Senior Cycle Subjects: A Guide for Students, Parents & Guardians





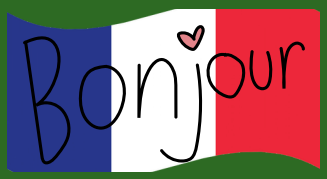






























St. Clare's Comprehensive







Ms. Carden - Guidance Counsellor



Acknowledgement:
Thank you to all of the teachers who contributed to the booklet.

Issue 1 November 2026

Disclaimer: This information was accurate at the time of publication and is subject to change.

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English

MANDATORY



Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Leaving Certificate English develops students' skills in reading, writing, speaking, critical thinking and analysis.
Students engage with a wide variety of literary and non-literary texts and learn to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively.

English is available at Higher and Ordinary Level.

Current Assessments and Examinations:
Current course: English is assessed through two written Leaving Certificate examination papers:

- Paper 1: Comprehending and Composing
- Paper 2: Single Text, Comparative Study and Poetry

Each paper accounts for 50% of the overall result.

What type of student will enjoy studying English?





Senior Cycle Reform:

- The introduction of a new Leaving Certificate English course is anticipated from September 2028 at the earliest.
- The new course will still focus strongly on reading, writing and literature, with students working across the areas of Exploring, Creating, Analysing and Comparing.

Under the new specification, when introduced, assessment is planned to consist of:

- Written examination – 60%
- Comparative Oral – 20%
- Writing Task – 20%

English is a core subject studied by all students. Higher Level is particularly suited to students who enjoy reading, discussion, writing and analysing texts, and who are comfortable developing detailed written responses.





English is required for entry to many third-level courses and colleges e.g. Higher Education Institutions which require three languages.

- **Journalism and Media**
- **Law/Communications, Publishing and Public Relations**
- **Marketing, Teaching and Arts.**



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/english/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Gaeilge/Irish

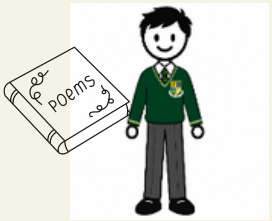
MANDATORY

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle: Irish at senior cycle has 3 components, Listening 10%, Oral 40 % Written paper 50%.

Gaeilge is available at Higher, Ordinary and Foundation Level.



Content:
Oral 40%: x5 Poems have to be prepared and one will be selected by the examiner to read out loud.
X10 Sraith Pictures have to be prepared.
Conversation topics.
Paper 1: Essay/ Paragraph
Paper 2: Literature and reading comprehensions.
X5 poems and x5 stories and HL have a novel to read.





Current Assessments and Examinations:
Aural - Listening Component
Paper 1
Paper 2
+
Orals- Completed during the Easter holidays and conducted by an examiner from the State Examinations Commission.
Listening, paper 1 and 2 .

Senior Cycle Reform:

- A new Leaving Certificate Irish course will be introduced for 5th-year students commencing the senior cycle in September 2028.

Gaeilge is a compulsory subject. You will enjoy studying Gaeilge if you enjoy communicating and being creative. You will enjoy studying Irish if you like learning new words and expressions, developing your speaking and writing skills, and expressing yourself through Irish.





Note: An H4 is required for students who want to study Primary School Teaching.

- **Primary School Teacher, Post Primary Teacher and Lecturer.**
- **Media, Acting, Journalism, Gaeltacht and Irish-language organisations.**
- **Translators, Government and Public Service**



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/gaeilge/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Mathematics

MANDATORY

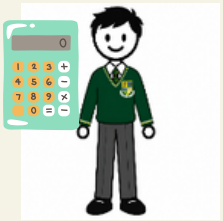
Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
A two year course covering topics Number, Algebra, Functions and calculus, Geometry, Trigonometry,Statistics and Probability. Core skills in each topic are developed and account for half the course and practical Q's on applying these skills make up the other half. Exam can be completed at higher,ordinary or foundation level and there are 2 exam papers to complete for LC.



Content:

- Algebra: Equations, expressions, sequences and functions.
- Functions and Calculus: Understanding, representing and applying different types of functions and their practical applications.
- Geometry: Shapes, coordinates, constructions and trigonometry.
- Statistics: Data analysis, probability and interpreting statistical information.
- Problem-solving: Applying mathematical concepts and reasoning to real-world and unfamiliar problems.
- Probability: Probability is the study of how likely something is to happen, expressed as a fraction, decimal, or percentage.

What type of student will enjoy studying Mathematics?





Current Assessments and Examinations:
LC: 2 written papers 2.5 hours each and worth 300 marks each divided into 2 sections: Concepts and Skills which tests core methods and Practical Applications which tests applying the core methods.

Senior Cycle Reform:

- A new Leaving Certificate Irish course will be introduced for 5th-year students commencing for the students starting senior cycle, possibly in September 2028.





Mathematics is a compulsory subject. You will enjoy studying Mathematics if you enjoy working with numbers, patterns and repeating methods. Spatial reasoning, Problem solving and curiosity, logical reasoning and enjoyment of finding a solution to problems, logical thinking and finding patterns.

Third Level: Mathematics is a required subject for many third-level courses in Ireland. Most courses require a pass in Maths, while courses such as Engineering, Science and Mathematics may require Mathematics at Higher level.
Note: 25 Bonus CAO points for students who achieve a H1 - H6 in Higher Level Mathematics.

- **Accountant and Engineer**
- **Primary, Post Primary School Teacher and Lecturer.**
- **Builder, Mechanic, Chef and Retail Staff**



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/mathematics/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

History

OPTIONAL

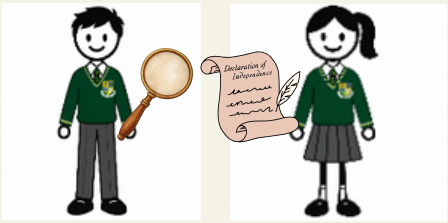
Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Students will study two courses from Europe and the wider world and two courses from Irish History. Students will develop critical thinking and be able to analyse both primary and secondary sources, understand fake news, propaganda and bias.



