaving Certificate Chemistry is assessed by means of a terminal examination paper at each level. Students are required to keep a record of their practical work over the two years of the course.

### Careers

You could use chemistry in most fields, but it's commonly seen in the sciences and in medicine. Chemists, physicists, biologists, and engineers study chemistry. Doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, physical therapists, and veterinarians all need to study chemistry.

## Physics

Physics attempts to develop a unified description of how matter and energy behave and interact with each other. The Universe is composed of a wide variety of simple and complex systems and physics attempts to describe these systems in terms of all-embracing fundamental concepts. In its search for basic laws and general



principles, physics encompasses the study of the universe from the smallest subatomic particles to the largest galaxies. It involves asking fundamental questions and trying to answer them by observing, measuring, experimenting and developing models to explain the physical world. Physics is progressive, new data may answer some questions but raise others and this makes physics exciting and interesting.



Physicists are problem solvers, the analytical and practical skills developed by students of Leaving Certificate Physics opens a wide variety of opportunities in many fields.

More specifically Leaving Certificate Physics, aims to empower students to:

- build knowledge and understanding of specified core concepts and fundamental principles of physics
- develop the skills, values and dispositions needed to apply this knowledge to explain, analyse, solve problems and predict events in a variety of systems and interactions in the physical world
- demonstrate inquiry and practical skills consistent with the principles and practices of physics
- understand how society and science are interwoven, the everyday relevance and the ethical implications of physics.

There are five strands in the new Physics subject specification: a unifying strand, The Nature of Science, and four contextual strands, Forces and Motion, Waves and Energy transfer, Electricity and Magnetism, and Modern Physics.

Within these strands, students learn about the nature of knowledge in Physics, designing and carrying out investigations, developing simple models of understanding. Students learn about motion, forces, energy, light, reflection, refraction, lenses, heat transfer, waves, sound, light-waves and colour, magnetism, electricity and energy generation.

### **Benefits of studying Physics**

Gain understanding how the technology around you works (mobile phones, televisions, radios, computers, contact lenses, x-rays) Investigate the limits of space and the motions of the planets. Physics helps to train your brain to think beyond boundaries. Studying physics is an excellent aid for the real-life problem solving questions which have been recently introduced in the new Project Maths syllabus. The senior cycle physics has been simplified by providing formulae to the students which previously needed to be learn off by heart.

### **Relevant Careers**

Astronomy (Astronauts to Telescope designers), Medicine (Doctors to Surgeons), Radiology (Medical Physicists to Radiographers), Architecture, Engineering (Mechanical to Electrical), Meteorology, Renewable Energy, Computer Programming, and Optometry.

## Applied Maths

Applied Maths is offered as an 8<sup>th</sup> subject and will be timetabled for two periods a week, as well as one after school period per week.

This subject is suitable for students who enjoy Maths and want to gain easy leaving cert points.

When studying Junior Maths have you ever wondered what is the point of algebra, trigonometry or quadratic equations?

Applied Mathematics will answer these questions by showing real life applications and uses of the Maths you study. With the extra points now allocated to Higher Level Maths, Applied Maths will help you gain these extra points. Many topics overlap with Higher Level Maths and Physics.

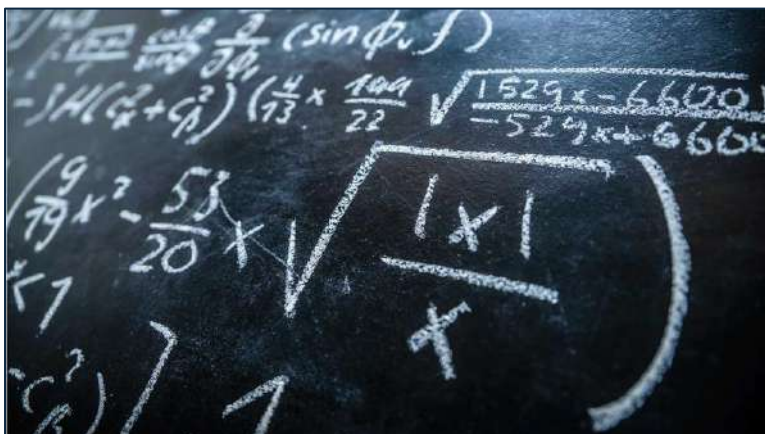
The course consists of 10 topics in total, including all the Higher Level topics. The examination consists of one paper and is 2.5 hours long. The exam paper contains 10 questions at Higher Level and 9 at Ordinary Level, with students answering 6 questions in both cases, spending about 25 minutes on each question.

### Benefits of Applied Maths:

- Improvement in Maths.
- Improvement in Physics.
- Opportunity to earn 100 points
- Predictable paper.

### Relevant Careers:

Sciences, Engineering, Architecture, Economics, Computer Programming, Astronomy, Mathematics, Actuary and many others.





# E. Artistic & Creative

## Art

What will I learn?

Leaving Certificate Art is built around three interconnected areas:

1. **Research** – investigating ideas, artists, materials, environments and themes; exploring observations and primary sources.
2. **Create** – making artworks using a broad range of media and processes (drawing, painting, sculpture, print, mixed media, digital work, etc.).
3. **Respond** – analyzing your own work and the work of others through Visual Studies.

The **Visual Studies** component includes:

- **Europe & the Wider World** – key Western art movements from Romanesque to today.
- **Ireland & Its Place in the World** – major periods and artworks relating to Ireland.
- **Today's World** – contemporary art, current practitioners, social commentary, art and the environment, and critical literacy.

### Skills You Will Develop

- Creative, conceptual and practical skills
- Visual literacy and the ability to “read” images
- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Research, communication and reflection skills
- Ability to curate, present and justify your own artistic decisions
- Observational drawing, life drawing and imaginative composition
- Understanding of art media, techniques and processes

### Additional Learning Opportunities

- 5th year trip to **Newgrange**
- Compulsory **6th year gallery/museum visit**
- Optional **biennial international art and classics trip** (Florence and Rome)



## How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

Assessment is through **three components**, all set and examined by the **State Examinations Commission (SEC)**. Both Higher and Ordinary Level follow the same structure with differentiated marking.

