



Leaving Certificate Subjects Booklet

5th Year 2025/26

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with information that should prove useful in making decisions regarding Leaving Certificate subjects.

The choosing of subjects for Leaving Certificate is one of the most important decisions you will make at this stage of your life. Your choice of subjects will have an impact on the decisions you make post Leaving Certificate.

It is important to consider your personal strengths and learning styles when making your decisions. There is no such thing as 'an easy subject' at Leaving Certificate level as each subject requires a considerable amount of regular study.

In Loreto College Foxrock, in addition to the 3 core subjects, each student chooses 4 subjects from the 16 optional subjects offered.

Core Subjects	Option Subjects (Choose 4)
English	Accounting
Irish	Applied Maths
Maths	Art
	Biology
	Business
	Chemistry
	Classical Studies
	Economics
	French
	Geography
	History
	Home Economics
	Music
	Physical Education (LCPE)
	Physics
	Spanish

When choosing subjects for your Leaving Certificate programme please consider the following:

1. The minimum entry requirements for the courses you may be interested in studying at Third Level.

These are the minimum academic qualifications that a college demands from applicants for entry.

For example:

For entry to UCD, UCC, University of Galway, Maynooth University, RCSI, **English, Irish, and four other subjects** in the Leaving Certificate are required.

A **third language** must be included among the other subjects for most degree programmes in Arts, Human Sciences, Law, Social Science, Commerce, Medicine and Health Sciences and some other degrees. However, there are exceptions.

For Business courses, the subjects presented must include **Mathematics**, and for courses in the Sciences (i.e. Science, Agriculture, Engineering, Food Science and Technology, Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, and Veterinary Medicine) **Mathematics** and a **Science** subject are required.

2. The specific entry requirements for the courses you may be interested in studying at Third Level.

For example:

For entry to Engineering in UCD a H4 Maths and a H6 in a Science subject is required.

For entry to Journalism in DCU H4 English is required.

3. The Points System

This system allocates point values to Leaving Certificate subjects for entry purposes to the HEIs (Higher Education Institutions). The points are allocated to the **best six** subjects that an applicant presents. These grades must be achieved in **one sitting** of the Leaving Certificate. (See back of booklet.)

Note:

The application process and entry requirements for admission to Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Ireland vary depending on whether an applicant is defined as an EU or a non-EU applicant. To establish your status, you need to contact the Admissions Office of the relevant institution, details of which can be accessed on their websites. It is your responsibility to establish your status and to know the application procedure in your situation.

In general, when it comes to choosing your optional subjects you should:

- Select a range of subjects which will leave your career choices open for as long as possible.

Choose subjects that . . .

- are required to get you into your preferred course or chosen career.
- you are interested in and prepared to work at.
- suit your strengths and talents.
- will help you get sufficient points to gain entry into your chosen course at Third Level.

Look for advice, speak with . . .

- The Guidance Counsellor
- Relevant teachers
- Older siblings, if applicable
- Students studying the subject.

Do your research . . .

- Browse through the textbook being used.
- Look at past exam papers (these are available online with the marking schemes on www.examinations.ie)
- Look at the syllabus/specification for the subject at www.curriculumonline.ie
- Consider the coursework involved and the nature of it. Taking on many subjects that have a coursework element might put some students under additional pressure.
- Find out if there are overlapping topics in your chosen subjects e.g. Physics and Applied Maths are a good combination, Home Economics and Biology have some overlapping chapters.

Finally. . . Be independent, try not to be overly influenced by others, and choose the subjects you want to do and not the subjects all your friends are doing.

Useful websites:

www.qualifax.ie

https://careersportal.ie/school/subject_explorer.php?parent=34&ed_sub_cat_id=238&menu_parent_id=

www.loretofoxrock.ie – Guidance and Counselling for information and event guide

On the following pages you will find an outline of each of the subjects on offer at Loreto College Foxrock for the Leaving Certificate.

THE CORE SUBJECTS

(ENGLISH, IRISH & MATHS)

ENGLISH

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Comprehending and Composing:

Students are required to study language in a wide variety of contexts, genres, functions and styles. Students develop skills and competencies in the areas of:

- The language of Information
- The language of Persuasion
- The language of Narration
- The language of Argument
- The Aesthetic use of language

Comparative Study:

Students engage in the comparative study of three texts usually a novel, film and play. The three comparative texts vary each year.

At Higher Level the texts can be compared by

- Theme and Issue
- Literary Genre
- Cultural Context
- General Vision and Viewpoint

At Ordinary Level the texts can be compared by

- Hero/Heroine/Villain
- Relationships
- Social Setting
- Theme
- Aspects of the story: tension, climax, resolution, ending, etc.

Poetry:

Students study a wide range of poetry. There are 48 prescribed poems for study at Higher Level and 36 poems prescribed for study at Ordinary Level.

Single Text:

Students will study a single text which can be either a play or a novel.

Note:

Study of a Shakespearean Drama is compulsory at Higher Level – this may either be done as the Single Text or as part of the Comparative Study.

Study of a Shakespearean Drama is not compulsory at Ordinary Level.

How is this subject examined?

