



Stratford College  
*Co-educational Secondary School*

# Senior Cycle Programme 2025/2026

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## Our Mission

*Stratford College aims to provide a teaching and learning community committed to quality and excellence in education.*

*We are dedicated to:*

*Providing a nurturing environment where each individual can develop self-esteem and a sense of their place in, and responsibility to, society.*

*Instructing Jewish students in their religion while fostering mutual respect for all traditions.*

*Promoting personal achievement and academic success.*

*Respecting the unique potential of every student and encouraging each to maximize it.*

*The founding values continue to inspire the school today; those of educating our students in **an inclusive academic environment** which seeks to foster in young people a sense of **personal and academic achievement**, of **respect** for diversity and of **service** to the community.*



## Our Senior Cycle Guiding Principles

**Quality;** *Our Senior Cycle Programme will offer all learners a high quality education, characterised by high expectations of the learner and the pursuit of excellence. It will aim to generate engagement and enthusiasm and encourage participation.*

**Inclusive education;** *the experience of Senior Cycle will be inclusive of all learners and contribute to the achievement of equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all*

**Continuity;** *the curriculum will build on students' learning to date, actively support their progress in learning, and facilitate them in preparing and planning for future learning*

**Lifelong learning;** *Students will develop the skills of managing and directing their own learning that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school, in further and continuing education, and in working life.*

These principles will continue to guide our thinking as new subject specifications become available and short courses are considered.

We communicate our progress and national developments on our website, in our annual School Improvement Plans, at our annual curriculum evening and information evenings and regularly at our Board meetings.

**School Self Evaluation (SSE)** and **School Improvement Planning (SIP)** will continue to prioritize areas of development in teaching and learning and by so doing improve students' learning experiences and outcomes in this and all our programmes.



## Senior Cycle Redevelopment

The Senior Cycle in Ireland's education system is undergoing significant redevelopment, with a focus on creating a more equitable and enriching experience for all students. Key aspects of these developments include:

- **A Focus on Equity and Excellence:**
  - The overarching goal is to provide a Senior Cycle that caters to the diverse needs and talents of all students, ensuring both equity and excellence in education.
- **Curriculum Reform:**
  - This involves the development and revision of subject specifications, with increased emphasis on assessment components beyond traditional final exams.
  - New subjects, such as Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and Climate Action and Sustainable Development, are being introduced to broaden student choice.
- **Enhanced Student Experience:**
  - The redevelopment aims to reduce the pressure on students and create a more engaging and relevant learning environment.
- **Transition Year Development:**
  - The Transition Year program is being strengthened, with a new program statement to provide clearer guidance and support.
- **Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programs:**
  - Development of these learning programs are happening, with supports being put in place for schools, especially special schools.
- **Assessment changes:**
  - There is a move to implement more diverse forms of assessment, that are not solely based on the final leaving certificate exams.

Essentially, the Irish government is working to modernize the Senior Cycle, making it more adaptable to the needs of today's students and preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of the future

### I begin fifth year in 2025

If you are due to start fifth year in 2025, the following changes apply to you:

The following subjects will have a revised curriculum (called 'specifications'): Business, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Arabic, Latin, and Ancient Greek (Tranche 1 subjects).

These subjects will feature an externally assessed component(s).

Additional component(s) will not be a traditional written exam.

Additional component(s) will be externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission.

Two new subjects will be introduced in some schools in 2025. For later years, it will be introduced to more schools on a phased basis. These subjects are (1) Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and (2)

Climate Action and Sustainable Development. If your school becomes one of those in the first phase of schools to offer either of these subjects, you may be able to avail of them.

**I begin fifth year in 2026 or later**

If you are starting fifth year in 2026, or after, the following changes apply to you:

The following subjects will have revised curriculum: Business; Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Arabic, Latin, and Ancient Greek (Tranche 1 subjects).

More revised subjects will also be available to you. These will be announced once a final schedule setting out the phases over which all subjects will be revised is published. This webpage will be updated once this schedule is available.

These subjects will feature an externally assessed component(s).

Additional component(s) will not be a traditional written exam.

Additional component(s) will be externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission.

Two new subjects, first launched in 2025, will continue to be introduced on a phased basis. These subjects are (1) Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and (2) Climate Action and Sustainable Development. If your school is in the second or later phase of schools to offer either of these subjects, you may be able to avail of them.

Your teachers and school will be given the support and training to introduce these subjects and help prepare you for the additional components and the examination.

## HOW TO MAKE YOUR SUBJECT CHOICE

1. Think about what it is you might like to do when you leave school. If this requires further study look up [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie). Look and see what courses are on offer and do a random check for subject requirements for this type of course. Some courses require you to have studied a particular subject at leaving cert level in order to gain entry into the course. e.g. Medicine requires two science subjects including chemistry.
2. Now look at the list of subjects and pick out the ones you enjoy, then pick out the ones you think you can do well in. Keep in mind that scoring points is important if you wish to go on to third level education.
3. Some students choose to take a broad range of subjects (e.g. one from each area, business, science, humanities and practical) as they are not sure what they want to do. This is not always necessary as most courses do not have subject requirements and even if you do not study the subject at leaving cert you could go on to take it a third level. e.g. you do not need to have studied business to do a business studies degree.
4. It is also wise to do some research as to what subjects entail at leaving cert level. There can be a huge jump in the standards expected of you or the weighting given to the practical side of the subject.

