



Coláiste Chill na n-Iníon

Firhouse Community College



Choosing Leaving Certificate Subjects Information Booklet 2026

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SENIOR CYCLE PROGRAMMES

Transition Year

This is a one year programme between the end of the Junior Cycle and the beginning of the Leaving Cert programme. In Firhouse Community College all students follow the Transition Year Programme before progressing on to Leaving Certificate. The programme provides for the development of personal and social skills. It encourages research and activity based self-directed learning, both inside and outside the classroom. The programme offers new experiences in areas such as Work Experience and Community Care and there are several modules on offer in areas not covered in the traditional Leaving Cert.

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) is a two-year programme designed for students who prefer a more practical and hands-on approach to learning. It focuses on developing life skills, work skills, and personal responsibility, as well as preparing students for further education, training, or employment.

In Firhouse Community College, students studying the LCA take a range of subjects that include vocational and practical modules, along with core areas such as English, Mathematics, and Social Education. Work experience is also an important part of the programme, giving students the opportunity to gain real-life experience in the workplace.

Instead of a points system, students receive credits throughout the two years. These credits are awarded for coursework, key assignments, practical activities, and final exams. At the end of the programme, students are awarded a Leaving Certificate Applied, which can help them progress to further education, apprenticeships, or directly into the world of work.

The Established Leaving Certificate

Most students follow the traditional two-year Leaving Certificate programme. In Firhouse Community College, students taking the Established Leaving Certificate study seven subjects at either Higher (Honours) or Ordinary level. Foundation level is also available in two subjects: Irish and Mathematics.

Up-to-date fact sheets on all subjects can be found on the Careers Portal, which provides useful information about course content and assessment.

At the end of the two years, points for entry into third-level courses are calculated based on a student's best six subjects.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

A new subject called **Leaving Certificate Life, Community and Work (LCW)** will be introduced for fifth year students in September 2026. This subject replaces the current Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) Link Modules as part of the redevelopment of the Senior Cycle.

Life, Community and Work focusses on helping students develop important skills for life beyond school. The course encourages students to explore enterprise, community involvement, career planning, and the world of work. It promotes self-directed learning and provides opportunities for students to engage with their local community and reflect on their future education and career pathways.

The programme complements the academic Leaving Certificate by helping students build skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving and career planning.

In Firhouse Community College, LCW will be taken alongside other Leaving Certificate subjects and will operate in a similar way to how LCVP was previously offered, effectively functioning as an additional subject within the Leaving Certificate Programme.



SUBJECT CHOICE

Introduction

In addition to the core subjects of English, Irish, and Mathematics, students who follow the Established Leaving Certificate programme must choose four option subjects.

Choosing your subjects can sometimes feel confusing or stressful but taking the time to think carefully will help you make the right decision. It is very important to check course and entry requirements, as certain subjects may be needed for particular college courses or careers. Remember, it is your responsibility to research these requirements. Keeping a list of useful websites, such as Careers Portal and college websites, can help you stay organised.

You should also think about your interests, strengths, and future goals. Choosing subjects you enjoy and are good at will help you stay motivated and achieve your best. Try to consider how your subject choices might affect your future options.

To help you decide, options subject teachers will give presentations explaining what their subjects involve. You will also attend a Subject Options Fair in the school hall, where you can speak to current fifth-year students who are studying these subjects. They can share their experiences and answer your questions.

This booklet provides clear and reliable information about each of the option subjects available in Firhouse Community College. While not all subjects are available in every school, Firhouse Community College offers a very wide range of subjects, with no fewer than 19 option subjects available. This includes all three Science subjects and all three Business subjects.

Core Subjects

All students in Firhouse Community College study the following core subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Irish (unless officially exempt)

Option Subjects

In addition to the core subjects, students must choose four option subjects.

The option subjects available include

Languages	Science Subjects	Business Subjects	Humanities	Practical Subjects
French	Biology	Accounting	Geography	Art
Japanese	Chemistry	Business	History	Construction Studies
	Physics	Economics	Politics and Society	Design and Communication Graphics
	Physical Education	Life, Community & Work (formerly LCVP)		Engineering
				Home Economics
				Music

Advice on Choosing Your Subjects

When choosing your subjects, it is important to consider your interests, abilities, and possible career paths. Some important points to remember are listed below:

- Choosing subjects you enjoy and are good at makes learning easier and more enjoyable.
- There is no such thing as an “easy” subject. All subjects require effort and commitment to achieve good grades.
- Do not choose subjects based on who you think the teacher might be.
- Extra tuition or grinds can help, but they are not a substitute for regular study and hard work.