Higher/Ordinary Level		
	<i>Paper 1</i>	<i>Paper 2</i>
Time	2 hours 50 minutes (170 minutes)	3 hours 20 minutes (200 minutes)
Marks	200 marks	200 marks
Structure	Section 1 Comprehending (100 marks) Comprehension questions and functional writing tasks	Section 1 Single Text (60 marks) Study of a play or novel
	Section 2 Composition (100 marks)	Section 2 Comparative Study (70 marks) Comparison of novel, play and film
		Section 3 Poetry (70 marks) Unseen Poetry Prescribed Poetry

Additional information:

- It is essential that students are reading regularly outside of the course if they are to achieve their potential in Leaving Cert English. Reading for pleasure will allow students to build on their Junior Cycle skills so that they can develop a more sophisticated range and depth of vocabulary, the ability to clearly express opinion and learn to think critically and independently.
- Teachers will recommend a wide range of reading material on a regular basis and a senior reading list is available on the school website and in the school library. Students should engage in their own time with fiction and non-fiction texts, online and print articles, podcasts, and digital media on a wide range of topics.
- Teachers also encourage their students to develop their writing skills by sharing information on relevant writing competitions.
- Where students are studying a dramatic text, every effort is made to arrange for students to see a production of the studied text.

AN GHAEILGE

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Leaving Certificate Irish is available at Higher and Ordinary level. There are three main aspects of the course regardless of level selected:

1. **An Bhéaltriail (The Oral Examination).** The Oral is a common examination for students of both levels and is worth 240 marks which represents **40%** of the entire Leaving Certificate Irish Examination.
2. **An Chluastuiscint (The Aural Examination).** The Aural Examination is not a Common Examination. The content of the Aural is common to both levels but the questions posed distinguish themselves in terms of difficulty between levels. The Aural Examination is worth 60 marks, which comprises **10%** of the entire Leaving Certificate Irish Examination at both Higher and Ordinary Levels.
3. **The Written Component.** The remaining **50%** of the Leaving Certificate Irish Examination examines a variety of poetry and prose through written questions. Although the poetry and prose are common to both Higher and Ordinary level, the questions asked involve completely different levels of complexity and depth. The written aspect of the Leaving Certificate Irish Examination also includes a piece of creative writing (e.g., an essay or debate at higher level; a letter or e-mail at Ordinary level). The remaining elements of the written component include an additional piece of literature (e.g. a drama) at Higher level and Reading Comprehension at both Higher and Ordinary levels. The Comprehensions are entirely different, and the complexity and subject matter of questions asked vary greatly between the two levels.

How is this subject examined?

Leaving Certificate Irish is examined through an Oral Examination which usually takes place in the Spring of Sixth Year.

The **Oral examination** is comprised of 4 elements:

- (i) **Beannú/Greeting** (name of student, address, D.O.B etc.)
- (ii) **Léamh na Filíochta/Reading of poetry**
- (iii) **Comhrá/General conversation**
- (iv) **Sraith Pictiúir/Series of picture stories**

Paper 1 includes the **Aural Examination**, along with Composition (e.g. essay or debate at Higher level; a letter or e-mail at Ordinary level).

Paper 2 (following Paper 1 in June) includes Reading Comprehensions and questions on poetry and prose.

Additional information:

Since the Oral Examination is common to both Higher and Ordinary levels and the poetry and prose texts are common to both, there is an element of flexibility for students to move between levels.

Note: Higher Level Irish is a specific subject requirement for Primary School Teaching and most courses are studied through Irish.

MATHS

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Project Maths involves the introduction of revised syllabi for both Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Mathematics. It involves changes to what students learn in Mathematics, how they learn it and how they will be assessed.

Project Maths aims to provide an enhanced student learning experience and greater levels of achievement for all. Much greater emphasis will be placed on student understanding of mathematical concepts, with increased use of contexts and applications that will enable students to relate mathematics to everyday experience. The initiative will also focus on developing students' problem-solving skills. Assessment will reflect the different emphasis on understanding and skills in the teaching and learning of mathematics.

The Mathematics syllabi have been introduced by strand as follows:

1. Statistics and Probability
2. Geometry and Trigonometry
3. Number
4. Algebra
5. Functions

How is this subject examined?

The Leaving Cert Maths examination consists of two Maths papers each of 2.5 hours duration. All questions must be answered. Each paper consists of:

- Concepts and Skills - 6 Questions - 150 marks
- Contexts and Applications - 3 Questions - 150 marks

Additional information:

Students will experience mathematics in a new way, using examples and applications that are meaningful for them. These will also allow students to appreciate how mathematics relates to daily life and the world of work. Students will develop skills in analysing, interpreting and presenting mathematical information; in logical reasoning and argument, and in applying their mathematical knowledge and skills to solve familiar and unfamiliar problems.

Note: Higher Level Maths is a specific subject requirement for courses in Actuarial studies, Level 8 Engineering courses, some Level 8 Computer Courses and Data Science courses.

THE OPTIONAL SUBJECTS

ACCOUNTING

Brief Summary of Course Content:

The syllabus is divided into two sections:

Financial accounting exposes the students to the principles of double entry and the preparation of accounts using accounting standards, including:

- Final accounts of a company
- Cash flow Statements
- Published Accounts
- Accounts from incomplete records
- Present accounts of clubs or societies
- Analysis of financial records (Ratio analysis)

Management accounting on the other hand is essential in helping managers make important decisions:

- Management Accounting – Breakeven analysis, Product Costing and Budgeting

How is this subject examined?

