Mercy Secondary School
Mounthawk

2nd Year Subject Choice

For September 2016

Includes:
- Subject choice for Second Year
- Brief overview of Senior Cycle
Introduction

The transition from first year to second year in school begins the process of specialisation in terms of subject choices. Our intention in offering a broad range of subjects to students in first year is that they will have the opportunity to sample the various subjects available and therefore to come to a more considered choice of options in second year.

We offer some general guidelines in choosing subjects.

Some rules:

- All students must retain the core subjects from first year. (see the list below)
- From the other 5 optional subjects taken in first year, you will keep 4 (therefore dropping 1).
- You may not take up a subject that you have not taken in first year. You can only continue with the subjects you are currently studying.

Your strengths and interests:

- Having experienced the subjects through first year, each student should be better informed to decide whether they want to keep a subject. Take into consideration your results in the subject at Christmas, your teachers’ suggestions at the Parent-Teacher Meetings and your progress since then.
- Focus on your strengths.
- If you are unsure of your aptitude for a subject, please ask your teacher.
- Do not choose subjects on the basis of your friends’ decisions. What they like may not be what you are good at.

Middle-term implications of you choices—Senior Cycle


Long term implications of the choice:

It is necessary to take into consideration the long term implications of your choices, since certain courses in third level require certain subjects and dropping some subjects may curtail your options later in senior cycle or in college.

- A modern language (French/German/Spanish) is required for entry into any NUI college. (UCC, NUI Galway, UCD, NUI Maynooth) with the following exceptions: Nursing at all Colleges, engineering and all science courses at NUI Maynooth, and Engineering and Agricultural Science courses at UCD.

- At least one laboratory science subject is required for entry to most science, engineering, medicine and para-medical honours degrees.

- You cannot be expected at this stage to know what you want to do in college or as a career. Indeed, even if you have certain ideas at the moment, you will probably change your mind
several times over the next few years. Therefore the best advice is to maintain a balance in your choice of subjects; this will keep your options open - Business, Science, Humanities etc...

Consult:
- An important decision such as this needs to be made in consultation with your parents and in your own best interests.
- Ask older students whom you know what the subjects are like in second and third year.
- Please feel free to consult with the career guidance counsellors in the school and ask them for any information you need on requirements for college courses.

The Process of Subject Option Choices.
- You will be given a subject option form to fill in and return to the office by the specified date.
- Subjects will be offered to you with the intention of giving each student their first four choices. If that is not possible, you have a strong likelihood of getting your first, second or third choice. It is important therefore to make sure that the essential subjects you require are at the top of your list.
- For logistical reasons in processing the data, please note the following:
  - If you require a language, make sure to put it at the top of the list.
  - If you require science or business, please ensure it is near the top of the list.

Remember you may not start a new subject in second year.
If we cannot give the 4th choice, you will be offered a lower choice on the list. Therefore please make sure that you are actually prepared to do the subject that you have included as choice 5.
In processing the option choices for the year, it may transpire that one subject may clash with another subject and it may not be possible to offer a student both subjects. Should this occur, students will be informed of the difficulty and asked to reconsider their choices.
You will receive an offer of subjects before the end of the school year. Once this has been done and you have accepted the subjects, your decision is considered final.
Any request to change subjects in September will be entertained only on the basis of the Summer Examination results and then only if there is a place available in the requested subject.

For these reasons, we ask you to please consider carefully the choice of subjects at this time and try, in as far as possible, to ensure that the choice is the correct one.

Classes and Class Groupings in Second Year.
Students will be aware that they will be re-assigned to new base class groupings in second year. This re-assignment is based on subject option choice and on the performance of students in a combination of their Christmas, Summer exams and the recommendations of their teachers.
Classes are banded in English, Irish and Maths into honours, ordinary and foundation level based on the results from first year and the recommendations of the teachers. Students with special needs are considered for extra help, resource hours or reduced curriculum on an individual basis. All such arrangements will be discussed with parents. Students with special needs are considered for reasonable accommodation for state examinations on an individual basis.
Subject and Course Information

The Core Curriculum

All students at Junior Cycle level study the full core curriculum:

- Irish*
- English
- Maths
- History
- Geography
- Civic Social and Political Education (C.S.P.E.)
- Religious Education
- Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E) (Not examined)
- Physical Education (Not examined)

*Irish is compulsory for all students who do not have an official exemption granted by the Department of Education. Such exemptions will generally have been processed in national school or in 1st year.

