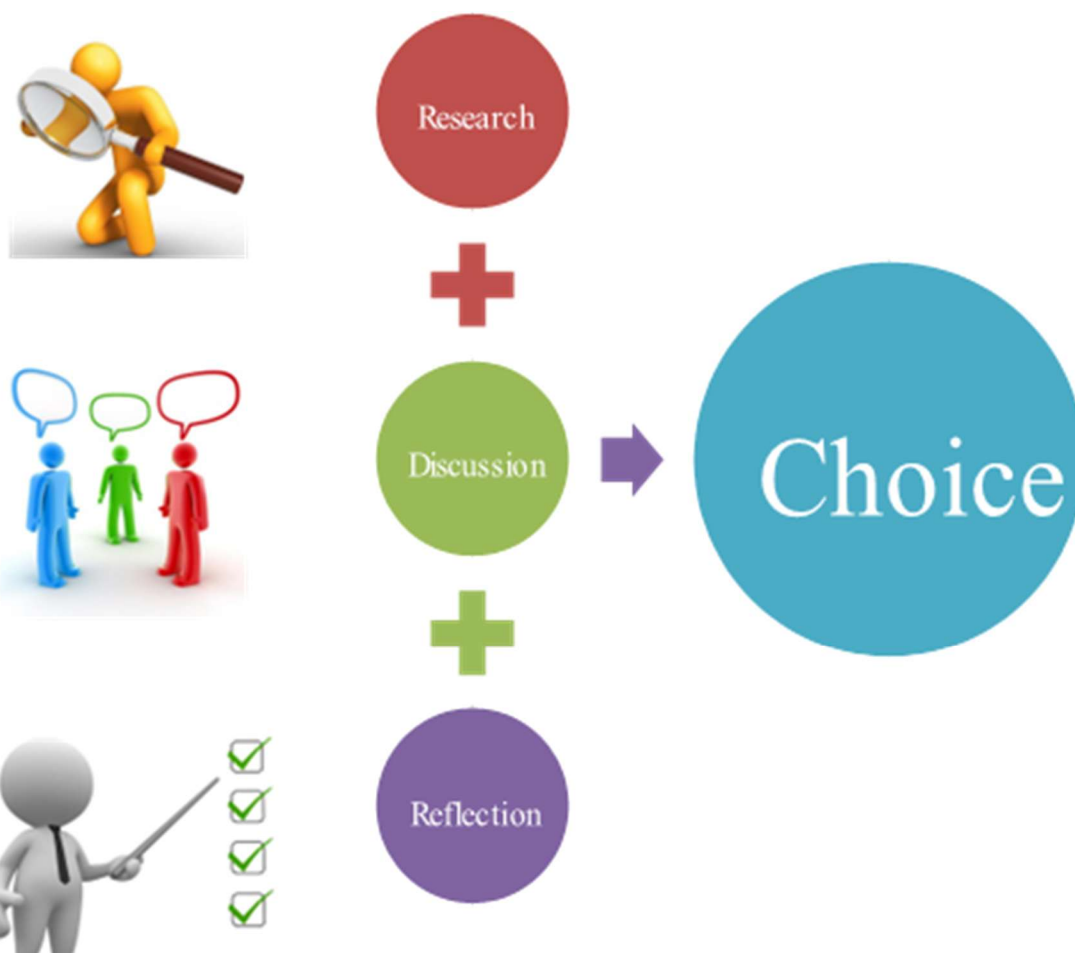




Ballyhaunis
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Senior Cycle

Subject Choice Information Booklet



Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to provide students with the necessary information to choose subjects for the Leaving Certificate which suit their needs and interests. Choosing subjects to study in the Leaving Certificate is not easy, and students must consider their possible future careers when doing so. The end of both Third Year and Transition Year are big milestones in a student's educational life and the choices they make now will have implications for their future career. For this reason, it is important that they take their subject choices seriously. Consultation with teachers, parents/ guardians, senior cycle students, family and the guidance counsellor are essential. A student should never choose a subject without knowing what he/ she will be studying. It is important to note that some future careers require certain subjects at leaving certificate (e.g., medicine requires a strong knowledge of chemistry).

We at Ballyhaunis Community School, must ensure that each student is informed about the subjects available to them. However, students must also take a certain level of responsibility for their career development and should speak to their teachers and parents about these choices. There are many factors which must be considered when choosing subjects, most notably whether you like the subject or not and, of course, your ability in the subject.

