

# Subject Choice for Senior Cycle A Guide for Students and Parents 2017



Bronagh Meehan

School Guidance Counsellor



Dear Students,

With the Guidance and support of your Parents/Guardians and myself, you are about to make a very important decision in relation to subject choice. You will be asked to select a number of subjects, usually seven, for your Leaving Certificate.

To make a good decision it is essential to have good information. To help you make the best decision regarding Subject Choice the following has been arranged:

- Information sessions on Subject Choice
- Individual teachers will give information on their subjects if requested
- Follow up information on request from individual teachers
- Individual interviews with the Guidance Counsellor when necessary

I would recommend that you:

- Visit the Careers Library/Computer Facility ([www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie), [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie))
- Consult textbooks and past papers
- Talk to students who have or are presently studying the subjects which interest you
- Discuss Subject Choice with your teachers, parents/guardians

Choose your 'package' of subjects to satisfy your interests and to keep as many career options open as possible.

**Keep the following guidelines in mind:**

- Ensure that you have the essential subjects for your job/course (check Qualifax for matriculation and course requirements) as they can change annually.
- Select your remaining subjects to maximise your results. Look back over previous examinations/tests and school reports to see what subjects you did well in.
- Check college prospectuses and QUALIFAX.
- A third language and a science subject are usually an advantage.

- A pass in Ordinary level Maths is essential for entry to virtually all courses, so whatever you do over the next two years do not neglect your work in this subject.

By getting as much accurate and up to date information as possible you will make a good Subject Choice decision.

If you require any further assistance, please make an appointment to see me.

Best wishes,

Bronagh Meehan

Guidance Counsellor

## **Choosing a Career**

Some people know at an early stage what they would like to be – a farmer, an engineer, a salesperson, a teacher, a builder – but many have no definite ideas about the kind of work they would like to do. One of the principle needs of young people in choosing a career is information on: entrance requirements, opportunities available and awareness of their own qualities, skills and potential.

Good decisions are based on good information. Towards the end of Third Year most young people face the first big decision of their lives; the choice of school subjects. The choice is important because, once made, it may affect the course of their working lives.

It is essential to know the following Entrance Requirements:

- Matriculation requirements (institution entrance requirements)
- Subject requirement for your chosen career
- Academic entrance requirements e.g. New Points system in CAO

## **Points about Choosing a Career**

In choosing a Career you must take into consideration a number of factors including:

- Employment opportunities available
- What you would like to do
- Your talents and attainments in school exams etc.
- General intelligence, physique and talent

## **How to set about Choosing a Career**

A good way to approach career choice is to list on one side your interests and talents: Which school subjects are you best at? Do you write well? Are you artistic? Do you get on well with other people? Do you work best with a group or do you like to work alone on an exercise or a problem? Are you a leader, the kind of person your classmates pick as a team captain etc.? Would you like outdoor or indoor, manual or deskwork?

Against this, list the careers that, at first glance, interest you and the educational qualifications and any particular personal qualities required for each of them. By comparing your two lists, you should be able to narrow down the choice of occupations that you consider would suit you.

A Careers Investigation/Career Interest Inventory should be completed before final choice of subjects is made. Students can access these quickly and easily on ([www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie), [www.careerdirections.ie](http://www.careerdirections.ie) & [www.careersworld.com](http://www.careersworld.com))

## **Application procedures and entry requirements for 3rd Level Colleges**

Information

Application for almost all full-time undergraduate courses (Honours Degree, Ordinary Degree and Higher Certificate courses) in the Universities and Institutes of Technology is made through the Central Applications Office (CAO).

The CAO provides an applications pack (which will be distributed to all students) with a handbook that lists all the courses on offer and gives information on how to apply. The closing date for applications from Irish and other European Union nationals is normally 1 February each year.

A student must also have the particular academic entry requirements needed for the course he/she wants to take.

When choosing your Leaving Cert. subjects it is vitally important that you are aware of the fact that you do need certain subjects in order to apply for particular 3rd level college courses. Below is a brief description of these Subject Entry Requirements and a brief guide to the Leaving Cert. Points System.

## **Entry Requirements for 3rd Level Colleges - Very Important**

There are two sets of Entry Requirements which must be met before a student is eligible for places in 3rd level colleges (i.e. before points can be considered). These are Minimum Entry Requirements and Specific Course Requirements.