### Do not:

1. Choose your subjects based on what your friends are doing.
2. Choose your subjects based on what teachers you think you might or might not have.
3. Choose your subjects on what other people tell you about how easy or difficult a subject is. Every person will find different areas easy or difficult according to their ability.
4. Choose a subject without researching what it entails at leaving cert level.

### Do:

- Know the Basic Entry Requirements for the college in question
- Know Specific course entry requirements
- Choose subjects on the basis of interest, aptitude, possible career paths and achievements to date in exams or tests.

## Our Senior Cycle Programme

Students will study eight (8) subjects for the Leaving Certificate programme

Each of these subjects have 3 periods a week and the core subjects of Irish\*, English, Maths have 4 periods a week.

Non-EU students and DES exemptions may apply.

*Please note all subjects are offered subject to demand and staff allocation.*



## ACCOUNTING

Accounting involves the recording of financial information by an individual, voluntary organisation or business, the presentation of this financial information and the interpretation and uses of this financial information.

### A STUDENT CHOSING TO STUDY ACCOUNTING CAN EXPECT TO UNDERSTAND:

- how and why financial information is recorded
- the information contained in Bank statements, why a Bank Reconciliation Statement may be needed and how to do one
- how a small business records its financial information
- how to interpret and use the information in the accounts of a business from the point of view of shareholders, creditors, customers and employees
- how to record, present and interpret the financial information for a voluntary organisation e.g. Club or Association
- the importance of financial information for good decision making.
- how to correct mistakes in accounts
- how to deal with companies who have insufficient records of business transactions
- Management Accounting - break even analysis: budgeting, cash flow statements etc.

A student will **benefit** from studying Accounting by learning how to:

- collect, organise, record and present financial information
- analyse and interpret financial information
- think clearly and logically
- perform the duties of a treasurer of a voluntary organisation properly
- prepare your own accounts if you set up your own business
- understand the key concepts of accounts

### ASSESSMENT:

Written Exam

This will be to your advantage if you continue your studies in third level. Accounting is a course taught in many third level courses.

Accounting is useful for **careers** in:

Accountancy, Auctioneering, Auditing, Advertising, Banking, Book-keeping , Building Society Clerk, Business Law, A Vast Array of Clerical Work, Company Secretary, Hospital Administration, Hotel Management, Insurance, Market Research, Purchasing Officer, Quantity Surveyor, Receptionist, Sales Representative, Taxation Consultant, Teaching, Computers.





## VISUAL ART

### What is Visual Art?

Leaving Cert Art is a fun and rewarding subject that helps you develop important creative and practical skills, whether you're aiming for an art career or just want to enhance your creativity.

Art teaches you how to communicate visually, to think outside the box, solve problems, and express ideas in a hands-on way. Art is connected to many other subjects and is useful in all areas of life, whether you're going into a creative career or just want to develop new skills. It encourages creativity, builds manual skills, and helps you see the world in a new way.

If you're considering pursuing Art or Design at third level, studying Art for the Leaving Cert is essential. It not only nurtures your creativity but also enhances your problem-solving skills, making it valuable for a wide range of careers.

### How is Visual Art Assessed?

Your final grade in Leaving Cert Art is made up of three parts:

1. **Practical Coursework (50%) January - April**

This is based on a portfolio project you create over a 10-week period during.

2. **Practical Exam (20%) April**

This is a 5-hour invigilated practical exam at the end of your

3. **Visual Studies - Written Exam (30%) June**

This exam ties the practical side of art with theory, it focuses on the theory of contemporary art and art history.

### Visual studies - What Will You Study?

In the written Visual Studies exam, there are three main areas:

- **Content Area 1: Europe and the World**

This covers the development of art in Europe and beyond, learning about major art movements and key artists from around the world.

- **Content Area 2: Ireland and Its Place in the Wider World**

This area focuses on Irish art and its influence in the world, looking at Irish artists and art history.

- **Content Area 3: The Study of a Specific Topic**

You'll choose a topic that interests you, giving you the chance to dive deeper into a certain area or art movement.

### **Careers in art**

A career in Art and Design offers many exciting options. You could become a graphic designer, illustrator, animator, fashion designer, textile designer, architect, interior designer, fine artist, art director, industrial designer, product designer, photographer, game designer, 3D modeler, museum curator, exhibition designer, stage designer, art therapist, art teacher, public artist, or work in digital design, web design, branding, or calligraphy. The possibilities are endless for anyone passionate about art and creativity.





