



ALEXANDRA COLLEGE DUBLIN

Subject Choices for Senior Cycle

2025 - 2026

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N.B. Information in this booklet is for guidance only. All details on entry requirements **must** be checked on individual college websites as requirements change.

1 - Subject choice guidelines

- A) Students normally take seven subjects for Leaving Certificate.
- B) Irish, English, Mathematics and a third language are compulsory.
- C) Each student chooses three subjects from the following:

History	Accounting
Geography	Art
Home Economics	Music
Religious Education	Physics
Classics	Chemistry
Latin	Biology
Business	Agricultural Science
Economics	Applied Mathematics
Computer Science	Physical Education
Politics & Society	

For the purpose of third level entry in the Republic of Ireland points are calculated by the CAO on the basis of the **six** highest scores taken in **one** Leaving Certificate sitting.

It is important to give due consideration to the choice of subjects as change will not be encouraged in 5th Year.

Points to consider when choosing subjects:

1. Subjects you are good at and have enjoyed Junior Certificate.
2. Specific subject requirements for particular courses.
3. Balanced selection is good. If undecided about future courses, it is worth considering including a science subject to maximize options.
4. Students should seek advice from subject teachers, the guidance counsellor and older siblings.

Useful websites for reference:

www.cao.ie

www.ucas.co.uk

www.qualifax.ie

www.careersportal.ie

2 - The Points System

New Points System

90-100%	H1	100	O1	56
80-90%	H2	88	O2	46
70-80%	H3	77	O3	37
60-70%	H4	66	O4	28
50-60%	H5	56	O5	20
40-50%	H6	46	O6	12
30-40%	H7	37	O7	0
00-30%	H8	0	O8	0

25 bonus points will be awarded for Higher Level Mathematics, at grade H6 or above.

3 - Gaeilge –The Irish Leaving Certificate Course

The Irish Department in Alexandra College aims to teach the syllabus in a creative and stimulating fashion as well as promoting and fostering a positive attitude towards our culture. All classes follow the common syllabus in fifth year and the additional Higher Level material is taught in sixth year. We encourage as many students as possible to continue at Higher Level. Before deciding on whether to take Higher or Ordinary level for Leaving Certificate students should consider the following points.

1. The oral exam is now worth 40% of the overall result and it is a common exam at both levels. Students will already have participated in CBAs from the Junior Cycle course and will therefore be familiar with the conversational skills required.
2. Students will have completed a module on oral Irish skills in Transition Year and will have produced their own booklet in preparation for the senior cycle.
3. To date, 3 out of 4 classes take Irish at Higher Level in Alexandra College.
4. Grade H4 at Higher Level Irish is an essential requirement for admission to the Primary Teacher training colleges. Other courses, which require Irish, are Law and Irish in UCC, Computer Science, and Linguistics and Irish in TCD.

Exam layout

Ordinary Level	Higher Level
Oral Exam 40%	Oral Exam 40%
Greeting (5m)	Greeting (5m)
Poetry reading (35m)	Poetry reading (35m)
General Conversation (120m)	General Conversation (120m)
Description of picture story (80m)	Description of picture story (80m)

Ordinary Level	Higher Level
<p>Paper 1 27%</p> <p>Aural section (60m)</p> <p>Listen to and answer questions on pieces of news items, notices, announcements and conversations in all 3 Irish dialects.</p> <p>Write 2 pieces of composition (50m + 50m)</p> <p>Story/ Blog & Letter/Conversation</p>	<p>Paper 1 27%</p> <p>Aural section (60m)</p> <p>Listen to and answer questions on pieces of news items, notices, announcements and conversations in all 3 Irish dialects.</p> <p>Write 1 Composition (100m)</p> <p>Essay/Newspaper Article/Story/Debate/Speech</p>
<p>Paper 2 33%</p> <p>Prose</p> <p>Answer 2 questions on 2 samples of prose works based on a summary of the story, character analysis and personal opinion.</p> <p>Poetry</p> <p>Answer 4 short questions based on theme, language and style of the poem.</p> <p>Reading Comprehension</p> <p>Read and answer questions on 2 pieces of writing (50m + 50m)</p>	<p>Paper 2 33%</p> <p>Prose (30m)</p> <p>Answer 1 question on 1 prose work based on style of writing, character analysis and development of a theme.</p> <p>Poetry (30m)</p> <p>Answer 3 short questions based on theme, language and style of the poem.</p> <p>Additional literature. (40m)</p> <p>Answer 1 question based on summary and analysis of a play or novel studied.</p> <p>Reading Comprehension</p> <p>Read and answer questions on 2 pieces of writing (50m +50m)</p>

4 - The English Leaving Certificate Course

Aims

Building on the aims of English in the Junior cycle, the programme in senior cycle aims to develop in students:

- A mature level of literacy required for important tasks in everyday adult life;
- A respect and appreciation for the accurate and appropriate use of language;
- A competence in a wide range of language skills both oral and written;
- An awareness of the ways in which diverse forms of literature can be aesthetically enjoyable and can enhance our understanding of cultural identity.

Content

The syllabus is organised around two general domains of comprehending and composing.

- Comprehension involves analysing and answering questions on a previously unseen text. Composition involves a range of essay writing tasks.
- Within these two domains of comprehending and composing, students will be actively engaged in using various styles of language. These styles can be classified under five general headings:
 - The language of information
 - The language of argument
 - The language of persuasion
 - The language of narration
 - The aesthetic use of language (or language of description).

In addition, a range of literary texts is prescribed for study. The range of prescribed material includes film, prose, drama and poetry.

Assessment

Assessment is by means of a written examination at two levels:

- o Ordinary
- o Higher

There are two papers at each level.