### Overview of Assessment

Component	Weighting	Level	What It Assesses
Practical Coursework	50%	HL & OL	Research, idea development, media skills, and creation of a realised artwork
Practical Examination	20%	HL & OL	Ability to create a finished work under timed conditions
Written Examination	30%	HL & OL	Knowledge and understanding of Visual Studies

### Additional Assessment Component(s)

#### 1. Practical Coursework – 50%

- Completed during **Term 2 of 6th year**, using a **stimulus** chosen from an SEC coursework brief.
- You will produce:
  - **One fully realised artwork**, created over several weeks
  - **Plans and development work** for the piece you will make during the practical exam
  - An **Artist's Statement** explaining *what, how, and why*
- All work must be **100% your own**; SEC authentication is required.

#### 2. Practical Examination – 20%

- Takes place **immediately after the coursework window**, lasting **5 hours in one day**.
- You will create a **second realised artwork**, based on the **same stimulus** and the development work completed earlier.
- Includes an **Artist's Statement**.

#### 3. Written Examination – 30%

- Duration: **2.5 hours**
- Question types: essay-style responses, analysis of artworks, application of knowledge to new scenarios
- Areas assessed:
  - Understanding of art history and Visual Studies
  - Ability to analyse, evaluate and form arguments
  - Application of visual language
  - Critical and creative responses
  - Problem-solving and personal interpretation



## Careers

Studying Art develops transferable skills useful in many creative and non-creative fields. Learners gain confidence in generating ideas, solving problems and presenting work professionally — qualities valued by universities and employers.

### Related Career Paths

- Fine Art (painting, sculpture, printmaking, installation)
- Animation, Illustration & Concept Art
- Graphic Design, UX/UI Design
- Architecture & Interior Design
- Fashion Design & Textile Design
- Photography & Film
- Art Teaching or Art Therapy
- Museum, Gallery & Cultural Sector Roles
- Creative Media, Advertising, Branding
- Product & Industrial Design

Creativity, innovation and visual communication are core skills across modern industries, making Art a valuable pathway into many future options.

## Music

### What will I learn?

- **Course Content:**
  - Study a wide range of music styles: classical, traditional Irish, popular, and world music.
  - Learn about **set works** (specific pieces chosen for the exam).
  - Explore **composition, listening, and performance**.
- **Skills Developed:**
  - Critical listening and analysis.
  - Creativity through composing.
  - Confidence in performing.
  - Teamwork and communication (especially in group performance).

### How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

- **Written Exam:**
  - Length: **2½ hours**.



- Structure:
  - Listening questions on set works and Irish music.
  - Composition tasks (melody writing and harmony).
  - General listening and music theory.
- **Value:** 50% of the final grade.
- Question types include short answers, essays, and practical composition exercises.

## Additional Assessment Component(s)

- **Practical Performance Exam:**
  - Worth 50% of the final grade.
  - You choose your instrument(s) or voice.
  - Options include solo performance, group performance, or a mix.
  - Usually held in **spring of exam year**.

## Careers

Studying music can lead to exciting opportunities such as:

- **Music Performance** (solo artist, band member).
- **Teaching** (primary, secondary, or private tuition).
- **Sound Engineering & Music Technology.**
- **Composition & Songwriting.**
- Careers in **media, theatre, and arts management.**
- Transferable skills like creativity and communication are valued in many fields.

**Important:** It is not compulsory for students to have studied Music at Junior Cycle for them to take it up as a Leaving Certificate subject but students **must speak to teachers in the Music Department** prior to making a commitment to the subject.

## **Drama, Film & Theatre Studies**

Following an application process with the Department of Education, the school is delighted and proud to have selected as one of the pilot schools for this new Leaving Cert subject which began in September 2025.



This exciting course invites students to dive into the world of drama, film, and theatre where they'll get hands-on experience in creative projects, develop critical skills, and explore a variety of art forms. No prior experience in Theatre, Film or Drama is necessary. The course takes a multimodal approach, with equal time will be spent on the various aspects of the specification.

### **Why Choose Drama, Film & Theatre Studies?**

DFTS is not only for aspiring actors!!!

It's also for aspiring writers, producers, directors, lighting and sound technicians...

If you are interested in any or some of the following areas, then you should consider applying for DFTS:

- Drama
- Film Studies
- Drama &/or Film Production
- Performance
- Creative Writing

### **Assessment & Reflection**

The course is designed to make sure students understand the full creative process, from brainstorming ideas to the final performance. To help measure their progress, students will keep a portfolio with notes, sketches, and reflections on each project.

Students' final grade will be split between a written exam in June of 6th Year and a Creativity in Practice Project (ACTs) . This project will give them a chance to demonstrate what they've learned by responding creatively.

### **Applied Creative Tasks**

The practical heart of the course, Applied Creative Tasks, involve three major projects over two years. These tasks are designed to let students use everything they're learning



in a creative, hands-on way:

### **Task 1: Creating an Ensemble Theatre Piece**

Students will work together to create a short theatre piece. They'll get to experience all aspects of theatre production, from acting to designing costumes and sets, and will present this live to an audience.

### **Task 2: Making a Film Sequence**

This task focuses on creating a short film or a sequence of scenes. Students will plan, record, and edit, learning film techniques and how to tell a story on screen

### **Task 3: Developing a Theatre Piece or Short Film**

This final task lets students choose to create either a theatre piece or a short film. Inspired by a live performance or film they've seen, Students will work individually or with others to produce a piece that reflects their own artistic vision and knowledge.

## **Application Process**

As a pilot subject, the number of places available for students will be limited.

Expression of Interest and Application forms will be made available after the TY Application Process is complete.

If more students apply than there are places available, students will be selected taking into account their Third Year/TY record.