## BIOLOGY

2025/26 sees the introduction of the new Leaving Certificate Biology course which offers an updated and engaging course that reflects the latest scientific advancements and real-world applications. It emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and hands-on learning, ensuring that students gain a deeper understanding of biological concepts.

Now with a stronger focus on practical experiments and inquiry-based learning, students develop essential scientific skills that prepare them for both higher education and careers across many STEM fields. The new specification also incorporates modern topics such as genetics, biotechnology, and environmental sustainability, making it more relevant and applicable to today's world.

Biology is fundamental to understanding human health, biodiversity, and the challenges facing our planet, such as climate change and disease outbreaks. Biology students enhance their investigative, analytical and research skills, which are transferable to many disciplines, including medicine, environmental science, and biotechnology. The emphasis the new course places on scientific inquiry also helps develop problem-solving abilities that are beneficial in a wide range of professions.

As one of the most useful, accessible and popular subjects in the Leaving Certificate, it is a requirement for many third-level courses in healthcare, science, and agriculture. It is an excellent choice for students who are passionate about understanding the natural world and who may wish to pursue careers in medicine, veterinary science, nursing, or pharmaceutical research. Even for those who do not plan to enter a science-related field, the course fosters a curiosity for the living world and equips students with valuable knowledge about health and sustainability. Studying Biology not only broadens career opportunities but also helps students make informed decisions about their own well-being and the environment.

**Biology is not just important for understanding life as we know it. The new course places a large emphasis on developing the accompanying life skills.**

- Biology is the study of connections across the living world. It explores and attempts to understand how and why the biosphere functions. This intrinsic understanding of the system of life, the causes and effects of change are critical for preparing students for modern systems-based learning and change management.
- Biologists become familiar with statistics and data processing.
- Field work and laboratory work are team activities. Students take personal responsibility for their work as well as learn to work together to achieve comprehensive results and understanding.
- Communication and project work allow students to develop fluency in the language of science, which reaches across multiple disciplines. It seeks to create and enhance scientifically literate citizens with a passion for life-long learning.

## **ASSESSMENT:**

A) **Written exam worth 60%** (assessed at both Higher and Ordinary Levels) in the areas of:

- (1) Organisation of Life;
- (2) Interactions of Life;
- (3) Structures and processes of life

which are all underpinned by the Nature of Science.

B) **Biology in Practice Investigation worth 40%** (assessed at a common Level).

An investigation brief will be issued annually by the State Examinations Commission in term 2 of 5<sup>th</sup> year. The students will carry out the following:

- (1) Scientific research on a an issue related to the brief.
- (2) An experiment related to an issue within the brief that they will generate their own hypothesis and primary data for on an individual basis.

### **Biology is useful for careers in:**

Health Professionals, Nursing, Environmental Officers, Chiropodist, Dentist, Dietician, Optician, Pharmacist, Radiographer, Speech Therapist, Veterinary Surgeon, Publishing, Journalism and broadcasting; Library work and Information Science; Environmental Conservation; Marine and Freshwater Biology; Animal Nurse; Education; Horticulture; Zoologists; Food Industry; Production Management, The Brewing Industry, Agriculture and Food Industries.



## BUSINESS

Leaving Certificate Business develops students' awareness of the significance of business for the Irish and international economy and helps to foster an understanding of how the world of business works.

Students learn how business is relevant to their own lives, develop financial and business literacy, appreciate business in the world around them and how business is shaped by those who work, lead, and manage within the business environment.

The world of business is diverse, dynamic, and evolving, and through their study of Leaving Certificate Business, students learn how consumers, enterprise and governments must adapt to a range of opportunities and challenges such as digitalisation, sustainability, globalisation, ethical and economic concerns. Through their engagement with Leaving Certificate Business, students realise and can evaluate the impact of these issues on the business environment.

Through studying Leaving Certificate Business, the development of entrepreneurial thinking is fostered, and students have an opportunity to develop a range of competencies which will enhance students' abilities to communicate, research, problem-solve, and work as part of a team, which are fundamental in our increasingly complex, digital, and interconnected world. This supports students in becoming responsible, informed, and ethically aware and supports their development as confident, competent, and innovative citizens.

In studying Leaving Certificate Business, students develop the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that they require to engage actively and confidently in the business world, both as consumers and within the world of work, while also developing their own financial and business literacy and acquiring the capacity to make informed and rational business-related decisions. Through this learning, they come to better understand the social and environmental impact of business practices and they develop a positive, ethical disposition to enterprise and all aspects of business.

### Aims

Students of Leaving Certificate Business develop an appreciation of the importance of business in their daily lives and the world around them and gain a deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges within a constantly evolving business environment. Through studying Business, students develop a broad range of competencies and can apply their learning to a range of real-life experiences.

The **aims** of Leaving Certificate Business are:

- to appreciate the role that business plays in daily life, locally, nationally, and internationally and to recognise opportunities that business can provide.