I. Paper One (The Language Paper)

Paper One consists of a number of unseen texts, linked by a common theme. A range of comprehending and composing tasks is set. In their written tasks, students are required to convey their knowledge of the five styles of language mentioned above.

II. Paper Two (Prescribed Texts)

Paper Two is based on a range of literary texts prescribed for study.

- **The Single Text** section involves the close study of one stand-alone text (the most common choice is a Shakespearean play). Essay questions are based on topics including themes, characterisation, literary devices, relationships and audience response.
- **The Comparative Study** involves the analysis of comparisons and contrasts between three texts. The prescribed texts comprise films, plays and novels.
- **Poetry** is divided into a Prescribed and an Unseen section. In both sections, students are required to convey an understanding of poetry as an art form. The Prescribed essay requires an analysis of one poet's work. The essay should express an understanding of the key features of a poet's style and of the themes and key concerns presented in a selection of his or her poems.

5 - The Mathematics Leaving Certificate Course

Subject Overview

Mathematics is a wide-ranging subject that is both practical and theoretical, geared to applications and of intrinsic interest. Its manifestations permeate the natural and constructed world and provide the language and techniques for handling many aspects of everyday and scientific life. It is also an intellectual discipline that deals with abstractions and logical arguments.

Leaving Certificate Maths is provided in Alexandra College at two levels: Higher and Ordinary with separate syllabus for each level.

Project Maths:

Strand 1: Statistics and Probability

Strand 2: Geometry and Trigonometry

Strand 3: Numbers

Strand 4: Algebra

Strand 4: Functions

This project mathematics course focuses on developing student's problem solving skills. It enables students to relate Mathematics to everyday experiences. Students will experience Mathematics in a new way, using examples and applications that are meaningful to them. This will also allow students to appreciate how Mathematics relates to daily life and to the world of work. Skill, which will be developed, will include: analyzing, interpreting and presenting mathematical information as well as logical reasoning and argument.

6 - The Modern Language Leaving Certificate Course

All students in Alexandra College take at least one modern foreign language in the Leaving Certificate examinations. (Only those students with a language exemption do not have to include a foreign language in their choice of subjects.) A student can study more than one language at Senior Cycle. If the student

enjoys studying languages, has an aptitude for them or needs them for the course they want to study, then they should consider studying more than one language. Therefore students who started two languages in 1st year can of course continue to study them for LC.



Why study a modern foreign language?

1. For almost all universities in Ireland a foreign language is a requirement. (Often a minimum of a pass grade on an Ordinary level paper is sufficient.)
2. Most Irish higher education institutes participate in the ERASMUS Student Mobility for Studies and Student Mobility for Placement programmes. These European Commission programmes enable a student to study in her chosen faculty at a European University, or to gain work experience on a traineeship / internship in an enterprise (for a period of between three months and twelve months.) If you have knowledge of the language of the country in question you will be able to take full advantage of these programmes. A period spent abroad is a highly enriching and rewarding experience. Apart from enhancing your academic and professional chances, it can also improve language learning, intercultural skills and self-confidence.
3. The employers' group IBEC, following research, has found that two thirds of businesses in Ireland use foreign language skills when conducting business. They have also found that there are many unfilled job vacancies that require a modern foreign language.
4. The knowledge of one or more foreign languages increases your employability and job prospects.
5. Having a foreign language is a basic life skill and will benefit you whether you are travelling for holidays, study or work.

French - German - Italian - Spanish

	Higher Level	Ordinary Level
Reading Comprehensions	30%	40%
Written Production	25%	15%
Oral Exam (c.12 minutes)	25%	20%
Aural Exam	20%	25%

The four skills referenced are assessed across the following topics: Self, family, work, school, where you live, hobbies, your future, society, topic and current issues eg. environment, addictions, poverty, Europe.

7 - History for the Leaving Certificate

From the Emperors of Ancient Rome through the perilous waters of exploration to the dynamic age of steam and steel, the horrors of two world wars, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ending of communism, history introduces the students to the most compelling narratives of the past.

Content:

In Leaving Certificate history there is a wide range of courses available to students. Of the four courses studied over the two years, two are taken from Irish history and two from Europe and the wider world. In recent years students have chosen the following courses:

- America and the Wider World 1949-1989
- Nation States 1870 -1920
- Politics and Society in Northern Ireland 1949-1993
- Movements for Political and Social Reform 1870-1914

Other courses include:

- The Pursuit of Sovereignty and the Impact of Partition 1912-1929
- Dictatorship and Democracy 1920-1945.

The study of documents and primary sources is central to the study of Leaving Certificate history. Of the four courses studied, one is the prescribed documents course. It is the only part of the Leaving Certificate history where there is no choice.

The documents course rotates between European and Irish history every two years. For Leaving Certificate 2024 to 2025 the document course is European history from Dictatorship and Democracy 1920-1945.

Three short document based case studies are studied in depth. Two documents from one of these case studies with related questions appear on the exam paper.

Individual research is also an important part of Leaving Certificate history. The research project provides students with the opportunity for independent research on a topic of their own choice. They may choose from military, social, cultural, political or economic history. Recent research topics have included;

- Josephine Butler and the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act.
- The Munich Massacre 1972.
- The Sack of Balbriggan and the War of Independence.
- The Wurzburg Witch Trials 1626-'31.

Such research enables students to develop the ability to choose a topic, define aims, locate and evaluate sources. They also learn how to develop a coherent argument and review the research process. These skills are essential for success at both third level and in life.

The research essay is worth 20% of the final exam and is submitted in April of the Leaving Certificate year.

Leaving Certificate Exam Paper

There are four questions on the exam paper, three essay questions and one document question. The document question is from the prescribed document course, the other three from the other topics chosen by the students. Each question is 100 marks. The total marks for the exam paper is 400.

For more information on Leaving Certificate history see the DES website www.hist.ie

8 - The Geography Leaving Certificate Course

Who might study Geography?