Content:

- The American History topics include; the Vietnam War, the Montgomery bus boycott and the moon landing.
- Dictatorship and Democracy topics include; Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin, World War 11, the Holocaust etc.
- Irish History topics include; the GAA, Home Rule, the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence, Civil War, the founding of the Free State and Fianna Fail in power.
- An RSR (History project) which is worth 20 % is completed in 6th year. Students choose their own topic of interest and complete independent research under the guidance of their teacher. Most students receive full marks in the RSR. This is pre submitted two months before the written exam in June.

What type of student will enjoy studying History?



Senior Cycle Reform:
A draft LC History Specification has been published but it is still under review. The intended implementation date is September 2027 but this may change after further consultation with teachers. The biggest change is the Additional Assessment Component (AAC) worth 40 % with the final written exam worth 60%.
Irish and international history are still core with an extended timeline to 2009, to include the study of 9/11, the 2008 crash and the GFA.
Women's history e.g. the Magdalene Laundries and traveller history can also be studied.

- There is a commitment to move away from traditional essays to new question types based on examination of sources.
- The AAC will be presubmitted two months before the written exam in June.

History suits students who have natural curiosity about current affairs, an interest in current political leaders,a desire to find out why wars have started and when they will end. It is an ideal subject for those who prefer to understand the 'why' behind events rather than just learning facts.

History is not a mandatory entry requirement for the vast majority of third level courses including History degree programmes. However, History is considered a very useful subject for courses in politics, government and european studies.

http://

LEARN MORE

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/history/

Careers: Historian, museum curator, archaeologist, history teacher, archivist, journalist, lawyer, heritage officer, civil servant, and historical researcher.

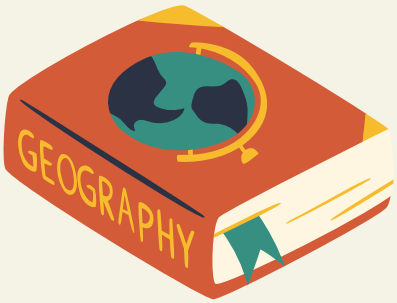




Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Geography





Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Senior Cycle Geography in Ireland involves studying the physical environment, human activities, and how people interact with the world around them. Students learn about topics such as rivers, earthquakes, population, urban development, climate change, and global issues. The subject includes map skills, research, and fieldwork, helping students develop analytical and problem-solving skills while understanding environmental and social challenges.

Content:

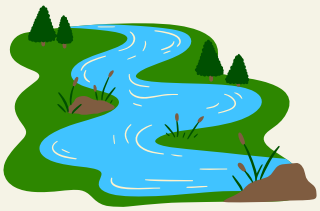
- The Physical Environment - Covers physical processes like tectonic activity, the rock cycle, surface processes (fluvial, coastal and glacial), and weather/climate management.
- The Human Environment - Focuses on human settlement patterns, population dynamics and migration.
- The Global Environment - Explores agriculture, fisheries, tourism, globalisation, and geopolitics.

Current Assessments and Examinations:

40% Practical Component
The examination no longer requires long essay style answers.
Higher and Ordinary levels available.

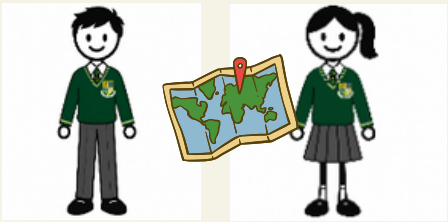
Senior Cycle Reform:
September 2026 – New Curriculum
The practical component will remain, but its weighting will be reduced from 40% to 20%.





- Careers: Geographer, town planner, environmental consultant, meteorologist, cartographer, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) specialist, climate scientist, urban planner, teacher, and travel consultant.

What type of student will enjoy studying Geography?



A student who enjoys learning about different countries, cultures, landscapes, weather, and the environment may like Geography. They may be curious about how people interact with the world, how cities develop, why natural disasters happen, and how human activities affect the planet. Geography may also suit students who enjoy maps, travelling, current affairs, problem-solving, and understanding environmental issues such as climate change and pollution.



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/geography/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Home Economics

OPTIONAL



Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Home Economics is an applied subject combining theory with practice in order to develop understanding and solve problems. It is concerned with the way individuals and families manage their resources to meet physical, emotional, intellectual, social and economic needs. We look at food studies,resource management, consumer studies and social studies.

Content:

- Food studies
- Resource management and consumer studies
- Social studies
- Elective 1: Home design and management
- Elective 2: Textile, Fashion and Design
- Elective 3: Social studies

Current Assessments and Examinations:
At present: 20% practical Journals, 80% written assessment
Proposed change: 40% AAC, 60% written exam

Senior Cycle Reform:

September 2027 (implementation)
Emphasised practical skills, sustainability and updated nutritional standards.

What type of student will enjoy studying Home Economics?



If a student has a keen interest in the area of nutrition, budgeting, consumer studies it would suit a student. If a student is thinking about a career in the area of nutrition, hospitality, culinary, nursing or teaching this would be a suitable subject area.





Career Links:
Home Economics can be used in place of a science subject to gain entry to St. Angela's Home Economics courses. In MTU, Home Economics can also be used in place of a science subject to gain entry to their Home Economics course.