### **1. Minimum Entry Requirements:**

These are particular subjects and numbers of honours/passes required to apply to an individual college or university. The following are the requirements of the main colleges in the CAO system; full details of the Minimum Entry Requirements of any particular college you are interested in should be researched in [www.Qualifax.ie](http://www.Qualifax.ie) and the college's prospectus.

2017

HC = Higher Level                      New Grade H1 – H8

OD = Ordinary Level                      New Grade 01 - 08

From this year, the universities and Institutes of Technology have introduced new basic matriculation requirements to take account of the new grade scheme

- Where the requirements pre 2017 were 2 higher level C3 grades and 4 ordinary level D3 grades, have now become 2 H5 and 4 O6/H7 grades.
- Where the requirements were pre 2017 5 ordinary level D3 grades, have now become 5 O6/H7 grades.
- Where the requirements pre 2017 were 3 higher level C3 grades and 3 ordinary level D3 grades, now have become 3 H5 and 3 O6/H7 grades.

### **NUI Colleges (UCC, UCD, NUIG, NUIM) RCSI**

OD3 is now O6/H7 =Irish, English and a Modern Language

- O6/H7-> Irish, English & Modern Language \*
- H5 in 2 higher level subjects and at least a grade H7 higher or O6 in 4 subjects

Important: A Modern Language is essential to gain entry to the vast majority of courses in the NUI universities; however Maynooth have dropped this requirement for their engineering and science programmes. UCD have now also dropped the 3rd language requirement for all their engineering, agricultural and some science programmes.

### **TCD (Trinity College Dublin)**

2017

- O6 -> English, Maths & Another Language
- 3H5 + 3 O6/H7

### **UL (University of Limerick)**

2017

- O6 -> English, Maths & Irish or Another Language
- 2H5 + 4 O6/H7

### **DCU (Dublin City University)**

2017

- O6 -> Maths, English OR Irish
- 2H5 + 4O6/H7

### **INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY (e.g. CIT)**

2017

- O6 -> Maths & English or Irish
- 2H5 + 4O6/H7 (Hons Degree)
- 5O6/H7 (Ord Degree/H.Cert)

## **2. Specific Course Requirements:**

In addition to the minimum entry requirements mentioned above, certain additional subjects may be required to gain entry to specific courses in a college.

Examples of such Specific Course Requirements include:

- Primary Teaching Courses: HC3 in Irish (Higher Grade C3) 2017 H5
- Professional Engineering Hons Degree Courses: HC3 in Maths 2017 H4
- Veterinary Medicine: HC3 in Chemistry 2017 H5
- Many Science, Medical, Paramedical Courses: HC3/H5 or OD3 06/H7 in 1 or 2 Science subjects
- Cadetships in the Defence Forces: O6/H7 in a Continental Language ( . NUI Matriculation)

Details of the Specific Requirements for courses can be found in the 3rd level college's literature. It is vitally important to check these requirements if you are hoping to apply for a particular 3rd level course, so as to ensure you are choosing the appropriate subjects for your Leaving Certificate.

It is only after both of the above sets of requirements have been met are you deemed qualified to be considered for a particular course. If you do not have the right subjects to meet the requirements for a course then you will not be considered even if you have 600 points!

## **NB**

Entry requirements and specific course requirements can change on an annual basis. It is vital, therefore, that the student gets, for himself, the most up to date information from 3rd level websites and prospectuses

Check [Qualifax](#) and the relevant college literature yourself. It's your choice, your responsibility.

## **Subject Matters – A Guide to L. Cert. Subjects**

### **ENGLISH**

Almost all universities, colleges and employers require a pass in Ordinary level English though some will accept Irish instead (e.g. the Institutes of Technology and DCU). English is required to study Nursing in NUI colleges, and the Gardai now require two languages, one of which must be English or Irish. H5 in English is essential for a small number of courses like Journalism, Communications and Speech Therapy.

Useful for: Acting, Advertising, Accountant, Barrister, Broadcasting, Civil Servant, Computer Programmer, Copy Writer, Flight Attendant, Interpreter, Journalist, Librarian, Marketing, Personnel Officer, Politician, Public Relations Officer, Receptionist, Solicitor, Speech Therapist, Printer, Proof Reader, Sales Representative, Secretary, Teacher, Translator.