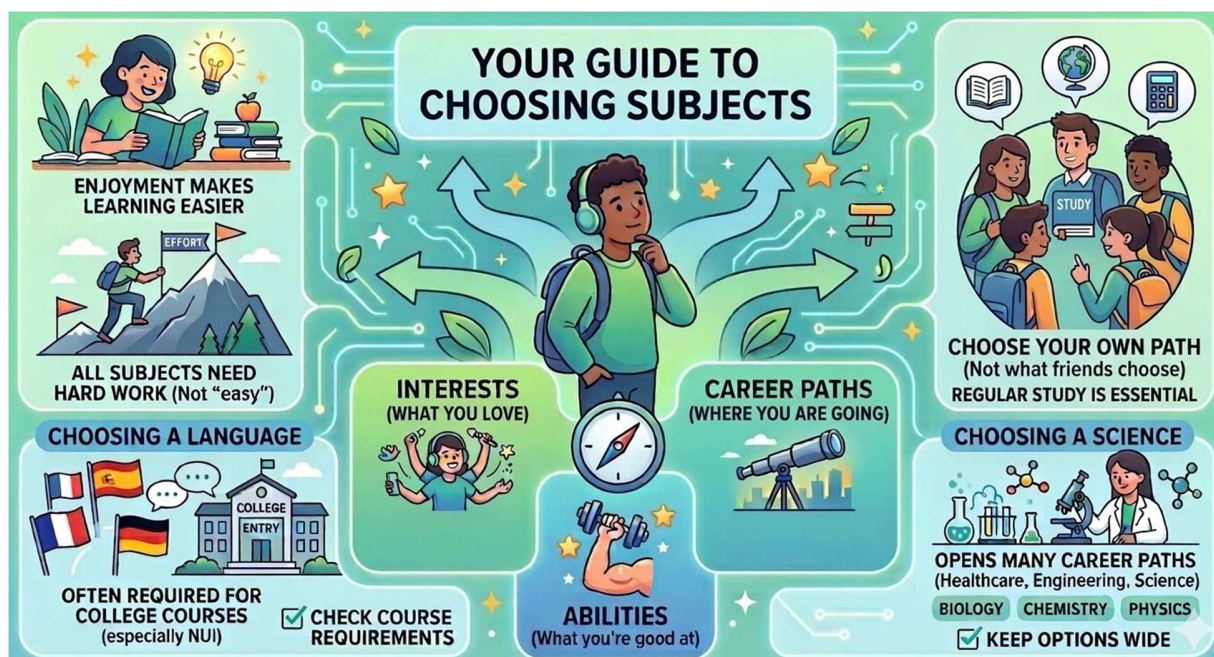
Choosing a Language

Many college courses require a modern foreign language. A student may require one modern continental language for entry to the constituent colleges of the National University of Ireland – Dublin, Galway, Cork and Maynooth. It is important to check the specific language and grade requirements for any courses you are interested in.

Choosing a Science Subject

Many college and career paths require at least one science subject. Studying science subjects such as Biology, Chemistry, or Physics can keep a wide range of options open, including careers in healthcare, engineering, and science.

Some courses may also require a specific science subject and a particular grade, so careful research is important.



Your Final Choices

For your remaining subject choices, think about the subjects you enjoyed most during the Junior Cycle. Subjects such as History, Geography, Art, Music, Home Economics, Technical Graphics, DCG, Engineering, or Business can be excellent choices if they match your interests and strengths.

Choosing subjects you enjoy will help you stay motivated and give you the best chance of achieving strong results.

Overview

Good subject choice should help you:

- Meet the entry requirements for courses and careers you are interested in
- Keep your future options open
- Achieve your full potential
- Enjoy your learning experience
- Have a positive and successful Leaving Certificate experience



ACCOUNTING

	Overview	
Accounting is all about understanding money in business. You'll learn how to keep records, prepare financial statements, and make sense of numbers so businesses can make good decisions. It's a mix of practical skills and theory, and it gives you a solid foundation for lots of careers in business and finance.		
	Why study Accounting?	
Accounting is a great subject if you want to understand how businesses work with money. Many top business leaders studied accountancy, and it opens doors to careers in accountancy, finance, marketing, business, or even starting your own business. It's also a subject where you can earn well in the future!		
	What kind of student would Accounting suit?	
Accounting is perfect for students who like numbers and order. It teaches you how to do bookkeeping and how to understand and work with financial information. You don't need to be a maths genius - just comfortable with numbers and willing to follow the rules. If you enjoy structure and organising information, you'll do well in this subject.		
	Assessment	
The exam is three hours long and can be taken at Higher or Ordinary level. It has three sections: - Financial Accounting (sections 1 & 2) - Management Accounting (section 3)		Topics include: - Preparing Financial Statements - Accounts for farms, clubs, and companies - Manufacturing Accounts - Analysing and interpreting financial statements - Budgeting and break-even analysis - Cost classification - Accounting rules and principles
	Top Tips	
- Accounting is about both numbers and understanding rules. - You don't need Higher Level maths, but practice helps. - Even if you didn't study Business Studies before, you can still take Accounting.		

ART



Overview

Leaving Certificate Art is a creative and practical subject that allows students to express their ideas visually while developing artistic and design skills. Students explore a range of areas including drawing, painting, design, and craftwork. They also learn about the history of art and how artists from Ireland and around the world communicate ideas through their work. Art helps students develop creativity, observation skills, and an understanding of visual culture.



Why study Art?

Art encourages creativity, imagination, and personal expression. It helps students develop problem-solving skills, attention to detail, and confidence in their own ideas. Art is useful for students interested in careers such as graphic design, architecture, animation, fashion design, teaching, interior design, and many other creative fields. Even for students not pursuing art-related careers, it develops valuable skills such as creativity, communication, and independent thinking.



What kind of student would Art suit?

Art is well suited to students who:

- Enjoy drawing, painting, or creating things
- Have an interest in creativity and visual expression
- Are willing to experiment with new ideas and materials
- Enjoy practical, hands-on work
- Are interested in design, history, or culture
- Are prepared to put time and effort into developing their skills

You do not have to be an expert artist to choose Art, but you should have an interest in creativity and be willing to practise and improve.





Assessment

Leaving Certificate Art is assessed in three parts:

- **Practical Coursework (50%)**

Students complete a coursework project over a 10-week period. All work is based on a given theme and students document their research, produce a range of drawings made from primary sources and plan for two finished pieces. One finished piece will be made during this time; the second finished piece will be completed during a 5-hour exam.

- The written exam on Visual studies is based on students' thoughts, knowledge, and observations of work by professional artists and imagery in wider visual media.



Practical coursework
50%
Practical Examination
20%
Written examination
30%



Top Tips

- If you are interested in studying art, design, architecture, or related courses in college, you will usually need to prepare a **portfolio** of your artwork. Leaving Certificate Art helps you build the skills and work needed for this.
- Choose Art if you enjoy being creative and are willing to spend time developing your ideas and improving your practical skills.



BUSINESS

	Overview
Leaving Certificate Business helps students understand how the world of business works and how it affects their everyday lives. Students learn about topics such as starting and running a business, managing people, making financial decisions, and how businesses operate locally and globally. The subject also explores modern business issues such as digital technology, sustainability, and ethical business practice. Business develops important life skills, including financial literacy, decision-making, and an understanding of enterprise.	
	Why study Business?
Business helps students understand how money, companies, and the economy work. It builds useful life skills such as managing personal finances, understanding employment, and making informed financial decisions. Business is an excellent foundation for many careers, including business management, marketing, finance, law, entrepreneurship, and accountancy. It also helps students develop problem-solving, analytical, and decision-making skills that are valuable in any career.	
	What kind of student would Business suit?
Business would suit students who: • Are interested in how businesses operate and how people manage organisations • Want to learn about money, finance, and entrepreneurship • Enjoy learning about real-world topics and current events • Are organised and willing to learn key terms and concepts • May be interested in careers in business, finance, law, or management You do not need to have taken Business Studies at Junior Cycle, but an interest in business and current affairs is helpful.	