Students should consider their possible or preferred future career when making these choices. Research into college courses which may lead to these careers will reveal the essential subjects required, and these are the minimum entry requirements.

We at Ballyhaunis Community School believe that informed subject choices are crucial to this success. The remainder of this booklet will explain the process involved in making subject choices and will provide detailed information on each subject available in the school, both compulsory and optional.

Irish Leaving Certificate Examination Points System

Throughout Junior Cycle you were used to receiving the following grades;
Distinction, Higher Merit, Merit or Achieved.

For senior cycle this all changes and now you will be looking at grades differently. You will now have higher and ordinary level papers and based on your percentage you will be awarded points. For example, if you look at the table below, if you get a H1 in higher level paper you get 100 points whereas if you get an O1 in an ordinary paper you get 56 points.

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
		O8	0

Notes:

- If you take Higher Maths and get a H6 or more, your maths score will include an extra 25 bonus points
- You add up your six highest scoring subjects to get your final CAO Points
- Your bonus points in maths can only be counted if the total for maths (points + bonus points) is one of the six highest subjects used to calculate the total (which it usually is, but not always)
- If you opt to take Life, Community & Work, formally LCVP, the following table shows how it is marked and the points that are awarded to it.

Life, Community & Work, formally (LCVP)	Grade	Points
	Distinction	66
	Merit	46
	Pass	28

Subjects Offered at Senior Cycle in Ballyhaunis Community School

Compulsory Subjects

English
Irish (Unless exempt based on a number of criteria)
Mathematics

Choice Subjects

Modern Foreign Languages

French

Social Studies

History
Geography

Humanities

Business
Accounting

Applied Science/ Technical

Construction
Engineering
Design & Communication Graphics (DCG)

Art/Music

Music
Art and Design

Science subjects

Biology
Chemistry
Phys/Chem
Agricultural Science
Computer Science
Physical Education
Social and Scientific (Home Economics)

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (**LCVP**) will now be called Life, Community and Work (LCW)

Information on Each Choice Subject

French

French as a Leaving Certificate subject aims to bring students closer to fluency in the French language, as well as developing a good knowledge of literature, culture, geography and national history. Senior Cycle French builds on the knowledge acquired for the Junior Certificate.

French	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 55% of Marks	1 Paper - 55% of Marks
Oral	- 25% of Marks	- 20% of Marks
Aural	- 20% of Marks	- 25% of Marks

Geography

Geography is the study of people, their environment, and the interaction between the two. The course follows from Junior Cert Geography, and covers very similar topics (such as rocks, soils, oceans, population movements, map-reading, and economic activities) in a lot more detail.

Geography	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 60% of Marks	1 Paper - 60% of Marks
Applied Geography Project	Project – 40% of Marks	Project - 40% of Marks

History

History aims to record and analyse things which have happened in the past, with an emphasis on both how and why events occurred. It deals with human experience and involves an investigation of the surviving evidence relating to such experience.

History	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 80% of Marks	1 Paper - 80% of Marks
Project	Project - 20% of Marks Due Easter of 6th Yr.	Project - 20% of Marks Due Easter of 6th Yr.

Business

Leaving Certificate business creates an awareness of the importance of business activity and develops a positive and ethical attitude towards enterprise. The learning experiences in business develop students' critical thinking, creative and organisational skills while enhancing literacy and numeracy skills using real-life examples. Business provides students with a learning foundation for a wide range of careers in business, marketing, law, enterprise and management.

Business	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 60% of Marks	1 Paper - 60% of Marks
Business Alive Investigation study	Project – 40%	Project – 40%

Accounting

Leaving Certificate accounting provides students with the knowledge, understanding and skills in accounting and financial management necessary for managing personal and basic company accounts. The learning experiences in accounting develop students' organisational, logical thinking, planning and problem-solving skills for their future life, work and study. It also develops their numeracy skills within the context of business and enterprise.

Accounting	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 100% of Marks	1 Paper - 100% of Marks

Construction Technology

This practical subject gives students hands-on experience working with tools and machines. Students also undertake theoretical and background work for their final examinations which provides the students with useful skills for working in the sector.