- Leaving Certificate Geography will suit somebody who enjoys learning about people and their societies, economics, cultures and the environment.
- Due to the broad applicability of geographic skills and knowledge, Geography is a discipline that can lead to a large number of career options in virtually every industry. For students who are undecided about what they want to pursue in third level, Geography encompasses a varied syllabus and complements other subjects at Leaving cert level (including history, economics, and agricultural science).
- Geography suits students who may be considering further study in areas such as environmental and town planning, economics, primary & secondary school teaching, environmental science, social studies, meteorology, geography and politics after school. Geography is accepted as a science subject for entry into several courses on offer in TCD.
- Students could also study Geology (outside of school) as a matric subject for Trinity College Dublin.

Why study Geography?

Geography is concerned with the study of people and their environment. The subject allows students to develop an understanding of the changing relationships between the physical and human world. Through their study of Geography students develop geographical skills that will help them to make informed judgments about issues at local, national and global levels. The course follows from Junior Cert Geography, and covers very similar topics (such as rocks, oceans, population movements, map-reading, and economic activities) in a lot more detail. New topics are introduced, such as regional Geography where students learn about Brazil, the Paris Basin, the south of Italy and Ireland. There are several optional sections on the course, allowing students to focus on the sections of the course, which they prefer.

Course content and the Geographical Investigation (field study)

Leaving certificate Geography is divided into three units (i) core (ii) elective (iii) the option. There is a compulsory field study, which is part of the Core Unit. This field study is completed together as a class. However, the written report completed afterwards is completed on an individual basis and is due for submission in April of 6th year. This geographical investigation is **worth 20% of a student's final Geography grade.** The field study is usually very similar to the River Dargle field study many students complete during Transition year – the only difference being that the written report is more detailed.

The teaching and assessment of **geographical skills** is an important element of the field study. Students are encouraged to improve their ability to gather information (from map-reading, statistics, charts), present information (using diagrams, maps, and writing), and evaluate information (separate fact from opinion, make informed judgments, propose sensible solutions to problems).

Topic	Time
Core unit: Physical	5 th Yr.
Plate Tectonics	
Earthquakes	
Volcanoes	
Folding & faulting	
Rocks	
Distinctive landscapes (The Burren)	
Rivers	
Ice & the sea	
Core unit: Regional	
i. Distinctive regions (regions defined by climate, culture etc.)	
ii. Irish peripheral region: The West of Ireland	
iii. Irish core region: GDA	
iv. European peripheral region: Mezzogiorno	
v. European core region: Paris Basin	
vi. Non-European region: Brazil	
vii. EU expansion and membership	

The elective: Human Geography	Sept 6 th Yr.
i. Measuring populations	
ii. Migration	
iii. Settlement	
iv. Urban land use	
v. Urban problems	
vi. Urban solutions	

The option: Geoecology	Jan of 6 th Yr.
i. Characteristics of the tropical rainforest biome	
ii. Human interaction with the tropical rainforest biome	
iii. Adaptation to the tropical rainforest biome	

Geographical investigation	Feb of 6 th Yr.
River study = 20% (4 weeks)	

If any Transition year student is curious or still undecided about taking up Geography for the Leaving Certificate, sit in on a 5th Year class to help you make your decision.

9 - The Home Economics Leaving Certificate Course

The Home Economics Course consists of a core and three elective areas. **All students will study the core and one elective area.**

The Core Areas

1. Food Studies

- Food Science & Nutrition
- Diet & Health
- The Irish Diet & Irish Food Industry
- Food Commodities
- Meal Management & Food Preparation.
- Food Processing
- Microbiology
- Food Spoilage & Preservation
- Food Safety & Hygiene

2. Resource management and consumer studies

- Family Resource Management
- Household Finances
- Household Technology
- Textiles
- Consumer Studies

3. Social Studies

- The Family in Society
- The Family as a caring unit
- Marriage
- Family Law

The Elective Areas

There are three electives from which students **must choose one**. The electives are extensions of content contained in the core and provide students with the opportunity to study certain topics in more depth.

The Elective Areas

1. Home Design and Management
2. Textiles, Fashion and design
3. Social Studies

Based on our experience the two most popular choices are Electives 2 & 3. Both options are available here in Alexandra College.

Fashion Design and Textiles:

- The History of Fashion
- Contemporary clothing and fashion
- Textile Science
- The clothing and textile industry
- Construction of a garment
- Design evaluation and garment construction

Social Studies

- Social Change and the family
- Education
- Work
- Leisure
- Unemployment
- Poverty
- Statutory and community responses to creating employment and eliminating poverty.

Assessment

Home Economics with Textiles, Fashion & Design

- Written Paper 70%
- Garment 10%
- Food Journal 20%

Home Economics with Social Studies

- Written paper 80%
- Food Journal 20%

10 - The Religious Education Leaving Certificate Course

Subject Overview

The Leaving Certificate Religious Education syllabus delves into the diverse and fascinating areas of religion, philosophy, theology and ethics. The philosophy component of the course will allow students to grapple with the ideas of individuals such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Nietzsche and with great philosophical moments in history such as the Enlightenment and Romanticism. The course also allows the student to study the foundation and development of world religions. Students will be invited to consider the social, political and cultural factors, which shaped the beliefs and practices of the first followers. Following this, the student will examine how these ancient faiths have developed and adapted to try and see what relevance they may have for contemporary society. Morality and ethics also feature in the syllabus and students will be asked to consider questions such as; is there such a thing as evil? Is the intention behind the action or the result of the action more important? What is the conscience and does everyone have one? The syllabus also requires students to reflect on contemporary matters of importance such as the relationship between religion and science, justice and gender to name a few. While this course would contribute to the social and ethical development of any student, it provides a particularly good foundation for any student who wishes to pursue further studies in the arts, humanities, social sciences, politics, philosophy or literature.