- Students sit one 3-hour exam in June.
- There is no continuous assessment element.

Additional information:

- Junior Cycle Business Studies provides you with a good basis for Leaving Cert Accounting. However, if you do not have Junior Cycle Business Studies it is preferable to have achieved a 'Distinction' or a 'Higher Merit' award in Junior Cycle higher level Maths.
- A good logical mind and high numeracy skills are essential.
- Good time management is crucial when approaching exam papers.
- You must be neat, accurate and fast when approaching questions.

APPLIED MATHS

What is Applied Maths?

Applied Maths is best described as a mix between Maths and Physics and focuses on the applications of mathematics in real-world situations. It is a subject that tests students' problem-solving nature and shows how the maths that they have studied can be utilised in different scenarios. There is considerable overlap between the Applied Maths, Physics and Project Maths courses, and so this combination of subjects is often chosen by students with a flair for mathematics.

Brief Summary of Course Content:

The course is broken into three strands:

1. Mathematical modelling with networks and graphs

Based on the idea of graph theory, this strand deals with optimisation problems such as finding the shortest/quickest route between various points or places.

2. Mathematical modelling of the physical world

This strand remains virtually unchanged from the previous course and deals with physical quantities such as velocity, acceleration, displacement, force, momentum, projectiles, and collisions.

3. Mathematical modelling of the changing world

This strand overlaps nicely with the calculus students will learn in their regular maths classes. The theory learned here can be applied to such topics as finance, economics, population change, global warming/cooling, radioactive decay, the spread of diseases, etc.

How is this subject examined?

Leaving Certificate Applied Maths is assessed by a final exam worth 80% and a project worth 20%. The project will be completed during class time in 6th year. The exam will be a 2.5 hour written paper.

What type of student might Applied Maths suit?

As the subject is primarily maths-based, it would certainly suit those students who enjoy and are proficient in maths. The new Applied Maths course has a broad range of topics and skills enabling students to use the maths they learn in their regular maths lessons and apply it to solve real-world problems, and so, this subject is a must for those considering careers in areas such as Engineering, Finance, Physics, Science, or Computer Science.

ART

Brief Summary of Course Content:

A new Leaving Certificate Art Curriculum Specification was introduced in September 2021. It was examined for the first time in June 2023. The new curriculum is both project and exam based. It will build on the student's previous learning experiences and prepare all learners for further studies. There are three strands of learning in the new specification: Research, Respond and Create.

How it is examined:

Practical Coursework: 50%

Practical Exam: 20%

Written Exam: 30%

Practical Coursework: 50%

Students will work on a project in **two** of their chosen areas of practice e.g., Creative Embroidery, Poster Design, Calligraphy, Printmaking or Painting. Students will be familiar with Creative Embroidery, Poster Design, Printmaking and Painting from the Junior Cycle. They will do projects based on some of these areas in Fifth Year.

The period for completion of the coursework in Sixth Year of school is ten weeks commencing immediately after the Christmas holidays, but exclusive of the February mid-term break. Students are required to make one finished artefact based on a given theme/stimulus and to conduct research or development work for this and another finished artefact, which is made in a five-hour exam in April. All coursework must be executed during class time, in a workbook provided by the State Exam Commission. Students are not permitted to do project work outside of class time. Only drawings made from Primary Sources are allowed.

Practical Exam: 20%

This is a five-hour exam held in April of Sixth Year. In this exam students will create a finished artefact in one of their chosen areas of practice. They will base their artefact on the research/development work conducted during the coursework/project.

Written Exam: 30%

This written exam is held in June. It is based on Visual Studies (formerly called History and Appreciation of Art). In the new specification, 'Visual Studies refers to the visual expressions of all aspects of culture, created by past, recent modern and contemporary societies.' There are three areas of content in the new Visual Studies course: 1. Europe and the wider world, 2. Ireland and its place in the wider world, 3. Today's world.

Students will be assessed at higher or ordinary level.

70% of the assessment will take place before the written exam in June.

How does it follow from the Junior Cycle?

Throughout Fifth and Sixth Year students will continue to develop and build upon the skills they learned during the Junior Cycle. They will continue to learn through the artistic process, researching, creating, and responding to art. They will continue to work on given project themes, researching these visually through ideas and development sheets.

Why study art:

By choosing to study art at senior cycle students will continue to develop their creative, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Through art, students gain a sense of achievement, enjoyment, and personal fulfillment. They learn to generate ideas and communicate these ideas through their own work. They learn what it is to be innovative, a lifelong skill for any future career path they wish to undertake.

Class time allocation:

180 hours of class contact time

Fifth year: 3 x 1 hour class periods per week.

Sixth year: 3 x 1 hour class periods per week.

BIOLOGY

Brief Summary of Course Content:

The Biology syllabus consists of four distinct units:

Unifying Strand: The Nature of Science – applying the principles and practices of science.

Strand One: The Organisation of Life - characteristics of living things and how they relate to what constitutes life.