### **IRISH**

Irish is required for all faculties in the National University of Ireland (UCC, UCD, UCG, NUI Maynooth) and NCAD, but you can be exempt from it under certain conditions e.g. being born outside the Rep. of Ireland or having a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia). Irish is required to study nursing, and the Gardai require at least a B in Foundation or a D on Ordinary (or a third language). Irish satisfies the requirement of a Modern Language for TCD and the Language other than English requirement for UL and DCU. Primary School Teaching requires a H5 in Irish. It is important to check if you need Irish for any course in which you have an interest and – equally important – the required level.

Useful for: Acting, Administration, Personnel in Irish Voluntary Bodies (e.g. Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann), Flight Attendant, Archivist, Army, Civil Service, Broadcasting, Journalist, Local Government, Politics, Printing, Publishing, Teaching, School Secretary.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Mathematics is a requirement for a great number of jobs and courses. Employers in all areas, including apprenticeships, tend to look for numeric skills and expect at least an O6/H7 in Maths. Institutes of Technology require a pass in Ordinary level Maths for entry to almost all of their courses. The universities require an O6/H7 for many of their Science and Business courses reflecting its importance as part of these courses. An O6/H7 is required for entry to Nursing. Higher level Mathematics is required by relatively few courses but it is essential for Engineering Honours Degree Courses: - Engineering, Mathematical, Theoretical Physics and Actuarial require a H4 or H3, again reflecting the crucial role it plays in these disciplines. Foundation Level Mathematics is

accepted by some employers (e.g. Grade B accepted for entry to Garda Siochana) and a very few colleges but it earns no points. Most PLC courses will accept it. But, choose wisely and you can still do an Arts, Law, or a Social Science Hons. Degree. You can also do courses in Music, Art, Drama, Sport or Catering.

Useful for: Accountancy, Actuary, Air Traffic Controller, Architecture, Astronomy, Banking, Biologist, Clerical Work, Chemist, Civil Servant, Computer Operator, Data Input Operator, Economist, Engineer, Engineering Technician, Geologist, Insurance, Laboratory Technician, Maths Teacher, Marketing, Medical Laboratory Technician, Meteorologist, Physicist, Psychologist, Programmer, Quantity Surveyor, Scientist, Sociologist, Statistician, Systems Analyst, Tax Officer, Trades.

### **FRENCH /SPANISH/GERMAN**

In these days of fast international transport and modern communications, knowledge of a foreign language will always be useful. You do not need a foreign language for all third level studies but it is a necessity for entry to the National University of Ireland (UCC, UCD, UCG, and NUI Maynooth) unless you are exempt due to a disability (e.g. a hearing problem or dyslexia). There are a few exceptions like Nursing (all) or Engineering, Science, Law, Business and Finance courses at NUI Maynooth and Engineering and Science courses in all NUI Universities. The other universities will accept Irish as 'a language other than English' for entry. However, many colleges have it as a requirement for specific courses such as European Studies, Languages and Marketing. There are opportunities in the areas of telesales and customer support with many companies locating in Ireland.

45% of Leaving Cert. marks are allocated to aural (tape) and oral parts of the exam.

Higher Level	25% oral	20% aural
Ordinary Level	20% oral	25% aural

A modern European Language (e.g. French) may be necessary for:

- ☐ Tourism
- ☐ Hotel & Catering Management
- ☐ Event Management
- ☐ Army, Air Corps, Navy Cadet ( c.f. NUI Matriculation)
- ☐ Speech Therapy
- ☐ Courses in UCC, UCD, UCG, NUI Maynooth (Exceptions as outlined above)

Useful for: Flight Attendant, Air Traffic Controller, Archivist, Au Pair, Secretary, Chef, Courier, Hotel Reception, International Marketing, Export Careers, Interpreter, Translator, Pilot, Travel Agency, Journalist, Waiter/Waitress, Importer, Librarian, Dept of Foreign Affairs, Teaching.

## **ACCOUNTING**

Extending beyond the actual making of records, i.e. Bookkeeping, Accounting is concerned with the analysis and interpretation of these records. It is an excellent preparation for any business related occupation. Though not essential for entry to any business college, accounting would obviously still be a great help to students wishing to pursue any third level business related course.

Useful for: Advertising, Accountancy, Auctioneering, Auditing, Banking, Bookkeeping, Clerical Work, Company Secretary, Computer Systems, Business Teacher, Administration, Management, Receptionist, Insurance, Market Research, Purchasing Officer, Quantity Surveyor, Sales, Taxation Consultant, Marketing, Business Law.