***If you have any questions about DFTS or would like to learn more about the subject before applying, speak to Ms Fox or Mr Davis.***

**NB:** Note that, as a pilot subject, DFTS will not be included in the normal subject choice process.



## F. Business & Finance

### Business

#### What will I learn?

Business at senior level introduces students to a wide range of topics, showing how entrepreneurs take their unique ideas and turn them into successful companies. The subject explores both Irish and multinational businesses, exploring how they attract customers and persuade them to buy the products and services we all use every day. Students will also learn skills and techniques used by real managers and business leaders - how they communicate with the different groups interested in their businesses and how they motivate and lead their staff in order for them to deliver the very best results.

Finally, the course touches on the wider environment that Irish businesses operate in and how decisions made by the Governments here (and in other countries) impacts whether they will be successful or not.

#### How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

The skills and knowledge acquired in Business will specifically help prepare students for life in third-level education and in the workplace afterwards. In addition to class tests, students will also get the opportunity to show their ability to communicate effectively and work in groups during project work (both digitally and in class).

As part of the course students will complete a research project worth 40% of their overall grade (see section below) which will show their ability to link material they have learned on the course with a real-life business. To support this, students will regularly work with case studies throughout the year, practicing their ability to '*put themselves in the shoes of a manager*' and make recommendations and decisions.

A final exam worth 60% of students' overall grade is completed at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> year, testing students' knowledge of business theory and their ability to apply it to real companies.

#### Additional Assessment Component(s)

The business curriculum was updated in 2025 and a new additional assessment component (AAC) was introduced. This AAC is worth 40% of students' overall grade.

Students are given approximately one year to complete their AAC, which requires them to engage in an independent investigative research study on a business of their



choosing. Students are given a brief which will touch upon some of the subjects covered in the course and can then select a business of their choosing to focus their research on.

Students will be supported by teachers while completing their research project and will have numerous opportunities to gain feedback on each section before it is submitted.

### Careers & Further Education & Training Links

Choosing business as a leaving certificate option is an incredible starting point for accessing a wide range of courses and careers including:

- Business
- Accounting
- Finance
- Economics
- Business & Law
- International Business
- Marketing
- Public Relations
- Human Resources Management
- Law
- Data Science
- Hospitality Management

In addition to providing students with excellent knowledge of business, the leaving certificate course also develops a range of skills that employers value (communication, interpersonal relationships, research, critical thinking, teamwork) ensuring that Ratoath's business students set themselves up with every chance of success in the future.

## Accounting

### *What does Accounting involve?*

- Preparing accounts for GAA clubs.
- Learning how to make a business successful and profitable.
- Learn how to prepare accounts up to government standard.
- How to manage cash in and out of a business.

### *What do you study?*

- You learn how to prepare Business Final Accounts, Club Accounts, Cash Accounts, Cash Flow Statements, Published Accounts and Accounts from Incomplete



Records.

- You learn Management Accounting. This involves business day to day planning and planning for the future using Costing and Budgets.
- You learn to analyse and comment on financial records.

### ***How do you benefit by studying Accounting?***

You learn:

- To collect information.
- To record and analyse information.
- To think logically and clearly.
- To manage your own money better
- To become a problem solver
- To develop the ability to link accounting with relevant computer applications.
- **Accounting modules in college based on OL LC accounting so having HL LC Accounting will put you at a significant advantage.**



You have an advantage when you go on to further study. Accounting is on the curriculum of many Third Level Courses, the most obvious being the Business Courses, Auctioneering, Advertising, Law and Engineering to name but a few.

A strong interest in Accounting from Junior Cert., plus a good mathematical ability, is essential. Prospective students should note that statistically Accounting provides one of the highest averages of H1 grades at Leaving Certificate level.

## **Economics**

What will I learn?

Senior cycle Economics explores the role of the consumer, the firm and the government in how our Economy functions. Students will learn about how consumers and firms make decisions and how the actions of the government will affect these decisions. Economics in senior cycle utilizes all of those concepts learned





through Junior Cycle business but presents them in a unique and engaging format. Students will find that they develop a much deeper understanding of the world around them and start to understand the interdependent relationship between Ireland and other countries.

### How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

Knowledge will be assessed through chapter tests and class discussion but also through practical exercises that explore the interdependence of Economies but through the setting of the classroom. A project component will also prepare students for assessment at leaving Certificate.

### Additional Assessment Component(s)

[The final assessment component is the leaving cert examination which comprises of two parts.

1. The actual leaving Certificate paper which is sat in June and is worth 80% of the students overall grade.
2. A Research Study that starts in September of 6<sup>th</sup> year and is submitted in December of 6<sup>th</sup> year. This is worth 20% of the students final grade. It's completion is facilitate in class so that students have their teachers guidance and help throughout the project.]

### Careers & Further Education & Training Links

Once students begin to study Economics they develop a whole new understanding of the world and it opens the doors to so many avenues for future study. Some will pursue a Business and Economics degree, others will enter the world of business and study as they work. Possible careers are Economist with Major firms, teaching, Financial Journalism, Retail, Marketing, etc.



# G. Humanities

## History

### What will I learn about?

You will study **four modules** in Leaving Cert History covering some of the most exciting, interesting and engaging periods and people of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, learning about the ideas and concepts that shape the world you live in today. Two of these modules cover Irish History, and the other two cover Europe and the wider world; including:

PERIODS AND EVENTS	
The Nazi Regime in Germany	The Russian Revolution and USSR
Italy under Mussolini	Radio and Cinema in the 1930s
The Moon Landing	The Vietnam War
The Cold War	World War 2
The Civil Rights movement in the USA	The Civil Rights movement in Ireland
The Troubles	The 1916 Rising
The War of Independence	The Civil War
The Emergency	20th Century American Popular Culture

PEOPLE			
Adolf Hitler	Joseph Goebbels	Leni Riefenstahl	Bernadette Devlin
Benito Mussolini	Bing Crosby	Ronald Reagan	P.H. Pearse
V.I. Lenin	Charlie Chaplin	Marilyn Monroe	John Hume
Joseph Stalin	Martin Luther King	Eamon de Valera	Seamus Heaney
Winston Churchill	Lyndon B Johnson	Michael Collins	Ian Paisley

...and many, many more.