- Careers: Chef, nutritionist, baker, food product developer, teacher, personal trainer, interior designer, fashion designer, social worker.





https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/home-economics/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Biology

OPTIONAL

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:

- Scientific inquiry – asking questions, forming hypotheses, planning investigations and drawing conclusions skills needed for AAC investigation..
- Lab Skills – carrying out investigations safely using appropriate equipment.
- Research Skills – finding reliable sources of secondary data and evaluating information in terms of reliability and using this evidence to support conclusions.
- Data analysis – collecting, analysing and interpreting data, including graphs and quantitative information.
- Problem solving – applying biological knowledge to unfamiliar situations and real-world problems.
- Scientific communication – explaining findings clearly using written, verbal, graphical and the reasons for scientific communication.
- Ethics – considering the ethical, environmental and societal implications of biological issues

Content:

- Unifying Strand: Nature of Science
- Strand 1: Organisation of Life
- Strand 2: Structures and Processes of Life
- Strand 3: Interactions of Life

Senior Cycle Reform:

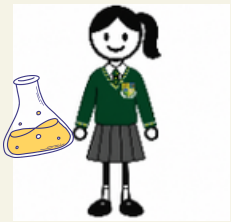
The current 6th years will be the first to sit this exam in June 2027.

Current Assessments and Examinations:
AAC Investigation = 40% deadline 26th February 2027
Exam in June = 60%

Career Links:
Biology links to careers in medicine, nursing, veterinary science, biotechnology, environmental science, agriculture, and food science.

What type of student will enjoy studying Biology?





A student who is curious about how living things work and interested in health, disease, genetics, and the environment. They enjoy investigating questions, understanding real-world issues such as climate change and biodiversity, and exploring how biology connects to medicine, agriculture, and biotechnology.





- Careers:
  Doctor, Nurse, Veterinarian, Biologist, Microbiologist, Geneticist, Pharmacist, Marine Biologist, Environmental Scientist, and Biotechnology Researcher.



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

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Chemistry

OPTIONAL

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Students develop scientific literacy skills and gather/use appropriate primary and secondary data to communicate observations and develop their understanding of chemistry



Course Content:
Four strands:

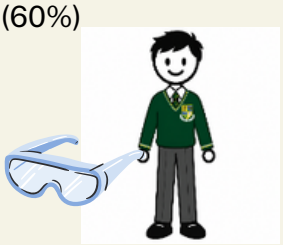
- Nature of Matter
- Behaviour of Matter
- Interactions of Matter
- Matter in our World all underpinned by the unifying strand: The Nature of Science

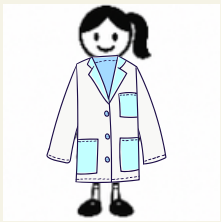
Senior Cycle Reform:

This was a Tranche 1 subject, with changes implemented since September 2025.

Current Assessments and Examinations:
Written examination 2.5 hours at Higher/Ordinary level (60%)
Common level additional assessment component (40%)

What type of student will enjoy studying Chemistry?







Careers:
Chemist
Pharmacist
Food Scientist
Forensic Scientist
Cosmetic Scientist
Chemical Engineer
Environmental Scientist
Medical Laboratory Scientist.



These careers involve areas such as developing medicines and skincare products, analysing evidence, testing food and water, conducting laboratory experiments and creating new materials. Some careers require Chemistry for CAO entry, while others accept alternative subjects, so it is important to check the entry requirements for each course.

Students who like a curiosity in using a range of equipment to investigate the properties and interactions of matter and the ability to use a range of models to analyse ideas and data



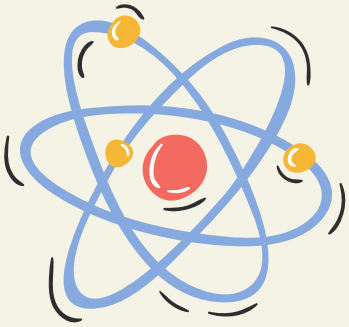
https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/chemistry/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Physics

OPTIONAL

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Students develop scientific literacy skills and gather/use appropriate primary and secondary data to communicate observations and to develop their understanding of physics.



Course Content:
Four strands:

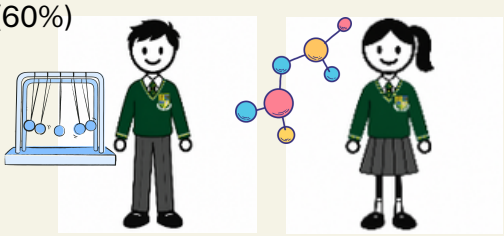
- Forces and Motion
- Wave motion and Energy Transfer
- Electric and Magnetic Fields
- Modern physics

All underpinned by the unifying strand: The Nature of Science

Senior Cycle Reform:
Tranche 1 subject with changes implemented since September 2025.

What type of student will enjoy studying Physics?

Current Assessments and Examinations:
Written examination 2.5 hours at Higher/Ordinary level (60%)
Common level additional assessment component (40%)





Careers:
Studying Physics can lead to careers such as;

- Physicist
- Engineer
- Astronomer
- Astrophysicist
- Aerospace Engineer
- Medical Physicist
- Renewable Energy Engineer
- Research Scientist
- Teacher and Data Analyst.



These careers involve areas such as space exploration, medical technology, electricity, renewable energy, scientific research and the development of new technologies.

Physics is essential or recommended for some engineering, physics and certain science degrees.

Students with an interest in using mathematics to model and problem solve. Curiosity in using a range of equipment to make measurements, verify underlying principles and formulate hypotheses



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/physics/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Business

OPTIONAL



Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Leaving Certificate Business is a practical and theoretical subject that helps students understand how businesses operate in Ireland and internationally. It combines concepts from economics, management, and entrepreneurship, giving insight into how businesses are structured, financed, and managed.

Course Content:
Leaving Certificate Business covers four main areas: Business in Action, exploring business types, functions and the business environment; People in Business, focusing on management, leadership and employee relations; Finance, including accounting, budgeting, taxation and sources of finance; and Enterprise, covering entrepreneurship, business planning, marketing, innovation and business ethics.