Content

Leaving Certificate religious education can be studied at Ordinary or Higher level. The course consists of three units.

- **Unit One**

Section A – The search for meaning and values

- **Unit Two**

Any two of:

Section B – Christianity: origins and contemporary expressions

Section C – World religions

Section D – Moral decision-making

- **Unit Three**

Any one of the following (excluding the two sections designated for coursework)

Section E – Religion and gender

Section F – Issues of justice and peace

Section G – Worship, prayer and ritual

Section H – The Bible: literature and sacred text

Section I – Religion: the Irish experience

Section J – Religion and science

Assessment

Leaving Certificate religious education is assessed at Ordinary and Higher level. There are two assessment components:

Examination Paper	80%
Coursework	20%

Coursework refers to a project, which is completed by March in the year of the examination. The project is based on a title prescribed by the State Examinations Commission. The majority of the project work is done outside of classroom hours with the teacher acting in a supervisory capacity.

11 - The Classical Studies Leaving Certificate Course

- Are you interested in the world of the Ancient Greeks and Romans?
- Do you enjoy reading?
- Can you write essays in English, expressing yourself clearly?

Students who can respond in the affirmative to these three questions should consider taking Classical Studies for the Leaving Certificate. *No* previous knowledge is required of the Classical World. You do *not* need to have studied Classics in the Junior Cycle. You do *not* need to know or learn the Latin or Ancient Greek languages.

Much of the work in this subject involves reading English translations of ancient texts and writing essays in English about them. It is desirable that students who choose this subject should feel confident in their ability to read and write in English — candidates in Leaving Certificate Classical Studies are assessed through a written examination and a written research project.

The single most important criterion to use in deciding whether to choose this subject is your level of interest in the Ancient World. It's easier to write an essay if you have a genuine interest in what you're writing about.

Below are some of the many topics that students will encounter in this subject (the full specification can be found [on the NCCA website](#)):

- **Greek Drama:** two tragedies — such as *Philoctetes* by Sophocles and *Medea* by Euripides. (The precise plays to be studied may change from year to year.)
- **Ancient Epic:** Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*.
- **Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar:** the lives, military campaigns, achievements and misdeeds of these famous figures, as recounted in ancient sources.
- **Roman Spectacle:** the entertainments that were put on in the Colosseum (gladiatorial shows, animal hunts) and Circus Maximus (chariot racing).

12 - The Latin Leaving Certificate Course

- Do you have some prior knowledge of Latin — e.g. did you take Latin as part of Junior Cycle Classics or for GCSE?
- Are you interested in the ancient Romans' language, history and civilisation?

If you have responded in the affirmative to these questions, then Leaving Certificate Latin could be for you.

What will you study?

- The Latin language, with a particular emphasis on grammar.
- A prescribed text — an extract of *c.* 500 lines from Virgil's *Aeneid*, done in class over two years.
- Selections from other Roman authors (e.g. Catullus, Horace, Ovid, Caesar, Sallust, Cicero, Livy).
- Roman History, from the death of Julius Caesar to the death of the Emperor Trajan (44 BC–117 AD).
- Roman Art & Architecture (including the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, the Arch of Titus, the Colosseum, the Pantheon).

The subject is assessed solely through one terminal, written, three-hour examination. There is no oral or aural component. (Note that you do *not* need to have studied Latin in Transition Year in order to take it for the Leaving Certificate.)

It is not generally recommended for students to choose Latin for the Leaving Certificate without having studied it previously. However, students with high academic ability and with exceptional levels of interest and motivation may do so.

13 - The Business Leaving Certificate Course



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

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. The study of Leaving Certificate Business supports students in becoming informed decision-makers and supports the development of a wide range of key competencies.

Assessment

There are two assessment components:

1. 40% A written examination and an Additional Assessment Component (AAC) comprising of the Business Alive Investigative Study. The Business Alive Investigative Study will be based on a common brief, set by the State Examination Commission.
2. 60% The written examination will be at higher and ordinary level and will be set and examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

The Business Syllabus for Senior Cycle

The Leaving Certificate Business course has been designed to prepare you for this dynamic (rapidly changing) business environment.

If you have already studied Business at Junior Certificate level, this course will build on your knowledge. If you are new to the subject however, the course is designed to take you through everything from the beginning. To succeed in this subject, you will need an interest in what's going on around you and to keep up to date with business related news articles

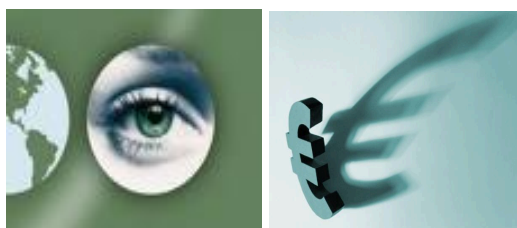
The Higher Leaving Certificate examination paper is divided into three sections:

1. **Section A** consisting of short questions
2. **Section B** where candidates have to answer **an analysed business question**
3. **Section C** where candidates have to answer four long questions

The final grade is based on the terminal examination which is a three hour examination.

The business syllabus can be found on the NCCA website.

14 - The Economics Leaving Certificate Course



Most students approaching the study of economics for the first time are already familiar with much of its subject matter even though they may be unaware of it.

Newspapers, magazines, radio and television keep us informed about all kinds of economic issues on a daily basis. Whether we live in the Celtic tiger era or during a recession, if we experience high rates of employment or unemployment, inflation or deflation, wage freezes, strikes and industrial unrest, price hikes, increased taxation, a change in the interest rates or a banking crisis – you will be learning about them all during the Leaving Certificate course. These are issues that will affect all of us, either directly or indirectly; whether as a consumer, a producer, a worker, a borrower, and a saver or just as a well informed citizen. Each of us has a vested interest in understanding how a modern economy works if we are to make properly informed decisions about matters affecting our own lives.