## **BUSINESS**

Business is concerned with how organisations are formed, financed and run, looking at the services involved such as banking, transport, taxation and semi-state organisations. It provides an excellent foundation for anyone contemplating a business career. Though like Accounting it is not an essential subject for any course, it would still be very useful.

Useful for: Industry, Business, Accounting, Banking, Bookkeeping,, Clerical work, Business Teacher, Administration, Hotel Management, Insurance, Receptionist, Store Management, Stock broking, Sales, Marketing, Merchandising, Purchasing Officer, Customs & Excise, Taxation, Law.

## **Economics**

Economics as a science has scope, purpose and limitations. Basic economic concepts will be covered such as wealth, income, welfare, scarcity, choice, wants, needs, goods and services, utility, production, consumption and exchange, opportunity cost, diminishing returns, open and closed economics. While ordinary and higher level pupils cover the same ground, the latter will be expected to have a wider knowledge and deeper understanding than the pupils who present at ordinary level

## SCIENCE SUBJECTS

### PHYSICS/CHEMISTRY/BIOLOGY/AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE

Not all Science courses available at third level require a Science subject, but you would be well advised to do one if you were at all interested in anything in the Science, Medical, Paramedical, Nursing, Engineering or Technology areas.

#### 2 Science Subjects required for:

☐ Some Science based courses at Trinity College, e.g. Physiotherapy, Pharmacy, Medicine, Dental Science, Human Genetics (in some cases they require Higher B's or C's, some will accept Maths, Applied Maths and Geography. The requirements are quite detailed so check the College Prospectus).

☐ Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy in UCC. (H3 in Chemistry and either Physics or Biology)

#### A Science Subject is essential for certain courses:

The N.U.I. Universities; UCC, UCD, UCG. and Maynooth require a Science subject - Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Physics with Chemistry, or Agricultural Science - (usually HC) for entry into the faculties of:

- ☐ Science
- ☐ Technology
- ☐ Nursing
- ☐ Veterinary
- ☐ Medicine/ Dentistry/ Pharmacy (Chemistry and Biology or Physics)
- ☐ Radiography
- ☐ Physiotherapy
- ☐ Occupational Therapy
- ☐ Speech and Language Therapy
- ☐ Human Nutrition
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Architecture
- ☐ Veterinary Medicine

## ☐ Agriculture

All Engineering and Science courses (UL)

Industrial Design ( UL and NCAD)

Environmental Health, Food Technology, Health Care Technology, Environmental Resource Management (DIT)

Medical Laboratory Science (CIT)

Home Economics Teaching

Nursing

## **BIOLOGY**

Biology is the science of life and living things from micro-organisms to humans. It forms a knowledge base for hundreds of careers ranging from oceanography and ecology to medicine and biotechnology. Though not a specific requirement for entry to Nursing a student interested in this career would be well advised to study Biology. Students taking Biology as an elective for Home Economics Teacher Training in St. Angela's must present Biology at OD or higher. Subject requirements for science, medical and paramedical courses in Trinity College are quite complex, so it is essential that you check their current prospectus and Qualifax.

Useful for: Agriculture, Animal Breeder, Animal Nursing, Ambulance Driver, Beautician, Biochemist, Biologist, Catering, Chiropody, Conservation Work, Dentist, Dietician, Farmer, Food Science, Doctor, Hairdressing, Health Inspector, Horticulturist, Laboratory Technician, Marine Biologist, Microbiologist, Nursing, Pharmacist, Physiotherapist, Psychologist, Science Teacher, Speech Therapist, Veterinary Surgeon, Zoologist.

## **PHYSICS**

Physics deals with the laws and forces governing natural phenomena and includes heat, light, electricity and magnetism. It is of key importance in technology and particularly relevant for those interested in specialising in most branches of engineering. In most engineering courses, one will find a high physics content, while some paramedical careers will involve the study of it, e.g. Radiography, Physiotherapy, etc. It is an essential requirement (H3) for Theoretical Physics (Trinity College) .

Anyone considering a career in Electronics should be encouraged to do Physics.