Senior Cycle Reform:
Leaving Certificate 2027 will sit the new subject specification exam.

Assessments and Examinations:
Students are now assessed by a 40% AAC and 60% Exam
Ordinary Level (OL): Short-answer questions, case studies, and practical problems.
Higher Level (HL): Longer structured questions, in-depth analysis, and more emphasis on decision-making and application.
Both levels require knowledge of real-life business scenarios and the ability to apply theory practically.

What type of student will enjoy studying Business?





Business is ideal for analytical, practical and creative students who enjoy problem-solving, working with numbers, understanding how businesses operate, and exploring entrepreneurship. It also suits students with good communication, teamwork and leadership skills who enjoy explaining ideas, planning projects and making decisions.





Careers:

- Students considering further study or careers in business, commerce, marketing, management or accounting.
- This subject provides a foundation in transferable skills useful across many fields, including problem-solving, critical thinking and financial literacy.



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/business/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

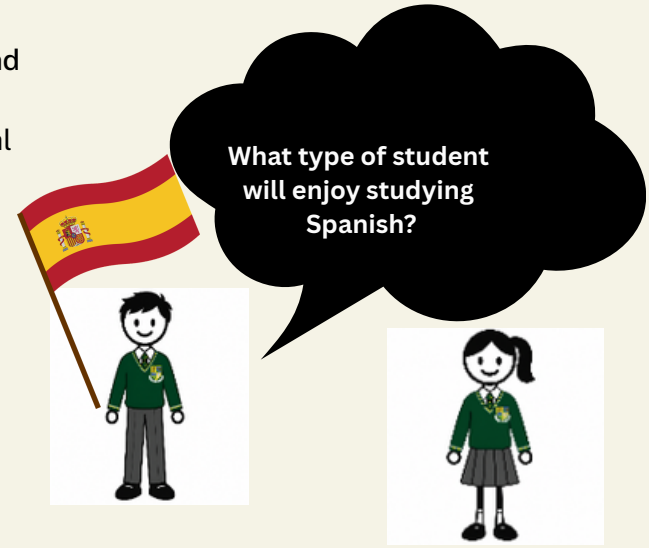
Spanish
Modern Foreign Language





Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Spanish as a Leaving Certificate subject aims to bring students closer to fluency in the Spanish language, as well as developing a good knowledge of literature, culture, and geography to provide a context for communication. As the second most widely spoken native language, and most widely studied language on the planet, Spanish has widespread use in international business. It also makes travel to Spain, Mexico, and most of South America more accessible.

Course Content:
Senior Cycle Spanish focuses on **oral, aural, reading and written communication.** Students study topics such as family, school, daily life, hobbies, travel, holidays, social issues, the environment and current affairs. They also develop grammar, vocabulary and an understanding of Spanish-speaking cultures and traditions.



Senior Cycle Reform:
The reformed LC Spanish specification is scheduled to be introduced into schools in September 2028. It is unclear yet what the main changes will be but their will still be an oral and listening exam.

Assessments and Examinations:
Higher Level: 25% oral exam (Takes place during Easter holidays)
20% listening exam (Part of the state exam)
55% written exam (Comprehensions, opinion piece, letters/diary entries)
Ordinary Level: 20% oral exam (Takes place during Easter holidays)
25% listening exam (Part of the state exam)
55% written exam (Comprehensions, opinion piece, letters/diary entries)

Anyone with an interest in Spanish culture, history, and language.

- Students interested in travelling the world.
- Students who are considering working in Spain (or other Hispanic countries) or
- international relations in the future.





Careers:

- Secondary School Spanish Teacher/Lecturer
- Translator/Interpretor
- Business, Marketing, Diplomacy and Journalism.
- Tourism, Hospitality and Aviation.

*Note: Some universities require students to have a third language for entry to their courses.



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/spanish/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

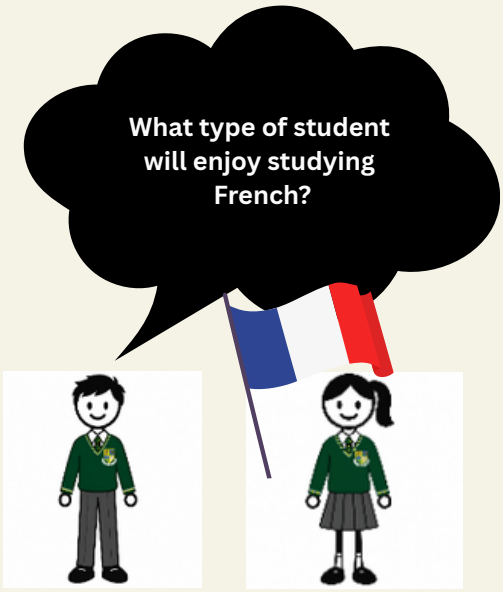
French
Modern Foreign Language

OPTIONAL

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Leaving Certificate French develops students' ability to communicate confidently in French through speaking, listening, reading and writing.



Course Content:
Students explore topics such as family, school, hobbies, travel, technology, the environment and current affairs.
The subject promotes cultural awareness and an appreciation of French-speaking countries.



Senior Cycle Reform:
Leaving Certificate French is due to be revised under Tranche 4 of the Senior Cycle Reform, with introduction planned for September 2028, subject to final approval. The updated course is expected to emphasise communication, practical language skills, cultural awareness and real-life applications. An externally assessed component other than a traditional written examination will be introduced, although the exact assessment arrangements have not yet been finalised.

