

What is the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme?

LEAVING CERT APPLIED



The Leaving Certificate Applied is a distinct, self-contained Leaving Certificate programme. It is designed for those students who do not wish to proceed directly to third level education or for those whose needs, aspirations and aptitudes are not adequately catered for by the other two Leaving Certificate programmes (the Leaving Certificate established programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme/LCVP).

The Leaving Certificate Applied is structured around three main elements-***Vocational Preparation, Vocational Education*** and ***General Education***-which are inter-related and independent. This programme is characterised by educational experiences of an active, practical and student-centred nature.

The Leaving Certificate Applied (**LCA**) is a two-year course, available to students who wish to follow a practical or vocationally orientated programme. The word 'applied' is used because the programme is designed to allow the students to apply the learning and experiences they gain over the two years of the programme to practical educational tasks at school, in the workplace and in the wider community.

LCA is aimed at preparing students for adult and working life. It is marked differently to the traditional Leaving Certificate established programme but **still is a gateway to third level education.**

Who designed the LCA programme?

The LCA programme has been designed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. The fundamental goal of the LCA programme is to prepare participants for the transition from the world of school to that of adult and working life. It is essential that the talents of all Leaving Certificate participants are recognised and that they are afforded an opportunity to develop in terms of responsibility, self-esteem, and self-knowledge. Participants should also develop communication and decision-making skills so as to achieve a more independent and enterprising approach to learning and life.

The LCA focuses on the needs and interests of participants, using a variety of methodologies, making optimum use of the resources of the local community and paying particular attention to the needs of the local region. There is a need to recognise that individuals differ considerably in the ways they process, assimilate and recall information.

The Junior Certificate provides the foundation for this development and continuity is an important guiding consideration.

The use of active of active teaching and learning methodologies across the curriculum promotes these qualities that are fundamental to the development of an individual with an enterprising outlook: self-confidence, responsibility, co-operation, teamwork, problem solving, independence, decision making, and initiative. Work experience and work simulation provides an important opportunity to apply and further these qualities.

Underlying Principles of LCA:

- Has as its primary objective the preparation of participants for adult and working life and the development of the participants' literacy and numeracy skills.
- It is intended to meet the needs of those participants who are not adequately catered for by other Leaving Certificate programmes or who choose not to opt for such options.
- It is a distinct and self-contained programme of two years.
- Consists of three main elements: Vocational Preparation, Vocational Education; General Education.
- Has established the concept of integration as a central element of the programme structure and of the participants' learning experience.
- Places a premium on the personal and social development of participants.
- Provides opportunities to develop the participants' processes of self-evaluation.
- Has a strong community base so as to complement the school as a learning site.
- Has available a broad range of teaching and learning methodologies and participant centred learning.
- Has available an appropriate range of modes and techniques for assessing the progress of the participants.
- Provides access to further education and training.

What is different about the Leaving Certificate Applied?

LCA is different in a number of ways:

- It is a distinct and self-contained programme made up of a number of courses.
- It is a practical programme that makes use of active and student centred learning methodologies.
- It includes seven **Student Tasks** that bring together learning experiences that the students have gained from the courses they have taken.
- It uses a unique system of assessment. The students' work is assessed over the two years of the programme and they gain **credits** as they go along. **Practical interviews** and **terminal written papers** are among the different forms of assessment used. The students' communication, problem solving and practical skills are also assessed.

Programme Requirements:

The LCA programme consists of a range of courses, each designed on a modular basis. A **module** is of thirty hours duration. Each year of the two-year programme is divided into two sessions, September to January and February to June, to facilitate the modular structure of the course. A module within a given course is usually completed within a session. Over the two-year programme the participants will complete 44 modules.

Courses/Subjects available in Coláiste Dún an Rí for LCA:

Vocational Preparation:	Number of Modules
Vocational Preparation and Guidance-Career Guidance and Enterprise	8
English and Communication	4
Vocational Education:	No. of Modules
Vocational Specialisms-2 full courses: Agriculture/Horticulture and Hotel, Catering and Tourism	8 (4×2)
Mathematical Applications	4
Introduction to Information and Communication Technology	2
General Education:	No. of Modules
Social Education: Health and Social Education and Contemporary Issues	6
Irish (5 th Year)	2

French (6 th Year)	2
Arts Education: Music/Art	2
Leisure and Recreation (including P.E.)	2
Electives Modules:	No. of Modules
Religious Education	2
Science	2
Total	44

NOTE: If any student has an exemption for Irish from the Junior Certificate it carries over to the LCA course also. This does not mean the student is exempt from French as a specific Language Exemption is needed.

