



*Programme Statement &
Outline of Student Tasks*

LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED

Leaving Certificate Programmes

Aims and Principles

1. The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, expressive, intellectual, for personal and home life, for working life, for living in the community and for leisure.
2. Leaving Certificate programmes are presented within this general aim, with a particular emphasis on the preparation of students for the requirements of further education or training, for employment and for their role as participative, enterprising citizens.
3. All Leaving Certificate programmes aim to provide continuity with and progression from the Junior Certificate programme. The relative weighting given to the various components — e.g. personal and social (including moral and spiritual) development, vocational studies and preparation for further education and for adult and working life — within the programmes may vary.
4. Programmes leading to the award of the Leaving Certificate are of two years duration and are offered in three forms:
 - i. The Leaving Certificate (Established)
 - ii. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
 - iii. The Leaving Certificate Applied
5. All Leaving Certificate programmes, in contributing to a high quality education, emphasise the importance of:
 - self-directed learning and independent thought
 - a spirit of inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving, self-reliance, initiative and enterprise
 - preparation for further education, for adult and working life
 - lifelong learning.

The Leaving Certificate (Established)

The Leaving Certificate (Established) programme offers students a broad and balanced education while allowing for some specialisation. Syllabuses are provided in a wide range of subjects. All subjects are offered at Ordinary and Higher levels. In addition, Mathematics and Irish are also offered at Foundation level.

The certificate is used for purposes of selection into further education, employment, training and higher education.

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme is an intervention within the Leaving Certificate (Established). LCVP students study a minimum of five subjects (at Higher, Ordinary or Foundation levels), including Irish and two subjects from specified vocational subject groupings. They are also required to take a recognised course in a Modern European language, other than Irish or English. In addition LCVP students take three Link Modules on Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience.

In particular, the LCVP aims to foster in students a spirit of enterprise and initiative and to develop their interpersonal, vocational and technological skills.

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

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Preamble

Introduction

The Leaving Certificate Applied programme has been developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. This programme is part of the expanded senior cycle provision designed to cater for the diversity of participants' needs.

The fundamental goal of the Leaving Certificate Applied is to prepare Leaving Certificate participants for transition from the world of the school/centre to that of adult and working life. This transition is complex and demanding for a variety of reasons

- patterns, and the qualities, aptitudes and personal skills required in the work-place have changed
- participants are remaining longer in formal education and in training than heretofore and the period of transition is also more lengthy
- in addition to the challenges in relation to education, training and jobs, participants are also faced with related, social, personal and cultural issues.

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 to life.

The suitability of the Leaving Certificate (Established) to adequately meet the needs of all Leaving Certificate participants has been subject to question. In the interests of equity it is important that the various needs of participants at the post-compulsory stage of education are provided for. The Leaving Certificate Applied has evolved from curriculum development projects aimed at strengthening the technological/vocational options and the development of personal skills at senior cycle.

The Leaving Certificate Applied 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 from this programme is an important guiding consideration.

The use of active teaching and learning methodologies across the curriculum promotes those 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, initiative. Work experience and work simulation provides an important opportunity to apply and further develop these qualities.

Effective implementation of the Leaving Certificate Applied requires the active support of the principal, senior management and the whole school/centre as an institution.

Note:

Throughout this book reference is made to teachers, students and schools. This programme is also in operation in other types of educational centres such as Youthreach centres. The words, tutors, learners and centres should be substituted for teachers, students and schools for those reading the text from this perspective.

Leaving Certificate Applied

Programme Statement

1. Features and Format of the Leaving Certificate Applied

Underlying Principles

The Leaving Certificate Applied

- I. Has as its primary objective the preparation of participants for adult and working life and the development of the participants' literacy and numeracy skills
- II. 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 programmes
- III. Is a distinct and self-contained programme of two years duration
- IV. Consists of three main elements: Vocational Preparation; Vocational Education; General Education
- V. Has established the concept of integration as a central element of the programme structure and of the participants' learning experience
- VI. Places a premium on the personal and social development of participants
- VII. Aims to develop active citizens who have a sense of belonging to the local, national, European and global community, who have a capacity to gain access to information and structures, and an ability to fully participate in democratic society
- VIII. Provides opportunities to develop the participants' processes of self-evaluation and reflection
- IX. Has a strong community base so as to complement the school or centre as a learning site
- X. Promotes the use of a broad range of teaching methodologies and participant centred learning
- XI. Has available an appropriate range of modes and techniques for assessing the progress of the participants
- XII. Provides access to further education and training

Elements of the Programme

The programme, which is of two years' duration, has three main elements

- Vocational Preparation
- Vocational Education
- General Education

A range of courses is provided within each of these elements.

Principles of Course Design

The following principles form the basis for the design of these courses

- Courses to consist of short, self-contained modules
- Student Tasks to be used as a means of integrating courses
- Progression from Year 1 to Year 2
- Schools to have flexibility within overall national provision

2. School Support, Organisation and Teaching Methodologies School Support

In order to deliver the Leaving Certificate Applied programme effectively a school requires

- Active commitment and support from management, the principal and the whole staff
- Effective communication between management, staff, participants, parents/guardians in matters relating to the Leaving Certificate Applied programme
- Attention to the professional development of teachers
- An openness and willingness to take on change
- Opportunities for co-operation and involvement with the local community

School Organisation

Careful attention to the detail and organisation of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme within the school, particularly in relation to planning, timetabling and co-ordination is extremely important.

Timetabling

Remember

- That the Leaving Certificate Applied is an integrated programme
- That it is important when planning and designing the timetable to do so for the full two year programme
- To refer to the programme requirements at all times
- That including time for the work of the co-ordinator, team meetings, work experience and monitoring work experience is important

The Programme Co-ordinator

Remember

- That the co-ordinator is a key person in the dissemination of information
- She/he also performs important functions in relation to administration (e.g. keeping records, co-ordinating the management of Student Tasks, monitoring participant attendance)
- She/he also plays an important role in relation to planning (e.g. timetable issues, provision of teaching staff, budget, chairing and convening team meetings, planning Student Tasks)
- She/he must relate well to, and be a motivator of, both teachers and participants and help to establish the profile of the Leaving Certificate Applied in the school and beyond
- That the co-ordinator should also have good organisational skills (e.g. organising work placements)

Teaching Methodologies

The programme is characterised by

- The use of teaching styles which actively involve the participants in locating and using relevant information, and which promote personal responsibility, initiative, independence, reflection, self-evaluation, self-confidence and co-operation
- A variety of teaching and learning processes including group work, project work and the use of individualised learning assignments
- The promotion of communication, literacy, numeracy and other generic skills across the curriculum using a range of media
- The promotion of equity in all its aspects including gender equity
- The development of teachers skills in evaluating their own performance
- The identification and use of teaching and learning resources in the local community and interaction with employers and enterprises

- A teaching approach designed to address and meet the needs of the participants

3. Programme Requirements

The Leaving Certificate Applied 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 courses. A module within a given course is usually completed within a session. Over the two-year duration of the programme the participants will complete 44 modules.