Assessments and Examinations:
The Leaving Certificate French assessment consists of an oral examination (speaking), an aural examination (listening) and a written examination. At Higher Level, the oral examination is worth 25%, the aural examination 20% and the written examination 55%. At Ordinary Level, the oral examination is worth 20%, the aural examination 25% and the written examination 55%.

French suits students who enjoy learning languages, communicating with others and exploring different cultures. It is particularly useful for those interested in travel, international business, education or working abroad. Students should enjoy speaking, listening, reading and expressing opinions, and be willing to practise vocabulary and grammar regularly.





Careers:

- Studying a language such as French can lead to careers in teaching and education, translation and interpreting, tourism and hospitality, international business and marketing, diplomacy and European Union institutions, journalism and media, international relations and law, aviation, customer service, and technology companies operating internationally.

*Note: Some universities require students to have a third language for entry to their courses.



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/french/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Agricultural Science

OPTIONAL

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science explores the science and technology underpinning the principles and practices of Irish agriculture and the wider agricultural sector. Students take a scientific approach to sustainable food production and resource management, combining practical activities, such as cultivating crops, with data analysis and the study of theoretical agricultural concepts.



Course Content:
Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science covers;

- Nature of Science, including scientific investigation, data analysis and safety.
- Soils, focusing on soil properties and management;
- Plants, including plant biology, crop production and grassland management.
- Animals, exploring livestock, animal biology, nutrition and biosecurity.

What type of student will enjoy studying Agricultural Science?



Senior Cycle Reform:
The updated curriculum specification is scheduled for introduction to schools in September 2027. It reflects a modernised, non-linear approach with an increased focus on sustainability, climate change, biodiversity loss, and integration of key personal competencies.

Agricultural Science suits students who have a strong interest in sustainable agriculture, environmental conservation, and food security, with a preference for hands-on learning, scientific inquiry, data analysis, problem-solving, and developing teamwork and communication skills.

Assessments and Examinations:
Written Examination (60%) - Assessed at Higher and Ordinary levels, testing knowledge across all strands and cross-cutting themes.
Agricultural Science in Practice Investigation (40%):
A common brief-based additional assessment completed over roughly 20 hours. It requires
students to execute secondary scientific research and design/conduct a practical experiment
to collect primary data.



Careers:

- Agricultural and environmental sciences (EPA / Teagasc / Department of Agriculture)
- Food production, quality assurance, and horticulture (Bord Bia / Food Safety Authority)
- Veterinary, animal health, and animal welfare sectors
- Agri-business, sustainability coordination, and biotechnology (Aurivo / FRS)
- Scientific journalism, media, and agricultural policy formulation (Farmers Journal).







The subject provides an excellent foundation for higher education, particularly in science and agriculture-related courses.

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/agricultural-science/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Accounting

OPTIONAL

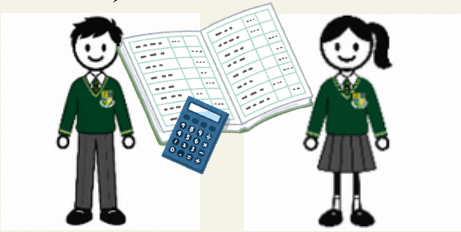


Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Leaving Certificate Accounting teaches students how to prepare and interpret financial statements, manage accounts, analyse business performance and understand budgeting. It develops accuracy, logical thinking and problem-solving skills, providing a foundation for further study and careers in business, finance and accounting.

Course Content:

- Financial Accounting - Double Entry Bookkeeping, Final Accounts (Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet) for Sole Traders/ Companies/ Manufacturing Enterprises/ Club accounts/ Farm Accounts, Cashflow Statements, Interpretation of Accounts
- Management Accounting - Cost Classification, Product costing, Cash Budgets, Production Budgets, Flexible Budgets, Marginal Costing

What type of student will enjoy studying Accounting?



Senior Cycle Reform:
Leaving Cert accounting does not have a definite date for implementation of the reform but it will be no earlier than September 2027.
Key changes include the introduction of an AAC worth 40% of overall grade and the the introduction of digital technology into the preparation of accounts

Accounting is suitable for students who enjoy practical learning, as the subject focuses largely on preparing and interpreting accounts. It is a good choice for students who enjoy working with numbers but does not require Higher Level Mathematics. Basic arithmetic skills, including addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, are sufficient. Good organisational skills and attention to detail are also important.

Assessments and Examinations:
Current Leaving Cert - 100% Written Exam
Reform Leaving Cert - 60% Written Exam, 40% AAC
(Possibly Starting September 2027)





Careers:
Financial Accountant, Management Accountant, Actuary, Tax Advisor, Auditor, Financial Analyst, Financial Controller/CFO, Investment Banker, Forensic Accountant/Fraud Investigator, Financial Advisor, Stockbroker.



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/accounting/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Art

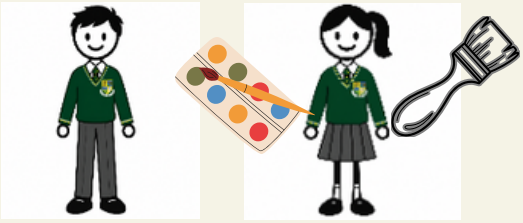
OPTIONAL



Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Leaving Certificate Art is assessed through Visual Studies (30%) in June; which involves researching artists and analysing artworks, and a practical project (70%) in the second year, where students develop ideas in a sketchbook and create two finished pieces using a range of media over 12 weeks.

Course Content:
Students explore a range of 2D and 3D materials and techniques throughout Senior Cycle before choosing their preferred media for their final Leaving Certificate project.
These include drawing, painting, printmaking, textiles, clay, ceramics and sculpture. Art History covers topics ranging from Pre-Christian Ireland to Impressionism.

What type of student will enjoy studying Art?