### The Project

20% of the final grade for Leaving Cert History is for a project called **The Research Study Report (RSR)**. The project can be about anything or anyone from the any time in the past – a topic that **you choose**. The average national grade for the RSR is approx. 92%. **This means that before you sit the Leaving Cert History Exam, 20% of the marks, and 20% of the points, are already in the bag!**

### Some important statistics about choosing History for the leaving certificate

- More people achieve a H5 or better in History than any other subject, other than Art and Music.
- History has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest failure rate of any Leaving Cert subject.



- History is their best result for 66% of students who choose it for the Leaving Cert.

Sources: *The SEC: www.examinations.ie*

## Classical Studies

Classical Studies explores the civilizations of ancient Greece & Rome & their continuing influence on our world. It includes history, literature, art & architecture, drama and philosophy. Classical Studies is generally enjoyed by pupils who like English, History, Art and storytelling in general. The fact that it has such a great variety of content contributes to its popularity among all kinds of students. The variety within Classical Studies has been highlighted as one of the best aspects of the subject by students as they are able to examine such a wide array of topics.

### Content of the syllabus

Pupils will study four distinct & varied topics:

1. **Power & Identity.** A study of how a young prince took the backward Greek kingdom of Macedonia and gave it the greatest army in the world, taking over most of the known world while destroying the previous superpower, the Persian Empire, all in the space of ten years. **Alexander the Great** is a titan of history, with many modern military strategists still studying his stunning victories on the battlefield as part of their training. The motto of “Live Fast, Die Young” is perfect for Alexander as he drank, partied, conquered & loved in excess, dying at the age of 32, leaving a legacy that would change the world forever.
2. **Drama & Spectacle.** An in-depth study one play from a selection of some the most important plays of all time, such as **Sophocles’ ‘Oedipus Rex’, Euripides’, ‘Medea’ or Aeschylus’, ‘Prometheus Bound’**. The ultimate examples of Greek Tragedy which set the scene for the development of Drama over the next two and a half thousand years. These plays involve love, intrigue, gods, murder, monsters & much, much more. We also examine two of the most significant buildings of the ancient world – the Colosseum, legendary arena of gladiator fights, & the Circus Maximus, home of Roman chariot racing.
3. **Gods & Humans:** This topic introduces students to Greek and Roman stories, beliefs and explanations concerning gods & their relationship with mankind. Studying myth, literature and art, they become familiar with the most important gods of Greece & Rome, seminal stories and domains associated with them, their key characteristics, attributes and roles within the pantheon, and how some ancient



thinkers sought to explain their origins, nature and purpose.

4. **The World of Heroes.** The reading and study of two of the most important pieces of literature in western civilization. **Homer's *The Odyssey***; The 10 year adventure of the Greek warrior, Odysseus, on his way home from The Trojan War, & '***The Aeneid***' of **Virgil**, the epic tale of the Trojan, Aeneas, his adventures around the Mediterranean & his war to found the city of Rome.

### **Assessment**

There are two assessment components at each level:

- Written examination 80%
- Research study 20%

The written exam will be comprised of some essay Qs but also features several Qs related to sources such as paintings, pictures, etc. This will cater to all learners & every student will be given the opportunity to succeed in the exam.

20% of the final grade for Leaving Cert Classical Studies is for a project called **The Research Study Report (RSR)**. The project will relate to a key theme of the course & will rotate every year. Students will choose their topic for research & are empowered to follow their own strengths & interests when competing the project.

### **Careers**

Classical Studies is a good foundation for careers in the arts in general as it combines many disciplines and areas such as art, architecture, literature, history, drama, philosophy, history, archaeology and sociology. The skills developed during the study of Classics are easily transferrable into any college course & are valuable life skills. Regarding specific careers relating to Classics, the fields of Archaeology and Education at both secondary and third level would be greatly assisted by a grounding in Classical Studies.



# H. Social Group

## Geography

### Why Choose Leaving Certificate Geography?

Leaving Certificate Geography offers students a dynamic, hands-on learning experience that connects directly with the world around us. As part of the senior programme, students complete a **Geographical Investigation**, which is worth **20% of their overall grade**. This includes an exciting field study at **Tanagh Education Centre in Monaghan**, where students carry out real scientific measurements on the River Bunnoe. They will investigate features such as river width, depth, velocity, turbidity and sample sediment size and shape. This practical work helps students develop important analytical skills and brings classroom learning to life.

The written exam is equally varied and engaging. Students answer short questions, complete map-reading exercises, and explore major global topics such as **natural disasters, plate tectonics, river processes, population change, migration and urban challenges**. These topics are constantly in the news, allowing students to connect their learning to real events happening across the globe.

Students will also be introduced to global biomes—such as the **Amazon Rainforest**—and will examine world cultures by studying countries like **France, Brazil and Italy**. Geography is a subject that helps students understand the planet, its people and the challenges we face. With commitment and a positive attitude, students can excel and gain a valuable qualification.

Geography provides a broad, well-rounded education and opens doors to a wide range of careers. It is especially useful for areas such as **cartography, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), town planning, environmental science, engineering, tourism, meteorology, business, government, teaching, transport, logistics**, and international development.

### New for 2026

A new **Leaving Certificate Geography course will begin in August 2026**, offering updated content and even more opportunities to explore the world through modern, relevant themes.

Geography is a subject for curious, questioning minds—and is more important today than ever before.

# Home Economics (Social & Scientific)

## What will I learn?

Home Economics (HE) at Leaving Certificate builds on the Junior Cycle strands exploring the complex relationships between individuals, families, communities, and the wider environment.

It is not necessary to have completed JC HE but it is beneficial. The course is mainly theoretical, with some practical elements, and focuses on real life problem solving and evidence informed decision making. HE is highly applicable to everyday life

and encourages students to connect learning to real-life practical problems including food choices, health, budgeting, consumer behaviour, and societal issues.



## Key Areas of Study

### 1) Food, Nutrition and Health

- Nutrient functions, sources, and requirements.
- Special dietary needs and nutritional issues.
- Irish and global food challenges.

### 2) Resource Management and Consumer Studies

- Personal and family resources management.
- Consumer rights, responsibilities, legislation, budgeting, and financial literacy.
- Housing and textiles considerations.