Courses

Participants are required to take courses in each of the following areas

Vocational Preparation	No. of Modules
Vocational Preparation & Guidance	8
English and Communication	4
Vocational Education	No. of Modules
Vocational Specialisms (2 full courses)	8 (4 x 2)
Mathematical Applications	4
Introduction to Information and Communication Technology	2
General Education	No. of Modules
Social Education	6
Languages:	
Gaeilge	2
Modern European Language	2
<i>or</i>	
Sign Language for participants from the deaf community	(4)
Arts Education (Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts)	2
Leisure and Recreation (including Physical Education)	2
Elective Modules	No. of Modules
Participants must complete four elective modules	4
TOTAL	44

With regard to the vocational specialisms, the list of options is as follows

Agriculture/Horticulture
Childcare/Community Care
Graphics and Construction Studies
Craft and Design
Engineering
Hair and Beauty
Hotel, Catering and Tourism
Office Administration and Customer Care
Technology

The two vocational specialisms outlined below are follow-on courses to the introductory courses shown in brackets and may only commence once these introductory courses have been completed.

Information and Communication Technology
(Introduction to Information and Communication Technology)

Active Leisure Studies
(Leisure and Recreation)

Elective Modules

Schools must provide four elective modules for which credit will be given. Schools may choose from the suite of modules and courses available, including courses/modules in Science and Religious Education. Schools may offer all four of the modules from one course e.g. Science, or may offer a combination of modules selected from different courses. Schools may not choose modules from the vocational specialisms already chosen.

In special circumstances, schools may wish to develop a new course/module to suit local needs or interests. Such courses/modules should be submitted to the NCCA to undergo a process of validation and can then be implemented subject to final approval by the Department of Education and Science.

The following chart specifies the elective options available from existing courses.

COURSE NAME	No. of	No. of	No. of
Vocational Preparation & Guidance	11	8	3
English and Communication	4	4	0
Mathematical Applications	4	4	0
Vocational Specialism	4 + 4	Participants may take up to 4 elective modules in any of the vocational specialisms that they are not being examined in	

Introduction to Information and Communication Technology	2	2	0
Arts Education	9	2	7
Social Education	6	6	0
Modern Language	2	2	Participants may take elective modules in other languages
Gaeilge	2	2	0
Sign Language	4		All four modules may be taken by deaf students instead of Modern Languages and Gaeilge. Modules 1 & 2 may be taken as electives by all participants
Leisure and Recreation	3	2	1
Religious Education	4	0	4
Science	4	0	4

Student Tasks

Each participant is also required to complete seven Student Tasks over the two years (see the Student Tasks section of this book for details).

4. Assessment and Certification

The following principles apply to the assessment and certification of the Leaving Certificate Applied

- I. Assessment criteria to be transparent
- II. Participants to accumulate credit during the programme
- III. The centrality of the Student Tasks to the nature of the Leaving Certificate Applied
- IV. External examination to incorporate a wide range of techniques
- V. Provision for early leavers to carry credit for achievement Participant achievement and performance will be 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 participants must

- Attend the classes and out-of-school activities related to the modules and
- Complete the key assignments related to the module.

No ranking of performance will be involved. A minimum attendance of 90% is required. The school must verify where there is absence due to exceptional circumstances.

B. Student Tasks

Individual performance in the Student Tasks will be assessed according to specific criteria (see the Student Tasks section of this book for details).

C. External Examinations

At the end of Year 2 participants will take final examinations in the following areas:

- English and Communication
- Vocational Specialisms (2)
- Mathematical Applications
- Languages (2)
- Social Education

Allocation of Credits

A participant may accumulate a maximum of 200 credits. These credits are allocated on the following basis

	Credits	Percentages
Satisfactory Completion of Modules*	62	31%
7 Student Tasks	70	35%
Final Examinations	68	34%

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

Credits for Module Completion

Non-Examination Courses	No. of Modules	No. of Credits
Vocational Preparation & Guidance	8	16
Introduction to Information & Communication Technology	2	4
Arts Education	2	4
Leisure and Recreation	2	4
Total	14	28

Final Examination Courses	No. of Modules	No. of Credits
English and Communication	4	4
Vocational Specialisms	8 (4 x 2)	8
Mathematical Applications	4	4
Social Education	6	6
Languages	4 (2 x 2)	4
Total	26	26

Elective Modules	No. of Modules	No. of Credits
Current and Validated Modules	4	8
Total	4	8
Overall Total	44	62

Credits for Student Tasks

General Education Task	10 credits
Vocational Preparation Task	10 credits
Vocational Education Task (x2)	10 +10 credits
Contemporary Issue Task	10 credits
Practical Achievement Task	10 credits
Personal Reflection Task	10 credits
Overall Total	70 credits

Credits for Final Examinations

English and Communications	12 credits
Vocational Specialisms (2)	12 credits (each)
Languages (2)	6 credits (each)
Social Education	10 credits
Mathematical Applications	10 credits
Overall Total	68 credits

Award of the Leaving Certificate Applied

The Leaving Certificate Applied is a single award made on the basis of credits accumulated over four sessions and in final examinations.

This approach

- Highlights the novel and innovative nature of the programme
- Promotes participant motivation by facilitating the gradual accumulation of credits for module completion, Student Task completion and final examinations
- Emphasises the integrated nature of the programme design and the co-ordinated approach to its implementation
- Enables greater flexibility by aggregating three very different yet complementary approaches to assessment in arriving at the final award
- Is consistent with the approach to the accreditation of pre-vocational education programmes in this and other jurisdictions

Participants who successfully complete the Leaving Certificate Applied programme will receive the Leaving Certificate of the Department of Education and Science. They may also receive a Record of Experience if they leave the school before completing the programme.

The Leaving Certificate Applied will be awarded at three levels

Pass	120 - 139 credits	(60% - 69%)
Merit	140 – 169 credits	(70% - 84%)
Distinction	170 - 200 credits	(85% - 100%)

Leaving Certificate Applied

Outline of Student Tasks - Part 1.

Frequently Asked Questions.

Introduction

This section outlines a central feature of the programme, the Student Tasks. It is these Student Tasks that make the Leaving Certificate Applied programme unique. They are designed to provide an opportunity for participants to integrate the learning and practical experiences that they have gained from the different courses and modules of the programme.

There are three parts to this section of the book

Part 1

Part 1 provides answers to the most frequently asked questions in relation to the Leaving Certificate Applied Student Tasks.

Part 2

The specifications (including assessment criteria) for each of the Student Tasks are outlined in part 2. Careful attention should be given to this section of the book in particular.

Part 3

Part 3 examines the process of completing Student Tasks and is presented in the form of questions to be answered by participants. A careful reading of this part of the book should help to clarify issues relating to the completion of the Student Tasks.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Student Task?

The Student Task is a practical activity and/or process of reflection through which the student integrates and applies learning experiences gained from undertaking the Leaving Certificate Applied 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

2. What is the purpose of the Student Task?

The primary purpose of the Student Task is to underpin a key educational principle of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme, namely integration. The Student Tasks are designed to help the 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 Leaving Certificate Applied programme. The Student

Tasks should draw learning together rather than allowing it to become or remain a fragmented experience. This process is referred to as integration.

3. 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

4. How many tasks are students expected to complete?


Over the duration of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme each student must undertake seven Student Tasks.