- to understand enterprise development and the interactions and connections between multiple stakeholders in the world of business, and to be able to apply this knowledge and understanding.
- to appreciate the opportunities and challenges of digital technology and develop an informed and critical understanding of ethical and sustainable business practice.
- to become business and financially literate, conscious, and aware of the importance of their financial wellbeing.
- to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and become confident, informed decision-makers.
- to develop competencies relevant to the dynamic world of business, to their lives, their careers, to further study, to roles as both employers and employees, as entrepreneurs and as business leaders of the future.

These competencies are linked and can be combined; can improve students' overall learning; can help students and teachers to make meaningful connections between and across different areas of learning; and are important across the curriculum.

The development of students' literacies and numeracy contributes to the development of competencies and vice-versa.

Key competencies are supported when students' literacies and numeracy are well developed and they can make good use of various tools, including technologies, to support their learning.



## CHEMISTRY

### Why Choose Chemistry?

Chemistry is the study of substances, their properties, and how they interact. It is a central science that links with Biology and Physics, making it useful for students interested in medical, pharmaceutical, and scientific careers. It also enhances problem-solving and analytical skills.

### Where Can It Lead?

A background in Chemistry is essential for careers in medicine, pharmacy, veterinary science, environmental science, and chemical engineering. Many university courses, especially in health and science fields, require Chemistry as a subject.

### Course Overview

The new Leaving Cert Chemistry syllabus, beginning in 2025, is structured around a unifying strand, **The Nature of Science**, and four contextual strands:

- **Nature of Matter:** Atomic structure, bonding, periodic trends, and chemical equations.
- **Behaviour of Matter:** Chemical reactions, thermodynamics, and reaction kinetics.
- **Interactions of Matter:** Equilibrium, acids and bases, and redox reactions.
- **Matter in Our World:** Applications of chemistry in health, sustainability, and industry.

Experimental and investigative skills are central to the new course. Students will conduct hands-on experiments, interpret data, and evaluate findings, with an emphasis on real-world applications of chemistry.

A major update to the assessment structure includes the **Additional Assessment Component (AAC)**, which will contribute **40% of the final grade**. This component evaluates students' ability to apply their chemistry knowledge in experimental and problem-solving contexts.



## CLASSICAL STUDIES

Leaving Certificate Classical Studies allows for the study of how the classical world of ancient Greece and Rome has influenced and shaped western culture across various fields of human endeavour, including art, architecture, history, archaeology, literature, drama, religion, philosophy and politics.

Leaving Cert Assessment: 20% research study report submitted in January of 6<sup>th</sup> year and a two and a half hour written exam (80%) including 10 stimulus questions and two extended answers completed in June of 6<sup>th</sup> year.

Over the course of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year students will study four strands.

The four strands of study are:

- Strand 1: The World of Heroes
- Strand 2: Drama and Spectacle
- Strand 3: Power and Identity: Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar
- Strand 4: Gods and Mortals

Classical Studies builds cultural capital and helps students become culturally engaged, aware and connected. It heightens their awareness of their own cultural environment and ethos and teaches them to appreciate the traditions and values of others. Immersion into the worlds of Greece and Rome offers a safe space to address controversial issues such as gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, religion and values and invites students to think about themselves with regards to these themes. The subject allows students to consider how women, the poor, the marginalised were represented in the context of a male-dominated culture.

Equally, the subject allows for interrogation of ideas around democracy and political values in various strands, through the study of texts, exploration of cultural practices and consideration of historical figures. In an increasingly diverse and multi-cultural society, this understanding of self and others through a cultural lens will help students become responsible citizens and active participants in today's increasingly diverse and complex local, national and international communities.

Link to specification

[https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/4f756b6f-29c2-4651-bf1e-06739dee2106/Leaving\\_Certificate\\_Specification-Classical\\_Studies\\_EN.pdf](https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/4f756b6f-29c2-4651-bf1e-06739dee2106/Leaving_Certificate_Specification-Classical_Studies_EN.pdf)

The study of Classics opens doors to:

Career paths for classics students are varied, and can include writing, law, heritage, arts, academia, business, finance, marketing, the public sector, film, and more.

**EDUCATING THE MIND WITHOUT EDUCATING THE HEART IS NO EDUCATION AT ALL (ARISTOTLE)**





## COMPUTER SCIENCE

Computer Science is problem solving, the study of computers and algorithmic processes. Leaving Certificate Computer Science includes how programming and computational thinking can be applied to the solution of problems, and how computing technology impacts the world around us.

The specification is constructed into 3 strands, whose learning outcomes are interwoven. The 3 strands are:

1. Practices and principles
2. Core concepts
3. Computer science in practice

Students will learn:

- The practices and principles of computer science, such as computational thinking, computers and society, and creative design
- How to analyze problems in computational terms and understand concepts such as abstraction, logic, algorithms, computer systems, data representation and evaluation
- Programming languages and how to read, write, test and modify computer programs.
- The process of designing computational artefacts such as web pages, digital animations, simulations, games, apps and robotic systems
- The ethical, historical, environmental and technological aspects of computer science, and how it impacts the social and economic development of society

Students learn programming by solving problems through computational thinking processes and through practical applications such as applied learning tasks. The Leaving Certificate Computer Science specification is designed for all students.