### 3) Social Studies

- Contemporary family structures, roles and relationships.
- Social change and contemporary issues affecting individuals and households.
- State supports, education, health, and community services.

## Skills You Will Develop

- Critical thinking and evaluation
- Research and analytical skills
- Practical food literacy and application of nutrition science
- Decision making and problem solving
- Communication skills
- Digital and numeracy skills

## How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

The Home Economics written examination is worth 80% of the final grade and is 2 hours and 30 minutes long for both Higher and Ordinary Level.

## Structure

### Section A- Short Questions

- 60 marks
- Covers all core areas of the course
- Assesses knowledge recall, understanding, and application.

### Section B- Long Questions

- 180 marks
- Question 1 is compulsory, and student have choice of 2 other questions.
- Assessment of extended answers requiring explanation, evaluation, and application of knowledge.

## Skills Assessed

- Ability to evaluate and discuss issues in depth.
- Application of theory to realistic scenarios and case studies.
- Data interpretation and problem-solving.

## Additional Assessment Component(s)

The Additional Assessment Component in HE involves students researching and writing about four different areas of food studies and are worth 20% of the final grade

The journals are submitted electronically in 6<sup>th</sup> year and are completed under teacher supervision during class time.



The areas for investigation include:

- 1) Application of Nutritional Principles
- 2) Food Technology
- 3) Food Preparation & Cooking Principles
- 4) Properties of Food



## Careers & Further Education & Training Links

Home Economics provides an excellent foundation for careers in areas related to food, health, science, education, and social services. It develops transferable skills in research, communication, analysis, and decision-making.

### Career Links:

- Nutrition and Dietetics
- Home Economics Teaching
- Food Science and Technology
- Culinary Arts and Hospitality
- Public Health
- Early Childhood Studies
- Social Care and Youth Work
- Consumer Affairs
- Advocacy
- Community Development
- Fashion, Textiles, and Product Design
- Environmental Health
- Health Promotion
- Novel research opportunities
- Advisory positions to public health and nutrition governing bodies.



## Leaving Cert Physical Education (LCPE/Exam PE)

### What will I learn?

Strand 1: Skill learning, participation and performance

Strand 2: Physical and psychological demands of performance

Strand 3: Factors influencing participation in physical activity

Some of the topics within these strands include:

- Benefits of physical activity
- Heart rate measurement
- Newton's laws of motion in sport
- Fitness testing & training methods
- Psychology, nutrition, supplements
- Muscles & bones
- National Governing Bodies & safety regulations
- Ethical practice, performance-enhancing drugs
- Media and sport, gender stereotyping, barriers/supports to participation

How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

50% Physical Education Project – Common Brief

50% Written Exam – Higher and Ordinary Level



### Additional Assessment Component(s)

The AAC allows students to engage with physical activity and follow a structured process that includes planning, engaging, performing, evaluating and communicating on and in physical activity. The AAC is designed to give students the opportunity to apply and demonstrate the learning they have developed within the specification in a structured process. Students demonstrate an understanding of their physical activity engagement and performance; making informed decisions and evaluating the short and long term results and consequences; being open to feedback and able to use it to improve their learning; being aware of and looking after their physical wellbeing; making choices and developing personal learning goals; working with others; and applying their learning to improve physical activity engagement.

### Careers

Sport Psychologist, Dietitian, Coach, Physiotherapist, Personal Trainer, Exercise Physiologist, Sports Photographer, Sports Journalist, Sports Development Officer, Facility Manager, eSport Analyst, Performance Data Analyst, PE Teacher, Community Sports Coordinator, Sports Technology Developer

# I. Practical & Technology

## Engineering

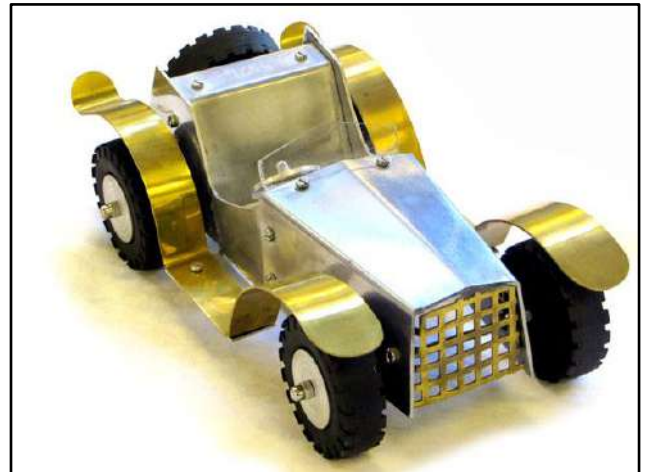
What will I learn?

Leaving Certificate Engineering is a subject that gives a student an opportunity to work with a range of metals and plastics in a safe workshop environment. The basic concepts of General Engineering are discovered.

Practical classes involve the safe use of lathes, drills, milling machines and computer-controlled manufacturing systems. This runs in tandem with theory-based classes analysing properties of materials, structures and the theory behind how machines work.

The subject is closely related to Engineering, the junior certificate subject. However, to peruse Leaving certificate engineering, it is not a requirement of the student to have completed it in the junior certificate.

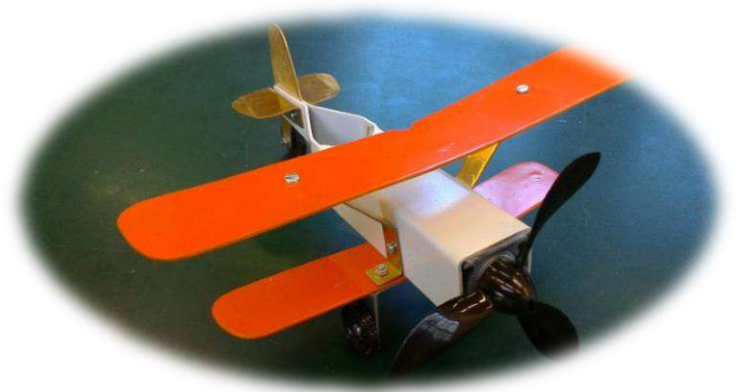
In final year, students analyse, design and manufacture their own artefact as part of the Leaving Certificate examination. Previous Projects have included model Golf buggies, Snowmobiles, Cranes and Lunar Roving Vehicles.