Strand Two: The Structures and the Processes of Life – how the unique and diverse structures within living things allow life to function.

Strand Three: The Interactions of Life – systems of the living world at different scales.

In this subject, an attitude of curiosity and scientific enquiry is both promoted and facilitated. In deepening their understanding of biological facts and principles students are further enabled to appreciate the nature and diversity of living organisms. In creating an awareness of the application of knowledge of biology to modern society students are encouraged to make informed evaluations about contemporary biological issues.

How is this subject examined?

This course is new for 2025. It will be examined at both higher and ordinary level. There will be a written paper worth 60% of the grade and a project (the additional assessment component) worth 40%. The brief for this Biology in Practice project will be given to students in term two of Fifth Year and is envisaged to take 20 hours of class time to complete.

Additional information:

Students who enjoyed science in the Junior Cycle might wish to consider studying Biology in the Senior Cycle. The course is a continuation of what was studied at Junior Cycle but in much greater detail. It is recommended that a student taking Leaving Certificate Biology has a good understanding of Junior Science.

A considerable amount of commitment and ongoing study is necessary to succeed in this subject. Students must be dedicated to learning and applying a wide range of new vocabulary as it relates specifically to biology and science in general. The content of modern biology is increasingly biochemical. Each student should have an aptitude and interest in both theory and laboratory work.

Note:

A science subject (Biology or Physics or Agricultural Science or Physics/Chemistry) is a requirement for Nursing and many more Health Care and Science courses at Third Level.

BUSINESS

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Leaving Certificate Business develops students' awareness of the significance of business for the Irish and international economy and helps to foster an understanding of how the world of business works. Students learn how business is relevant to their own lives, develop financial and business literacy, appreciate business in the world around them and how business is shaped by those who work, lead and manage within the business environment. (LC Business Specification)

The Senior Cycle Business Specification is broken down into 4 strands of study and one unifying strand which cover the following areas:

Strand 1: Exploring the Business Environment

Students explore how the government makes decisions that impact business and how business impacts society, the environment and the economy. They explore how developments at national, European and international levels impact the world of business and consider how digital developments and international trade can impact consumers and businesses alike.

Strand 2: Understanding Enterprise

Students will develop an understanding of enterprise and entrepreneurship in its broadest sense and will recognise the importance of both entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship in the world of business and their significance for the individual, the community and the wider economy.

Strand 3: Leading in Business

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

Strand 4: Being Informed and Making Informed Decisions

Students will develop the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions associated with making informed decisions particularly in areas that affect their own lives.

Unifying Strand: Investigating Business

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

How is this subject examined?

Assessment Component	Weighting	Level
Business Alive Investigative Study	40%	Common Brief
Written Examination	60%	Higher & Ordinary Level Exam Papers

Additional information:

- Junior Cycle Business Studies is not a requirement.
- Business is very much a 'living subject', therefore a good understanding and interest in current affairs is beneficial.
- Business is a broad subject and therefore provides a good foundation for any third-level course or career choice.
- Good time management is required when approaching exam questions.
- There is a huge amount of learning involved, with only a few calculations. Business requires both rote learning and applied learning.

CHEMISTRY

Brief Summary of Course Content:

The Chemistry syllabus consists of a core syllabus and two option modules. Higher Level students must study the entirety of either Option 1 or Option 2. Ordinary Level students must study one of Options 1A and 2A or one of Options 1B and 2B. The Chemistry syllabus includes 28 specified mandatory experiments.

The Core topics include:

Periodic table and atomic structure	Thermochemistry
Chemical bonding	Organic chemistry
Stoichiometry and formulas and equations	
Rates of reactions	Acids and bases
Chemical equilibrium	
Volumetric analysis	Water

The Option topics include:

- Option 1A: Additional Industrial Chemistry
- Option 1B: Atmospheric Chemistry
- Option 2A: Materials
- Option 2B: Extraction of Metals and Additional Electrochemistry.

How is this subject examined?

The course is new for 2025. It will be examined at both higher and ordinary level. There will be a written paper worth 60% of the grade and a project (the additional assessment component) worth 40%. The brief for the Chemistry Practice project will be given to students in term two of Fifth Year and is envisaged to take 20 hours of class time to complete.

Additional information:

Students who intend to choose Chemistry for Leaving Certificate must be focused, interested in problem-solving and prepared to work hard both in class and at home. Students need to stay on top of the workload from the start of the course. Understanding and knowledge of the fifth-year content is necessary to access and understand the topics taught in Sixth Year. Remaining organised must be a priority.

It is advised that a minimum of 'Higher Merit' in Junior Cycle Science is obtained before considering choosing Chemistry in the Leaving Certificate. A basic command of Mathematics is necessary to navigate and enjoy Chemistry.

Note: Chemistry is a specific subject requirement for the following courses: Dentistry (UCC), Human Nutrition and Dietetics (TU Dublin), Medicine (UCC), Pharmacy (UCC and RCSI), Medical and Health Sciences (UCC), Veterinary Medicine (UCD). A science subject is also a requirement for Nursing and many more Health Care and Science courses at Third Level.

CLASSICAL STUDIES

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Classical Studies is divided into 4 Strands: Ancient Epic, Greek Drama, History, and Gods and Mortals.