Students complete four group projects called Applied Learning Tasks:

1. Interactive Information Systems
2. Analytics
3. Modelling and simulation
4. Embedded systems

These four Applied Learning Tasks prepare the students for their individual project in mid-6th Year worth 30% of the Leaving Certificate.

The exam is worth 70%. There is a written component and a coding component (Python). The coding component is computer based.



## DRAMA, FILM & THEATRE STUDIES

The new curriculum is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the dramatic arts, combining practical skills with theoretical knowledge. This new subject reflects our commitment to a well-rounded education, recognising the importance of the arts in fostering creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness.

The course covers three main areas: drama, film, and theatre studies. Students will engage with classic and contemporary works, learn the intricacies of film production, and explore the diverse world of theatre. This multidisciplinary approach ensures that students gain a holistic view of the arts, equipping them with the skills needed for various career paths in the creative industries.

What are the benefits of this new program? Many and various.

1. Enhanced Creativity and Expression: By engaging in drama and theatre activities, students will develop their creative thinking and expression. They will learn to convey complex emotions and ideas through performance, fostering a deeper understanding of human experiences and perspectives.
2. Critical Analysis and Appreciation: Through film studies, students will learn to critically analyse cinematic techniques, storytelling, and the cultural significance of films. This analytical skill set is invaluable, extending beyond the arts into other academic and professional fields.
3. Practical Skills and Collaboration: The subject emphasises practical skills such as acting, directing, film making and stagecraft. Students will work on projects that require collaboration, communication, and problem-solving, preparing them for teamwork in any future career.
4. Cultural and Social Awareness: Engaging them in works from different cultures and their own and different time periods will broaden students' cultural awareness and empathy. They will gain insights into societal issues and historical contexts, fostering a well-rounded, global perspective.

The new Leaving Certificate in Drama, Film, and Theatre Studies will open up exciting opportunities for students:

- **Pathways to Further Education:** Students interested in pursuing further studies in the arts will find this subject an excellent foundation. It will prepare them for specialised courses in drama, film, theatre, media studies, and related fields.
- **Career Opportunities:** The skills acquired through this subject are highly transferable. Whether students aim to become actors, directors, screenwriters, film critics, or educators, the knowledge and experience gained will be invaluable.
- **Personal Development:** Beyond academic and career prospects, the subject will significantly contribute to students' personal growth. It encourages self-confidence, resilience, and emotional intelligence—qualities essential for success in any walk of life.

### **Assessment**

<b><u>Assessment component</u></b>	<b><u>Weighting</u></b>	<b><u>Level</u></b>
Drama, Film and Theatre Studies		
Creativity in Practice Project	50%	Common brief
Written Examination	50%	Ordinary and Higher level

[https://ncca.ie/media/mynjac2v/draft-lc-dfts-specification\\_en.pdf](https://ncca.ie/media/mynjac2v/draft-lc-dfts-specification_en.pdf)



## ENGLISH

Leaving Certificate English invites students into rich experiences with language so that they become fluent and thoughtful users of it and more aware of its significance in their lives. It develops a range of literacy and oral skills in a variety of areas, personal, social, and cultural. Students develop a wide range of skills and concepts. These will allow them to interpret and enjoy a range of material so that they become independent learners who can operate independently in the world beyond school. (DES, p.2)

At Stratford College we place great emphasis on active teaching methodologies to engage students in the prescribed material. Over the two years we study a mix of canonical and contemporary poets, one Shakespearean text in detail, and the Comparative, where we compare and contrast a novel, play and film. This comprises Paper 2, which is focused on our studied texts. Paper 1 asks the student to respond to given texts and write in an appropriate style and register. The Composition section, worth 100 marks, is where creative writing is captured, with options for budding journalists and debaters.

Where possible we attend live performances of our exciting texts, and/or visit the Irish Film Institute for National Theatre Live screenings. We encourage wide reading and critical analysis of many different forms of media.

Key Assignments are expected to be completed at the end of each module, with peer assessment, rewrites and redrafting ongoing. Teacher and peer feedback inform these redrafts and are key to achieving high grades.

It is a rigorous and highly enjoyable course, where students develop a writerly and expert voice, articulate their opinions and analyses, alongside pushing the boundaries of language and challenging conventional forms of thought.



## FRENCH

### Why Choose French?

In the Senior Cycle, French is offered as the sole modern foreign language at our school. French is one of the world's most widely spoken languages, with over 220 million speakers across Europe, Africa, North America, and beyond. Studying French not only opens the door to a rich cultural heritage, but also gives you a competitive edge in today's globalized world. Whether you're interested in international business, travel, culture, or communication, French is a valuable skill that will benefit you both academically and professionally.

