

Information for TY students and TY parents/guardians on program choice and subject choice for Leaving Certificate

Guidance Department 2010

Leaving Certificate Framework

The Leaving Certificate is a two year programme with three separate orientations:

- Leaving Certificate Established (LCE)
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

LCE and LCVP have minimal differences, while LCA is a substantially different program. All three programs are outlined here. In an average year group of 140 students in Newpark, usually somewhere in the region of 100 students will opt for LCE, 25 will opt for LCVP and 15 will opt for LCA. Choice of program is down to the individual student's learning style and future interests.

Leaving Certificate Established (LCE)

All students opting for LCE or LCVP must make subject choices from within a number of option blocks. It is wise for this choice to be made in conjunction with parents/guardians. There are nineteen subjects on offer and you will be required to take seven of these, at most.

- Irish, English, Mathematics are compulsory
- French or German

Choice of three of the following option subjects:

- *Physics, Biology, Chemistry*
- *Construction Studies, Engineering, Design & Communication Graphics*
- *Accounting, Economics, Business Studies*
- *Home Economics*
- *Music, Art*
- *History, Geography*
- *Religious Education*

- Physical Education is also compulsory

You need to choose subjects which will give you a good balance, or mix, so as to keep as many options open as you can, for your future career choice. It is not recommended that students over-specialise, e.g., take all three Laboratory Sciences unless you are sure that this really is the area you want to get into when you leave school. Very few young people of 15 or 16 years are sure of what they want to do after school, and may change their minds a number of times over the next couple of years.

You can help yourself to make the wisest choice if you keep in mind that entry to many courses and jobs from the Leaving Certificate depends, very often, on the standard of the results you achieve, rather than the subject options you achieve them in.

When choosing options it would help to ask yourself the following questions:

1. What subjects am I most interested in?
2. What subjects am I likely to be best at?
3. What subjects will I need for course entry requirements?

The answers to numbers 1 and 2 will probably be quite closely linked. Generally, if you are interested in something, it is easier to do well at it.

For information on course content of each of the different Leaving Certificate options see:

- www.newparkschool.ie/guidanceandcounselling
- www.curriculumonline.ie Click on: Senior Cycle Curriculum

For course entry requirements, get a sheet of paper and list any career, third level course and job area you are even slightly interested in, find out the entry requirements, and list them. Entry requirements for third level courses are complex and vary from course to course, so you must refer to the relevant literature on the college websites. The qualifax database is also very useful.

For information on course requirements see:

- www.qualifax.ie Click on: Students – Support & Advice – Subject Choices

On www.qualifax.ie the Leaving Certificate requirements for each course are listed in a clear and transparent manner, allowing parents and students to find the requirements for any course, and compare the requirements for similar courses in different institutions.

Attached here you will find a 3 page summary of significant course requirements for English, Irish, Maths, Modern languages and Science. While other subjects may be desirable for third level study, they are usually not a requirement (for example, business and/or accounting may be desirable but it is not necessary to have studied either of these at school in order to take them up at third level.) The notes given here are for your guidance and we have made every effort to see that they are up to date and correct. *It is your responsibility to check and satisfy yourself that these are the correct requirements for your course choice.*

The information given is not exhaustive and, naturally, the circumstances for each individual are different; so, if in doubt, please discuss with one of the Guidance Counsellors, Ms Jenny Crampton or Mr Eoin Norton. We are very willing to talk to parents/guardians, either by phone (2883724), email (en@newparkschool.ie or jc@newparkschool.ie) or by appointment.

In order to keep your options open for courses later, we would, therefore, recommend that you consider the following subjects in the Senior Cycle:

Everyone takes

English
Irish
Maths
French or German

We Recommend

Strongly considering a lab science
i.e. Physics, Chemistry, Biology

Two other subjects, taking into account
your strengths, interests and third level
requirements.

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

This programme is aimed at developing skills and aptitudes which would not necessarily be fostered by the LCE. These skills are developed by participation in two link modules:

- Preparation for Work - This is linked to career guidance and will place considerable emphasis on the development of communication skills, interviews, job applications etc. It will build on some of the work covered in this area in the Transition Year
- Enterprise Education - This course involves the study of enterprise in operation. There will be a substantial amount of activity, involving observational visits to places of work and analysis.