Optional Subjects:

Of the 5 optional subjects in first year, you will retain 4, dropping 1.

Modern Languages: French, German, Spanish
It is generally advisable that students should keep a language unless there is a general learning difficulty which makes language learning difficult for a student.

Science
Because science is desirable for so many courses in third level, and because it divides into three subjects for the Leaving Certificate, we recommend that students retain this subject if at all possible.

Business Studies
Business divides into three subjects for the Leaving Certificate and should be retained by any student who is intent on pursuing a business career.

Art
Art is an excellent subject for anyone intending to study or work in areas like Advertising, Fashion Design, Decorating etc.
Music
Music educates students for the entertainment business in the widest sense whether in the public arena or in the privacy of the home.

Home Economics
This broad ranging subject covers craftwork and design, home management, health and fitness and food preparation. It is a good preparation for students going into a range of courses such as catering, food science, hairdressing, dietician etc..

Technical Graphics
Technical Graphs (TG) is a very relevant preparation for students who wish to go on to study engineering, design, draughtsmanship, apprenticeship in many trades etc.

Materials Technology (Wood)
Woodwork is a good preparation for apprenticeships, building construction, engineering, etc.

Metalwork (Materials & Tech)
Metalwork is a subject where students get a good grounding in preparation for Fitter, Toolmaker, Engineer etc.

OPTIONS FOR SENIOR CYCLE
There are four options available to students in Senior Cycle in Mounthawk.
• The Traditional Leaving Certificate
• The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
• The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
• Transition Year.

It is our aim in the school to provide for the Educational needs of the whole school population, and therefore we offer the full range of programmes available in Ireland for senior Cycle. A basic outline of the Programmes follows below. Having an eye to the options in Senior cycle may be important in making your subject choices for second year.

1. **The Traditional Leaving Certificate**
In Mercy Mounthawk students take 7 subjects for the Leaving Certificate.

The Core Curriculum consists of English, Irish and Maths for examination. Students also take Religion, and P.E. as core subjects but not for examination.
An additional 4 subjects are taken from the option list below:
In the Humanities: History, Geography, French, Spanish, German and Music and Religion.
In the Sciences: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Agricultural Science and Applied Maths.
In Business: Accounting, Economics, Business.

2. LEAVING CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME.

L.C.V.P. is essentially the traditional Leaving Certificate with two additional Link modules (short courses) which count as another subject for Leaving Certificate and as such may be used as one of the 6 subjects for the purpose of points.

Programme Requirements:
Requirements for students taking LCVP Examination are as follows: Students take 7 subject in addition to 2 Link Modules. Subjects must include:
• Leaving Cert Irish
• Modern European Language
• 2 subjects must be selected from one of the designated Vocational Subject Groupings listed below
• 2 Link Modules: Preparation for the World of Work and Enterprise Education

Vocational Subject Groupings (Subject groupings can vary from year to year.)
1. Construction Studies or Design Communication Graphics or Engineering (any two)
2. Physics and Construction Studies or Engineering
3. Home Economics and Biology
4. Home Economics and Art
5. Accounting or Business or Economics (any two)
6. Physics and Chemistry
7. Biology and Physics or Chemistry or Physical Chemistry (combined subject)
8. Construction St. and Business or Accounting or Econ.
9. Home Econ. and Business or Accounting or Econ.
10. Art and Business or Accounting or Economics
11. Music and Business or Accounting or Economics
12. Engineering and Business or Accounting or Economics

The Link Modules:
Link Module 1 - Preparation for the World of Work
Students will research and investigate local employment opportunities, develop job seeking skills such as letter writing, C. V. presentation, interview techniques, gain valuable practical experience of the world of work, interview and work shadow a person in a career area that interests them.