Assessment

Leaving Certificate Business is assessed in two parts:

- **Business Alive Investigative Study (40%)**
Students complete a research-based project on a real business or business topic using a common brief issued by the State Examinations Commission.
- **Written Examination (60%)**
Students sit a written exam at Higher or Ordinary level, which tests their understanding of business concepts and their ability to apply this knowledge to real-life situations.



Top Tips

- Business is a great choice if you are considering careers in areas such as business, marketing, finance, law, or entrepreneurship, or if you may study business in college.
- Choose Business if you are interested in real-world topics and are willing to keep up with business news and examples.



CHEMISTRY



Overview

Leaving Certificate Chemistry helps students understand the substances that make up the world around them and how they interact. You'll learn about atoms, molecules, reactions, energy changes, and applications of chemistry in everyday life. The course blends theory with practical scientific investigation, equipping students with skills in analysis, problem-solving, and laboratory techniques.



Why study Chemistry?

Leaving Certificate Chemistry helps students understand the substances that make up the world around them and how they interact. You'll learn about atoms, molecules, reactions, energy changes, and applications of chemistry in everyday life. The course blends theory with practical scientific investigation, equipping students with skills in analysis, problem-solving, and laboratory techniques.



What kind of student would Chemistry suit?

Chemistry suits students who:

- Are curious about how the physical world and materials work
- Enjoy solving problems and working logically
- Like practical, hands-on scientific activities and experiments

You don't need to be a maths expert, but confidence with numbers and Junior Cycle Science concepts helps.

Chemistry is an essential for the following third level courses

Dentistry, UCD

Medicine, UCD

Dietician, DIT

Pharmacy, UCD

Lab Technician, DIT

Vet, UCD



Assessment

Chemistry in Practice Investigation – 40 %

- A research-based investigation guided by a common brief from the State Examinations Commission.
- Students gather and analyse data, conduct experiments, and present findings.

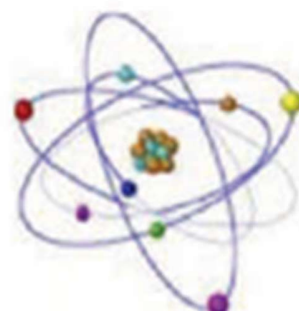
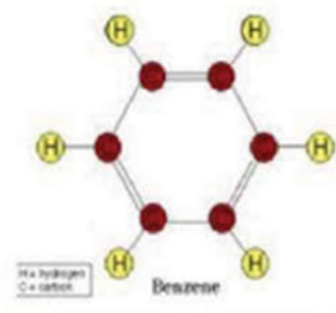
Written Examination – 60 %

- A terminal paper testing knowledge, understanding, problem-solving, and application across core chemistry topics.



Top Tips

- Choose Chemistry if you enjoy science, logical problem-solving, and hands-on experiments.
- Consider it if you are interested in careers like medicine, pharmacy, engineering, or environmental science.



CONSTRUCTION STUDIES



Overview

Leaving Certificate *Construction Studies* is being redeveloped into *Leaving Certificate Construction Technology* for students beginning 5th year in **September 2026**. The subject explores how buildings and structures are designed, constructed, and maintained. Students learn both technical theory (materials, structures, building science) and practical skills (workshop processes, technical communication) to understand the built environment.



Why study Construction Studies?

This subject is ideal if you enjoy working with your hands and your mind. You'll develop practical building skills, technical drawing ability, problem-solving techniques, and an understanding of how buildings work — all valuable for careers in **architecture, surveying, construction management, trades, engineering, and design**.



What kind of student would Construction Studies suit?

Construction Studies suits students who:

- Enjoy practical, hands-on tasks and working with tools
- Are interested in building design, materials, and how things are constructed
- Like solving problems and thinking in three dimensions
- Can work meticulously and safely with equipment

It helps if you have studies Wood Technology/Graphics at Junior Cycle



Assessment

Exploring the Constructed Environment – 30 %

- A project-based investigation guided by a common brief provided by the SEC.
- Students research a construction-related theme or problem, develop ideas, and produce a practical outcome (such as a model, artefact, or design solution), accompanied by documentation and evaluation.

Craft Skills Assessment – 20 %

- A **timed practical craft task** set by the SEC.
- Students interpret working drawings and demonstrate practical woodworking and construction skills, including measuring, marking out, tool use, accuracy, and quality of finish.

Written Examination – 50 %

- A terminal paper testing knowledge, understanding, and application of construction technology, materials, methods, building science, and the built environment.



Top Tips

Choose it if you enjoy practical and technical work and like the idea of designing and making things in a real-world context.

Consider it if you're interested in careers in the built environment - such as architecture, construction management, trades (carpentry, plumbing etc.), or engineering.

DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION GRAPHICS



Overview

DCG is a two-year Leaving Certificate subject focused on design, problem-solving and visual communication through graphics, 3D modelling and computer-aided design (CAD). Students explore how design ideas are represented, communicated and brought to life using modern technologies.

DCG develops students' ability to think spatially, solve complex design challenges and communicate ideas clearly — skills that are essential in today's design, engineering and technology-driven world.



Why study DCG?

DCG helps students build strong visual-spatial skills, creativity and technical understanding. Through sketching, CAD modelling and design tasks, students learn how products, buildings and systems are designed and represented. Students who study DCG gain skills that are highly valued in many industries, including engineering, architecture, product design, animation, construction and technology.