- **Strand 1: Ancient Epic** focuses on the most influential book in Western literature – *The Odyssey*. This is read in comparison with *The Aeneid*. Both follow the stories of ancient heroes on their journeys home after the Trojan War – where they meet monsters, visit the Underworld, and face heroic challenges. These books would influence everyone from Dante to James Joyce, to Marvel heroes.
- **Strand 2: Greek Drama** will focus on the Theban plays – *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*. Oedipus famously married his mother and killed his father. These plays were hugely influential – inspiring Shakespeare and modern dramas.

For both Strand 1 and 2 there is a focus on literature. *This can be beneficial to any student's English and for students with an interest in literature, philosophy, or psychology.*

- **Strand 3:** The **History** strand focuses on the careers of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Both men rose to power in Greece and Rome respectively. The course focuses on their political careers, how they wielded power, and how they treated the people they conquered. The focus is on history and politics. *This can be helpful for any student studying history and for students with an interest in history, politics, or sociology.*
- **Strand 4:** The last strand **Gods and Mortals** focuses on ancient beliefs, gods, their depiction in art, and philosophy. Students study the nature of ancient gods, how the ancients praised them, and what philosophers thought about life and death. There is also a focus on Gods in art and architecture of ancient temples. *This can be of benefit to any student studying art or with an interest in philosophy, science, and literature.*

How is it examined?

Exam: 3 hours - 80% of mark

- 2 Extended Answers - 32%
- 10 Stimulus Questions - 48%

Coursework: 20% of grade – the Research Study on one topic relating to the curriculum.

Additional information:

Classical Studies is a fantastic subject that provides a range of easily transferable skills that can be invaluable to any career be it in Law, Business, Academia, Education, Civil Service, Diplomacy, Writing, Artists, Drama, Journalism, Psychology/Social Sciences, Archaeology, Curatorship, Antique Dealers, etc. Most Classics students benefit from the skills they acquire and find themselves in a wide range of different professions.

ANY STUDENT CAN CHOOSE CLASSICAL STUDIES AT LEAVING CERTIFICATE - NO PRIOR KNOWLEDGE IS REQUIRED.

ECONOMICS

Economics is a social science that studies human behaviour. It is the study of the process and decisions that influence the production and consumption of goods and services by individuals, firms, governments and other institutions in an economy.

Economics studies how scarce resources are best distributed to satisfy our infinite needs and wants.

Brief Summary of Course Content:

In 2019 a new specification in this subject was introduced and it is presented in five strands that reflect five fundamental economic questions:

- What is Economics?
- How are economic decisions made?
- What can markets do?
- What is the relationship between policy and economic performance?
- How is the economy influenced by international economics?

How is this subject assessed?

Assessment components:

There are two assessment components at each level:

- Written examination (80%)
 - Section A: Choice of short answer questions
 - Section B: Choice of extended response questions
- Research study (20%)

The subject is examined at two levels: Higher and Ordinary

Additional information:

Being economically literate enables students to identify and evaluate economic concepts as they relate to the economy and political systems. By exploring the economic world in which you live, you will understand the economic, social, political and environmental implications of the decisions made by individuals, businesses, the government etc.

FRENCH

Why study French for the Leaving Certificate?

- Competency in a foreign language is a life skill, not just another subject.
- There is a severe shortage of qualified and skilled people available to work in a foreign language in Ireland.
- Proficiency in French will open career opportunities both here and abroad.
- French is the second-most widely spoken mother tongue in the European Union.
- It is highly recommended today to be proficient in at least one foreign language.
- If you are linguistic, consider studying a second foreign language with French e.g. Spanish or Japanese (you can take it up in Fifth Year through the Post Primary Language Initiative (PPLI)).

Opportunities ahead when you study French:

- The option to study French at college as part of a business or law degree, or to study Applied Languages (Translation and Interpreting) or in the field of education.
- The opportunity to complete an Erasmus year or term studying in a French-speaking country including Canada, Switzerland, Belgium and even Guadeloupe in the Caribbean.
- Scholarships to study in French-speaking universities.
- Interning or working as a volunteer in a French-speaking country.

The Leaving Certificate course outline:

The Leaving Certificate course builds on the firm language base acquired in the first four years of studying French. The focus will continue to be on the everyday life of a teenager in Ireland and in the francophone world equipping the student with the vocabulary and grammar structures to understand, speak and write about themselves and these realities.

Students develop French language skills through a variety of learning opportunities, including film, music, online learning tools and authentic French texts and resources.

The syllabus aims to lead every student to:

- A communicative competence in the target language
- Awareness of language and communication
- An understanding of how to go about learning a foreign language
- A level of cultural awareness

How is this subject examined?

The four skills of reading, speaking, listening and writing are assessed in the following manner:

1. **Oral examination:**

This is a 12-minute conversation with an examiner. Topics range from the student's family, their area, their school, their friends, past-times, sports, hopes, ambitions and teenage problems. Students have an option to prepare a topic in advance of special interest and discuss it in the exam.

2. **Aural examination:**

This is a listening test, which tests aural comprehension. The student answers 5 sections in English. Topics range from interviews, conversations, telephone calls, news announcements, weather forecasts and miscellaneous items. A wide vocabulary is required.