Senior Cycle Reform:
The current LC Art curriculum was first examined by the SEC in 2022 so it will be one of the last tranches for Senior Cycle reform.
It is envisaged that the new NEW curriculum will first be introduced to schools in September 2028 and first examined in June of 2030. Details of possible changes are unknown at this stage.

Assessments and Examinations:
Leaving Certificate Art is assessed through practical work worth 70%, consisting of a 12-week project (50%) with a six-page A3 workbook and one finished piece, followed by a five-hour supervised exam (20%) to produce a second finished piece. The remaining 30% is a written Visual Studies exam in June, covering contemporary art, Irish art and European art through short questions and essays.

Senior Cycle Art suits creative, imaginative students who enjoy hands-on and visual learning. It develops practical skills in drawing, painting, printmaking and craft, while encouraging self-expression, critical thinking, problem-solving, perseverance and independence.





Careers:
Studying Art can lead to careers in digital and entertainment arts, including animation and game design; graphic, fashion and interior design; fine arts, museum and gallery work; traditional crafts such as jewellery-making and silversmithing; and arts education, administration and art therapy.



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/art/

Students should check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep their future career options open.

Music

OPTIONAL



Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Music at Senior Cycle in the Leaving Certificate develops students' skills in performing, composing and listening to music from a variety of styles and traditions. Students learn to express their creativity, understand musical concepts and appreciate music from different cultures and periods.

Course Content:
The Leaving Certificate Music course covers three main areas: **Performing, Composing and Listening.** Students develop practical musical skills, create their own music, and study a variety of musical styles, genres and traditions.

Senior Cycle Reform:

- The revised Senior Cycle Leaving Certificate Music course is planned for introduction in **September 2027**, for incoming fifth-year students.
- The new course aims to integrate performing, composing and listening more closely, make learning more relevant to students' musical experiences, and develop key skills and competencies.

The reformed LC Music course has two interconnected strands:

1. Strand 1: Exploring and Expressing Musical Ideas: Focuses on active music-making, creative experiments, student compositions, and practical instrumental or vocal performance.
2. Strand 2: Music in Context: Past and Present: Focuses on evaluating societal, cultural, and historical influences on music, analyzing both set works and traditional or contemporary musical styles.

Assessments and Examinations:
Leaving Certificate Music

- Ordinary Level: Choose one area to be worth 50%, with the other two worth 25% each.
- Higher Level: Performing, composing and listening are each worth 25%, plus a 25% elective in one of those areas.



Careers:
Studying Leaving Certificate Music can lead to careers such as music teaching, professional singing or performing, songwriting, composing, music production, sound engineering, music therapy, conducting, DJing, and working in radio, film, television or the music industry. It also develops creativity, teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills that are valuable in many career paths.

What type of student will enjoy studying Music?





Students who enjoy singing, playing an instrument, creating music, and listening to a variety of musical styles will enjoy Senior Cycle Music.



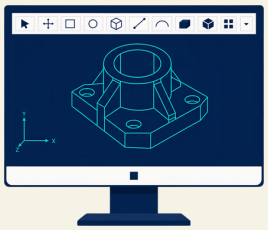
https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/music/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Design & Communication Graphics

OPTIONAL

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
DCG is the graphical representation of maths. Students can expect to learn about geometric principles and the importance design has in our everyday life.



Course Content:
Course content includes:

- Projection Systems
- Plane Geometry
- Descriptive Geometry of Lines and Planes
- Graphics in Design and Communication
- Freehand Drawing and Sketching
- Computer-Aided Design (CAD)
- 3D Modelling using SOLIDWORKS

Assessments and Examinations:
Course assignment
40% - Design project, including a significant compulsory CAD component.

Written examination
60% - Terminal Leaving Certificate examination covering the examinable syllabus.

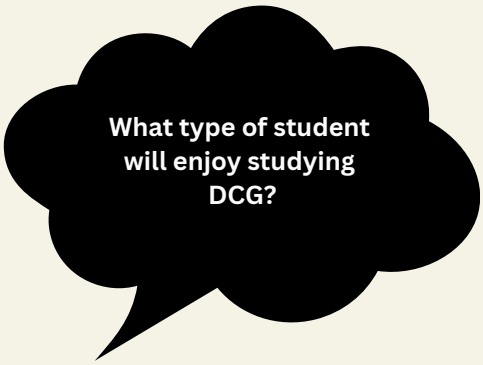
Senior Cycle Reform:
The revised DCG specification is planned for introduction from September 2027. The draft retains a 40% Student Design Project and 60% written examination, but the revised specification and assessment arrangements should be checked for the relevant examination year.

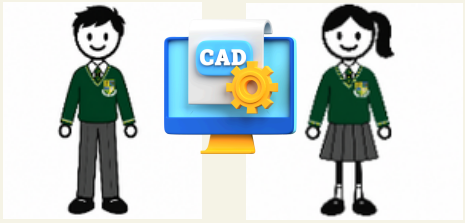




Careers:
Useful for students who wish to study:

- Engineering
- Architecture and Construction
- Quantity Surveyor
- Mechanic /Product Design
- Civil / Structural Engineer
- Game Designer / 3D Animator





Students who like using measured drawings and CAD to solve problems or develop concepts will enjoy studying DCG.



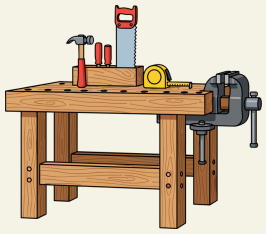
https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/applied-graphics-and-design/

https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/design-and-communication-graphics/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Construction Technology

OPTIONAL

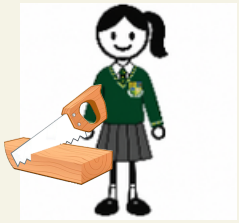


Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Construction Technology at Senior Cycle gives students practical and theoretical knowledge of building and construction. Students learn about building materials, construction techniques, sustainability, and building design, while developing practical skills through project work and hands-on activities.