DCG encourages students to:

- Think visually and creatively
- Analyse and solve design problems
- Communicate ideas clearly using drawings and digital models
- Understand how everyday products and structures are designed

Some real-world areas where DCG skills are used include:

- Architecture and building design
- Product and industrial design
- Engineering and manufacturing
- Animation and game design
- Construction and planning
- Interior and spatial design

DCG supports innovation by helping students understand how ideas move from concept to final design.



What kind of student would DCG suit?

Design and Communication Graphics suits students who:

- Enjoy drawing, sketching and visual problem-solving
- Are interested in design, buildings, products or technology
- Like working with CAD software and digital tools
- Enjoy understanding how objects and structures are created
- Have good spatial awareness and attention to detail



Assessment

Assignment – 40 %: A substantial design project based on a brief issued by the SEC. Includes sketches, CAD work, design development pages, and presentation.

Written / Drawing Examination – 60 %: A terminal examination testing graphic problem-solving, drawing skills, and design understanding.



Top Tips

Choose it if you enjoy design, sketching, and solving visual problems.

Choose it if you want useful skills for careers like architecture, engineering, or product design.

ECONOMICS



Overview

Economics is a social science that studies how individuals, businesses and governments make decisions about resources. It explores the world around us and helps explain many of the economic issues we hear about in everyday life.

The Leaving Certificate Economics course is organised into five strands:

- **What is Economics About?**
- **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?**

Through these strands, students explore how economies operate at local, national and global levels and develop an understanding of the economic, social, political and environmental impacts of decision-making.

Economics also complements the study of many other Leaving Certificate subjects including **Accounting, Business, Geography, History and English.**



Why study Economics?

Studying Economics can be very beneficial for students considering further study in **business, finance, economics or social sciences** at third level. It also provides valuable knowledge that can be applied to everyday decisions and understanding national and global economic events. It helps students understand the modern world. By developing skills in **critical thinking, data analysis and decision-making**, students learn how to analyse real-life economic issues.



What kind of student would Economics suit?

Economics suits students who:

- Are curious about how the world works
- Have an interest in current affairs and global issues
- Enjoy analysing information and discussing ideas
- Like thinking critically about real-world problems

A **good standard of Mathematics and English** is helpful, as students will work with economic data and need to clearly explain ideas and arguments. Reading outside of the curriculum is paramount to success.



Assessment

There are two assessment components at both Higher and Ordinary Level:

Research Study - 20%

Students complete a research study based on a topic issued by the State Examinations Commission. This involves researching an economic issue, analysing information and presenting their findings. This takes place in 6th year and takes 12 weeks to complete.

Written Examination - 80%

A terminal examination that tests students' knowledge, understanding and application of key economic concepts.



Top Tips

- Keep up to date with current economic news and events.
- Use diagrams and real-world examples where possible.
- Understand how international decisions affect local issues.

ENGINEERING



Overview

Engineering is a two-year Leaving Certificate course comprising **practical, project and written work**, where students develop their knowledge and skills in a challenging and exciting environment.

Advancements in design, technology and global expectations mean engineers are constantly pushing the limits of what can be achieved and are instrumental in shaping the future of the world we live in.

The course develops students' understanding of **engineering processes, design, automation, energy and engineering principles**. Students gain experience in designing, analysing and manufacturing engineering solutions while working in practical workshop environments.



Why study Engineering?

Engineering helps students develop practical skills, creativity and problem-solving while learning how engineering solutions are designed and applied.

Engineers are highly sought-after graduates who work in skilled environments across many industries, often internationally, contributing to global challenges.

They shape the future by developing technologies and innovations that improve everyday life. Engineers create safer travel, cleaner energy, and more efficient systems.

Some challenges engineers tackle include:

- Environmental pollution
- Global warming
- Healthcare improvements
- Renewable energy
- Water treatment
- Flood prevention

Engineering drives innovation and new product development.



What kind of student would Engineering suit?

Engineering suits students who:

- Enjoy **practical work and problem-solving**
- Are interested in **design, machines and how things work**
- Like **working with tools, equipment and technology**
- Enjoy **thinking creatively and developing solutions to real-world problems**

A good standard of **Mathematics and practical skills** is beneficial, as students will work with measurements, calculations and engineering drawings.



Assessment

Students are assessed through a combination of practical work, project work and a written examination.

Design-Based Project – 50%

Students complete a design project where they research, design and manufacture an engineering solution to a given brief.

Written Examination – 50%

A terminal exam assessing students' knowledge and understanding of engineering principles, processes, materials and technologies.



Top Tips

- Develop good **workshop safety habits** from the beginning.
- Practise explaining how engineering processes and systems work.

FRENCH



Overview

French is spoken by over **220 million people in more than 40 countries** across four continents. It is widely used in international organisations, culture, education, and diplomacy, and offers opportunities for travel, work, and study abroad.

To study French at Senior Cycle, students should have completed it at Junior Cycle. Performance at Junior Cycle helps guide the choice of level: students achieving **Distinction or Higher Merit** are recommended for Higher Level French, while others may opt for Ordinary Level.



Why study French?

Studying French opens doors to **culture, communication and global experiences**:

- Travel across **Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas**
- Work with international organisations such as **ONU, OTAN, UNESCO and Croix-Rouge**
- Participate in **ERASMUS programmes** and other international study opportunities

French develops skills in **language, culture, logic and communication**, and enhances future careers in diplomacy, business, education, translation, tourism, and international relations.



What kind of student would French suit?

French suits students who:

- Enjoy **languages and cultural exploration**
- Are interested in **travel, international study and communication**
- Like **reading, writing, listening and speaking** in a second language
- Are willing to **practice regularly and engage with French media**

Success in French requires consistent practice in **listening, speaking, reading and writing**.



Assessment

Assessment at Senior Cycle French is divided into the following components:

Listening – 20%

Students demonstrate understanding of spoken French in a variety of contexts.

Speaking – 20%

Students converse in French, showing fluency and accuracy.

Reading & Understanding – 30%

Higher Level: comprehension of newspapers, extracts from novels, and other texts.

Ordinary Level: understanding simpler texts and materials.

Writing – 30%

Higher Level: essay writing.

Ordinary Level: letter, postcard or note writing.