Summary of Subjects over the two-year programme at CDAR:

1. Irish and French	2. Information and Computer Technology
3. Social Education: Health and Social and Contemporary Issues	4. Career Guidance - VPG

5.Agriculture/Horticulture	6. Religion
7.Maths	8. P.E.
9.Hotel, Catering and Tourism	9. Work Experience
11.Music/Art	10. English and Communications
13. Enterprise - VPG	

NOTE: One day a Week (Wednesday's) students attend work experience 4 separate sessions must be completed over the two years.

How are students awarded Credits?

As students complete their LCA course they collect **credits**. It is possible to collect a total of 200 credits. A maximum of 62 credits are awarded for completing the required courses, 70 credits for the seven Student Tasks completed over the two years, and 68 credits for the examinations at the end of Year 2. Students who accumulate fewer than 60 credits will receive a Record of Experience.

Credits are marks given to students after the completion of **Key Assignments**. A Key Assignment is like a piece of homework each student must complete in each module or course. Each module has 4 Key Assignments that must be completed during each session over the two-year programme. For instance, Religion has a total of 16 Key Assignments to be completed over two years. Each module is awarded 1 or 2 credits depending on whether there is a terminal written exam.

NOTE: It is important to note that a student must complete all Key Assignments and have 90% attendance to pass each module in the various subjects on offer.

The LCA is awarded at three levels:

PASS	120-139 credits	60-69%
MERIT	140-169 credits	70-84%
DISTINCTION	170-200 credits	85-100%

Participant/student achievement is recorded in three modes:

A. Module Completion:

At the end of each session the participant will be credited on satisfactory completion of the appropriate modules. In order to be awarded credit students must:

- Attend the classes and the out-of-school activities related to the modules and
- Complete the key assignments related to the module.
- No ranking of performance will be involved. As mentioned already, a minimum of 90% attendance is required. The school must verify where there is absence due to exceptional circumstances. It is very important that LCA students produce a valid reason e.g. a Sick Cert from a doctor.

B. Student Tasks:

- Seven Student Tasks to be completed over the two years.

C. External Examinations:

- At the end of Year 2 students will take final examinations in the following areas:
- English and Communications
- Vocational Specialisms (2)- Agriculture/Horticulture, Catering and Tourism
- Mathematical Applications
- Languages (2)-Irish is assessed at the end of Year 1 and French at the end of Year 2.
- Social Education

What are student Tasks?

Each participant is required to complete seven **Student Tasks** over the two years. Tasks are like big projects with each task worth 10 credits. The Student Task is a practical activity and/or process of reflection through which the student integrates and applies learning experiences gained undertaking the LCA programme to some or all of the following:

- The development of a product
- The investigation of an issue
- The performance of an action
- The provision of a service
- The staging of an event
- Personal reflection

The primary purpose of the Student Task is to underpin a key educational principle of the LCA programme, namely integration. The Students Tasks are designed to help students develop within themselves a stronger awareness of the beneficial and coherent links that exist between the concepts, skills, competencies, experiences, knowledge and understanding that they have developed and/or acquired from the LCA programme. The Student Task should draw learning rather than allowing it to become or remain a fragmented experience. This process is referred to as integration.

What are the aims of the Student Task?

The aims of the Student Task are to:

- Provide an opportunity for students to integrate learning and practical experiences from the different courses and modules of the programme.
- Develop student literacy, communication and numeracy skills.
- Develop student confidence and self-esteem.
- Promote student motivation by providing short term achievable goals.
- Develop student responsibility and initiative as well as skills in self-evaluation, problem solving, reflection and management.
- Enable students to apply to practical problems and/or issues the knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies developed through participation in the modules.
- Promote co-operation and team work among participating students.
- Promote school/community liaison through involvement in the local community.
- Promote and develop active citizenship.
- Prepare students for life outside and beyond school.