Course Content:
Construction Studies at Senior Cycle covers building construction, materials, tools, safety, insulation, sustainability and building design. Students develop practical skills through workshop activities and project work, alongside the theory of how buildings are constructed.

What type of student will enjoy studying Construction?





Assessments and Examinations:

Written exam (50%)
Exploring the Constructed Environment (30%)
Craft Skills Assessment (20%).

Senior Cycle Reform:
Construction Studies is now called *Construction Technology and the new specification was* introduced for fifth-year students in September 2026.

Students who enjoy practical, hands-on activities, working with tools and materials, problem-solving and designing or building things will enjoy Construction Studies. It suits students with an interest in how buildings are constructed and an ability to work accurately and safely.





Careers:
Studying Construction Technology can lead to careers in construction, carpentry, architecture, quantity surveying, civil engineering, building surveying, project management and interior design. It can also provide a foundation for apprenticeships and further study in the construction industry, developing practical skills and knowledge that are valuable in a wide range of building-related careers.





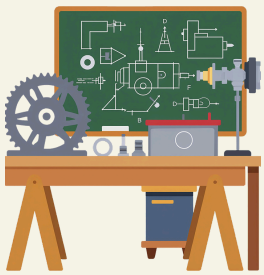
https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/construction-studies/

https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/construction-studies/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Engineering

OPTIONAL



Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Engineering is a practical subject that focuses on designing, making and testing products and structures. Students learn about materials, tools, manufacturing processes, mechanisms and electronics. The subject develops problem-solving, creativity and technical skills through hands-on projects and workshop activities.

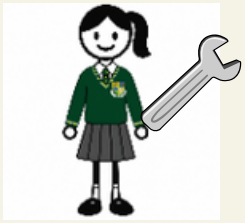
Course Content:
Students learn through doing with note taking and practical based learning; sketching, solid modelling and maths are important parts of this subject.
Course content includes:

- Materials and their properties
- Safe use of machine tools
- Mechanisms and mechanical systems
- Electronics
- Control and power systems
- Working with plastics and metals



What type of student will enjoy studying Engineering?





Assessments and Examinations:
<u>Course assignment</u>
50% - Design project, including a significant compulsory CAD component.
<u>Written examination</u>
50% - Terminal Leaving Certificate examination covering the examinable syllabus.

Students who enjoy hands-on learning and are curious about how things work, particularly machines and mechanisms, may enjoy Engineering.
An interest in materials, maths, sketching and Computer-Aided Design (CAD) is also beneficial.

Senior Cycle Reform:
The new course has two assessment components, replacing the existing combination of a written exam, project and separate practical examination.
Design and Manufacture Project - 50%
An extended project completed during the course, based on an annual brief set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).
Written examination - 50% at Higher or Ordinary Level.

Careers:
Useful for students who wish to study:

- Engineering
- Architecture and Construction
- Quantity Surveyor
- Mechanic /Product Design
- Civil / Structural Engineer
- Game Designer / 3D Animator





https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/engineering/

https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/design-and-engineering/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Physical Education LCPE

OPTIONAL

Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:

Leaving Certificate Physical Education develops the student's capacity to become an informed, skilled, self-directed and reflective physical activity participant through practical application of knowledge and skills.

Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE) helps students become confident, skilled and informed in physical activity. It promotes the importance of exercise for a healthy lifestyle and explores the factors that influence participation.

Students learn about different levels of physical activity, from recreation to high performance, and their benefits for health and wellbeing.

They also develop teamwork and fairness. They focus on personal and social responsibility, leadership and coaching skills.

Performance, self-reflection and independent learning are central to the subject.

What type of student will enjoy studying LCPE /Physical Education?





Course Content:

Leaving Certificate Physical Education develops the students:

Strand 1: Skill learning, participation and performance

Strand 2: Physical and psychological demands of performance

Strand 3: Factors influencing participation in physical activity

Assessments and Examinations:

Students develop their theoretical knowledge and learn to apply it to practical physical activity and sporting performance.

Physical Education Project - 50% (Common Level)

Written examination - 50% (Higher & Ordinary Level)

LCPE suits students who enjoy physical activity and want to understand sport, fitness and performance. It is ideal for those who enjoy a mix of practical and theoretical learning, are interested in areas such as training, nutrition and sports psychology, and are willing to set goals, analyse performance and work independently or as part of a team. Students do not need to be elite athletes; interest, effort and engagement are key.

Senior Cycle Reform:

The new course was introduced in September 2026.





Careers:

- PE teaching
- Sports coaching
- Personal trainers / Gym owners
- Leisure Management
- Nutritionist / Dietician
- Physiotherapy
- Exercise Physiologist / Sport Scientist
- Sports Journalist



https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-subjects/physical-education-specification/

https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/curriculum-developments/physical-education-specification/

Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Life, Community & Work



Brief Description of the Subject at Senior Cycle:
Life, Community and Work is designed to support personal development and prepare you for life beyond school. Through engagement with LCW students will recognise their strengths, aptitudes and interrests and build foundations for future progression pathways, including further education, training and employment. The subject supports the deevelopment of key competenciens such as communicating, working with others, thinking and solving problems. It fosters an enterprising mindset through innovation, resilience and adaptability.

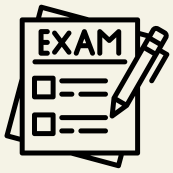
Course Content:
Digital Portfolio - From the beginning of 5th year, students will develop a digital portfolio. This is an individual record of participation, reflection and personal development across the course. The portfolio does not follow a fixed format. It should reflect the learning in a way that is authentikc and appropriate to the activity.

What type of student will enjoy studying LCW?