Top Tips

- Choose French if you enjoy **languages, culture and communication**.
- Think about your **future goals**: travel, study abroad, or careers in international work or diplomacy.
- Be prepared to **practice regularly** outside the classroom to maintain and improve skills.



GEOGRAPHY



Overview

Geography in Senior Cycle is all about helping you **make sense of the world** — from the landscapes you see every day to the big global issues you hear about in the news. You'll learn skills that help you understand real-life problems in your community, in Ireland, and around the world.

The course is organised into **three main strands**, plus a skills strand that helps you use maps, data, and real-world investigation techniques.

Strand 1: The Physical Environment

This part of the course looks at how the **natural world** works.

You'll develop your understanding of key topics that you have already studied at Junior Cycle including, plate tectonics, rivers, coasts, weather and climate.

It's basically the science behind the landscapes you see around you and the natural events you hear about.

Strand 2: The Human Environment

This strand is all about **people and places**.

Like physical geography, you'll explore things that you have already looked at in Junior Cycle, like how and why populations change, why cities grow and how they evolve, how countries use their resources, how economies develop and change etc.

If you're interested in why towns look the way they do, how communities develop, or how human decisions shape the world, this strand will suit you.

Strand 3: The Global Environment

Here you look at current worldwide challenges, such as: climate change, global inequality, sustainability, global interconnectedness etc.

This strand helps you understand **big global issues** and think about **solutions for a fairer, more sustainable future**, which is more important in today's society than ever before.

Fieldwork is a key part of the course and in this new course a geographical investigation will make up 40% of your overall result. For example, previous students investigate geomorphological processes shaping river valleys at sites like Lugduff Brook in Glendalough and write up a detailed field study report.



Why study Geography?

Across all strands, you'll regularly use a varied but unified set of geography skills, such as:

- * Map reading
- * Data analysis
- * Fieldwork techniques
- * Critical thinking

These skills help you apply what you learn to real-life situations and make informed decisions in your everyday life. Even if Geography is something that you do not wish to continue with after school, you will have developed a wide skill set applicable to various areas of work and further education.

Studying geography is ideal if you enjoy exploring the world, asking questions, and solving problems.





What kind of student would Geography suit?

Geography suits students who:

- Are curious about the environment and human societies.
- Enjoy fieldwork, investigation, and working with maps and data.
- Like combining theory with practical skills.
- Work well independently or in teams.

It's a subject for students who want **a mix of scientific, social, and analytical learning.**



Assessment

The new Leaving Certificate Geography course has a more balanced assessment, giving students the chance to demonstrate both knowledge and practical skills:

Written Examination (60 %)

Tests knowledge and understanding across Physical Geography, Human Geography and the larger Global Environment. Students will answer questions on theory, data interpretation, and map and photograph analysis.

Applied Geography Project (40 %)

This is a major piece of work where students **apply geographical skills in a real-world context.** It involves:

- Fieldwork investigations
- Data collection and analysis
- Report writing and presentation of findings



Top Tips

When considering Geography, ask yourself

- Are you interested in **how the world works**, both physically and socially?
- Do you enjoy **fieldwork and hands-on investigation**?

HISTORY



Overview

“Those who don’t know history are destined to repeat it.”

History shapes every individual and society today, and learning from it helps us understand the present and plan for the future. In Senior Cycle, students study **20th-century History** across:

- **Ireland** – key events that shaped modern Ireland
- **Europe** – major political, social, and cultural developments
- **America** – significant historical movements and figures

You will also learn how to **source, collate, and present information logically**.



Why study History?

History is about understanding **people, events, and societies**. Studying it helps you:

- Evaluate sources and evidence critically
- Investigate topics independently
- Present arguments clearly, both in writing and orally
- Understand how past events shape the world today

It equips you with skills that are **highly useful in everyday life and future careers**.



What kind of student would History suit?

History is ideal for students who:

- Are interested in key events, people, and human behaviour
- Enjoy discussing issues that affect society
- Like problem-solving and critical thinking
- Are inquisitive and enjoy debating or arguing a case
- Enjoy reading, writing, and presenting information clearly



Assessment

Assessment for Leaving Certificate History combines **examination and project work**:

Written Examination (80 %)

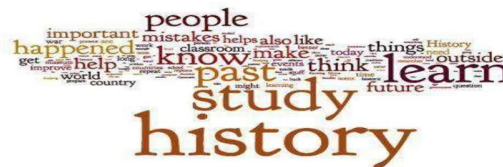
- **Higher Level:** Write 3 structured essays and shorter answers on 2 documents
- **Ordinary Level:** Write paragraphs, short answers, and document-based responses

Independent Research Project (20 %)

- Students choose a topic of historical importance for investigation and report writing
- Past topics at Firhouse Community College have included the building of Auschwitz Concentration Camp and the rise of Fidel Castro in Cuba

Skills Assessed:

- Critical evaluation of evidence and sources
- Organising and presenting ideas logically
- Problem-solving and analytical thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Independent research and presentation



Top Tips

When considering History, ask yourself:

“Do I enjoy exploring the past, analysing evidence, and discussing ideas?”

Studying History develops skills that are highly valued by employers and applicable in many careers, such as publishing, law, insurance, PR, civil service, HR, business, psychology, and teaching.

HOME ECONOMICS



Overview

The Home Economics syllabus (Social and Scientific) gives students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to manage their own lives, succeed in further education, and prepare for future careers. It develops flexibility and adaptability, equips students for a consumer-oriented society, and provides a foundation for careers in food, textiles, science, design, social studies, and tourism.

Home Economics is a practical and applied subject concerned with **managing material and human resources** to meet the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and economic needs of individuals and families. It also emphasises the interdependent relationships that exist between individuals, families, and their immediate and wider environments. Home Economics is a popular and highly rewarding subject choice for Leaving Certificate students.



Why study Home Economics?

Students should consider studying Home Economics if they enjoy **researching, studying, analysing, and interpreting information**. You should be interested in **learning nutrition and culinary skills, communicating effectively, staying organised, and discussing ideas while working in teams**.