Useful for: Architecture, Astronomy, Biophysicist, Computer Careers, Dentist, Doctor, Engineer especially electrical and electronic, Geophysicist, Health Inspector, Laboratory Technician, Marine Radio Operator, Meteorologist, Naval Services, Nurse, Oceanographer, Optician, Pharmacist, Physicist, Physics Teacher, Pilot, Radiographer, Scientific Research, Telecommunications, various trade Apprenticeships, Ventilation and Heating technicians.

### **Chemistry**

Course consists of pure chemistry(70%) and social and applied aspects of chemistry(30%). As well as theory to learn there are also mandatory practicals that must be carried out- 28 at higher level, 21 at ordinary level. There are two main differences between higher and ordinary level. (1) The range of topics and (2) The depth of treatment. Leaving Cert. Chemistry is a course that requires consistent hard work in class, quite an amount of definition and theory learning at home and an ability to grasp abstract ideas. Calculations are involved but are straightforward. Good grades are very achievable at both levels, if students are focused.

Useful for: Human Nutrition and dietetics, Medicine, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, Biotechnology, Clinical Speech and Language Studies, Dentistry, Dental Hygiene, Earth Sciences, Electronics, Engineering, Chemical Sciences with Medicinal Chemistry.

### **Agricultural Science**

Agricultural Science is the application of science and other disciplines (e.g. business) to the production of quality food. It encompasses a range of services provided to farmers and food producers to ensure quality standards and profitable production systems.

Useful for: Careers in sectors such as food, agriculture, business and services include:

- Enterprise management
- Technical service & consultancy
- Research
- Education
- Marketing & communications
- Primary production of quality food & fibre products

### **GEOGRAPHY**

Geography is concerned with the interrelationships between human activities and the physical environment. Geography includes the study of population, farming, industry, pollution, statistics, resources, landscapes, and communications. For both Pharmacy and Science in TCD it is accepted as one of the HC's in science subjects.

Useful for: Civil Engineering, Construction, Town Planning, Architecture, Meteorology, Surveying, Agriculture, Auctioneering, Archaeology, Horticulture, Forestry, Conservation Work, Statistics, Marine Officer, Geologist, Geography Teacher, Naval Officer, Quantity Surveyor, Tourism and Travel.

A good History or Geography Student shows:

- An interest in the world as it is now and how it came to be so.
- A thirst for knowledge to explain and explore the current situation.
- An ability to express themselves accurately and to support their arguments with relevant information.
- An appreciation of historical sources and a geographers understanding of causes.
- An interest in reading and watching relevant programmes on TV and video.

## **HISTORY**

History embraces the world of politics, economics, religion and philosophy. It can be a most enjoyable challenge, developing skills such as identifying main issues, critical analysis and the ability to select relevant information.

Useful for: Archaeology, Barrister, Broadcasting, Civil Service, Gardai, History Teacher, Journalism, Librarianship, Local Government, Politics, Researcher, Social Work, Solicitor, Tourism, Writer.

## **Technology**

Technology gives the students a basic understanding of the principles of engineering, design and project management. If you enjoyed the technology programme at Junior Certificate level and enjoy hands – on activity, you may develop an interest in a career in engineering or technology if you decide to study this programme. This is both a theoretical and practical subject. The theoretical material covers – Material Technology, Structures, Electricity, Electronics and Control, Mechanisms, Project Management, Quality Management, Health and safety, Information Communication Technology and a Design Portfolio. The Practical Material consists of constructing a fully functioning 3 dimensional model for a specific brief.

Useful for: Science with Nanotechnology, Science with concurrent Teacher Education, Product Design and Technology, Physics Technology, Electronics, Engineering, Energy.

## **Music**

The main aim of Leaving Certificate music is the development of the student's skill in the main facets of music: listening, composing and performing.

The listening and composing elements account for 50% of the overall mark and performance makes up another 25%. After this the student can decide to specialise in a performing, composing or listening elective for another 25%. There are two written papers each worth 100 marks. Paper 1 is a listening paper. Students study four large scale pieces in great detail. Paper two is a composition paper where students must compose a melody and set harmony to another melody. Most students choose to complete their elective in performance (giving them up to 50% before attempting the written papers). Students can perform in a variety of styles and in a variety of ways. Students can also choose a music technology option as part of their practical exam.

Useful for: Education, Religion and Music – Second Level Teaching, Music Applied, Music, Media and Performance Technology, Music Manager, Music Therapist, Musical Instrument Technician, Musician.