- Vocational Preparation Task
- Vocational Education Task (x 2)
- General Education Task
- Contemporary Issue Task
- Practical Achievement Task
- Personal Reflection Task

5. What is the schedule for completing the seven Student Tasks?

The schedule for the completion of the seven Student Tasks is

YEAR 1		YEAR 2	
Session I	Session II	Session III	Session IV
General Education Task	Vocational Preparation Task	Contemporary Issue Task	Personal Reflection Task
	Vocational Education Task	Vocational Education Task	<i>(incorporating Reflective Statements I and II)</i>
		Practical Achievement Task	
	<i>(Reflective Statement I)</i>		<i>(Reflective Statement II)</i>



This schedule is designed to facilitate

- Students learning the task process by focusing on one Student Task in Session I, two Student Tasks in Session II etc.
- Progression and development in both the quality and nature of the Student Tasks
- Increasing student autonomy in the identification, design and planning of Student Tasks
- The development of more meaningful integration
- Greater opportunities for cross-curricular applications
- Development of time management techniques

6. What are the main stages of the Student Task?

The Student Task has a number of stages. These stages can be grouped as follows

- Selecting/planning
- Implementing
- Recording and cross-curricular applications
- Reviewing and evaluating
- Presenting/communicating

These elements are discussed in greater detail in Part 3 of this section of the book.

7. How long should it take a student 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 by its nature will 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 I and finishes at the end of Session IV.

8. Where and how should each Student Task be identified and planned?

Each Student Task will be identified, designed and planned at school level in accordance with the description of the Student Task as set out in Part 2 of this section of the book. It is an essential requirement of the programme that each student is actively involved in the identification, design and planning of each of the Student Tasks that they undertake. The students should also have a genuine interest in the content matter of their tasks.

9. What is the appropriate balance between teacher guidance and student self-responsibility?

At all times the main responsibility for the Student Task rests with the student, it must be her/his own work. The teacher may, however, need to advise and guide the student in

- Identifying appropriate and relevant topics
- Setting manageable and clear objectives
- Planning and managing a time schedule to complete the Student Task
- Developing research skills
- Identifying potential human and material resources
- Identifying other courses that might help in a meaningful way
- Developing and encouraging integration
- Examining and identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses
- Developing language and communication skills
- Understanding the assessment requirements of the Student Task
- Understanding the technical skills required to make a presentation

10. Can a Student Task be undertaken on a group basis?

With the exception of the Practical Achievement Task and the Personal Reflection Task, a Student Task may be undertaken on a group basis. The number of students involved in a group is not specified but it should be such that each student has a clearly defined individual role, which allows her/him to make a meaningful contribution. It should still take each individual student at least ten hours to complete this Student Task. It is important that the individual student presents an overall description of the group task and has a clear understanding of the nature and objectives of the whole task while at the same time presenting a report on their individual contribution to that Student Task.

11. Can there be more than one group task undertaken in a class of students?

There can be any number of group tasks in a class. It is also possible to have a combination of both individual and group tasks within the class.

12. Can key assignments from courses/modules be included in a Student Task?

Yes, key assignments can be part of a Student Task but the task must build upon and be greater than the key assignments.

13. What are the general requirements necessary for receiving credits for a Student Task?

To receive credits for a Student Task a student is required to

- Produce authentic evidence of task completion
- Produce a task report
- Present for interview

The only exception to this set of requirements is the Personal Reflection Task, which does not have an interview component.

14. What is authentic evidence of task completion?

Depending on the nature of the Student Task this may be in the form of a finished product/artifact, or a record/log/portfolio, which may include supporting photographic and/or video evidence of the investigation, event, performance or services undertaken. Authenticity is verified by the school authorities.

15. 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 aim(s)
- 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 (see also page 62 for student guidelines on completing a report)

16. What is meant by cross-curricular application?

Cross-curricular application is when a student consciously takes an aspect of a course that she/he has studied, other than the course that the Student Task is based in, and applies it to that Student Task in a practical and meaningful way.

17. What is meant by integration?

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 acquired through study of a range of courses within the Leaving Certificate Applied programme. The Student Tasks should draw learning together rather than allowing it to become or remain a fragmented experience. This process is referred to as integration.

18. What are the assessment criteria for each Student Task?

The assessment criteria for each Student Task are presented in detail in Part 2 of this section of the book.

19. What is the procedure if a student is unhappy with the credits they have been awarded for their Student Task?

The Department of Education and Science has an appeal procedure in place and the student should be made aware of this and directed accordingly.

20. Must a Student Task be typed/word-processed?

No, a Student Task need not be typed or word-processed.

21. How long should the various elements of the Student Tasks be kept in school?

Each Student Task should be kept in the school until the closing date for appeals for that task.

22. Can work which has been assessed as a Student Task be submitted for assessment again?

Work which has been assessed for a Student Task cannot be re-submitted for assessment.

Leaving Certificate Applied

Outline of Student Tasks Part 2

Task Specifications

Leaving Certificate Applied
Specifications for the General Education,
Vocational Preparation and Vocational Education Tasks

Student Tasks within these three headings must fall into one of the following categories

- An investigation of an issue/topic
- The staging of an event
- A performance (group or individual)
- Provision of a service
- Development of a product/artifact

General Education Task

This Student Task must be based in the General Education element of the programme, displaying evidence of cross-curricular applications from courses within this element and/or other elements. The General Education Task is assessed at the end of Session I Year 1.

Vocational Preparation Task

The Student Task under this heading must be based in the Vocational Preparation element of the programme, displaying evidence of cross-curricular applications from courses within this element and/or other elements.

The Vocational Preparation Task is assessed at the end of Session II Year 1.

Vocational Education Task (x2)

Each student must undertake two vocational specialisms within the Vocational Education element of the programme and complete a Student Task within each of these courses. The two tasks may not be taken from within the same course. Each Student Task should display evidence of cross-curricular applications from the courses within this element and may include evidence of crosscurricular applications with other elements. **Mathematical Applications and Information Technology are mandatory areas of cross-curricular application in the Vocational Education Tasks.** This should not preclude students from applying learning from other areas of the curriculum to these Student Tasks.

In the case of a Student Task undertaken as part of the vocational specialism in Information and Communication Technology the student will be required to show evidence of cross-curricular applications from Mathematical Application and at least one other course, which may not be Information and Communication Technology itself.

Vocational Education Task 1 is assessed at the end of Session II Year 1.

Vocational Education Task 2 is assessed at the end of Session III Year 2.

Assessment

1. Evidence of Student Task completion

Each student must present authentic evidence of having completed the Student Task. This may be in the form of a finished product/artifact, or a record/log, which may include supporting photographs and/or video evidence of the investigation, event, performance or service undertaken.

2. Individual Student Task report

A report should include information regarding

The title

The statement of aim(s)

The plan of action

Carrying out the Student Task

Presentation and analysis of findings

Evaluation of the task and the student's own contribution

How other courses contributed to the Student Task (see also page 62 for student guidelines on completing a report)

A student may incorporate evidence of investigation and any other support documents into their final report.

In the case of a group task, it is important that the individual student presents an overall description of the group task within their report while at the same time presenting their individual contribution to that Student Task.

3. Presentation at interview

The interview will involve a discussion between the examiner and students of the work involved in the task. The duration of the discussion should be 5 minutes minimum, of the 20 minutes allocated to the assessment of each student's task.