Construction Studies	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 50% of Marks	1 Paper - 50% of Marks
Craft Skill Assessment	- 20% of Marks	- 20% of Marks
Exploring the Constructed Environment	- 30% of Marks	- 30% of Marks

Engineering

Leaving Certificate Engineering is the study of mechanical engineering. Students develop skills and initiative in the planning, development and realisation of technological projects in a safe manner. There are two main areas of study: workshop processes, and materials and technology.

Engineering	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 50% of Marks	1 Paper - 50% of Marks
Design and manufacture project	Project - 50% of Marks	1 Paper - 50% of Marks

DCG

This subject develops students' comprehension ability, and problem solving, and creative thinking skills are developed through the analysis and solution of both 2 and 3-dimensional graphics. Graphics and design are communicated using freehand sketching skills, traditional draughting equipment and CAD.

Design & Comm Graphics	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 60% of Marks	1 Paper - 60% of Marks
Project	Project- 40% of Marks Due Jan of 6 th Yr.	Project- 40% of Mark Due Jan of 6 th Yr.

Art

The Art course for Leaving Cert is about developing the student's ability in a range of artistic fields and disciplines. The syllabus permits a huge number of media, from the fine arts such as sculpture, drawing, and painting to puppet-making, embroidery, calligraphy, metalwork, and pottery.

Art	Higher	Ordinary
Written Exam	1 Paper - 30% of Marks	1 Paper - 30% of Marks
Practical Exam	1 Paper - 20% of Marks	1 Paper - 20% of Marks
Practical Coursework	1 Paper - 50% of Marks	1 Paper - 50% of Marks

Music

Leaving Certificate Music involves a series of interrelated musical activities within each of the three core areas of musical experience - performing, composing and listening.

Music	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	50% Composing 25% Aural 25%	50% Composing 25% Aural 25%
Practical	50%	50%

Biology

Biology is the study of life. Through the study of biology students employ the processes of science to explore the diversity of life and the inter-relationships between organisms and their environment. They become more aware of the use of living organisms and their products to enhance human health and the environment.

Biology	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 60% of Marks	1 Paper - 60% of Marks
Biology in Practice Investigation	- 40% project	- 40% project

Chemistry

This subject aims to provide a relevant course for students who will complete their study of chemistry at this level while, at the same time, providing a foundation course for those who will continue to study chemistry or related subjects following completion of their Leaving Certificate. Chemistry is considered most useful for careers in Pharmacy, Ag Science, Medicine, Engineering, General Sciences and Biotechnology. There is a strong emphasis on Maths in this subject.

Chemistry	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 60% of Marks	1 Paper - 60% of Marks
Chemistry in Practice Investigation	- 40% project	- 40% project

Physics and Chemistry

This course combines parts of both Leaving Cert Physics and Leaving Cert Chemistry into a single course which is examined separately. It includes mandatory practical experiments which must be completed and written up, as well as a written examination on the theory and applications of both disciplines. There is a strong emphasis on Maths in this subject.

Physics and Chemistry	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 100% of Marks	1 Paper - 100% of Marks

Agricultural Science

Agricultural science is the study of the science and technology underlying the principles and practices of agriculture. Plants and animal types associated with agriculture are studied, and investigations are undertaken into such aspects as soil, ecology, plant and animal physiology, farm crops, farming practices, genetics and microbiology.

Agricultural Science	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 75% of Marks	1 Paper - 75% of Marks
Project	- 25% of Marks Due March of 6 th Yr.	- 25% of Marks Due March of 6 th Yr.

Computer Science

Computer Science is the study of computers and computer programming. The Leaving Certificate Computer Science course introduces students to problem-solving using programming and computational knowledge. The course develops an understanding of fundamental concepts of computer science and technology's role in society. Through applied exercises, students will develop practical skills while working in teams to create functioning computer applications.

Computer Science	Higher	Ordinary
Final Assessment Computer based assessment	70% of marks	70% of marks
Coursework Assessment	30% of marks	30% of marks

Physical Education

The general aim of physical education in senior cycle is to develop the learner's capacity to participate in physical education and physical activity in a confident and informed way. In Leaving Certificate Physical Education, learners have an opportunity to study physical education for certification. The aim of Leaving Certificate Physical Education is to develop the learner's capacity to become an informed, skilled, self-directed and reflective performer in physical education and physical activity in senior cycle and in their future life.