How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

1. 50% Terminal written paper
2. 50% Practical project work.

***One key advantage of Engineering is that the student can achieve 50% of their Leaving Cert grade before sitting the final exam. This suits students who are anxious about final written exams.***



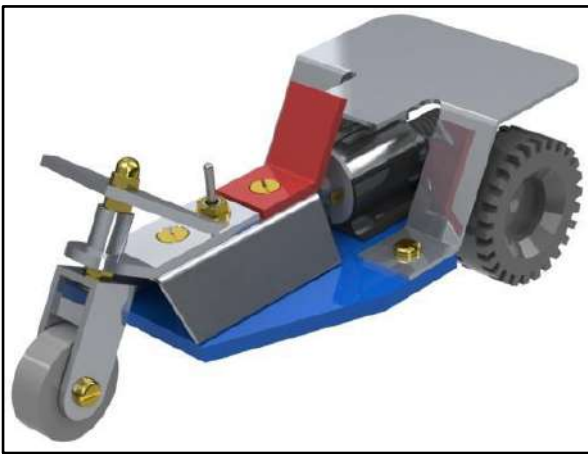
### Careers

Engineering is an excellent base for students who wish to peruse careers in:

- |                                     |               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| • Mechanic and Fitter Apprentices   | Salaries 130k |
| • Environmental Engineering         | Salaries 90k  |
| • Biomedical Engineering            | Salaries 95k  |
| • Mechanical Engineering and design | Salaries 105k |

Previous students who recently completed the Engineering course in Ratoath College are now pursuing education in Nano Technology (DCU) , Environmental Engineering, (NUIG) Biomedical Engineering (UL), and apprenticeships in Mechanical fitting (SOLAS) with the intention of starting up their own garage businesses.

Previous students from Ratoath College who have finished their third level studies are now in employment such as Mechanical Engineers working for ESB, Service engineers working for OTIS passenger lifts, Sound and RIG engineers working with MCD Productions and the Jet engine service technicians for the Australian Air Corps. The possibilities are endless!



## Engineering Student Profile

*“The leaving cert exams were a very busy time for me as I was aiming for high points. The fact that I had 50% of my Engineering marks achieved throughout the year took a lot of pressure off me for my final exam. I really enjoyed the two years of engineering as I got to work on CNC machines, worked with a lot of different materials and designed very interesting projects”*

## Construction Studies

### What will I learn?

Construction Studies introduces you to modern construction technology, building design principles, sustainable practices, and the materials and processes used across the built environment. You will explore themes such as modern methods of construction (MMC), energy efficiency, and safety, while also developing essential craft skills through practical tasks and technical drawing. The updated learning outcomes place strong emphasis on investigation, problem-solving, and understanding how buildings are planned, constructed, and maintained.



How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

Assessment includes a written exam, a practical skills test, and a project or portfolio where you demonstrate your understanding of materials, processes, and design. These components reflect the balance between practical work and theory at both levels.

Career and further education and training links

Studying Construction Studies can lead to apprenticeships and careers in carpentry, architectural technology, engineering, construction management, or roles in sustainable and modern building technologies. MMC and sustainability skills are increasingly important in Ireland's growing construction sector.

## Design and Communication Graphics (DCG)

What will I learn?

In DCG, you will learn how to understand and communicate ideas through graphics. You'll develop strong visual-thinking skills by working with 2D and 3D drawings, exploring shapes, structures, and how objects are designed. You will learn to solve problems using plane and descriptive geometry and apply these skills to real-world design challenges.

A key part of the subject is using computer-aided design (CAD) to create accurate digital models. The revised draft specification emphasises design thinking, clearer learning outcomes, and applying graphics skills in meaningful contexts across three strands: *Geometry in Context*, *Projection Systems*, and *Plane and Descriptive Geometry*. Overall, DCG helps you build creativity, accuracy, and confidence in representing ideas visually.

How will my knowledge and skills be assessed?

DCG is assessed through two main components:

- **A Student Design Project**, where CAD is a significant and compulsory element.
- **A written examination**, testing your understanding of geometry, design communication, and problem-solving.

Assessment in the revised specification continues to value practical design skills alongside clear, structured graphical communication.



## Career and further education links

DCG is an excellent foundation for careers in architecture, engineering, product design, construction technology, animation, and other areas where visual communication and design play a central role. Your CAD experience and graphical problem-solving skills are highly valued in many STEM and design-related pathways. [[curriculumonline.ie](http://curriculumonline.ie)]



## 7. Careers Information

### Useful Websites and Email Addresses

- [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)

Database of all Post Leaving Cert and 3<sup>rd</sup> level courses in Ireland

- [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)

Excellent careers website featuring videos of people currently working in selected careers. Careers Portal can also be used to check entry requirements for third level courses.

Contact a member of the Guidance team for any queries you may have:

- Ms Brooks: [abrooks.rth@lmetb.ie](mailto:abrooks.rth@lmetb.ie)
- Ms Canty: [lcanty.rth@lmetb.ie](mailto:lcanty.rth@lmetb.ie)
- Mr Delaney: [cdelaney.rth@lmetb.ie](mailto:cdelaney.rth@lmetb.ie)

### Examples of subject combinations for Third Level Courses

#### Arts:

Subjects required for Maynooth

University:

- English
- Irish
- Third Language
- Any 3 other subjects

#### Medicine:

Subjects required for Trinity College:

- Maths
- English
- Irish (or another language)
- Chemistry
- Biology or Physics
- Any other subject

#### Computer Engineer:

Subjects required for Engineering in TU

Dublin:

- Irish or English (O6/H7)
- Maths (O6/H7)
- 4 other subjects

#### Sports Scientist:

Subjects required for Sports Science and

Health at DCU:

- Maths
- English or Irish
- 1 Science subject
- Any 3 other subjects



## 8. Leaving Cert Grades & CAO Points System

### Leaving Cert Grades

The current Leaving Certificate grading scale was introduced in 2017.