Assessment Criteria

The assessment will be conducted on the basis of the following criteria

- Ability to select and plan effectively their Student Task
- Quality of engagement in the activity and evidence of progress and achievement provided
- Ability to reflect upon and evaluate the experience of undertaking and completing the Student Task
- Quality of integration of learning
- Evidence of cross-curricular applications
- Quality of communicative ability

Credit Allocation

The ten credits (5% of the total programme marks) allocated to each of these tasks will be awarded on the following basis.

9 - 10 Credits

The student clearly explains the aims and purposes of the Student Task. She/he sets very clear goals and demonstrates a high level of planning.

There is also very clear and authentic evidence of the student's ability to effectively organise, engage with, demonstrate and/or apply appropriate skills to, make progress on, and complete the process of achieving the goal.

The student has produced a task of high quality, clearly compliant with their stated aims and purposes and has developed a comprehensive understanding of the concepts and/or processes involved. She/he also demonstrates creativity and originality both in selecting and conducting the Student Task.

As part of the ongoing process the student also evaluates and reviews the initial targets set and makes adaptations/modifications where appropriate. The process of integration is very clearly evident. She/he also shows evidence within the Student Task of cross-curricular applications of learning from different courses and modules of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme.

The student presents a well structured report with clarity of expression. At the interview the student demonstrates a very high level of communicative ability both in presenting and articulating the experience of the Student Task.

7 – 8 Credits

The student provides a good explanation of the aims and purposes of the task. She/he presents an adequate record of how the Student Task was planned and implemented.

There is also clear evidence of the student's ability to effectively organise, engage with, demonstrate and/or apply appropriate skills to, make progress on, and complete the process of achieving goals set.

The student has produced a task of good quality that is compliant with their stated aims and purposes and has developed a good understanding of the concepts and/or processes involved.

There is some evidence of originality in selecting and conducting the Student Task. Throughout the task the student engages in some reflection and evaluation and has made modifications where necessary. There is clear evidence of the process of integration.

The report is well written and presented and she/he also refers to cross-curricular applications within the report. At the interview the student demonstrates a very good level of communicative ability both in presenting and articulating the experience of the Student Task.

5 – 6 Credits

The student provides a reasonable explanation of the aims and purposes of the task. A limited record of how the Student Task was planned and implemented is presented. There is some evidence of the student's ability to organise, engage with, demonstrate and/or apply appropriate skills to, make progress on, and complete the process of achieving goals set. The student has produced a task

of reasonable quality that sufficiently meets their stated aims and purposes. The quality of reflection and evaluation of the Student Task evident at interview is acceptable. There is reasonable evidence of the process of integration.

The report is acceptable in its structure and presentation, with limited reference to cross-curricular applications. Communication of the process at interviews both in terms of presentation and articulation, is good.

3 – 4 Credits

The student provides a limited explanation of why this particular task was chosen. A poor record of how the Student Task was planned and implemented is presented. There is poor evidence of the student's ability to organise, engage with, demonstrate and/or apply appropriate skills to, make progress on, and complete the process of achieving goals set. The student has produced a task of poor quality.

Reflection and evaluation of the Student Task is limited. There is little or no evidence of the process of integration.

The report is poorly structured and presented with no reference to cross-curricular applications. Communication of the process both in terms of presentation and articulation is acceptable.

1 – 2 Credits

The student presents a very poor explanation of why this particular task was chosen. A very poor and incomplete record of how the Student Task was planned and implemented is presented. There is little or no evidence of the student's ability to organise, engage with, demonstrate and/or apply appropriate skills to, make progress on, and complete the process of achieving goals set. The student has produced a task of very poor quality. There is little evidence of reflection or evaluation of the Student Task. The report is very poorly structured and presented. Cross-curricular applications and the process of integration are not evident. Communication of the process both in terms of presentation and articulation is very poor.

0 Credit

The Student Task is unstructured and incomplete, shows no evidence of engagement and is devoid of reflection and evaluation. The student shows very little ability to present and articulate any part of the process.

Leaving Certificate Applied

Specification for the Contemporary Issue Task

1. Nature of the Contemporary Issue Task

The Contemporary Issue Task requires the student to conduct and complete an investigation into, and to take action in relation to, a contemporary issue of social significance in the local, national and/or global community. The action element of the Contemporary Issue Task may take the form of a presentation on the issue investigated to the class or to another group, or may involve an appropriate practical action in relation to the issue. The Contemporary Issue Task should also develop links with other relevant areas of the curriculum and apply learning from other Leaving Certificate Applied courses.

2. Purpose of the Contemporary Issue Task

The purpose of the Contemporary Issue Task is to develop and apply to an investigation and accompanying action, the knowledge, skills and understanding which the student has gained from completing the Social Education course in particular, and from other courses which are part of the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. The investigation should help the student to develop her/his awareness and understanding of the different dimensions of the particular issue chosen e.g. social, political, civic, economic and cultural dimensions. The action element of the Contemporary Issue Task aims to promote active citizenship and informed participation in society. In general terms, the purpose of the Contemporary Issue Task is to provide the student with an opportunity to

- Conduct an investigation
- Develop skills of planning and recording
- Understand an issue in greater depth
- Understand an issue in a broader context
- Undertake an action
- Develop skills of reflection and evaluation

3. Structure of the Contemporary Issue Task

Selecting the Issue

The issue to be investigated may arise naturally from topics or themes covered in the Social Education course or may be chosen by students as of particular concern or interest to them, even though not directly addressed in the modules. It is important that the issue meets the criteria listed below.

Criteria

- The issue selected must be a contemporary issue of social significance.
- The issue may be local, national or global in scope. If an issue is examined at a local level then the student is expected to also discuss it in a wider national and/or global context. If the issue selected is a global issue then the student is also expected to discuss its national and/or local dimension/s.

- The issue must be linked to one or more of the key concepts and/or themes of the Social Education course e.g. equality, gender, health, relationships, conflict, law, community, democracy, development, social justice, human rights and responsibilities, active citizenship, forces/interests (media, pressure groups, lobbying).
- The student is expected to be able to make connections between the issue they are investigating and other related issues and contexts.

Components of the Contemporary Issue Task

The Contemporary Issue Task can be described as having two components, the investigation and the action.

The Investigation

The investigation element of the Contemporary Issue Task requires the student to state clearly the aims of the investigation, to conduct primary research and/or bring together background information, facts/figures/data and other relevant items of the particular issue she/he is investigating, and to provide a summary of her/his findings of the issue. Students are also expected to keep a record of the planning and organisation procedures they employ during the investigation. The investigation should be brought together as a portfolio.

The Action

The student action may take the form of any one of, or combination of, the following: a presentation to the class or to another group to inform them about the issue investigated; a display to inform others about the issue; organising or supporting a campaign in relation to the issue; taking appropriate practical action in relation to the issue.

A record or account of the action taken should be included in the portfolio. This could take the form of visual evidence and/or a written/taped report.

4. The Portfolio

The portfolio is intended to provide maximum flexibility and may therefore include written, audio or video elements. It should include visual illustrations and other relevant items. As a guide, the written content of the portfolio should be no more than 1500 words in length while the maximum duration for the audio **or** video element should be 5 minutes. If a student wishes to present both written and audio **or** video elements in the portfolio then the number of words in the written report along with the viewing/listening time on tape needs to be adjusted accordingly e.g. 750 words and 2½ minutes. The portfolio can therefore be presented in a variety of forms but it should include the following sections.