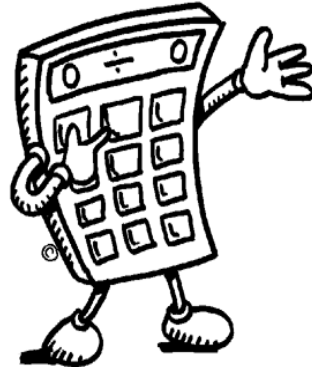
The Leaving Certificate paper is divided into two sections:

4. **Section A** consisting of short questions
5. **Section B** where candidates have to answer **only four out of eight** questions on different topics.

Students do not need to have studied Business Studies to Junior Certificate level. An interest and average proficiency in mathematics is desirable. Students who enjoy watching the news, discussing or debating current affairs and have an interest in knowing how the world trading systems work, for example, will enjoy the study of economics for the Leaving Certificate. Being able to understand how the economic systems of the world work is knowledge for life not just for the Leaving Certificate.

Career Links: Accountancy, Finance, Banking, Marketing, and Sales Management.

15 - The Accounting Leaving Certificate Course



Accounting is a continuation of Basic Accounting as studied for Junior Cycle. It is divided into two main areas:

Financial Accounting (Two thirds of the course)

Management Accounting (One third of the course)

It is commonly seen as the mathematical side of business as it attracts the more numerate student. Once you can understand and adhere to the basic rules of accounting, it is a subject that you can do very well in.

The final grade is based on the terminal examination which is a three hour examination.

The accounting syllabus is available [on the NCCA website](#).

16 - The Art, Craft and Design Leaving Certificate Course

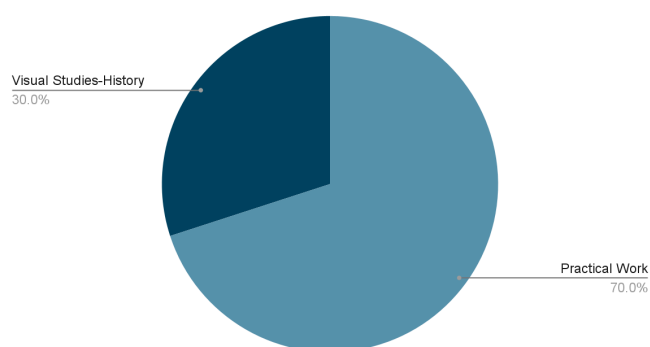
Leaving Certificate Art, Craft and Design is an exciting and engaging course that allows creative students the opportunity to build on their drawing and craftwork skills in preparation for assessment and begin the formal study of art history and appreciation.

How is the course structured?

Students who choose Art, Craft and Design for the Leaving Certificate will spend **3 X 1 hour periods a week** studying the course.

- i. **Two** of these periods are practical lessons. These consist of learning the practical skills of drawing in different media, intaglio, poster design, painting and clay modelling. During practical classes students are also given the opportunity to develop visual creative skills and techniques.
- ii. **One** period a week is spent studying history and appreciation of art and design.

Breakdown of class time

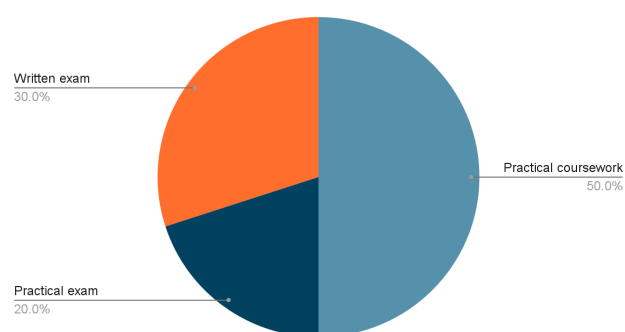


Assessment

The examination is divided into 3 units.

1. Practical coursework during class time **only** - 50% (Jan - April sixth Year)
2. Practical Examination 20% (May of sixth Year)
3. Written (Visual studies) examination 30% (June examinations)

Assessment



70% on the practical element and 30% on the written history element.

Art is assessed at two levels, Ordinary Level and Higher Level. The standard and quality of work determine the difference in level.

What kind of student would the Art, Craft and Design course suit?



Example of Leaving Cert. Coursework.

1. If you enjoy looking, creating and analysing then this is the subject for you.
2. Students who have shown an aptitude and interest for art before.
3. Anyone considering a career in a creative discipline such as Architecture, Marketing, Film and Entertainment, Web Design, Fashion, Game Design, or Advertising.
4. Students who are looking for a break from intensive memory-work in their other subjects, or to reduce pressure on themselves in June by having a subject with exams in April/May.

How can Art, Craft and Design be beneficial in college, career and life?

Art, craft and design allows students to develop many different skills that are useful and often essential in further education, careers, and life. Problem solving and creative thinking can add an extra element for somebody wishing to study business or marketing. Hand/ eye coordination and fine motor skills are essential for a student wishing to study physiotherapy or surgery!

Many students will not go on to study or have a career in the creative realm but all will visit galleries, watch films and be exposed to art and design throughout their life. Students who have studied this course have the vocabulary and understanding to confidently discuss, debate and understand what is going on in the visual world around them.

17 - The Music Leaving Certificate Course: Senior Cycle



Subject Overview:

The Leaving Certificate Music syllabus provides continuity and progression from the Junior Cycle Music course, but it is not necessary to have sat the Junior Cycle Music course to undertake the Leaving Certificate course. In providing the musical knowledge, understanding, practical competencies and attitudes appropriate to their age, abilities and interests, the syllabus caters for the varying needs of all students including those who wish to pursue further studies in music.