The scale has 8 grades, the highest grade is a Grade 1, and the lowest grade is a Grade 8.

Grades achieved at Higher Level have a 'H' before the number and grades achieved at Ordinary Level have an 'O' before the number.

### CAO Points

Points are awarded by the Central Applications Office (CAO) based on the **highest 6 grades achieved** by students. The maximum points achievable is 600.

25 "bonus points" are awarded for grades H1 to H6 in Maths, so students studying Higher Level Maths can achieve 625 points.

The CAO uses the points attained by students to allocate available places in third level courses on a supply and demand basis.

For example, where there are 40 places available on a course, the 40 students who applied for that course that have attained the highest number of points (and have met all other entry requirements for the course/college) are offered these places.

The points that are published for each particular course is the points score of the person allocated to the 40<sup>th</sup> place in the example above. For this reason, the points for some courses go down in the second or subsequent round of CAO offers, where all available places were not allocated in the first round or where more places became available.

Where more than one person is on the same number of points at the end of the list of the number of places to be allocated, the CAO selects who the place or places will be allocated to by lottery. Where this is the case, the published points total will have an asterisk after it (e.g. 356\*).

**Note that the CAO system is not the only route to further education and training for students once the Leaving Cert is over. During the course of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Year, students will learn about all post-Leaving Cert options with the Guidance Team.**



<b>Leaving Cert Grades &amp; CAO Points</b>				
<b>% Marks</b>	<b>Higher Level Grade</b>	<b>CAO Points</b>	<b>Ordinary Level Grade</b>	<b>CAO Points</b>
90-100	H1	100*	01	56
80-89	H2	88*	02	46
70-79	H3	77*	03	37
60-69	H4	66*	04	28
50-59	H5	56*	05	20
40-49	H6	46*	06	12
30-39	H7	37	07	0
0-29	H8	0	08	0

***\*For Maths only, 25 additional “bonus” points are awarded from Grades H1 to H6, so a H1 in Maths receives 125 points and a H6 receives 71 points.***



## 9. Summary: The Senior Cycle Process

Hopefully after reading this handbook, you will be ready to take the next step and choose which Senior Cycle option is best for you. Below is a summary of the process that will take place.

### Step 1 - Transition Year

The TY application process takes place first so that places in TY are allocated before the Leaving Cert options process begins.

Information presentations for students take place in school and the Programme Coordinator, Ms Savage, presents to parents at the Information Evening in the school.

### Step 2 - Leaving Cert Applied

The LCA application process runs alongside the Leaving Cert options process.

Information presentations for students take place in school and the Programme Coordinator, Ms Savage, presents to parents at the Information Evening in the school.

Note that, where the school feels that LCA may be the most appropriate option for a particular student, their Moltóir may be in touch with parents and the student to discuss this option.

### Step 3 - Established Leaving Cert: Subject Choice

After the TY application process is complete, the remaining 3rd Year and current TY students who have not chosen TY will then complete their Leaving Cert Subject Choice form.

- Students will select 4 subjects and a further 4 backup subjects in order of preference.
- Note that, while every effort is made to assign students to their highest four preferences, this will not be possible for everyone and students may be assigned to any of their 8 preferences.
- Once the form is submitted **it is not possible to make changes to your options preferences.**
- When you return as a Fifth Year student, you will be given the opportunity to change options subjects but it is important to note that the subjects available will be limited based on numbers and timetabling constraints.
- **It is therefore extremely important to study this handbook carefully and take your time when selecting your Leaving Cert options subjects as there is no guarantee you will be able to change them later.**



## 10. Griddle Subject Options Forms Instructions

Is it now time for you to indicate your preferences for Leaving Cert Options Subjects.

Do to this, you will complete an online form through the school's curriculum planning system, Griddle.

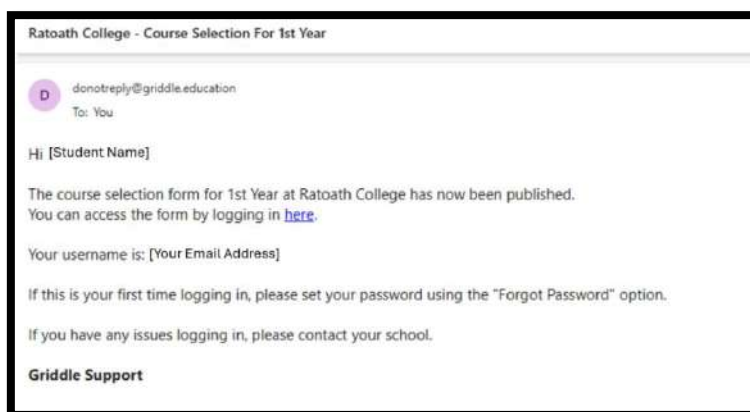


Please note, you may find it easier to complete this form on a PC or laptop compared to a mobile phone.

The form is straightforward and will only take a few minutes. Please follow the steps below:

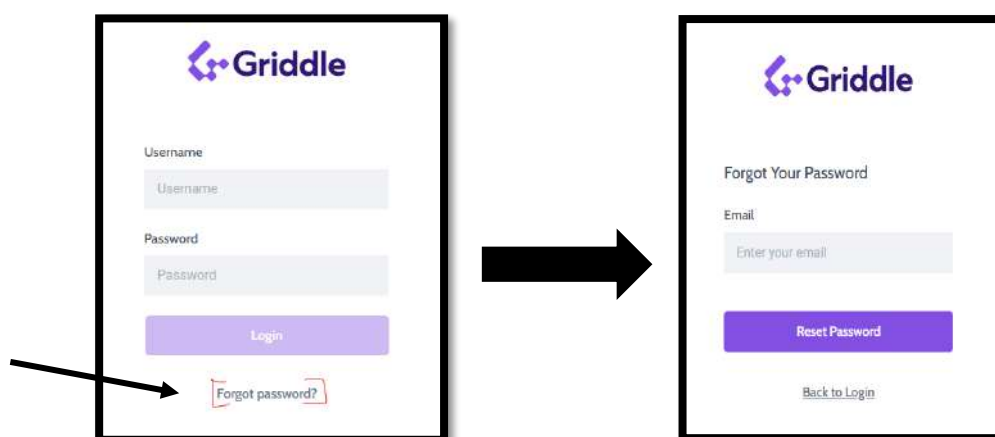
1. You will receive an email from Griddle (donotreply@griddle.education) which looks like this:

- Note this email will be sent to your **school email address**
- If you have not received the email, please check your email account's junk folder before contacting your Moltóir.