Section 1. Background and Introduction to the Contemporary Issue

This section should explain why this particular issue was chosen and place it in the context of the Social Education course. It should also include an outline of the aims of the investigation, some background information on the issue and its connection to other related issues. This section is designed to give a frame to the portfolio entries.

Section 2. Portfolio Entries

- A record of the planning and organisation of the investigation
- A record of the planning and organisation of the action
- Other relevant items related to the investigation and/or action e.g. supporting articles, posters, a description of any primary research undertaken etc.
- A summary of facts/findings about the issue

Section 3. Experience of the Contemporary Issue Task (Conclusion)

This section should give a brief report of the student's experience of the Contemporary Issue Task. This should allow the student to look back on the issue from their current perspective, to look inwards in relation to its meaning to themselves and to look forward in relation to how some of the learning from this experience might be taken into account in the future.

5. Undertaking and Managing the Contemporary Issue Task

The Contemporary Issue Task is to be presented at the end of Session III in Year 2 of the programme. The main responsibility for this Student Task rests with the student. The Contemporary Issue Task may be carried out on an individual or group basis. In the case of a group Contemporary Issue Task, it is important that the individual student's portfolio presents an overall description of the investigation and action undertaken while at the same time focusing on her/his individual contribution and learning experience. This is necessary in order to facilitate the examiner in developing an overall understanding of the group Contemporary Issue Task while at the same time allowing her/him to identify the contribution made by an individual student to that group task.

6. Assessment

The Contemporary Issue Task is assessed at the end of Session III Year 2.

The assessment will be based on

- (a) An examination of the contents of the portfolio (10 minutes duration)
- and
- (b) A simple oral presentation of 2 - 4 minutes duration by the student to the examiner, with optional use of supporting visual material, as part of an individual interview of not less than 10 minutes duration.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment will be conducted on the basis of the following criteria

- Ability to select and plan effectively an investigation and action related to a contemporary issue
- The student's understanding of the issue and awareness of the wider context
- Ability to summarise findings/facts about the issue
- Quality of engagement in the action

- Ability to reflect upon and evaluate the experience of undertaking and completing the Contemporary Issue Task
- Quality of integration of learning
- Evidence of cross-curricular applications
- Quality of communicative ability

Credit Allocation

The ten credits (5% of total programme marks) allocated for the Contemporary Issue Task will be awarded on the following basis.

9 - 10 Credits

The student provides a very clear explanation of why this particular issue was chosen. She/he presents a complete and well organised record of how the investigation and action were planned and implemented. The student also has a very clear understanding of the issue and is very comfortable discussing it in a wider context.

There is very clear evidence of the student's ability to summarise the major facts/findings that she/he has compiled on the issue. Engagement in the action component of the Contemporary Issue Task demonstrates a high level of commitment and competence. Throughout the assessment the student engages convincingly in reflection and evaluation of the experience. She/he has no difficulty projecting the learning from this Student Task into possible future situations. She/he also shows evidence within the Contemporary Issue Task of cross-curricular applications of learning from different courses and modules of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme. The process of integration is very clearly evident. Finally, at the interview and/or presentation the student demonstrates a very high level of communicative ability both in presenting and articulating the experience of the Contemporary Issue Task.

7 - 8 Credits

The student provides a good explanation of why this particular issue was chosen. She/he presents an adequate and organised record of how the investigation and action were planned and implemented. The student also has a clear understanding of the issue and is comfortable discussing it in a wider context.

There is also clear evidence of the student's ability to summarise the major facts/findings that she/he has compiled on the issue. Engagement in the action component of the Contemporary Issue Task is genuine and competent. Throughout the assessment the student engages in some reflection and evaluation of the experience. She/he can project some of the learning from this Student Task into possible future situations and shows some evidence of cross-curricular applications of learning. There is clear evidence of the process of integration. Finally, at the interview and/or presentation the student demonstrates a very good level of communicative ability both in presenting and articulating the experience of the Contemporary Issue Task.

5 - 6 Credits

The student provides a reasonable explanation of why this particular issue was chosen. A limited record of how both the investigation and action were planned and implemented is presented. The student also has a reasonable understanding of the issue in a wider context.

The student shows some ability to summarise the major facts/findings that she/he has compiled on the issue. Engagement in the action component of the Contemporary Issue Task is satisfactory. Throughout the assessment, reflection and evaluation of the experience is acceptable. She/he finds it difficult to project some of the learning from this Student Task into possible future situations and to give evidence of cross-curricular applications of learning. There is reasonable evidence of the process of integration. Communication of the process at interview, both in terms of presentation and articulation, is good.

3 - 4 Credits

The student provides a limited explanation of why this particular issue was chosen. A poor record of how both the investigation and action were planned and implemented is presented. The student also has a limited understanding of the issue and finds it difficult to discuss it in a wider context.

The student shows little ability to summarise the major facts/findings that she/he has compiled on the issue. There is limited engagement in the action. Throughout the assessment, reflection and evaluation of the experience is limited. She/he finds it very difficult to project any of the learning from this Student Task into possible future situations or to relate any cross-curricular applications. There is little or no evidence of the process of integration. Communication of the process both in terms of presentation and articulation is acceptable.

1 - 2 Credits

The student presents a very poor explanation of why this particular issue was chosen. A poor and incomplete record of how the investigation and action were planned and implemented is presented. The student also has little or no understanding of the issue and cannot discuss it in a wider context. The student finds it very difficult to summarise the major facts/findings that she/he has compiled on the issue. There is little or no engagement in the action. There is little evidence of reflection or evaluation of the experience. She/he cannot project any of the learning from this Student Task into possible future situations. Cross-curricular applications and the process of integration are not evident. Communication of the process both in terms of presentation and articulation is very poor.

0 Credits

The Contemporary Issue Task is unstructured and incomplete, shows no evidence of engagement and is devoid of reflection and evaluation. The student shows very little ability to present and articulate any part of the process.

Leaving Certificate Applied

Specification for the Practical Achievement Task

1. Nature of the Practical Achievement Task

The Practical Achievement Task requires each student to undertake and complete a significant task of a practical and/or enterprising nature over an extended period of three months. The student decides on something specific which she/he wishes to achieve within a defined time frame. The Practical Achievement Task requires the accumulation of tangible evidence of the achievement, including evidence of progress throughout the period of the task. This task is an individual task only.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Practical Achievement Task is to provide the student with an opportunity to target a specific achievement and to plan for, engage with, make progress on, and complete activities in relation to this achievement. In doing so, the student should experience a strong sense of achievement.

The achievement might involve

- The development of an existing or new practical skill (e.g. sporting skill, musical skill)
- Undertaking an initiative
- Developing a product
- Providing a service

This task facilitates students gaining credit for achievements undertaken outside of school time.

In general terms, the purpose of the Practical Achievement Task is to provide the student with an opportunity to

- Undertake a practical task
- Develop skills of goal setting
- Develop skills of planning and reflection
- Sustain activity in the targeted area
- Gain a sense of mastery and achievement

3. Structure of the Practical Achievement Task

The Practical Achievement Task should be seen as having three stages.

First Stage

The main outcome or evidence of the first stage is an initial statement by the student. The initial statement may be presented in written, video or audio form. A written initial statement should be approximately 200 words in length while the maximum duration for an initial statement in audio or video format should be 2 minutes.