Course Content:

As part of the Leaving Certificate Music course you will study everything from *The Beatles* to *Bach*, from *Queen* to *Tchaikovsky* and everything in between.

The content of the course involves a series of interrelated musical activities within each of the three core areas of musical experience –

- (1) performing,
- (2) composing and
- (3) listening and responding.

Each of the core components is worth 25% of the available marks, and the students then elect to undertake 50% of their work in one of above activities that best suits their interests and talents. Students in Alex have typically chosen the 50% performance elective.

The **performing** component includes the presentation of a practical where the students perform chosen repertoire on their discipline at their standard. The performance can be undertaken as part of a group or on an individual basis.

In **composing**, the students are required to develop the skills associated with the understanding of harmonic and melodic constructs. The students are expected to compose a 16-bar melody that must reflect understanding of style and structure, and includes a short modulation.

The students are also expected to analyse a given piece of music with accompanying chords and continue the piece adding their choice of chords while considering the stylistic implications of the given opening.

The **listening** element of the course spans different musical periods, styles and genres. For this part of the course, students will develop through the analysis of set works, their aural awareness of stylistic features, and the ability to listen critically, and to use these skills to demonstrate an understanding of the features of different musical periods and styles. As part of the listening component, Irish music, as an integral part of our heritage and culture, is studied in detail and students will develop an understanding of the changes that have impacted from both inside and outside the culture.

Assessment:

The assessment takes the form of a 2-paper exam in June, with the practical element taking place either the two weeks before the Easter Holidays or the two after.

Paper 1 - Listening (100 Marks)	Paper 2 - Composing (100 Marks)
4 Prescribed Set Works (55) Irish Music (25) Aural Skills (20)	Melody Writing (40) Harmony (60)
Practical Elective (200 Marks) - Choose one option	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Play/sing 6 pieces of music. Complete a short sight-reading test. (200 Marks) 2. Play/sing 4 pieces on one instrument and play sing another 4 pieces on another instrument. Complete a short sight-reading test. (200 marks) 3. Play/sing 4 pieces on one instrument. Demonstrate how you would input a 4-part score into Musescore. Complete a short sight-reading test. (200 marks) 	

18 - The Physics Leaving Certificate Course

Physics is the investigation of how things work. You will enjoy physics if you liked doing science investigations in Junior Science or TY and enjoy using ICT to support your learning. If you got satisfaction from trying to find the connection between voltage and current by measurement, graphing and calculation or are curious about how a prism splits light into a rainbow of colours then physics is for you.

It helps if you are competent and confident in using basic maths in a practical context. There is an overlap with project maths as it relates maths to the real world. There is a close relationship with applied maths but it is not essential to do both.

In physics you need to work steadily through the year as concepts are grasped through practical investigations, simple problem solving and real world examples. Physics develops your ability to think logically and scientifically. You can't learn it off by rote.

The course topics are Mechanics, Optics, Waves, Heat, Electricity, and Modern Physics. The grading is 100% exam based.

19 - The Chemistry Leaving Certificate Course

Overview

The teaching of chemistry in Alexandra College fosters cooperation among students and encourages individuals to hold themselves accountable to high standards.

Collaborative work allows students to clarify their own thought processes and this in turn can boost self-confidence. The range of skills developed as a result of this two-year course include creative problem solving, logical reasoning, pattern recognition and precise expression.

Content

The course comprises a variety of topics including: Volumetric Analysis, Stoichiometry, Organic Chemistry, Chemical Equilibrium, Rates of Reaction.

The theory content of the course is complemented by mandatory experiments, and each student is required to keep a record of her practical work.

The course requires stamina, promotes independent thought and encourages the application of initiative. For the ambitious student who relishes a challenge, there is little more satisfying than being able to cope with the demands of this rewarding subject.

The final grade is awarded solely on performance in the final examination.

20 - The Agricultural Science Leaving Certificate Course

The new specification Leaving Certificate in Agricultural Science was first examined in 2020. The course involves the study of the science and technology underlying the principles and practises of agriculture with particular focus on Ireland and Irish Agri-business.

The course aims to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that promote the sustainability of agricultural resources, and places emphasis on the managed use of these resources. Plants and animal types associated with agriculture are studied, and investigations are undertaken into such aspects as soil, ecology, plant and animal physiology, farm crops, farming practices, genetics and microbiology.

The curriculum is structured, as per diagram below, around the four (4) core strands of scientific practises, soil, crops and animals. It provides a strong focus on how science works; on scientific investigation: hypothesising, experimenting, evaluating, interpreting, communicating; and on the role and contribution of science to agriculture. It also emphasises the importance of health and safety. The eight (8) cross-cutting themes, which are illustrated as surrounding the strands, permeate and provide appropriate contexts for the study of the four strands.

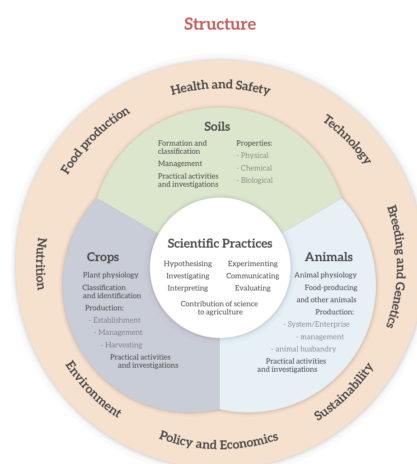


Figure 4: Structure of the specification

Agricultural Science provides a challenge to students with or without farming backgrounds. Each strand contains aspects of biology, chemistry, physical and human geography, home economics

and business, plus new subject matter specific to Agricultural Science. This wide spectrum includes soil science, livestock physiology to slurry nutrient analysis.