Link Module 2 - Enterprise Education
Students will be involved in organising visits to local business and community enterprises; meet and interview enterprising people on-site and in the classroom; plan and undertake interesting activities that will build self-confidence, creativity, initiative and develop teamwork, communication and computer skills.
3. **The Leaving Certificate Applied**

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a distinct, self-contained two-year Leaving Certificate. 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 traditional Leaving Certificate. The fundamental goal of the Leaving Certificate Applied is to prepare students for transition from the world of the school to that of adult and working life.

The Leaving Certificate Applied consists of a range of courses, each designed on a modular basis. Each year of the two-year programme is divided into two semesters, September to January and February to June. A module within a given course is usually completed within a semester. Over the two-year duration of the programme the participants will complete 44 modules. Participants are required to take courses in each of the following areas:

- **Vocational Preparation**: Vocational Preparation & Guidance, English and Communication
- **Vocational Education**: Vocational Specialism – 2 courses, Mathematical Applications, Introduction to Information & Communication, Technology.
- **General Education**: Social Education, Gaeilge, Modern European Language, Arts Education (Drama, Music, Visual Art), Leisure and Recreation.

**Assessment and Certification**

A. **Module Completion**

At the end of each Session the student will be credited on satisfactory completion of the appropriate modules. In order to be awarded credit students must:
- Attend the classes and out-of-school activities related to the modules and
- Complete the key assignments related to the module.

A minimum attendance of 90% is required. Where absence is due to illness, the student must supply a medical certificate to the school authorities.

B. **Student Tasks**

As part of the Leaving Certificate Applied students undertake a number of tasks, which are set and examined over the two years of the programme. These tasks, which are examined externally by the Department of Education and Science, are practical activities, which allow students, individually or in teams, to apply classroom experience to real-life situations.

C. **External Examinations**

At the end of Year 2 participants will take written examinations in the following areas: English and Communication, Vocational Specialisms (2), Mathematical Applications, Gaeilge, Modern European Language, and Social Education. Examinations run concurrently with the traditional Leaving Certificate.

4. **Transition Year.**

The Transition Year programme is intended to facilitate the integrated development of the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical, social and vocational capacities of each individual student. The general aim of the year is the preparation of young people for their roles as autonomous, participative and responsible members of society. Emphasis is therefore placed on:

(a) Education for maturity, spiritual and personal development, including social awareness and
increased social competence.
(b) The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on self-directed learning.
(c) Education through experience of working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

Main Components of Programme:

Academic Studies:
Aspects of the following subject areas are included:
Gaeilge, English, Mathematics, French, Spanish, German, History, Geography, Science (including modules of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Applied maths), Business Studies (including modules of Economics, Accounting and Business). Study, homework and regular evaluation are required. In the area of languages, the emphasis is on literacy and fluency, with elements of literature, which are not prescribed for the Leaving Certificate programme.

General Education:
Modules are also provided in Music, Art, Drama, Dance, Social and Health Education, Religion, Personal Development, Mini-Company, Physical Education and Tourism Awareness. Students have opportunities in I.T. with the provision to do the E.C.D.L. and a food safety course in Home Economics.

Careers Education:
This section includes Work Shadowing one day each week for 9/10 weeks. During this period, students will spend 3 days in each of 3 workplaces where they will shadow a member of some particular profession or workforce.
Students also have one class period of Guidance each week during which they receive a comprehensive preparation for the world of work. This will include interview preparation, compiling a C.V., writing letters, study skills and an overview of Third Level, subject choices for Fifth Year and careers information.

Activities:
To achieve the holistic aims of the year, great emphasis is placed on a variety of activities offered in the year ranging from tours, to hill walking, first aid to cookery skills, driving lessons to deportment. The programme is wide and varied providing opportunities for each student to excel.

A Word on Homework and Study:
Students should get into the habit of noting all of their homework in the School Journal. It is recommended that parents check the journal each night to ensure that this is being done and that each student is completing all of their homework assignments.

It is recommended that second year students study for at least 2 hours each night. Study should be done in a quiet environment without the distraction of T.V., conversation or music. An evening’s study should be a combination of homework and revision. It is important that students learn the centrality of revision from first year - constant revision is a key to success.

Optional supervised study is available in school from Monday to Friday from 4.00 to 6.00, providing a structured environment conducive to productive study. Application forms are available from the office in September.
(See www.mercymounthawk.ie for details)