2. Click the link in the email. This will open the Griddle website. First, select 'Forgot Password' and then, on the next screen, enter your **school email address** and select 'Reset Password'.

*Your email address is case sensitive here, so ensure all letters are in lower case.*



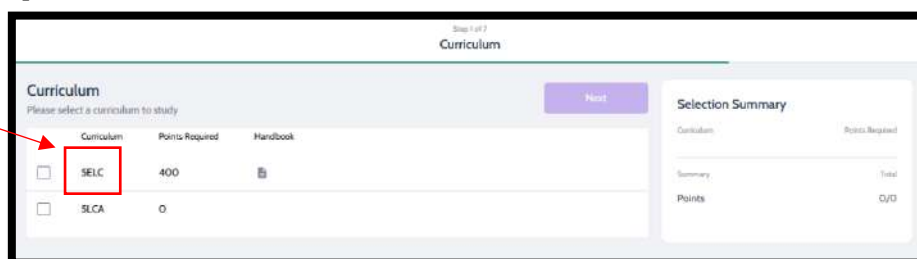


3. You will then receive a separate email from Griddle to set your password. Click on the link in this email and follow the instructions to set your password and then login.
4. Once logged in, select 'Start' to begin completing the form.



## 5. Curriculum

Select the first option, "5ELC", and then click next.



## 6. Electives

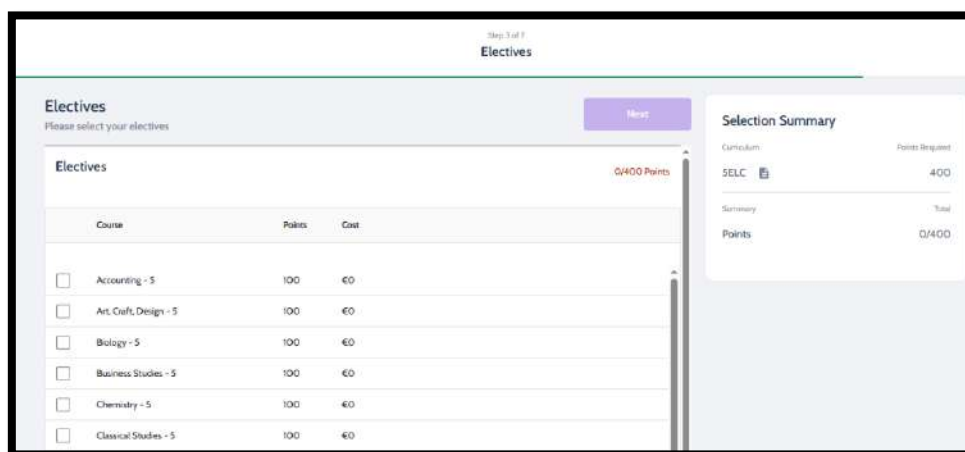
On this page, you will see the list of available options subjects. You must select **FOUR** subjects.

**These must be the FOUR options subjects you most want to study for your Leaving Cert, your top four preferences.**

You will be able to organise these four subjects into your order of preference later.

*Please note, references to 'Points' and 'Cost' can be ignored.*

Once you are happy with the four subjects selected, click 'Next'.



## 7. Elective Backups



While every effort is made to accommodate students' four highest preferences, this will not be possible for everyone.

As such, in this step you must select four more subjects from the ones you did not select as your top four preferences in the previous step.

These subjects will be used where it is not possible to assign you to one or more of your top four preferences.

Select four subjects, **the next four highest of your preference**, and then click 'Next'.

You will you able to organise these subjects into the order of your preference in the next step.

## 8. Preference Ranking

You will now organise the subjects you have selected into the order of your preference.

**Please note – if completing the form on a mobile phone, it may be necessary to turn your phone to landscape to view this page correctly.**

You will see two separate lists, **Chosen Courses** and **Elective Backups**.

- For **Chosen Courses**, ensure your highest preference subject is at the top of the list and your second preference is second on the list and so on.
- For **Elective Backups**, ensure the subjects listed appear in the order of your preference.
- Subjects can be moved up and down the lists by clicking on them and dragging into place. To do this on a mobile phone, tap and hold the subject and then move it to the desired place.

**Please take care to ensure that when you are finished, both lists appear in order of your preference.**

**You will not be able to change this or amend the form once it is submitted.**

Once you are happy with the order of your preferences, click 'Next'.

Select Course	Course	Points	Cost	Rank
☰	Accounting - 5	100	€0	
☰	Art, Craft, Design - 5	100	€0	
☰	Biology - 5	100	€0	
☰	Business Studies - 5	100	€0	

Select Course	Course	Points	Cost	Rank
☰	Chemistry - 5	100	€0	
☰	Classical Studies - 5	100	€0	
☰	Construction Studies - 5	100	€0	
☰	Design & Communication graphics - 5	100	€0	

Course	Points Required
5 ☰	400
Electics	Points
Accounting - 5	100
Art, Craft, Design - 5	100
Biology - 5	100
Business Studies - 5	100
Summary	Total
Points	400/400

## 9. Final Review



The final step is to review the preferences you have selected.

Carefully check that the **subjects** on both lists, and **the preference number** next to them, are correct.

If you want to make a change to what you have selected, use the arrow to go back.

If you wish, you can select 'Save as Draft' and return to complete the form later.

When you are ready to submit your preferences, click 'Submit'.

**Once submitted, you cannot make changes to the form so make absolutely sure you are happy with the order of your preferences before you click submit.**

**The next opportunity you will have to amend your options preferences will be in mid-September of Fifth Year.**