Physical Education	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 50% of Marks	1 Paper - 50% of Marks
Project	- 50% of Marks	- 50% of Marks

Home Economics Social and Scientific

The Home Economics syllabus provides students with knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes necessary for managing their own lives, for further and higher education and work. The learning experiences in home economics develop flexibility and adaptability in students, prepare them for a consumer-oriented society and provide a learning foundation for a wide range of careers in food, textiles, science, design, social studies and tourism.

Home Economics	Higher	Ordinary
Written Paper	1 Paper - 80% of Marks	1 Paper - 80% of Marks
Project	1 Paper - 20% of Marks	1 Paper - 20% of Marks

Life, Community & Work (LCVP Link Modules)

The Life, Community and Work curriculum offers practical learning opportunities for students to engage with their communities. It emphasizes personal development, informed decision-making, and the development of transferable skills. The curriculum aims to foster appreciation for community roles and cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset. Students will develop an understanding of their personal strengths and career foundations and will engage in work experience as part of this subject.

The Life, Community and Work curriculum supports students in transitioning to various post-school pathways, including further education and employment.

The curriculum consists of two modules: Me and my Future, and Community and Work, with four interwoven strands.

LCVP Link Modules (Life, Community and Work) Grades & Points

- **Distinction (85-100%):** 66 Points
- **Merit (70-84%):** 46 Points
- **Pass (60-69%):** 28 Points
- **Assessment:** The grade is based on a portfolio (60%) and a terminal exam (40%).

Common Questions about Subject Choice

How many subjects should I choose?

Your Leaving Cert results will be calculated using the six subjects that you performed best in. In BCS, you will study seven subject and may also opt to complete LCW to give you 8 subjects.

Are there any subjects that I must choose?

Unless you are exempt from any subject, students must choose English, Irish and Maths. Other than these subjects, it is important to check any subject requirements there are for your preferred courses. These are subjects that candidates must have completed to gain entry to some courses. For example, pharmacy in Trinity requires candidates to achieve a minimum of a H5 in higher level chemistry. Primary Teaching in Mary Immaculate College requires H4 in Irish. To check if your preferred course has any requirements you must meet upon entry, you can go to the college websites or use qualifax.ie.

How do I choose the right subjects that suit me?

There are lots of things to consider when choosing your subjects. Firstly, look at your Junior Cert results and find the subjects that you were best at. Choosing subjects that you are good at will help you achieve higher grades in the Leaving Cert.

Next, consider the subjects that you enjoyed the most. Taking an interest in a subject will greatly help to motivate you when it comes to studying and allows the information to stick in your mind easily. Following on from this, make sure to include any subjects you might need for third level study (either required by the course, or which will benefit your studies for that course).

Why do different colleges have different requirements for the same course?

Due to the structure of the CAO system, you may have to opt for your preferred course in several different colleges. This is the real problem with choosing subjects because all colleges have different minimum entry requirements, even for the same course. For example, if you wish to study business, assuming all students take English, Trinity and UL require you to have one language (Irish or a modern language), **NUI colleges require you to have both Irish, English and a modern language (third language)**, DCU and institutes of technologies require neither.

Do I need to study a third language?

This question comes up every year. As in the previous question, the third language is required for the NUI colleges, these being UCD, UCG, Galway University, Maynooth University and Royal college of surgeons. Also, if medicine is something that you are considering, a third language is required. If you have done a French at Junior cycle and you want to go to one of the NUI colleges then it is advisable to keep your French for Senior

Cycle. For students who have their own native language and can speak and write it fluently, and where the department of education has a leaving certificate exam for that subject, that will suffice for meeting their language requirement. Again, there must be a leaving certificate paper in that language for it to meet requirements for the NUI colleges.

Are there any subjects that are easier than others?

This is a common misconception. There is no such thing as an “easy subject”. It depends entirely on the student. A student with strong mathematical ability may favour maths over languages and find it easier, but a student with a flair for languages may favour French over maths and find them easier. Many students read Leaving Cert results statistics and misunderstand their relevance. You must remember that where a subject appears to have a high percentage of H1 s every year, it is due to the high standards and capabilities of the students taking that subject. There is no easy subject. Each subject requires time, dedication and consistent attention for two years.

If I don't know what I want to study at third level yet, what subjects should I choose?

If you still aren't sure what you wish to study, I would advise you to take a good mixture of subjects. A language and a science subject are important so that you don't limit your options when it comes to your CAO. To maximise your Leaving Cert points, you should then choose subjects you are interested in and will enjoy studying.