To begin with, the student specifies at least three options for achievement. The student explores these options and identifies one achievement that they want to target and work on. An account of this decision-making process must be included in the initial statement. However the detailed evidence to be presented on completion of this task should relate to the specific achievement targeted by the student.

As well as identifying the achievement, the initial statement should include an overall statement of aims, a plan for undertaking and completing the achievement and a completion date. The date of commencement of the Practical Achievement Task may occur either towards the end of Session II in Year 1 or at the beginning of Session III in Year 2. The initial statement must be signed and verified by the student and the school manager or her/his representative (by the end of May in the case of the former or the end of September in the case of the latter). The time span for undertaking and completing the achievement is at least three months. During this time, the student must regularly engage in activity related to the achievement.

Second Stage

During the second stage, the student undertakes the task by engaging in the practical achievement to the level required. In this context, there should be clear evidence of the student's progress from her/his starting position towards the achievement of set goals. The student is required to keep a log or record describing her/his engagement with the activity, and evaluating her/his progress. The log/record must indicate progress, must be documented over the time period of the Practical Achievement Task and must contain a minimum of five entries. In order to verify its authenticity the log/record entries must be signed by the student and the school manager or her/his representative. In addition to the log/record, the student should assemble other supporting evidence to verify achievement. Evidence might include a record of performance, video material, certificates, photographs, written reports etc. Two sources of evidence will be required. All evidence must be verified. In some cases, evidence might incorporate certification from an established, accrediting body. Other evidence will require verification. In this context, the verifiers of evidence will be adults who have supervised or monitored the student's practical achievement, who are knowledgeable in the area of the achievement, and who can verify participation and progress made.

Third Stage

During the third stage, the student completes the practical achievement and prepares for assessment. This stage requires the student to prepare a concluding statement incorporating reflection and evaluation on her/his engagement and progress during all stages of the Practical Achievement Task. The concluding statement may be presented in written, video and/or audio form. A written statement should be approximately 400 words in length while the maximum duration for a statement in audio or video format should be three minutes.

In summary, five items must be presented for assessment on completion of the Practical Achievement Task.

- An initial statement by the student
- A log or record of progress by the student (with a minimum of five entries)
- Two sources of evidence verifying the achievement of the student
- A concluding statement by the student

4. Undertaking and Managing the Practical Achievement Task

The Practical Achievement Task is to be presented at the end of Session III in Year 2 of the programme.

The main responsibility for this task rests with the individual student. She/he should complete some of the work and activity related to the achievement in her/his own time. It follows that the student must be given the autonomy to choose a practical achievement that is both meaningful and personally challenging. At the outset, the student needs to be informed of the parameters and requirements of the Practical Achievement Task.

The achievement must

- Be highly practical
- Be challenging for the student in that it represents a significant task requiring regular engagement by her/him over a minimum three month period
- Be realistic for the individual student involved, providing a genuine opportunity for the student to achieve the proposed level of success
- Offer potential for the accumulation of evidence of practical achievement
- Not be something already submitted for assessment but it may build upon existing pursuits, skills or specific aspects of the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme developed and/or undertaken by the student

The practical achievement should be broadly related to the aims of the Leaving Certificate Applied and might be within one of the following categories

- Community involvement
- Enterprise activity
- Physical/recreation
- Practical skill
- Product manufacturing
- Provision of a service
- Organisation of an event
- Adventure activity

Students will need mentoring at all stages of the Practical Achievement Task. At the first stage, students should be helped to choose highly practical, challenging achievements that allow them to gain the proposed level of success. The 'mentor' should assist the student in choosing an appropriate practical achievement.

Once the choice is made the student assumes overall responsibility and prepares a plan of action outlining how the achievement will be undertaken and completed. During the second stage, the student undertakes the activity and records progress in the log/record. The mentor should set a date/dates to look at the log/record, receive an update on ongoing progress, discuss with the student

the need to reassess targets and change plans if necessary, and advise on verification. The mentor should meet the student at the initial stage, at least once during the planned activity and at the end to help the student prepare for assessment.

5. Assessment

The Practical Achievement Task is assessed at the end of Session III Year 2, on the basis of a portfolio related to the specific practical achievement chosen by the student and an interview of not less than 5 minutes duration with the student by the examiner. The portfolio must contain the five items identified in Section 3 of this specification. As a guideline, the portfolio items should be of an amount that facilitates their examination in 10-15 minutes.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment will be conducted on the basis of the following criteria

- Ability to select and plan effectively a practical achievement
- Quality of engagement in the activity and evidence of progress and achievement provided
- Ability to reflect upon and evaluate the experience of undertaking and completing the Practical Achievement Task
- Quality of integration of learning
- Evidence of cross-curricular applications
- Quality of communicative ability

Credit Allocation

The ten credits (5% of total programme marks) allocated for the Practical Achievement Task will be awarded on the following basis.

9 - 10 Credits

The student clearly explains the decision making process they went through when selecting their practical achievement. She/he sets very clear goals and demonstrates a high level of planning in the initial statement.

There is also clear evidence of the student's ability to effectively plan, organise, engage with, make progress on and complete the process of achieving the goal. As part of the ongoing process, the student also evaluates and reviews the initial targets set and makes adaptations to the action plan where appropriate.

In the concluding statement the student engages convincingly with reviewing, evaluating and interpreting the experience and demonstrating its application to future endeavours. She/he shows evidence within the Practical Achievement Task of cross-curricular applications of learning from different courses and modules of the Leaving Certificate Applied. The process of integration is clearly evident. At the interview she/he demonstrates a very high level of communicative ability both in presenting and articulating the experience of the practical achievement.

7 - 8 Credits

The student presents a good explanation of how and why they selected their Practical Achievement Task. She/he sets clear goals and demonstrates a very good level of planning in the initial statement. The approach of the student towards undertaking and completing the Practical Achievement Task demonstrates good organisation and commitment - she/he produces evidence and demonstrates planning, organisation, engagement, and progression in achieving the goals set. There is good evidence of the student reviewing and evaluating their progress as she/he proceeded to complete the Practical Achievement Task.

In the concluding statement the student conveys a very good ability to review, evaluate and interpret the experience and learning, and demonstrating its application to future endeavours. She/he shows some evidence within the Practical Achievement Task of cross-curricular applications of learning. There is clear evidence of the process of integration.

At the interview the student is a very good communicator, both in presenting and articulating the experience of the practical achievement.

5 - 6 Credits

The student has some understanding of how and why they selected their particular Practical Achievement Task. She/he sets goals and demonstrates a good level of planning.

There is some evidence to show a level of engagement and follow through. Progress to achievement is adequately logged and verified.

There is limited evidence of the student reviewing and evaluating their progress as she/he proceeded to complete the Practical Achievement Task. She/he finds it difficult to give evidence of cross-curricular applications of learning. There is reasonable evidence of the process of integration. Communication of the process both in terms of presentation and articulation is good at interview.

3 - 4 Credits

The student has a limited understanding of how and why they selected their particular Practical Achievement Task. She/he shows some ability to set goals and plan the course of action required to complete the achievement. Evidence of achievement is basic in nature. There is some engagement with the activity but in general the approach of the student lacks sufficient motivation. Reflection on and evaluation of the experience is superficial. She/he finds it difficult to relate any cross-curricular applications. There is little or no evidence of the process of integration. Communication of the process both in terms of presentation and articulation is acceptable.