Schedule for the seven Student Tasks:

YEAR 1		YEAR 2	
Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
1. General Education Task -normally anchored	2. Vocational Preparation Task -normally anchored in VPG. (10 Credits)	4. Contemporary Issues Task -normally anchored by one of the	7. Personal Reflection Task , incorporating

<p>through Active Leisure studies or Art. (10 Credits)</p>	<p>3. Vocational Education Task- anchored in one of the Vocational Specialism courses, e.g. Agriculture/Horticulture. (10 Credits)</p>	<p>Social Education teachers. (10 Credits) 5. Vocational Educational Task- anchored by the second Vocational Specialism courses, e.g. Hotel, catering and Tourism. (10 Credits)</p> <p>6. Practical Achievement Task-a Task where students undertake a practical and/or enterprising task over a period of three months, e.g. completing a First-Aid course. (10 Credits)</p>	<p>Reflective Statements I and II. (10 Credits)</p>
	<p>Reflective Statement I</p>		<p>Reflective Statement II</p>

Summary of the seven Students Tasks:

1. General Education Task	10 Credits
1. Vocational Preparation Task	10 Credits
1. Vocational Education Task x2	10 +10 Credits
1. Contemporary Issues Task	10 Credits
1. Practical Achievement Task	10 Credits
1. Personal Reflection Task	10 Credits
OVERALL CREDITS	70 CREDITS

Allocation of Credits:

Satisfactory Completion of Modules*	62 Credits	31%
7 Student Tasks	70 Credits	45%
Final Examinations	68 Credits	34%

***With regard to the assessment component of Module Completion, modules in the non-examination courses, e.g. Religion, will have a value of two credits. Courses also assessed in the Final Examinations will have a value of one credit per module.**

How long should it take to complete a Student Task?

The recommended time for completing a Student Task is ten hours, some of which will be in class time. The Personal Reflection Task, will by its nature require more time as it is an ongoing task designed to allow the student to reflect on a regular basis on their learning experiences. This Student Task commences at the beginning of Session 1 and finishes at the end of Session 2.

On completion of Students Tasks a student is required to produce authentic evidence of task completion. The student must also produce a task report and present for interview with a task examiner appointed by the State Examinations Commission. Task interviews take place within the school and are arranged by the LCA co-ordinator, deputy principal and the State Examinations Commission. These interviews form part of the assessment procedure for each task and occur during Sessions 1 to 3. The only exception to this set of requirements is the Personal Reflection Task, which does not have an interview component. The task report need not be typed but all task reports are retained in the school until the closing date for appeals for each task.

What is a Student Task Report?

A Student Task report is a description of the various stages required to complete a Student Task. A report should include information regarding:

- The title
- The statement of aims
- The plan of action
- Carrying out the Student Task
- Presentation and analysis of findings

- Evaluation of the Student Task and the student's own contribution
- How other courses contributed to the Student Task

The primary purpose of the Student Task is to give students an opportunity to develop a stronger awareness of the coherent links that exist between the concepts, skills, competencies, experiences, knowledge and understanding that they have developed and/or required through study of a range of courses within the LCA programme. The Student Task should draw learning together rather than allowing it to become or remain a fragmented experience. This process is referred to as integration.

NOTE: For a detailed description of each of the seven Student Tasks and the Course and Module descriptors please refer to www.examinations.ie (LCA section) and www.slss.ie or www.pdst.ie . For more details on LCA you can contact Clare Education Centre, Government Offices, Kilrush Road, Ennis Co. Clare. T. 065-6845504/065-6845514, F. 065-6842930

Or simply drop into the school and arrange to speak to the LCA co-ordinator, Ms Cumiskey.

Some comments from students why they chose LCA

- *"I chose LCA because it seemed like an interesting course to do"*
- *"I liked the idea of doing a variety of different subjects"*
- *"I chose it because it prepares you for adult life"*
- *"It gives you the opportunity to do work experience"*
- *"I prefer practical work to theory work"*
- *"I prefer project work to exams"*

NOTE: The LCA programme is an important part of a student's journey in education. It is important to note that the LCA is not a barrier to third level education. A student who successfully completes LCA can go on

to college/university. The student must first complete a PLC course (Post Leaving Certificate course) and then apply to the college of their choice.

The LCA programme is recognised as a fundamental part of senior cycle within Coláiste Dún an Rí. The programme is promoted by:

- LCA Co-ordinator presentation to parents of third year students and TY Students
- LCA Co-ordinator presentation to classes within third year
- Regular in-service for new and existing teachers teaching the various modules within LCA
- Year-heads and management encouraging and promotion of the programme