## **Art**

The Leaving Certificate Art course is made up of four units. These units should be linked together and based on the everyday visual experience of the student's own environment. All students, both at higher and ordinary level, follow a common course. The practical work includes Life Sketching, Still Life, Imaginative Composition, Design and Craft Work.

The History of Art and appreciation is a broad course covering Irish and European Art and also Art Appreciation. It requires looking at artworks through the use of reproductions, art galleries, reading books and writing essays on different art/design topics. The standard and quality of work determine the different levels of Honours or Pass.

Useful for: Art Teaching, Design – Visual Communications, Graphic Design, Architecture, Fashion Design, Industrial Design, Product Design and Technology, Art Director, Film Animator, Makeup Artist Photography, Art History, Antique Specialist, Television Graphic Artist, Textile Artist.

## **Home Economics**

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.

Home economics focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of skills and attitudes that will enable students to take control of their own lives at present and in the future whether that be in home, in further education, in the world of work, or other life situations.

It prepares students both male and female to become flexible and adaptable to the changing situations of modern life.

Useful for: Food Innovation, Home Economics Teaching, Food and Management Science, Veterinary Nursing, Childcare , Consumer Education, Fashion and Textiles, Food and Nutrition, Housing and Furnishings, interior design, Health, Food Science, Dietetics and Nutrition, Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation, Education and Teaching, Social work.

## **Religion**

Religion at Leaving Certificate Level builds on many areas studied in Junior Cert. The course covers a wide range of topics. Moral decision-making, Christianity, Religion and Gender, Worship, Prayer, Ritual, Meaning and Values, Bible. The course develops many of the skills required in both third level and world of work for example research, problem solving, enquiry, analysis and critical thinking.

.Useful for: Media-broadcasting, Journalism, Public Relations, Law, Marketing, Teaching, Theology courses in the Pontifical University St Patrick's College Maynooth and St Patrick's Campus DCU.

## **DCG**

Leaving Certificate **design and communication graphics** involves comprehending, analysing and **communicating** information presented verbally or graphically. Problem solving and creative thinking skills are developed through the analysis and solution of problems in both two and three dimensions **graphics**

Useful for: Any Trade, Graphic Designers, Engineering,Architecture, Geology,Surveying, Product Designers, Construction Studies, Metal/Wood/Technology Teaching, Design and Communication Graphics, Eucation Management

## **FURTHER EDUCATION COURSES**

There is no central applications body for Further Education Courses (Formerly PLC's) courses. Students must apply directly to the individual colleges. Places on FEC courses are not allocated on the basis of points, but applicants must be of Leaving Certificate or Leaving Certificate Applied standard. Most colleges interview candidates to determine their suitability.

### **Summary of Points system:**

The Points System is basically a selection system used to select students for a course when there are more qualified applicants than places on the course. Qualified here means they have satisfied both sets of 'Entry Requirements' (mentioned earlier) for the course.

A student's points total is calculated from his/her six best subjects.

Points are calculated from one sitting of the Leaving Cert. only, in other words you cannot combine Leaving Certs for the calculation of points.

### **The New CAO Points Scale**

The new [CAO](#) scale is part of a series of inter-related reforms focusing on the transition from school to college, and designed to take some of the heat out of the points race.

The points changes are directly linked to an overhaul of the previous Leaving Certificate 14-stage grading system, stretching from A1 to NG (No Grade), at both higher and ordinary level.

From 2017, there will be only eight bands, at each level, in the grading system - H1 to H8 and O1 to O8. Scores of between 30-39pc will be awarded a H7 and be worth 37 points.

Currently a mark of 5pc generally separates Leaving Cert. grades - eg, a B3 is 70-75pc and a B2 is 75-80pc – but under the new system, a grade will cover a 10pc stretch of marks, such as 70-80pc for a H3.

Arising from that, the CAO scale has undergone a significant revamp. The top of the scale will continue to be 100 but it will no longer go down in standard steps of five or 10 points.

In what is known as a non-linear scale, different increments will be used between each grade and while a H1 (90-100pc) will attract 100 points, a H2 (80-90pc) will get 88 points and a H3 (70-80pc) will be worth 77 points.

A H4 will be worth 66 points. A H5 will be 56 points and a H6 46 points. There will be no points for a H8.

The H7 will be equivalent to O3, which will also attract 37 points. An O1 will be worth 56 points the same as a H5.