### What Will You Learn?

The French curriculum at Senior Cycle is designed to enhance your language proficiency and cultural understanding. You will:

- **Refine your Language Skills:** Engage with a variety of texts, including literature, articles, and media, to improve your reading, listening, writing, and speaking abilities.
- **Cultural Awareness:** Explore French-speaking countries, traditions, and contemporary issues, allowing you to better understand the culture, history, and society of the Francophone world.
- **Communication:** Develop your ability to converse fluently in French, expressing ideas, opinions, and arguments clearly and confidently, whether in everyday situations or more formal contexts.

### Assessment & Grading

- Oral Exam – 25% in H.L., 20% in O.L.
- Aural Exam – 20% in H.L., 25% in O.L.
- Written Exam on reading comprehension and writing ability – 55%

The Leaving Certificate French exam assesses your ability in all four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The exam structure is designed to test your practical language use and critical thinking. The results of this exam are highly regarded by third-level institutions and employers alike, making French a great choice for both academic and career advancement.

### Career Opportunities

Proficiency in French offers many exciting career opportunities. Whether you're interested in working in international business, diplomacy, translation, tourism, or education, having French as part of your skill set is highly advantageous. As one of the official languages of the European Union and a key language in international relations, French opens doors to countless career paths across the world.

### Is French Right for You?

If you are interested in broadening your cultural horizons, improving your communication skills, and gaining an advantage in a competitive job market, French is an excellent choice for your Senior Cycle. Our French course is designed to support you every step of the way, building on your existing skills and preparing you for success. **Join us and discover the world of French!**



## GEOGRAPHY

Geography is a dynamic subject deeply connected to students' lives. It explores the spaces, places, and experiences that students bring into the classroom. The subject acknowledges how daily life is shaped by social, economic, environment and cultural changes, and how these experiences shape the world. Before entering the classroom, students have already developed personal geographies based on their individual experiences.

### Geographical Imaginations

Massey (2006) refers to "geographical imaginations" as the mental images we create of the world. These imaginations are formed through our personal experiences and shape how we understand the world around us.

### The Importance of Geography Education

We aim to provide engaging, relevant geography lessons that connect to students' everyday lives. Geography helps students explore how humans and the environment interact, fostering critical thinking on global issues like climate change and social inequalities.

### Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning gives students ownership of their education, encouraging them to actively investigate and solve real-world geographical problems.

### Scope of Geography

Geography means "writing about the Earth" and is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. Geography is divided into human geography, which looks at human activities and societies, and physical geography, which studies natural environments. Environmental geography, which is the intersection of the two, explores how human activity impacts the environment.

### Senior Cycle - Leaving Certificate Geography

Leaving Certificate geography helps students understand the changing relationships between the physical and human worlds. Through their study, students develop geographical skills that enable them to make informed judgments about local, national, and international issues.

The Leaving Certificate geography course can be studied at either Ordinary or Higher level. It is divided into Core, Elective, and Optional units of study.

Students will complete an individual **Geographical Investigation** report in advance of the written examination. When conducting the investigation students learn to work as members of a team, taking responsibility to complete a specific task.

### Course Structure:

- **Core Unit:** Includes Physical and Regional topics, skills-based material, and Fieldwork.
- **Elective Unit:** Human Environment.

- **Higher Level:** Geoecology

### Skills and Investigation Work

The geography course develops a variety of skills such as map reading, direction, measuring, and sketching. Students will learn to interpret physical landscapes on Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI or Tailte Eireann) maps and analyses human and economic landscapes. Skills like graph and table reading, along with displaying information is also covered. These skills are not only essential for geography but are transferable to many other fields of study and work. They are also required for the fieldwork / investigation component of the course.

### Relevance and Transferability

Geography is highly relevant and relatable. The knowledge and skills students acquire in geography help them understand and evaluate how our environment works and how people interact with it. Geography is important for orienting students to the world and helping them "connect the dots." It is a scientific and practical subject that equips students to become informed, active citizens.

### Career Possibilities in Geography

Students considering further study in areas such as geography, economics, environmental science, or politics may pursue careers in various fields, including:

* Sustainability Consultant	* Environmental Scientist	* Climatologist	* Urban Planner
* Surveyor	* Environment Planner	* Transportation Planner	* Conservation Officer
* Geospatial Analyst	* Geologist	* Ecologist	* Geography Teacher
* Park Ranger	* Hydrologist	* Development Officer	* Geopolitical Analyst
* Policy Maker	* Landscape Architect	* Remote Sensing Analyst	* Journalist
* Cartographer	* Natural Preservation	* Coastal Rescue	* Geo Development of Renewable Energy Resources
* Meteorologist	* Geographical Information Systems (GIS)	* Economic Geography	

Geography is not only a subject that helps students understand the world but also equips them with the skills necessary for a wide range of career paths, offering opportunities to work in fields that impact the environment, urban planning, policy making, and more.