Senior Cycle Reform:
LCW replaces the LCVP (Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme) for students starting fifth year in September 2026. Students sitting their Leaving Certificate in 2028 will be the first cohort to be examined in the new Leaving Certificate (LCW) course.

Assessments and Examinations:
Portfolio in Action 60%
This is a multi-modal submission completed in 6th year in response to a State Examinations Commission (SEC) brief.
Written Examination - 40%
The written examination assesses your understanding of the strands of study, your engagement with the Applied Learning Tasks (ALTs) and your ability to apply learninh across different contexts.



LCW (Life, Community and Work) is best suited to students who enjoy practical, real-life learning and want to develop skills for life after school.

Important Information:
“LCW is a subject built on participation, reflection and growth. The effort students invest over the two years will shape their results, confidence, self awareness and readiness for life beyond school.” (Caroline McHale)



Curriculum Specification for Leaving Certificate Life, Community and Work

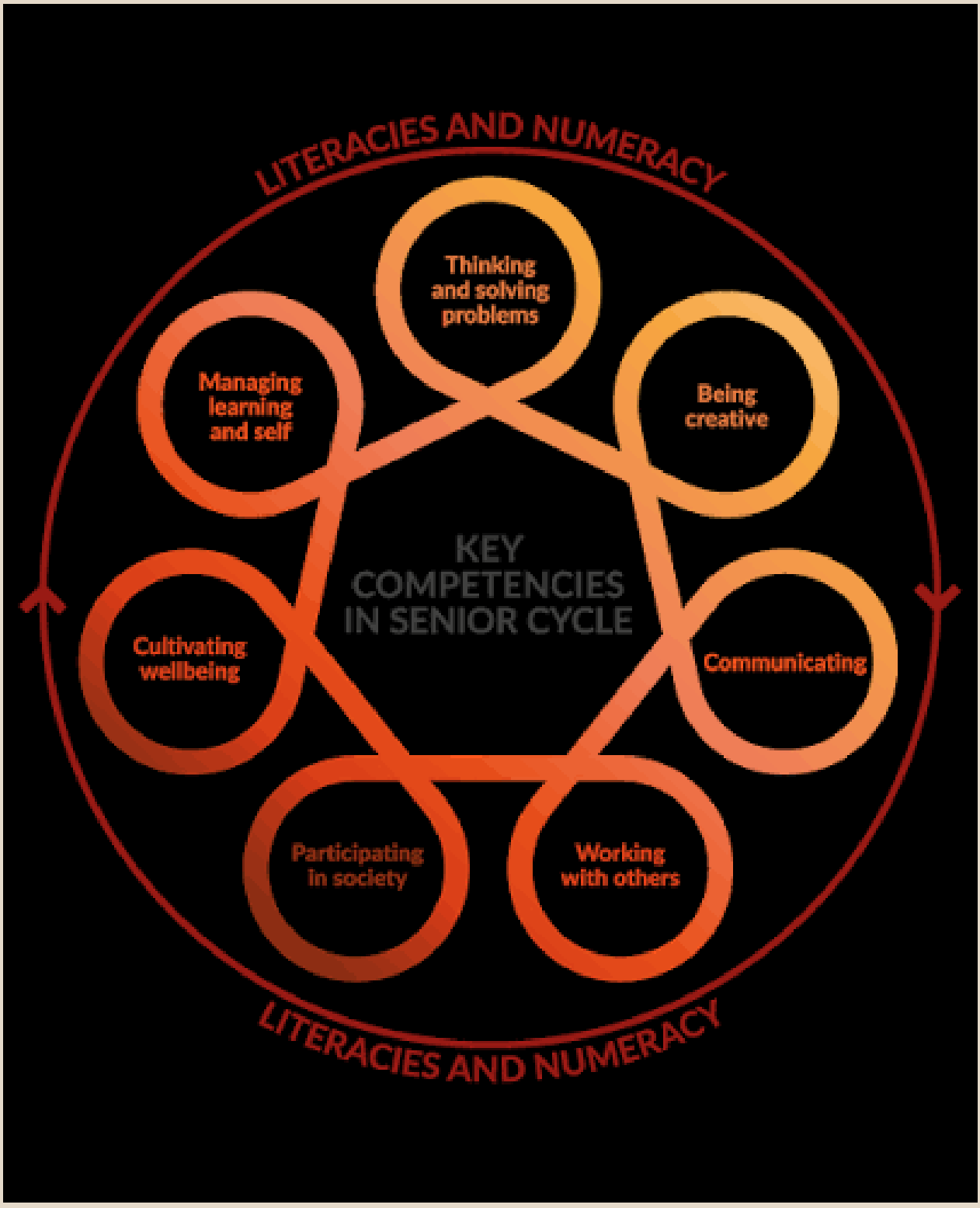
Check course entry requirements carefully and choose subjects that keep future career options open.

Glossary of Terms & Useful Websites

Term	Meaning
Senior Cycle Key Competencies	Core skills, knowledge and values students develop across subjects.
A.A.C.	Additional Assessment Component
S.E.C.	State Examinations Commission are responsible for the development, assessment, accreditation and certification of the second-level examinations
L.C.W.	Life Community and Work (formerly LCVP)
Tranches	The Senior Cycle curriculum will be updated through a phased approach known as ‘tranches.
N.C.C.A.	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment https://ncca.ie/en/
Useful Websites:	https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-redevelopment/
	https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/
L.C.E.	Leaving Certificate Established - Traditional LC
L.C.A.	Leaving Certificate Applied
LP1 and LP2	Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes for students progressing from LP1 and LP2 in Junior Cycle
Student Support File	The Student Support File (SSF) is used to collate all relevant information relating to the student.

Key Competencies in Senior Cycle

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop during senior cycle.



N.C.C.A. Document