Because points are currently awarded in multiples of five only, a relatively large number of students can bunch on the same score, which can result in CAO applicants with the same points subjected to random selection for a college place.

The new scale means that any points score between 0 and 625 is possible, which will allow for greater differentiation between individual students when it comes to competing for college places.

### Changes to the Common Points Scale

The table below shows the revised CPS that will be introduced from 2017:

NEW GRADES	% MARKS
H1 / O1	90-100
H2 / O2	80<90
H3 / O3	70<80
H4 / O4	60<70
H5 / O5	50<60
H6 / O6	40<50
H7 / O7	30<40
H8 / O8	0<30

Higher		Ordinary	
Grade	Points	Grade	Points
H1	100		
H2	88		
H3	77		
H4	66		
H5	56	O1	56
H6	46	O2	46
H7	37	O3	37
H8	0	O4	28
		O5	20
		O6	12
		O7	0

Choosing subjects does not necessarily mean that you will be able to study them for the Leaving Cert. School Principals have to match the numbers taking various subjects with available staff. It may happen that not enough students opt for a certain subject so a class cannot be formed. Such a subject is then dropped from the options. So it is important to have a substitute choice that you have researched and that you are happy with should one of your choices prove not to be feasible. Your school has also to put choices in various groupings so you may find that two of your chosen

subjects are in the same group and you may only choose one of them. So the message is be aware of any potential difficulties that may arise.

### **Subject Level**

Having chosen one's subjects the next step is to decide at what level one is going to study them. Having carefully examined one's Mock Junior Certificate results you must honestly assess where your potential lies. If one feels one is an honours student and one is willing to put in the study over the two years required to get a good result then one should start with all your subjects at honours level.

Remember that it is easier to drop to a lower level if your teacher, parents and above all you agree that it is the right move, than to find that the pass class is too easy and one needs to move to honours.

Your Principal and teachers like to see students working to their potential but sometimes movement between pass and honours classes is restricted simply because there is no place available. So the message is; start at the higher level and keep the head down.

### **Senior Cycle Subjects at De la Salle College.**

The following subjects are compulsory:

Irish, English, Maths, Physical Education, Religion, Guidance.

Students may choose from the following list of subjects:

Accounting/ Business/ Economics

Chemistry/ Ag. Science/Biology/Physics/Applied Maths

Art

French/Spanish/German

Geography

History

Technology

Home Economics

Music

Religion

Design and Communication Graphics

## **Subject Choice**

Students are invited to choose the 4 subjects they are interested in studying. De La Salle will try its best to accommodate the students' choices but unfortunately this is not always possible because of time table constraints.

It is advised that students select subjects that they like and those that they are good at. Having a genuine interest in the subjects you are going to take for the Leaving Cert. is very important. It can be difficult enough at the best of times to motivate yourself to study, but it can be twice as difficult if you are studying subjects which you don't particularly like.

Students are normally expected to choose seven subjects.

Recap: Beyond the core essential subjects of English, Irish and Maths there are relatively few demands in terms of essential subjects for courses and jobs. If you are considering going to any of the National Universities of Ireland (UCC, UCD, UCG, NUI Maynooth) a third language must be among your chosen subjects. Likewise, if you are considering Medical, Paramedical, Nursing, Science or Engineering Hon. Degrees you must have a science subject (two for some courses). All Engineering Hons Degree courses require a H4 in Maths. What particular grades you need to have in these or other required subjects will be detailed in Qualifax and the prospectuses from the colleges. Make sure you consult these.

When you have made your final selection you should examine them very carefully to see that you have kept your career options open. You should check to see if you have the essential requirements for third-level courses in which you have an interest. It is too late finding out in your Leaving Certificate year that you do not have an essential subject when you come to fill out your CAO form.

The details given in these pages are not intended to be exhaustive; they merely highlight the complexity of subject requirements.

## GUIDE ME OH LORD

GUIDE ME OH LORD,  
YOU ARE MY HEART,  
YOU ARE MY  
STRENGTH, YOU ARE  
MY HOPE. TEACH ME  
OH LORD, AND GUIDE  
MY WAY IN  
EVERYTHING. I LOVE  
YOU MORE EACH  
PASSING DAY. THANK  
YOU FOR YOUR  
GUIDANCE IN JESUS  
NAME I PRAY.

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