Will a certain teacher be teaching a certain subject?

No teacher knows their timetable for the next academic year, so there is no guarantee as to what teacher you will have. So please do not choose a subject based on the assumption that you will have a particular teacher.

If I pick a subject and try it for a few weeks and then don't like it can I change.

BCS will strive to accommodate students with subject changes, but all of this is dependent on numbers in each of the classes. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to facilitate a change. It is important that research is done properly and choices are put down according to preference.

Subject Choice Procedure

Step 1

Read this information booklet fully

Step 2

Attend the school subject fair and get the answer to the questions you need in relation to the different subjects

Step 3

If you have a follow up question about subjects, ask questions when you have that teacher for class or if you want to check entry requirements for colleges contact Mr. Waters or Ms O'Reilly who will gladly help you out.

Step 4

You will receive your subject choice form. Read carefully and we are asking you to select 6 choice subjects. You will rank these from 1 – 6 so please remember put down your subjects in order of preference. It is also very important to have your research done and to talk to your parents about your subject choice. Also, you can indicate if you would like to do Life, Community & Work.

Step 5

Once we have received your subject choice forms, we then enter them into a software programme, and it will create bands and it will try and offer students their top 4 subjects. If for some reason it can't offer you your top four it might go to your 5th or 6th choice. So, it's so important to put down your subjects in order of preference.

Sample Subject Choice Form



Ballyhaunis Community School SENIOR CYCLE SUBJECT OPTIONS

Name: _____ Class: _____

All students generally study Irish, English & Maths and FOUR of the following:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Accounting | 10. Engineering |
| 2. Agricultural Science | 11. French |
| 3. Art | 12. Geography |
| 4. Biology | 13. History |
| 5. Business | 14. Home Economics (Social & Scientific) |
| 6. Chemistry | 15. Music |
| 7. Computer Science** | 16. Phys-Chem |
| 8. Construction Studies | 17. Physical Education ** |
| 9. Design & Communication Graphics | |

** New Subjects will only be offered if there are sufficient student numbers.

NOTE: A selection process will be used if subjects are oversubscribed. Preference will be given to students who have studied the subject at Junior Cycle.

LCVP (Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme) - Please indicate if you are interested in doing LCVP as an additional subject - see school website link for more information

YES I am interested in studying LCVP ☐ NO - I am not interested in studying LCVP ☐

The FOUR subjects I would like to study are:

1	3
2	4

If the above subject choices cannot be offered, please list the next two preferred choices

5	6
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I have discussed these subject options with my son/daughter

Signed: _____

Parent/Guardian

Son/Daughter's Name

Date: _____

Subject Fair

On the day of the subject fair, please ask the following questions off the subject teachers and record your answers.

Questions to ask each subject teacher

How much reading is involved?

How much writing is involved?

How much coursework is involved?

Is there the option of Higher, Ordinary or Foundation Level?

Is there an oral test?

Is there an interview?

Do I have to do a project/ portfolio?

Will there be a practical exam?

What practical skills are involved?

Do I need to have studied this subject in junior cycle to pick it up in senior cycle?

How much laboratory or fieldwork is involved?

What is the workload like to get a good grade in this subject?

Please fill in the following table to help you with your decision-making process.

Subject	Teacher	Project Y/N	College Requirement Y/N	Will you consider this subject? Y/N
French				
Geography				
History				
D.C.G.				
Construction				
Engineering				
Music				
Art				
Home Economics				
Biology				
Chemistry				
Phys/Chem				
Ag. Science				
Physical Ed.				
Computer Science				
Business				
Accounting				
L.C.W. (L.C.V.P.)				

In summary when it comes to subject choice remember...

- 1. Pick a subject you are interested in**
- 2. Pick a subject you enjoy – it will make studying the subject easier**
- 3. There is no easy subject at senior cycle, you have to work to get the grades.**
- 4. Do not pick a subject because all your friends are doing that subject, pick the subject because you want it.**
- 5. Do not pick a subject because you presume a certain teacher will be teaching it.**
- 6. Get advice from the subject teachers (at the subject fair or if you have them for class), ask the guidance counsellors, have the conversation about subject choice with your parents.**
- 7. Do online research into subjects and career areas**

Useful websites that may help with your research.

www.careersportal.ie

www.qualifax.ie

www.examinations.ie

www.apprenticeships.ie

School Contact details:

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