The subject combines theory and practice, giving students the opportunity to apply their learning to real-life situations and develop skills that are useful across other subjects like Biology and Business Studies.





What kind of student would Home Economics suit?

Home Economics is ideal for **practical students who enjoy making, doing, and understanding how things work.**

- Completion of the **Junior Cycle Home Economics course** is strongly recommended, as many topics are continued at Leaving Certificate level.
- While the course includes practical skills, much of it is **theory-based**, and students are expected to **write up and present practical work**, as there is no separate practical exam like at Junior Cycle.
- The course suits students who enjoy **learning life skills, researching, problem-solving, and managing resources**, while working both independently and in teams.



Assessment

Leaving Certificate Home Economics (Social and Scientific) is assessed through a **written exam and practical coursework**:

Written Examination – 80 %

- **Section A:** 12 short questions; answer 10, focusing on core areas (60 marks)
- **Section B:** 5 questions; answer Question 1 (Food Science and Nutrition) plus any 2 others from the core areas (180 marks)
- **Section C:** 3 questions; answer 1 elective question based on the chosen elective (80 marks)

Practical Coursework – 20 %

- Completed in journal form and typed up, usually during 5th year

Part of the Core Areas and externally assessed

Core Areas: Food Studies – 45%, Resource Management & Consumer Studies – 25%, Social Studies – 10%

Electives (choose one – 20%): Home Design and Management / Textiles, Fashion and Design (includes garment production) / Social Studies. Here at Firhouse Community College students study the Social studies module as our elective.



Top Tips

Home Economics is a practical and applied subject that **combines theory with essential life skills**. It is ideal for students who are willing to learn and enjoy **hands-on, real-world applications**.

- Develop skills in managing **resources, people, and daily life**
- Build knowledge useful across other subjects like **Biology and Business Studies**
- Combine practical work with theoretical learning for a **well-rounded experience**
- Opens pathways to careers in **Health, Education, Tourism, Clothing and Design, and the Food industry**, including roles such as Chef, Dietician, Nutritionist, Fashion Designer, Home Economics Teacher, Childcare, Interior Designer, and Hospitality Management

JAPANESE

	Overview
Japanese is offered as a Leaving Certificate course for fifth and sixth-year students. The curriculum starts at a beginner's level, meaning you do not need any prior knowledge of the language to enroll. The course is designed to balance practical linguistic skills with a deep understanding of Japan's rich and diverse culture. By the end of the two-year cycle, you can expect to reach a conversational level of Japanese.	
	Why study Japanese?
Choosing Japanese offers unique advantages for both your personal interests and future career: • Cultural Connection: It is ideal if you have an interest in Japanese art, anime, manga, or martial arts. • Global Career Opportunities: Japanese is a highly useful language for international business. There are numerous job opportunities in Japan for English speakers, and Japanese can be continued at third level in university. • Unique Perspective: Beyond university entry requirements, learning a foreign language provides a new view of the world and helps you connect with people from different backgrounds.	
	What kind of student would Japanese suit?
Japanese is a rewarding choice for students who: • Enjoy Language Learning: If you like exploring how languages work, you will find Japanese fascinating. • Are Hardworking: You must be willing to devote consistent time and effort to mastering a completely new writing system. • Appreciate Simplicity in Grammar: Many students find Japanese grammar easier than European languages because it has no irregular verbs, no plurals, no genders, and no future tense. • Have an Interest in Culture: This course suits those who want to develop a good understanding of life in Japan	





Assessment

The Leaving Certificate examination evaluates your skills across several areas:

- **Oral Exam:** Conducted in sixth year, the oral component is worth **25% of your overall grade** at both Higher and Ordinary levels.
- **Reading & Writing:** You will be tested on your ability to read Japanese comprehensions and write **short essays** in Japanese.
- **Writing Systems:** You will learn to navigate three distinct scripts:
 - **Hiragana:** Phonetic lettering.
 - **Katakana:** Used primarily for foreign words.
 - **Kanji:** Chinese characters; you will learn approximately **100 Kanji** over the two years.



Top Tips

If you are considering Japanese, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I interested in Japanese culture?
- Can I commit to practicing new scripts?
- Am I ready to speak from day one?



カタカナ katakana										ひらがな hiragana									
ワ	ラ	ヤ	マ	ハ	ナ	タ	サ	カ	ア	わ	ら	や	ま	は	な	た	さ	か	あ
	リ		ミ	ヒ	ニ	チ	シ	キ	イ		り		み	ひ	に	ち	し	き	い
ヲ	ル	ユ	ム	フ	ヌ	ツ	ス	ク	ウ	を	る	ゆ	む	ふ	ぬ	つ	す	く	う
	レ		メ	ヘ	ネ	テ	セ	ケ	エ		れ		め	へ	ね	て	せ	け	え
ン	ロ	ヨ	モ	ホ	ノ	ト	ソ	コ	オ	ん	ろ	よ	も	ほ	の	と	そ	こ	お

MUSIC



Overview

Leaving Certificate Music encourages students to **develop their musical creativity and potential** through three main areas of study: **performing, composing, and listening**. Each of these components is worth **25% of the total mark**, and the final **25% comes from an elective**, which allows students to focus on the area of music they enjoy or excel in.

Students study all three areas, gaining skills in performance, composition, analysis, and listening, while the elective provides an opportunity to specialise in their strongest musical area.



Why study Music?

Music helps students to:

- Develop musical creativity, technical skills, and a deeper understanding of musical styles
- Express ideas and emotions through performance and composition
- Analyse and appreciate music from different historical periods, cultures, and genres
- Learn transferable skills such as concentration, discipline, and problem-solving

Studying music combines **practical skills with academic learning**, offering a balanced and rewarding experience for all students.



What kind of student would Music suit?

Music is suitable for students who:

- Enjoy performing, composing, or analysing music
- Have an interest in musical styles from **classical to contemporary**
- Are willing to practise regularly and commit to both practical and theoretical work
- Like working independently as well as in groups, choirs, or ensembles

You **do not need to have studied music at Junior Cycle** to take the subject, though prior experience can be helpful.