3. **Written examination:**

It consists of two sections -

Section 1: Reading comprehensions are answered in French at Higher Level and a mixture of English and French at Ordinary Level.

Section 2: Students must complete a series of written tasks. These include opinion pieces, letters (formal and informal), emails, messages, diary entries, (form filling and cloze tests feature on the Ordinary Level paper)

The chart below illustrates the difference between the marking system of both Higher and Ordinary Level. The oral exam takes place in the spring of Sixth Year.

Higher Level			Ordinary Level		
Oral exam	25%	100 marks	Oral exam	20%	80 marks
Aural exam	20%	80 marks	Aural exam	25%	100 marks
Written exam	55%	220 marks	Written exam	55%	220 marks

GEOGRAPHY

Geography, part of the humanities subject group, is the study of people, their environment, and the interaction between the two. Students are encouraged to improve their ability to gather and evaluate data and propose solutions. Students learn various skills including map-reading and statistics and they present information using diagrams, maps, and writing.

The Leaving Certificate course follows from Junior Cycle Geography, and covers very similar topics (such as rocks, soils, oceans, population movements, map-reading, and economic activities) in a lot more detail.

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Three Core Units:

- Patterns and processes in the Physical Environment
- Regional Geography
- Geographical Investigation

Two Elective Units (pick one):

- Patterns and processes in economic activities
- Patterns and processes in the human environment

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

- Global Interdependence
- Geoecology
- Culture and Identity
- The Atmosphere-Ocean Environment

How is this subject examined?

Ordinary and Higher Level:

- Written Examination (80%): Students complete two questions on the core units, one question on an elective unit, and one question on an optional unit (higher only).
- Geographical Investigation Report (20%)

Why study Geography?

- If you are interested in geography, economics, environmental science, or politics ...
- It links to many other subject areas - biology and economics in particular.
- If you would like to know 'how the world works'!
- If you want to know the answer to WHY? WHERE? WHAT? WHEN?

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How much homework am I expected to do?

As with all your Leaving Certificate subjects you will be required to complete homework. Geography on average will take about 20-30 minutes a day of written work and study.

How are the questions structured?

- There are 10 short questions worth 80 marks.
- There are questions for Physical, Regional and Economic each worth 80 marks, (20, 30, 30 marks).
- Higher Level only, the option essay style question is worth 80 marks.

How much is the Field Study worth?

- 20% overall. Fieldwork is done in Sixth Year.

Can I see exam papers?

- Yes, please go to www.examinations.ie. Remember like all exams good time management is crucial when approaching exam papers.

HISTORY

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Students will study four modern history topics from the twentieth century: two Irish history topics, and two topics from Europe and the wider world.

How is this subject examined?

Ordinary and higher level:

- Written Examination (80%): The exam contains four questions – one for each topic. At higher level, three questions are essay questions, and one is a documents-based question. At ordinary level, all questions contain documents to answer questions on and long and short paragraph questions.
- Research Study (20%): This will be written up and submitted in March of Sixth Year.

Additional information:

Students who wish to study history should be prepared to do a lot of reading. Students with a real interest in history tend to do better. The essay-writing element of the exam requires a good standard of English; however, this level can be achieved through continued essay-writing practice.

The Research Study Report can be done on any topic in history that the student is interested in – as long as it is before 1993 in Ireland, or 1992 outside of Ireland.

There will be at least two non-compulsory history trips during the course of the Leaving Cert if sufficient numbers of students wish to attend (one overnight trip to Derry, and one trip abroad).

HOME ECONOMICS

Home Economics is a broad subject that relates to everyday living. It is not as practical based as at Junior Cycle, however there is still a practical element. The Leaving Certificate course follows from Junior Cycle Home Economics and covers very similar topics (such as nutrition, diets, foods, processing of food, consumer studies and household technology) in a lot more detail.

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Three Core Units:

- Food studies
- Resource management
- Social core

And an elective area:

- Social studies

How is this subject examined?

Ordinary and Higher level: Written examination – 80% Journal – 20%

Why study Home Economics?

- If you are interested in nutrition, food, the processing of foods, being able to manage yourself especially in finances and becoming a more discerning consumer.
- Family and society play a huge role in our lives and are constantly changing - Home Economics helps you gain a clearer understanding of sociology.
- You get to create foods and meals with the added benefit of realising the science and nutritional benefit of it.

It has links with the Leaving Certificate Biology and Business courses.

“I hear the Journal is really hard. What does it actually involve?”

- There are **4 different practical assignments** specified by the State Examinations Commission which vary each year.
- Continuous coursework which is spaced out throughout Fifth & Sixth Year with 4 practical cookery assignments. It comprises of **8 written pages** and **one cookery practical** for **each** assignment.
- 3-page investigation into a topic, the recipe, and the student’s own account of how they made a chosen dish with an evaluation.
- One assignment is completed in September of Sixth Year.
- Unlike other subjects, The Food Studies Coursework is **completed by Halloween of Sixth Year** and corrected by examiners before Christmas of that year. However, these results are not

available until the review of scripts in August. These marks are added to the written exam result from the written paper.

“How much homework am I expected to do?”