1 - 2 Credits

The student presents a very poor explanation of why she/he selected the particular Practical Achievement Task. She/he shows a poor ability to set goals and plan the course of action required to complete the achievement. There is a low level of engagement with the activity. There is little reflection or evaluation of the experience. Cross-curricular applications and the process of integration are not evident. Communication of the process both in terms of presentation and articulation is poor.

0 Credit

The Practical Achievement Task is unstructured and incomplete, shows no evidence of engagement and is devoid of reflection and evaluation. The student shows very little ability to present or articulate the process.

Leaving Certificate Applied Specification for the Personal Reflection Task

1. Nature of the Personal Reflection Task

The Personal Reflection Task is a critical reflection on the learning experiences of the Leaving Certificate Applied student that takes place over the course of the two years of the programme. This task will require the student to

- Review and reflect on the various learning experiences involved in the programme
- Look forward and plan for future learning and work

2. Purpose of the Personal Reflection Task

The purpose of the Personal Reflection Task is to provide the student with an opportunity to reflect on her/his personal experiences of the programme on an ongoing and progressive basis and to apply this understanding to future learning and career planning.

The reflective process will enable the student to identify aspects of his/her authentic experiences that are personally meaningful. It will provide the student with an opportunity to

- Make sense of experiences
- Develop skills of reflection
- Develop the capacity for self-evaluation and self-knowledge
- Set personal goals and attain them
- Recognise personal strengths and aptitudes in terms of learning style
- Transfer knowledge to new situations

The outcomes of this reflective process will be applied to decisions on future career planning and life-long learning.

It is intended that the Personal Reflection Task will enrich integration in that the student will reflect on what was significant for her/him in relation to the whole programme and will make concrete conclusions about learning gained through the various disciplines.

3. The Process of Reflection

The development of reflective skills should be facilitated through regular review and reflection on aspects of the programme. In this context, specific reference points can be used, for example work experience, enterprise, community work, interviews, Student Tasks, out-of-school activities, outdoor education, modules, courses, classroom work, group interaction, personal development, specific achievements etc.

This reflective process can be facilitated in a variety of ways and schools should choose the approach or range of methods they deem most suitable for the individual student. These might include

- Discussion
- Self audit/Self assessment
- Problem solving
- Qualitative/quantitative assessment
- Graphic analysis
- A teacher/student devised format drawn up to meet the student's needs
- One to one - student-teacher, student-student, student-adult

It is highly recommended that students maintain a journal/log of reflections throughout the programme to aid them in the drafting of the reflective statements.

With regard to the specific subject or focus of reflection, students should identify what was meaningful for them and address questions such as:

- What was I like before this experience?
- What did I expect of the experience?
- What was the experience actually like?
- What did I learn from the experience?
- What have I learned about myself from this experience?
- How has it affected my outlook and plans for the future?
- What advice would I give anyone else starting on the same course, work placement, or experience?

The outcome of the reflection could be presented in written, audio, video, graphic or pictorial form and maintained by the student as a reference point for the reflective statements.

4. Structure of the Personal Reflection Task

While the reflective process is ongoing and progressive the Personal Reflection Task will be completed in the form of reflective statements to be presented for assessment, by an examiner, in a portfolio at the end of Year 2. Two reflective statements will be required.

- At the end of Year 1 the student will present a reflective statement focusing on any aspects of her/his learning experiences during the year
- At the end of Year 2 the focus of the reflective statement will be vocational, with specific reference to work experience and other elements of the programme which have contributed to the student's current thinking and plans for the future.

In each case, the reflective statement will draw together and analyse varied reflections by selecting specific experiences, which have had the greatest impact on the individual student.

The reflective statements may be presented in written, video or audio form. A written statement will be approximately 400 words in length while the maximum duration of a statement in video or audio form will be four minutes. The student may choose a different format to present each reflective statement.

Each reflective statement should

- At the outset, clearly state the focus or foci of the reflection
- Describe the initial position, situation or starting point for the reflection
- Describe the experiences and how they affected the initial position
- Summarise the student's present position or situation
- Describe how the experiences have affected the student's outlook for the future

The reflective statement may incorporate (or be presented with) a small amount of illustrative material – photographs, posters, video, audio, graphic presentations etc. These should only be used to support or illustrate the written text or, in the case of an audio or videotape, the spoken message. This supporting evidence should be selected from the material assembled as part of the reflective process. The format of illustrative material should be such that it can be presented in an A4 portfolio/folder. It should be presented on A4 paper or similar material. The material assembled in the portfolio folder should be of an amount that can be comfortably examined in 20 minutes by an examiner.

5. Assessment

The Personal Reflection Task will be assessed at the end of Session IV Year 2 on the basis of a portfolio containing two reflective statements, one completed at the end of Year 1 and the other completed at the end of Year 2. The focus of reflection will be as outlined in the section above on 'Structure of the Personal Reflection Task'. The portfolio will be submitted to the Department of Education and Science for examination at the end of Year 2. Prior to submission, in order to verify the authenticity of the work, the Reflective Statements, must be signed by the student and the school manager or her/his representative. The statement for Year 1 must be signed and date stamped at the end of Year 1. The statement for Year 2 must be signed at the end of Year 2.

Assessment Criteria

The assessment of the portfolio will take account of the following

Ability to Reflect

The ability of the student to recognise, identify, describe, explain and analyse relevant experiences; to apply critical thinking and creative thinking to learning from experiences; and to make connections between one experience and another.

Media of Reflection

The level of organisation and quality of communication evident in the reflective statement.

Foci of Reflection

The level and quality of engagement with key elements of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme and with the required foci of reflection, which is evident in the reflective statements.

Credit Allocation

The ten credits (5% of total programme marks) allocated for the Personal Reflection Task will be awarded on the following basis.

9 – 10 Credits

The reflective statements demonstrate a high level of reflective capability (evidenced by critical, creative and analytical thinking). They are very effectively organised and demonstrate a high level of communication skills. The Statements are characterised by a high quality of engagement with the key programme elements.

7 - 8 Credits

The reflective statements demonstrate a good level of reflective capability (experiences are personalised) and are well organised. The reflections are communicated well and are characterised by good quality engagement with the key programme elements.

5 – 6 Credits

The reflective statements demonstrate a reasonable level of reflective capability (experiences are mainly narrative in nature) and are adequately organised. Communication of the reflections is mainly good and there is an acceptable engagement with the key programme elements.

3 – 4 Credits

The reflective statements demonstrate a poor level of reflective capability (experiences are only narrative in nature) and are poorly organised. Communication of the reflections is poor and often lacks focus.

1 – 2 Credits

The reflective statements demonstrate a very low level of reflective capability (are narrative in nature) and are very poorly organised. The reflections are ineffectively communicated and lack focus.

0 Credit

The reflective statements are devoid of reflection, lack organisation, are difficult to understand and fail to focus on what is required.

Leaving Certificate Applied

Outline of Student Tasks Part 3

The Five Main Stages of the Student Task Process

The Five Main Stages of the Student Task Process

This section of the book presents a number of key questions related to the five major stages of the Student Task process. These questions should help to clarify the Student Task process for both the teacher and student. Key questions relating to the Personal Reflection Task are dealt with separately at the end of this section.