Assessment

Assessment is designed to allow students to **focus on their strengths**, while still developing skills across all three areas.

Components:

- **Listening – 25%**
 - Study prescribed works (4 set works spanning 1500s–1970s, e.g., The Beatles, Mozart, Berlioz, Raymond Deane)
 - Explore Irish music history and styles
 - Develop aural skills by analysing musical elements
- **Composing – 25%**
 - Melody writing and harmony
 - Create and structure music using chords and musical techniques
- **Performing – 25%**
 - Higher Level: play 3 pieces in one activity or use the music technology option
 - Ordinary Level: play 2 pieces
 - Both levels: perform an **unprepared test**
 - Music Technology: use music editing software to perform or compile backing tracks
- **Elective – 25%**
 - Choose the area of greatest strength: Listening, Composing, or Performing
 - Examples: extended performance, submitted compositions, or prepared recordings

Assessment Format:

- Performing is assessed during a **two-week exam period in March/April of 6th year**
- Listening and Composing are assessed by **aural and written exams** in June, each 90 minutes



Top Tips

If you are thinking of choosing Music, ask yourself if you enjoy performing, creating, or analysing music, and are willing to practise regularly

PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Overview

Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE) develops students into **informed, skilled, self-directed, and reflective performers** in physical activity. The course combines **practical performance with theoretical understanding**, helping students improve their own abilities, analyse performance, and gain insights into the science, psychology, and ethics of sport.

Students engage in a **broad range of physical activities**, including games, athletics, aquatics, artistic activities, adventure activities, and personal fitness, while also exploring the factors that influence participation and performance.



Why study LCPE?

Studying LCPE allows students to:

- Develop **practical and technical skills** across a variety of physical activities
- Understand the **science, psychology, and ethics behind performance**
- Analyse factors influencing participation, fitness, and inclusion in sport
- Apply knowledge in **planning, evaluating, and improving performance**

The course prepares students for **future careers in sports, health, and physical activity**, while fostering a lifelong appreciation for staying active.



What kind of student would LCPE suit?

LCPE is ideal for students who:

- Enjoy **physical activity and a wide range of sports**
- Are interested in the **science and theory behind exercise and performance**
- Like **data analysis, independent research, and problem-solving**
- Are open to **practical and classroom-based learning** (approximately 50% theory, 50% practical)

Students should be willing to explore topics that **impact participation and performance**, from fitness and physiology to ethics, psychology, and social factors in sport.



Assessment

Assessment reflects the balance between **practical skill and theoretical understanding**:

- **Written Examination:** Tests understanding of theory including sports psychology, physiology, ethics, media, inclusion, drugs in sport, gender issues, and components of fitness.
- **Physical Performance:** Students are assessed on participation and skill development in chosen physical activities.

This approach allows students to demonstrate their **strengths in practical performance or theoretical understanding**, while developing critical thinking and self-reflection skills.



Top Tips

Physical Education is ideal if you enjoy **being active, trying different sports, and learning about how the body and mind perform**.

- Develop **practical skills and fitness** across a variety of activities
- Learn the **science, psychology, and social aspects of sport**
- Opens pathways to careers in **teaching, coaching, physiotherapy, sports science, and fitness**

PHYSICS



Overview

Leaving Certificate Physics develops a student's ability to **think logically, observe carefully, and understand the scientific method**. The course combines **practical laboratory work with theoretical understanding** and explores the role of physics in modern technology, society, and scientific discovery.

Physics builds analytical, problem-solving, and numeracy skills, helping students **understand the world through the lens of science** and providing a strong foundation for further study in scientific, technical, or mathematical disciplines.



Why study Physics?

Studying Physics allows students to:

- Develop **logical thinking and problem-solving skills**
- Understand **how the physical world works** and how science impacts everyday life
- Gain experience in **scientific method, experimentation, and analysis**
- Prepare for **further study in science, engineering, computing, astronomy, and technology**

Physics also enhances your ability to **express ideas concisely, reason critically, and apply mathematics in real-world contexts**.



What kind of student would Physics suit?

Physics is ideal for students who:

- Enjoy **mathematics and scientific reasoning**
- Are curious about **how the world works, from mechanics to atomic physics**
- Can work methodically in **laboratories and practical experiments**
- Are interested in **careers or further study in science, engineering, or technology**



Assessment

Leaving Certificate Physics is assessed through a **terminal written examination (60%)** and an **additional assessment component (40%)**.

- **Written Examination:** One paper covering all topics, including:
 - Optics / Waves – light, sound, and real-world applications
 - Mechanics – motion, forces, and energy
 - Heat – energy changes, conversions, and calculations
 - Electricity – circuits, AC/DC, and real-world phenomena
 - Electricity and Magnetism – motors, interactions, and applications
 - Modern Physics – radiation, nuclear processes, and applications
- **Additional Assessment Component:**
 - The AAC brief is given to students in January in fifth year and needs to be **uploaded by December of sixth year**.
 - Students complete a **formal laboratory write up** based on the brief.
 - The AAC assesses students on their **understanding, ability to link and connect, creativity, and research skills**.

Assessment Notes:

- The written paper tests both theory and experimental understanding
- Students must be able to use **formulas, SI units, and significant figures** correctly



Top Tips

Physics is ideal if you enjoy **problem-solving, mathematics, and understanding the physical world**.

- Learn how to **apply scientific principles and mathematical reasoning** to real-world problems
- Gain hands-on experience through **experiments, data analysis, and laboratory work**
- Opens pathways to careers in **engineering, physics, astronomy, computer science, finance, and technology**

POLITICS AND SOCIETY



Overview

Politics and Society is a modern Leaving Certificate subject, first introduced at Firhouse Community College in 2018. The course is structured around **four main strands**: Power and Decision Making, Active Citizenship, Human Rights and Responsibilities, and Globalisation and Localisation.

You will explore the ideas of key sociologists and politicians while examining **how power is distributed in Ireland and across the globe**, and how society functions in both local and global contexts.



FCC students meeting President Connolly and Dublin South-West TDs Seán Crowe, Ciarán Ahearn and John Lahart



Why study Politics and Society?