Home Economics on average will take about 20-30 minutes a day of written work and study.

“How are the questions structured?”

Answers in Home Economics are bullet-point based.

MUSIC

Brief Summary of Course Content:

- Practical examination - 50%
- Composition - 25%
- Listening - 25%

Practical - 50%

Students are expected to present a contrasting programme in front of an examiner on their chosen instrument/s. Students can choose their practical pieces in 5th year, which allows students to develop their confidence in the performance of these pieces over two years. Students can choose to perform:

- **6 pieces on one instrument**
- **4 pieces** to be performed on **two separate instruments (8 pieces in total)** or
- **4 pieces** to be performed on **one instrument** including an **activity** to be completed on a **music technology software**.

Music Technology – can be included with Practical Exam (50%)

Students often decide to perform four pieces on one instrument and complete an activity on a music technology software (Musescore). The technology aspect requires inputting a four-part piece into the software programme, making three changes to the piece, saving and retrieving the file, and printing the piece.

Composition Paper - duration 1 ½ hours (25%)

Students answer two questions on the music composition paper and have forty-five minutes to complete each question.

Q1. Students are asked to compose a **16-bar melody**. Students are given four bars by the examiner and must complete the remaining twelve bars. A series of rules are followed by the students to produce a strong-sounding melody.

Q2. Students are asked to **add suitable chords and a bass line** to a piece of music. Students will examine the notes in each bar and will choose an appropriate chord to be displayed in a chord box. Once again, a set of rules are followed to enhance the quality of the chords chosen. Students are then asked to compose a bass line using notes from the chosen chords.

Listening – duration 1 ½ hours (25%)

Q1-6. Students will study four major **Set Works** over the two-year senior cycle. Students will develop their listening skills by identifying a piece of music, and discussing the tonality, tempo, dynamics,

instrumentation, and style associated with each work. Students will listen to a **Traditional Irish Music** recording and will identify traditional instruments, traditional dances, and features of Irish Music present in the recording.

Why Choose Music?

- Music is a very active subject.
- Students are rewarded generously for displaying musical ability on their chosen instrument in the practical exam (50%).
- If students are willing to practice their instrument continuously over the two-year cycle, it is very achievable for students to score highly in the practical exam.
- The practical exam takes place before the Easter holidays. This takes pressure off the students throughout the State Exams in June.
- The expected level for the Leaving Certificate music practical is Grade 4/5 approximately (to incorporate six years of instrumental tuition from 1st year – 6th year).
- It is not compulsory to have studied music at Junior Cycle. The coursework at Senior Cycle is new for all students. The fundamental rudiments of music will be covered at the beginning of 5th year to ensure that all students are comfortable reading music.
- If a student is considering Music for Leaving Cert and has any queries concerning their choice, please drop into the music room (F10) anytime throughout the school day. Current 5th and 6th Year Music students are available to advise 4th Year students about studying music.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE PHYSICAL EDUCATION (LCPE)

Introductory Information

Students should have a passion for physical activity (in general) and an interest in science/physiology and ethical issues would be an advantage. For the performance assessment, the criteria established by the SEC are quite comprehensive. A high level of physical literacy is recommended (i.e. competence in fundamental skills; ability to learn and transfer both open and closed skills; and a reasonable level of both skill and health-related fitness). **Students must be competent in two different sporting strands (i.e. two physical activities of 'high' to 'very high' standard in terms of playing/execution/participation; and a firm theoretical understanding of at least one of those).**

Both practical components are accompanied by written reports; the language of which will be subject-specified and somewhat technical. Good language skills are desirable, and the ability to write in both 'essay' and 'report' style is important. The use of recording and performance analysis technology is something students need to be comfortable with. Students will be working independently for much of the practical components and the ability to take personal responsibility for skills development and written work deadlines will be essential.

How will students be assessed?

The assessment is broken down into three strands:

1. A physical activity **project** worth 20% (100 marks)
2. A **performance assessment** worth 30% (150 marks)
3. A **written examination** worth 50% (250 marks)

For the **project**, learners can choose either a *performer or a coach/choreographer role*. Students then apply their learning to develop their personal performance in their chosen role, and complete a digital project report, covering four sections: **Performance analysis, identification of four performance goals, evidence of ongoing training/practice reflection, and a concluding analysis.**

For the **performance assessment**, learners choose one of the three selected physical activities* being studied by their class. They will be assessed in a variety of contexts, including personal performance, fully competitive and/or conditioned practices. The performance is captured digitally by the learner, in sessions designed to capture their best personal performance.

Performing in a selected activity, learners are expected to:

- show evidence of their capacity to select, apply and perform the skills and techniques outlined in the physical activity section in a conditioned practice, a fully competitive version of the activity, or personal performance.

- demonstrate understanding and knowledge of the physical activity, including the ability to apply and adopt different tactics, strategies, and compositional knowledge in response to different scenarios in conditioned or competitive environments.
- demonstrate knowledge and application of relevant rules, regulations, and codes of practice in the chosen activity.

*The theory elements of the PE course will be complemented by the study of three activities from the categories of Athletics/Aerobic/Artistic and Creative Competencies Games, Adventure Activities and Aquatics. These will also form the basis of the performance assessment and project. ***For practical purposes, these activities will be chosen by the class teacher and based on the needs of all learners and available resources.***

Half of the overall marks go for the **written assessment**. The exam is **2.5** hours in length and worth 250 marks.