There are >20 specified practicals that are undertaken during the course which provide links to theoretical and cross cutting themes. The coursework component is a student driven research and scientific investigation linked thematically to the cross-cutting areas of the curriculum.

Assessment Component	Percentage
Written <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Short answer questions● Structured questions● Synoptic questions	75%
Coursework <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Individual investigative study	25%

This subject is for the student that wishes to extend their learning to new areas and be challenged to apply theoretical principles to practical real life scenarios.

21 - The Biology Leaving Certificate Course

Biology is one of the more popular science subjects chosen at Leaving Certificate level in Alexandra College. Most students find the course interesting and enjoyable and many go on to study it in some form at third level.

The biology course builds on the Junior Cycle science course, but students should be aware that the course content is studied in much greater detail.

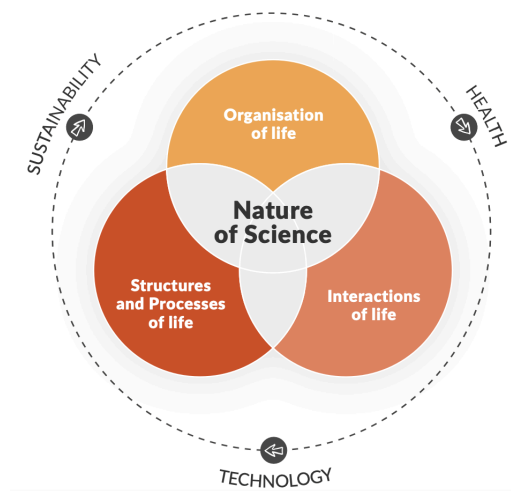
The biology syllabus is prescribed, which makes attaining a high grade in the final Leaving Certificate examination very achievable, particularly for students who work **steadily** from the start of fifth year.

The aim of Leaving Certificate Biology is to provide students with an experience that develops their interest in and enthusiasm for the scientific study of life. In doing so, it aims to build the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions necessary for students to become scientifically literate citizens who are well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities of their future, embracing life-long learning and sustainable living, as citizens in a technologically developing society.

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

- build knowledge and understanding of a number of specified core concepts and fundamental principles of biology
- 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 biological world
- demonstrate inquiry and practical skills consistent with the principles and practices of biology
- understand how society and science are interwoven, the everyday relevance of biology and the ethical implications of biology.

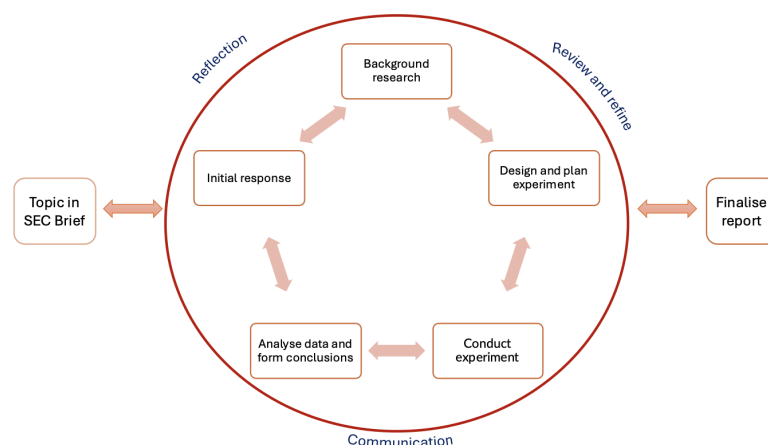
The course is divided into four strands: a unifying strand, Nature of Science, and three contextual strands, Organisation of Life, Structures and Processes of Life, and Interactions of Life.



Assessment for Certification

There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising a Biology in Practice Investigation. The written examination will be taken at higher and ordinary level. The Biology in Practice Investigation will be based on a common brief. Each component will be set and examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

A brief for the conduct of the **Biology in Practice Investigation** will be **published annually** by the **State Examinations Commission (SEC)** in term 2 of Year 1.



Overview of the process for completion of the Biology in Practice Investigation

Assessment component	Weighting	Level
Biology in Practice Investigation	40%	Common brief
Written examination	60%	Higher and Ordinary level

Overview of Assessment for Certification

The teachers of biology encourage students to become independent learners, taking responsibility for their own work, working collaboratively with each other and with their teacher. The teacher acts as a guiding influence within the classroom.

Most students in Alexandra College sit higher rather than ordinary level biology.

For the syllabus specification please see:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/biology/>

22 - The Computer Science Leaving Certificate Course

Computer science is the study of computers and algorithmic processes. Leaving Certificate Computer Science includes how programming and computational thinking can be applied to the solution of problems, and how computing technology impacts the world around us.

Students will learn:

- The practises and principles of computer science, such as computational thinking, computers and society, and creative design
- How to analyse problems in computational terms and understand concepts such as abstraction, logic, algorithms, computer systems, data representation and evaluation
- Programming languages and how to read, write, test and modify computer programs
- The process of designing computational artefacts such as web pages, digital animations, simulations, games, apps and robotic systems
- The ethical, historical, environmental and technological aspects of computer science, and how it impacts the social and economic development of society.

The role of programming in computer science is like that of practical work in the other subjects - it provides motivation, and a context within which ideas are brought to life. Students learn programming by solving problems through computational thinking processes and through practical applications such as applied learning tasks.

The Leaving Certificate Computer Science course is designed for all students. It applies to many aspects of students' lives and is therefore relevant to a wide range of student interests.

Assessment:

There are two assessment components at each level, an end-of-course examination (70%) and coursework (30%).

Component	Percentage
End-of-course examination <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Computer-based assessment of learning outcomes	70%
Coursework assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none">● One computational artefact with report	30%
Total	100%

23 - The Physical Education Leaving Certificate Course

Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE) was introduced as an optional subject, on a phased basis, starting with a small number of schools, from September 2018. Students in these schools sat the first Leaving Certificate Physical Education examination in June, 2020. LCPE is now available in all schools from September 2020.

