

Junior Certificate Course Participation Policy.

The Junior Certificate in Clonkeen College:

The Junior Certificate is a second-level course and examination accredited by the Ireland's State Examinations Commission. The Junior Certificate examination is normally taken after the first three years' study in Clonkeen College. Typically our students takes 9 to 12 subjects – including English, Irish and Mathematics – as part of their Junior Cycle.

The aims of the Junior Certificate in Clonkeen College are to provide a well-balanced, general education for our students that can provide a sound basis for their further education and progress through life. The Junior Cycle is the first three years of their second-level education. In the final year of the course, Clonkeen College teachers often allocate a substantial amount of time for revision of key topics. Our students also practice answering questions which appeared on previous examination papers. Courses are quite broad - for example the Business course covers business organisation, marketing, economics, accounting and several other areas. The same is also true for the Science course, which covers basic physics, chemistry and biology. The Leaving Cert exam by comparison is a much more specific, advanced and detailed course of study.

What subjects do Clonkeen College students study?

Our students undertake all the subjects listed below, except insofar as exemptions or exclusions apply.

The subjects offered in Clonkeen College include:

- Irish [Exemption from taking Irish is subject to Circular M10/94, on the grounds of time spent abroad or learning disability.]

- English [Exemption from taking Irish is subject to Circular M10/94, on the grounds of time spent abroad or learning disability.]
- Mathematics [Exemption from taking Irish is subject to Circular M10/94, on the grounds of time spent abroad or learning disability.]
- French
- Civic, Social and Political Education (Usually called CSPE)
- Social, Personal and Health Education (not examined) Usually called SPHE
- PE (not examined)
- Art
- Business
- French
- Geography
- Science
- History
- Religious Education (examinable)

What about the examination itself?

The Junior Cert examination takes place after three years of study in Clonkeen College, in early June. The exams always start with English, then the other main subjects and typically finish with the subjects that have the fewest candidates. The exams can take the form of written papers, aurals, orals, practicals as well as marks from course work assignments (such as in CSPE, where 60% of the exam rests on an action project). Exams are usually 2 to 3 hours long; most subjects are one paper only (i.e. they are taken in a single session), however 4 subjects have two papers at higher level - Irish, English, Mathematics and Business Studies. Candidates are permitted to leave the exam hall anytime after the first half hour, up to 15 minutes before the end of the exam and after the exam is concluded.

What levels are available in Clonkeen College?

In general, at the Junior Certificate, Clonkeen College students take the examination subjects at the higher level, however students may take a lower level paper if this is more suitable.

In CSPE, there are no separate levels, all students take the same (Common) level.

The level taken at Junior Certificate can have a bearing on the level taken in the Leaving Certificate. The professional advice of Clonkeen College teachers is well worth considering before a move to sit a lower level paper is taken.

What is the grading system for the Junior Cert?

Grading is split into seven ranges.

Grade A [85 -100%] Grade B [70 -84%] Grade C [55 -69%]

(These grades are considered to be the honours grades).

Grade D [40 -54%]

(This grade is considered a pass grade).

Grade E [25 -39%] Grade F [10 -24%] No Grade (N.G.) [Below 10%]

(These grades are considered fail grades).

The pass mark is set at 40%, and anything over 55% is nominally described as an 'honour'. Marking schemes are freely available to students before exams. However at Junior Certificate level, exam papers are not returned after the exam. If a student feels he has been unfairly marked, they can have the paper rechecked (i.e appealed) for a fee of around €30. To appeal, he must inform Mr. Twomey, school Principal. The appeals always have to be in by a deadline. The appeal results are usually released by the second week of September.

What about exemptions?

Students who face disadvantages (for example, those who suffer spelling problems caused by dyslexia) can apply for an exemption from being penalised for bad spellings in exams such as English and Irish. These candidates will be marked harder on a separate topic. (e.g. if a student has a spelling exemption in English he/she will not be marked out of 5 for their mechanics - instead he/she will be marked out of a greater number in another area, for example out of 25 rather than 20 for content)

When do students get their results?

Results are released in mid-September. It is possible to fail the Junior Cert but rare: all students continue to their next year of education no matter what their results. The Junior Certificate (and more so, the Leaving Certificate) results take centre place in the Irish media during the week surrounding their release. The newspapers publish various statistics about the exam and cover high achievers (some receive 11 or even 12 A grades!).

Can students appeal their grades?

If a student is unhappy with a grade they received on any of the exam results, they may appeal the decision made by the SEC. They need to pay a fee (the fee is normally under €50) and there is a deadline to appeal, usually 14-21 days after the results are published, in which the student's application must be made. The appeal results are usually handed out mid-November. The grade that is received this time is final, and no more appeals can be made. If the candidate's grade did not change, no further action will be taken. However, if a change did occur, then the candidate will be refunded the appeal fee via a Cheque made out to the principal of the school.

What provision is made for students with Special Educational Needs?

Clonkeen College is committed to providing students with SEN's with every type of practicable support it can possibly give. To that end, classes are mostly mixed ability for the three years leading up to the Junior Certificate. In second and third years concurrent timetabling in Irish and Mathematics allows students to be taught in classes consistent with their abilities (setting). In particular, significant provision is made for Learning Support classes in Mathematics and English in first year.