- The exam comprises compulsory 'short answer' and 'short paragraph' style questions (Section 1)
- Section 2 requires students to respond to an unseen case study, blending theoretical knowledge in essay-style answers.
- Section 3 involves essay-style answers in response to the prescribed topics as dictated by the SEC.

The exam content is divided into two Strands:

Strand One: 'Towards optimum performance'

1. Learning and improving skill and technique
2. Physical and psychological demands of performance
3. Structures, strategies roles and conventions
4. Planning for optimum performance

Strand Two:

1. Promoting physical activity
2. Ethics and fair play

AND **ANY TWO** OF THE FOLLOWING (AS SET BY SEC)

3. P.A. and inclusion
4. Gender and physical activity
5. Technology media and sport
6. Business and enterprise in PA and Sport

Please visit examinations.ie for sample papers and exemplars of performance videos to better understand the requirements.

PHYSICS

What is Physics?

Physics is a broad subject which encompasses the study of the universe from subatomic particles to the largest galaxies. The Leaving Certificate Physics course follows directly from Junior Cycle Science and covers more topics in greater depth.

Brief Summary of Course Content:

Students will study a wide range of topics for example forces, wave motion, atomic physics, electricity and magnetism. During the course of their study of Physics, students will investigate concepts by completing experiments; students are required to complete and write reports of practical experiments and learn how to accurately record and analyse results. Students will also study theoretical concepts and complete mathematical work. Students will develop a good understanding of the role of Physics in modern society and technology.

How is this subject examined?

This course is new for 2025. It will be examined at both higher and ordinary levels. There will be a written paper worth 60% of the grade and a project (the additional assessment component) worth 40%. The brief for this Physics in Practice project will be given to students in term 2 of Fifth Year and is envisaged to take 20 hours of class time to complete.

Additional information:

At higher level, there is a deeper, more quantitative treatment of Physics.

What type of student might Physics suit?

Physics would suit any student with a questioning and inquisitive mind and a strong work ethic. It would suit students considering a career in any mathematical or scientific discipline, such as Finance, Statistics, Engineering, Physics or Computer Science.

A science subject (Biology or Physics or Agricultural Science or Physics/Chemistry) is a requirement for Nursing and many more Health Care and Science courses at Third Level.

SPANISH

Brief Summary of Course Content:

The syllabus is communicative in its approach.

The course has **three** main objectives:

- Basic communicative proficiency
- Language awareness
- Cultural awareness

How is this subject examined?

Fifth year students will be assessed in the following ways:

- Continuous assessment throughout the academic year in all four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
- The Christmas examination will contain comprehension, translation, written and aural components.
- A common end-of-academic-year examination will contain comprehension, translation, written, aural and oral components.

Sixth year students will be assessed in the following ways:

- Continuous assessment throughout the academic year in all four skills
- Mock examinations in February.
- Mock Oral examinations by external personnel where possible.

The chart below illustrates the difference between the marking system of both higher and ordinary levels. The oral exam takes place in the Spring of Sixth Year.

Higher Level			Ordinary Level		
Oral exam	25%	100 marks	Oral exam	20%	80 marks
Aural exam	20%	80 marks	Aural exam	25%	100 marks
Written exam	55%	220 marks	Written exam	55%	220 marks

Additional information:

The Spanish department recognises the importance of learning Spanish in a natural environment.

- Additional conversation classes taught by native Spanish teachers in Fifth and Sixth Year are offered to students.
- We organise trips and exchanges to Spain.
- We use Spanish music, film and literature to further their knowledge of the language.

JAPANESE

It is recommended that students who wish to take Japanese for the Leaving Certificate partake in the free classes provided by the Post Primary Language Initiative on Saturday mornings. Students wishing to take Japanese need to register for the Saturday Japanese classes before the summer as the places fill up very quickly (<https://ppli.ie/japanese-language-classes/>). The Leaving Certificate Japanese textbook is 'Nihongo Kantan' published by Authentik. There are 5 copies of this textbook available in the school library for students to use.

If students wish to get a head start on their studies, they can focus on learning basic Japanese writing (Hiragana and Katakana). There are many free apps to download for Android and iPhone. There is a small book (€5) that students can order from 'Amazon' - Kana Pict-o-Graphix: Mnemonics for Japanese Hiragana and Katakana by Michael Rowley.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Ms L Fitzsimons at lfitzsimons@loretofoxrock.ie

Leaving Certificate Grade Scale & Points System

Grades	% Marks
H1/O1	90 – 100
H2/O2	80 < 90
H3/O3	70 < 80
H4/O4	60 < 70
H5/O5	50 < 60
H6/O6	40 < 50
H7/O7	30 < 40
H8/O8	< 30

HIGHER LEVEL	POINTS		
H1	100		
H2	88		
H3	77		
H4	66	ORDINARY LEVEL	POINTS
H5	56	O1	56
H6	46	O2	46
H7	37	O3	37
H8	0	O4	28
		O5	20
		O6	12
		O7	0
		O8	0