## HISTORY

### Course Overview

Leaving Certificate History is designed to foster a deep understanding of human activities in the past, encouraging students to appreciate the complexities and nuances of historical events and how the actions and experiences of previous generations have helped influence the world today. History is beneficial for a wide range of careers and will prepare students for the skills, knowledge and challenges of a range of university courses in the Humanities; Law; Social Sciences and Business and International Relations.

The syllabus is divided into two main areas:

#### 1. Working with Evidence

**History and the Historian:** Provides a preliminary exploration of the nature of history, the role of evidence, and the methodologies historians use to interpret the past. ***Documents-Based Study:*** Involves a structured analysis of historical documents related to a prescribed topic to develop students' evidence-handling skills.

***Research Study:*** Encourages students to undertake a significant historical research project to further develop their investigative and analytical skills.

#### 2. Topics for Study

Topics are studied from the Later Modern field (1815-1993).

Students study two topics from Irish history and two from the history of Europe and the wider world (80%) and present a Research Project (20%).

Students focus on key events, developments, and figures within these topics, studying from multiple perspectives: politics and administration, society and economy, and culture, religion, and science.

##### Later Modern Ireland Topics (1815-1993)

- The Pursuit of Sovereignty and the Impact of Partition (1912-1949)
- Politics and Society in Northern Ireland (1949-1993)

##### Later Modern Europe and the Wider World Topics (1815-1992)

- Dictatorship and Democracy (1920-1945)
- The United States and the World (1945-1989)



## **Assessment**

The Research Study Report (20%)

Final Written Exam (80%)



## IRISH / GAEILGE

### General Aims:

The aims of teaching Irish in Stratford College are as follows:

- (a) To give the students the opportunity to learn and practice the Irish language
- (b) To develop the students' ability in Irish embracing all the language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- (c) To give the students an insight into Irish culture and provide opportunities for them to taste this through the language, music, history, literature etc.
- (d) Fostering a positive attitude towards the language

At Senior Cycle the subject builds upon knowledge acquired in Junior Cycle. In Stratford College Irish is compulsory and is predominantly taught at two levels:

Higher Level  
Ordinary Level

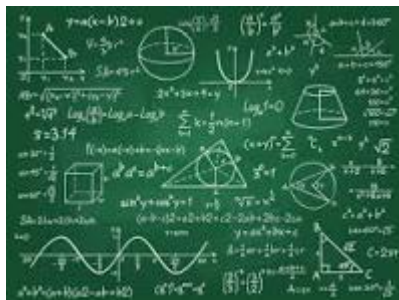
(The Foundation course is also offered if deemed the appropriate level for a student)

The Irish Syllabus for Higher and Ordinary Level is broken down as follows:

The Oral Exam (currently scheduled during the first week of Spring holidays and worth 40% of the overall mark)

Paper 1 - Listening Comprehension and Composition  
Paper 2 – Comprehension and Literature

With such an emphasis on the oral exam, the spoken language is given high priority both in and outside the classroom. The Irish Department in Stratford College promotes activities such as Irish debates, trips to the Gaeltacht as well as an active Seachtain na Gaeilge.



## MATHEMATICS

### Why Choose Maths?

Mathematics is a core subject that develops problem-solving, logical reasoning, and analytical skills. It is essential for many career paths, including science, engineering, finance, and technology. A strong foundation in maths is highly valued by employers and third-level institutions.

### Where Can It Lead?

Maths is a requirement for many third-level courses, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. Higher-level Maths offers **an additional 25 CAO points** if a student achieves a grade H6 or higher, making it an attractive option for university applications. However, **Higher-Level Maths requires a significant commitment in terms of time and effort.** Students should carefully consider their aptitude for the subject, their workload across other subjects, and their ability to manage the challenging content before deciding to take it at this level. In some cases, focusing on securing a strong grade in Ordinary-Level Maths may be a more strategic choice.

Careers in data science, actuarial studies, computer science, and architecture all heavily rely on mathematical skills, and many science and business-related courses also require a solid maths background.

### Course Overview

The Leaving Cert Maths syllabus is divided into five key areas: Statistics & Probability, Geometry & Trigonometry, Number & Algebra, Functions, and Calculus. Higher-Level students will encounter more complex problem-solving and abstract concepts, while Ordinary Level focuses on practical applications of mathematical skills. The exam consists of two papers, each assessing problem-solving ability and application of mathematical principles.



## MUSIC

### What is Leaving Certificate Music?

Leaving Certificate Music is a comprehensive course that explores the three core areas of musical study:

- **Listening:** Developing your ability to analyze, appreciate, and understand music from various periods and genres.
- **Composing:** Learning the techniques and skills to create your own original music.
- **Performing:** Refining your instrumental or vocal skills through solo and group performances.