Studying Politics and Society helps you to:

- **Understand real-world issues:** Examine topics like homelessness, crime, gender equality, and social media influence
- **Develop critical thinking:** Link current events to theories, and explore complex social and political structures
- **Prepare for careers:** Provides a foundation for Law, Policy, Research, Social Work, Teaching, and Politics
- **Gain practical experience:** Participate in projects, class elections, or events such as interviews and guest speakers



FCC students during a radio interview for RTÉ Drivetime



Dáil Quiz finalists 2026



What kind of student would Politics and Society suit?

This subject suits students who:

- **Follow the news and current affairs** and enjoy debating topical issues
- **Want to understand the “why”** behind social, political, and economic systems
- **Enjoy taking action** through projects, campaigns, or active citizenship initiatives

If these describe you, Politics and Society offers a **dynamic mix of theory and real-world application**.



FCC students meeting the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commissioner and Politics Key Thinker Kathleen Lynch



Assessment

Assessment is divided into two main components:

- **Action Project – 20%**
 - Complete a practical project on a real-life issue before the written exam
 - In the past FCC students action projects have included interviewing politicians and guests, organising school events such as mock elections, awareness weeks and townhall meetings
- **Written Examination – 80%**
 - A 2.5-hour exam taken at the end of 6th year, covering all four strands of the course



Town hall meetings with local politicians



Mock elections



Top Tips

Politics and Society is ideal if you enjoy **current affairs, debating ideas, and exploring how society works.**

- Connect **real-world issues to sociological and political theories**
- Develop skills in **critical thinking, analysis, and active citizenship**
- Opens pathways to careers in **Law, Policy, Research, Teaching, Social Work, and Politics.**



Politics students visiting the Dáil



LIFE, COMMUNITY AND WORK

(formerly LCVP Link Modules)



Overview

Life, Community and Work (LCW) is a **two-year senior cycle programme** designed to help students **understand themselves, their communities, and the world of work** while developing the skills needed for future life, learning, and employment. It combines **personal development, community engagement, and workplace awareness** through real-world learning experiences.

The course is organised into two integrated modules—**Me and My Future** and **Community and Work**—with strands such as **Understanding Myself, Progression Opportunities, Appreciating My Community, and Engaging with the Workplace**. Students apply their learning through tasks that build skills in reflection, communication, planning, and decision-making.



Why study LCW?

LCW helps students:

- **Explore personal strengths, interests, and goals** as they plan for life after school.
- **Understand how work, community, and society connect**, and how they can contribute meaningfully.
- **Develop key skills** such as problem-solving, teamwork, communication, and self-management.
- **Prepare practically for future careers and further education** by engaging in real-life tasks and experiences.

This subject bridges classroom learning with real-world contexts, helping students make informed decisions about their futures.



What kind of student would LCW suit?

LCW is ideal for students who:

- Want to **explore their own strengths, values, and future pathways**.
- Enjoy **practical, real-world learning** that connects school with life outside the classroom.
- Are interested in **community involvement, work experience, and personal development**.
- Like to work independently and collaboratively on projects and reflections.

This subject suits students who value learning that **goes beyond textbooks** and helps build skills useful for adult life, further study, and work.



Assessment



Written Examination – 40 %

- A terminal exam that assesses students' understanding of the course content, including learning from all strands and the application of key skills such as participating, reflecting, and applying.
- Questions may draw on real-life learning and the **Applied Learning Tasks** completed during the course.



Portfolio in Action – 60 %

- Over two years, students build a **portfolio of evidence and reflections** showing their engagement with learning outcomes and applied tasks.
- Near the end of 6th year, students respond to a **brief issued by the State Examinations Commission** using their portfolio to produce a multi-modal individual submission.

Grading:

- Distinction: 66 points (80-100%)
- Merit: 46 points (65-79%)
- Pass: 28 points (50-64%)



Top Tips

LCW is taken as an **additional Leaving Certificate subject** and is ideal if you enjoy **practical learning, exploring your strengths, and connecting school with real-life experiences.**

- Build skills in **goal-setting, decision-making, teamwork, and communication**
- Apply learning to **community engagement and workplace experiences**
- Opens pathways to **further education, apprenticeships, and careers in business, social services, and community work**

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU CHOOSE YOUR SUBJECTS

Choosing your Leaving Certificate subjects is an important decision that can influence your future study and career options. The good news is there are lots of helpful tools and websites to guide you!

Key Websites and Resources

1. CAO (Central Applications Office)
 - Explore the entry requirements for all third-level courses in Ireland.
 - Check which subjects are required or recommended for specific courses.
 - Website: www.cao.ie
2. CareersPortal
 - Learn about career pathways, required subjects, and skills for a wide range of jobs.
 - Includes detailed subject guides, future career trends, and real-life stories from professionals.
 - Website: www.careersportal.ie
3. State Examinations Commission (SEC)
 - Provides official subject syllabuses, exam papers, and marking schemes.
 - Helps you understand what each subject involves at Leaving Certificate level.
 - Website: www.examinations.ie
4. NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment)
 - Access curriculum guides and subject specifications for all senior cycle subjects.
 - Learn about skills, learning outcomes, and assessment methods.
 - Website: www.ncca.ie
5. MyFuture Career Resources
 - Offers interactive tools to explore your interests and match them with subjects and careers.
 - Website: <https://myfuture.ie>
6. Subject-Specific Resources
 - Many subjects have official guides, videos, and online resources, for example:
 - Science & Maths: Institute of Physics in Ireland – www.iopireland.org
 - Music & Arts: Music Generation – www.musicgeneration.ie
 - Home Economics & Food Science: Teagasc – www.teagasc.ie

Tips for Using These Resources

- Start with the CAO and CareersPortal to see which subjects you'll need for your dream courses or careers.
- Check official syllabuses on the SEC and NCCA sites to understand what you will actually study in each subject.
- Talk to teachers, guidance counsellors, and current students to get real-life insights.
- Don't rush! Make your choices based on both your interests and future opportunities.