LCPE is designed to appeal to a broad range of learners, whether they excel in sport or have a keen interest in physical activity and sport either as a performer and/or as a coach/choreographer. So, if you would like to learn more about the theory underpinning performance in physical activity and about how to improve your own performance, this subject may be of interest.

There are three assessment components in LCPE: Physical Activity Project, Performance Assessment and the written paper.

Assessment Component	Weighing	Level
Physical Activity Project	20%	Higher and Ordinary
Performance Assessment	30%	Common Level
Written Exam	50%	Higher and Ordinary

Physical Activity Project (20%)

The Physical Activity Project enables you to

- analyse your performance in one activity.
- set four performance goals.
- plan and implement a programme to improve.
- reflect on progress. Learners can use video, photographs and text, to tell the story of the project.

Performance Assessment (30%)

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

How will I learn?

Active participation is central to learning in LCPE. So, as you learn about the theories that impact performance, you will have the opportunity to put them into practice in the sports hall and/or outdoor playing area. You will be using a variety of tools, including video and

photography, to analyse your own and others' performance. You will be using the data you have collected to:

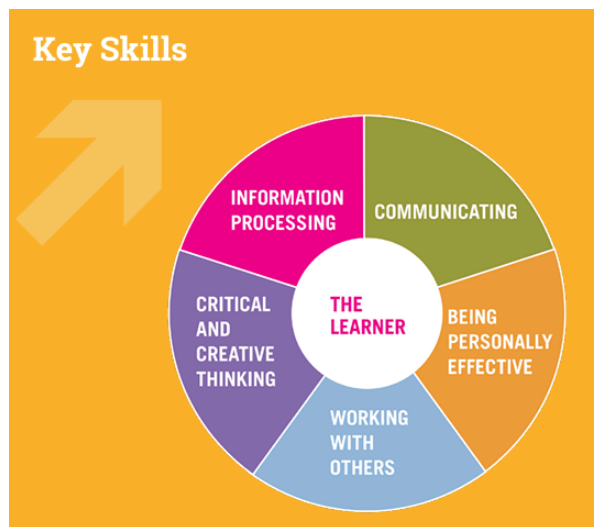
- plan for improvement.
- implement a training programme.
- reflect on progress.

There will be classroom discussions, debate and reflection on the different personal, social and contextual factors that impact on whether or not we are physically active or can excel in our chosen sport. Through this, you will develop valuable analytical and evaluation skills as you debate topical, and sometimes controversial, issues and study different viewpoints.

How will it be useful to me later?

Your learning in LCPE will inform how you participate in sport and physical activity in your adult life. You will find LCPE useful if you want to study sports science, physical education, leisure and recreation courses, media studies and many other courses. There are five key skills in the senior cycle. You will develop these skills in LCPE and they will be useful to you in any future learning and in your everyday life.

What are the key skills?



24 - The Applied Maths Leaving Certificate Course

Applied maths gives you the genuine skill of being able to solve real life problems using maths. This skill can be applied in all walks of life from science through medicine, architecture, economics, pharmacy, engineering, design, technology, business and actuarial studies.

Applied maths is a wonderful and challenging subject for those with a keen desire to solve problems and an appreciation of the beauty of maths. Applied maths is different to but certainly reinforces the mathematical thinking required in maths and physics. It is a useful support to either.

Along with the standard section which is maths questions linked to the mechanics section of Physics, there are also differential equations, along with newly added sections relating to networks.

Applied Maths has started a new curriculum. This means that there is now a graded problem solving project in Sixth Year, which will be an expanded version of the problem solving tasks that will be completed throughout the course.

25 - The Politics and Society Leaving Certificate Course



Politics and Society is a challenging and rewarding subject that suits any student who is interested in human rights, equality, diversity, sustainable development, power and democratic decision making. Studying Politics and Society gives students a real insight into people, power and how society works.

Students will learn about the social systems within which people act locally, nationally and worldwide, the concepts underpinning contemporary systems of government and the roles of groups such as multinational companies, non – governmental organisations and intergovernmental bodies in shaping the world we live in. Students will work with key themes and ideas in the social and political sciences.

The topics students study in Politics and Society include:

1. Power and decision-making in school
2. Power and decision-making at national and European level
3. Effectively contributing to communities
4. Rights and Responsibilities in communication with others
5. Human rights and responsibilities in Ireland, Europe and the wider world
6. Globalisation and identity
7. Sustainable development

Assessment

There are two assessment components for Politics and Society

1. A report on a citizenship project (20%)
2. Written Examination (80%)

1. The citizenship project will be based on a brief issued annually by the State Examinations Commission. The brief will outline a number of topics from which students will choose one for their citizenship project.

Students are afforded an opportunity to engage in research, analysis and extended reflection. The report will assess the student's ability to use the knowledge, concepts and skills of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities, as well as the student's capacity to reflect upon and evaluate what they have learned or achieved from being an active participant in civil, social and political life.

While the skills of reflective and informed decision-making, of planning and evaluating actions, and of working with others can be developed throughout all the learning in this course, these skills will be explicitly developed and applied through the student's engagement in a citizenship project.

2. The Leaving Certificate paper is divided into three sections:

Section A: Short Answer Questions – All questions to be answered

Section B: Data Based Questions on a case study – All questions to be answered

Section C: Discursive Essays- Students only have to answer 2 out of 6 questions.

The total examination time is 2.5 hours

Politics and Society provides an opportunity to link social, scientific and philosophical subjects in higher education. You will find Politics and Society beneficial if you want to study Politics, Sociology, Political Studies, Law, Philosophy, Inequality, Gender Studies, Anthropology, Social Studies, Journalism, Sustainability and many more.