### Key Areas of Study in Music:

#### Prescribed Works:

We will meticulously study a selection of prescribed works. These pieces are chosen to represent significant musical styles and composers, and you will learn to analyze their structure, harmony, melody, and historical context. Expect in-depth discussions, listening exercises, and score analysis. You will study;

- The Beatles
- Mozart
- Berlioz
- Deane

It is crucial to be aware that the specific prescribed works change from time to time, so your teacher will give you the precise list of works that you will be studying.

#### Irish Music:

A significant component of Set B is the exploration of Irish music. We will delve into traditional Irish music, including:

- **Sean-nós singing:** Exploring the unique vocal style and ornamentation.
- **Instrumental Irish music:** Examining the techniques and styles of traditional instruments like the fiddle, flute, and uilleann pipes.
- **The development of Irish music:** Looking at how Irish music has evolved and influenced other genres.

#### Composition:

Music encourages you to express your creativity through composition. You will learn:

- **Melody writing:** Crafting memorable and effective melodies.

- **Harmonization:** Adding chords and harmonies to your melodies.
- **Form and structure:** Organizing your musical ideas into coherent compositions.
- You will be expected to create your own compositions, that will be part of your leaving certificate exam.

### Performance:

Your performance skills will be a key element of your assessment. You will have opportunities to:

- Perform solo pieces on your chosen instrument or voice.
- Participate in group performances.
- Performance skills such as technique, musicality, and stage presence will be focused on.

### What to Expect in Class:

- Active listening sessions.
- Score analysis and discussions.
- Composition workshops.
- Performance practice.
- Aural training exercises.
- Theory lessons.
- Group work.

### How to Succeed:

**Practice regularly:** Consistent practice is essential for developing your performance skills.

**Listen actively:** Pay close attention to the music we study in class and beyond.

**Participate in class discussions:** Share your ideas and ask questions.

**Seek feedback:** Ask your teacher for constructive criticism on your compositions and performances.

**Stay organized:** Keep your notes and scores in order.

**Enjoy the music!**

### Assessment:

The Leaving Certificate Music examination consists of:

- **Listening Paper:** Assessing your knowledge and understanding of the prescribed works and other musical styles. (25%)
- **Composition Paper:** Highlighting your composing skills through melodic and harmonic composition (25%)
- **Performance:** Demonstrating your instrumental or vocal skills. (50%)

We are here to support you throughout your Leaving Certificate Music journey. Don't hesitate to ask your teacher any questions you may have. We look forward to a year filled with musical exploration and discovery!



## PHYSICS

### Why Choose Physics?

Physics is the most **fundamental science**, upon which all other sciences are based. It seeks to explain how the universe works, from the smallest subatomic particles to the vastness of space. Physics encourages us to see the world differently, fostering a deep appreciation for the laws that govern nature. It develops critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the ability to apply mathematical concepts to real-world scenarios. It is ideal for students who enjoy science and logical reasoning.

### Where Can It Lead?

Physics is fundamental for careers in engineering, astronomy, medical physics, environmental science, and technology-related fields. Many courses in science and engineering require a physics background.

### Course Overview

The new Leaving Cert Physics syllabus, effective from 2025, consists of a unifying strand, **The Nature of Science**, along with four key contextual strands:

- **Forces and Motion:** Kinematics, dynamics, Newton's laws, energy, and momentum.
- **Wave Motion and Energy Transfer:** Sound and light waves, reflection, refraction, and interference.
- **Electric and Magnetic Fields and their Interactions:** Electrostatics, circuits, electromagnetism, and applications.
- **Modern Physics:** Atomic and nuclear physics, quantum mechanics, and relativity.

Practical work and scientific investigations play a crucial role in the course. Students will engage with primary and secondary data, research-based investigations, and hands-on experiments to develop a deep understanding of physical concepts.

A key change in the new syllabus is the **Additional Assessment Component (AAC)**, which will account for **40% of the final grade**. This will assess students' ability to apply physics concepts in investigative and problem-solving scenarios, alongside their practical skills.



## LEAVING CERTIFICATE POINTS SCORING SYSTEM:

Grades and points introduced in 2017:

New Leaving Certificate Grading Scale		New Points at HIGHER LEVEL	New Points at ORDINARY LEVEL
90 – 100	H1/01	100	56
80 – 89	H2/02	88	46
70 - 79	H3/03	77	37
60 – 69	H4/04	66	28
50 – 59	H5/05	56	20
40 – 49	H6/06	46	12
30 – 39	H7/07	37	0
0 - 29	H8/08		

(Additional information from Irish Universities Association: [www/iua.ie](http://www/iua.ie))

Higher Maths grade H1 – H6 will gain an additional 25 points.

### ADVICE

**Maths:** A pass in Ordinary Level Maths is essential for entry to the majority of courses.

Students who fail to secure a grade 6 in Ordinary Level are in a difficult situation. Do not neglect study in this subject.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Language & Science Subjects:** A decision to drop all Science subjects or continental languages will have major implications on the range of careers open to you later on.

This document is offered as a guide only.

**The information contained within is not definitive nor meant to be. Furthermore it is subject to change on a yearly basis.**