The Link Modules occupy two periods per week, instead of the courses in Careers Education and Life-skills, taken by LCE students. **LCVP can best be described as the Leaving Certificate plus an extra subject i.e., the two link modules.**

The requirements for participation in the LCVP are set out below:

- All LCVP students must take at least five Leaving Certificate subjects, consisting of Irish, English, Mathematics and option subjects
- Vocational Subject Groupings. The Specialist Groupings consist of subjects which complement one another naturally. The Services Groupings comprise subjects which complement one another in a commercial context. LCVP students must be taking one of the following vocational subject groupings.

Vocational Subject Groupings (VSGs)
Specialist Groupings
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Construction Studies or Engineering or Technical Drawing (any two)2. Physics and Construction Studies or Engineering3. Agricultural Science and Construction Studies or Engineering4. Agricultural Science and Chemistry or Physics or Physics & Chemistry (combined subject)5. Home Economics and Agricultural Science or Biology6. Home Economics and Art7. Accounting or Business or Economics (any two)8. Physics and Chemistry9. Biology and Agricultural Science10. Biology and Chemistry or Physics or Physics & Chemistry (combined)
Service Groupings
<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. Engineering and Business or Accounting or Economics12. Construction Studies and Business or Accounting or Economics13. Home Economics and Business or Accounting or Economics14. Agricultural Science and Business or Accounting or Economics15. Art and Business or Accounting or Economics16. Music and Business or Accounting or Economics

- All students are required to take Irish, unless they are officially exempt. This can be taken at Higher, Ordinary or Foundation level
- The study of a continental language is obligatory

Certification

An LCVP student receives a full Leaving Certificate (identical to the LCE student) PLUS and additional Certificate. This additional qualification should be particularly beneficial to students when they are seeking employment, or when they have to attend interviews for entry to particular courses.

Grades are awarded at Distinction, Merit and Pass level. The Universities and Institutes of Technology award points for grades achieved in the Link Modules.

<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>
80-100	Distinction	70
65-79	Merit	50
50-64	Pass	30

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

The LCA is a self contained two years programme aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. The programme is divided into four half year blocks called sessions and achievements are credited in each of these sessions.

Courses are offered in three main areas:

- *Vocational Preparation* - focuses on Preparation for Work, Work Experience, Enterprise, and English and Communication
- *General Education* - concentrates on student's general life-skills, including Languages, Leisure, Arts and Social Education
- *Vocational Education* - is concerned with the development of Mathematical Applications and the skills necessary for the specialist areas on offer in Newpark: Hotel Catering and Tourism, Engineering, Leisure Studies and Information Technology.

Assessment

The LCA is assessed over two years under three headings:

- ❖ Modules - at the end of each session students are given credits for each module they complete satisfactorily
- ❖ Students Tasks - are practical activities, such as making products, carrying out investigations, organising events or providing services. They are assessed by external examiners.
- ❖ Final Examinations - are held at the same time as other Leaving Certificate examinations.

Students who successfully complete the programme receive a Leaving Certificate from the Department of Educational which is awarded at three levels:

- Pass (60 - 69% of credits)
- Merit (70 - 84% of credits)
- Distinction (85 - 100% of credits)

Progression

After completing the LCA, a student is eligible for employment, including apprenticeships. Those obtaining a merit or distinction may apply for jobs like the Garda Siochana. Students are also eligible for Further Education Courses (PLC's). LCA students cannot proceed directly to Third Level Education. However, they can apply for admission to Third Level through the CAO system upon completion of Further Education Courses.

Is the LCA for you?

- Are you a student interested in a new approach to education and training?
- Would you like the opportunity to follow a practical course that is based in school, the workplace and the community?
- Would you like your Leaving Certificate based on continuous assessment and not just in your final examination?

Again, if we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Eoin Norton
Jenny Crampton

Guidance Counsellors