A note on Integration

Integration is a very important aspect of the Student Task. The student should be encouraged to look at the task as a way of making more coherent links between the concepts, skills, competencies, experiences, knowledge and understanding that they have developed and/or acquired from the Leaving Certificate Applied programme as a whole. Some of the key questions outlined below will help the student with this process.

A note on Literacy and Numeracy

The development of every student's skills in literacy and numeracy is central to the Leaving Certificate Applied programme. The Student Tasks should be used as an opportunity to promote the development of these skills.

1. Selecting and Planning

Introduction

It is essential that the student is actively involved in selecting the Student Task and that the content of the task is of interest to him/her. Whatever the student proposes to undertake should be within their ability range and appropriate in the context of the programme. Originality should be encouraged at all times.

Each Student Task must be completed and presented for assessment by the end of a particular Session over the two years of the programme. It should take a student at least ten hours to complete a task. Further time will have to be spent in preparing the support documents/report relating to the specific Student Task. The student should set target dates to complete different components of the task and to meet with her/his teacher to review progress. It is important that the teacher ensures that time is set aside over the course of the Session for the student to complete the Student Task and to prepare her/his report.

Key Questions

There are a number of basic questions, which the student needs to ask herself/himself when setting out to plan her/his Student Task. The student should consider and have answers to the following questions before embarking on the Student Task. As the Student Task progresses, the student may need to revisit and reconsider their initial answers to these questions.

What do I think my Student Task is going to be about?

Why have I chosen this Student Task?

What course/s is the Student Task based in?

Will it be an individual or group Student Task?

What parts of the Student Task do I think I will be good at?

What parts will I need help with?
What teacher is going to take a special interest in my Student Task?
What do I hope to learn from doing this Student Task?
Who have I discussed this idea with?
What do I already know about my Student Task idea?
What else do I need to find out about this idea?
What skills do I need to develop?
How will I get this information and/or develop these skills?
Who are the people I need to talk to and/or write to?
Are there places I need to visit?
Are there things I need to see?
What materials and equipment do I need and how much will these cost?
What other courses in particular can contribute to the completion of the Student Task?
How am I going to present this Student Task?

If the student is involved in a group task then there are other important questions they will need to answer.

How many students are in my group?
Who exactly is in my group?
What is each member of the group good at?
What is each member of the group going to do?
What are the details of what I am going to do?
Do I have a good understanding of the whole task?
Am I clear how my contribution fits into this group task?
Are we going to work well together?
Have I enough to do?
Which parts of our finished group task will be similar and which will be different for the individuals involved?

Time management is an important aspect of undertaking a Student Task.

Among the questions that the student should ask in relation to this are

How much time do I have to do this Student Task?
Am I taking on too much or too little in the time I have available?
What is my starting date?
What is my completion date?

Can I produce an outline of the order and expected completion dates for the main parts of my Student Task?
Do I have a checklist to keep me on track?
How am I going to get started?
Who is the teacher offering me advice and guidance in relation to this Student Task and what dates have I arranged to meet her/him?
Have I a list of the things I need to get and by when?
What will I do if I can't keep to my time/planning schedule?
What could slow me down or distract me from doing this Student Task?

If I am working on a group task...

Will the group hold planning meetings to monitor progress?
When and where will we hold them and how many will we have?
How will decisions be made?
Will I have an equal say in these decisions?
How will we be sure that we finish this Student Task on time?

2. Implementing

Introduction

Once the student has carefully selected and planned their task they should now proceed to implement the Student Task.

Key Questions

What methods am I using to get my information or to show what my Student Task is about?
What special equipment and/or materials am I using?
Do I need permission/supervision to use/handle the equipment I need?
Am I keeping everything in a safe place?
Am I keeping to my plan/schedule?
Am I monitoring my progress carefully?
Can I make decisions on my own or do I need to consult with somebody?
Can I identify anything else I have learned to help me make decisions about my Student Task?
Have I considered a number of possible solutions for any problems I come across in my Student Task?
Have I included lots of my own ideas?

If I am working on a group task.....

How are we going to solve problems in the group?

What other skills have we got that we can use?

3. Recording and Cross-Curricular Applications

Introduction

It is important that students keep a record/log on their progress. This will help to provide focus and order. This of itself does not comprise a Student Task report but it may be part of the Student Task report. Students should also provide appropriate evidence of the research and information gathering undertaken e.g. copies of letters written/received, credit sources of information etc.

It is also important that the student incorporates meaningful and relevant cross-curricular applications to individual Student Tasks. A cross-curricular application is when a student consciously takes an aspect of a course that she/he has studied, other than the course the Student Task is based in, and applies it to that Student Task in a practical and meaningful way. Mathematical Applications and Information Technology are mandatory areas of cross-curricular application in the Vocational Education Tasks. This should not preclude students from applying learning from further areas of the curriculum to these particular Student Tasks.

Key Questions

Will I use a diary or logbook or some other method to record everything that I have done?

How will I record what I have found out?

Will I produce any drawings, plans, videos, photographs, product etc. that will form part of my Student Task?

Will I include copies of all the letters I sent even if I have received no reply?

Will I include copies of interviews, questionnaires etc?

Have I provided a list of the books, their authors and the publishers that I have consulted or looked at?

Have I included an index at the start of my report to show the different sections?

Do I want to acknowledge anyone's help?

What other Leaving Certificate Applied courses did I use to help me complete my Student Task?

What did I take from these courses to help me complete my Student Task?

Was it a skill, information or idea?

Is there any other way I could have used these courses in my Student Task?

Are there any other courses I could have used?

Have I made reference to these courses in my report?

If I am working on a group task...

Is everyone clear about what they have to do and their part in the Student Task overall?

Are our meetings going well?

Am I making worthwhile contributions to the meetings?

Are my ideas being taken on board?

Are we on schedule?

Are we working as a team or is everybody going their own way?

Are we talking to each other and sharing our ideas and experiences?

4. Reviewing and Evaluating

Introduction

This is where the student draws together the findings and experiences of the Student Task and takes meaning from them. The student should also engage in genuine and critical self-evaluation of their work.

Key Questions

What did I learn from the information I collected/the production I was involved in/the product I produced/the action I took for this Student Task?

How did this compare with what I hoped to learn at the beginning of the Student Task?

How well did I keep to my plan?

What did I enjoy most about doing this Student Task?

What did I dislike about doing this Student Task?

Which parts did I do well and why do I think I did these well?

If I have made something, is it safe to handle and of good quality?

Did anything take longer than expected?

Which parts were particularly difficult and which were easy to do and why?

If I was doing this Student Task again, what could I improve on?

How helpful were people in giving me information, showing me how to do things etc?

Did I encounter any unexpected obstacles in completing the task?

How did I overcome these obstacles?

If I am working on a group task...

Was I happy with the task that I had to do?

What contribution did I make?

How did our team get on?

How well did I work as part of a team?

What were the good things about being part of a team?

How well did the whole task come together?

If I was going to work in a team task again, would anything need to be changed in the way we worked together or divided out the jobs?

Would I like to keep the job/role I had or would I change it for another or for something that wasn't thought of at all?

How clear am I, and how clear is my presentation, on who did what?

Overall what did we learn as a group?

5. Presenting and Communicating

Introduction

In terms of presentation the best Student Tasks display clarity of aim, manageability of subject/topics and consistency of focus throughout. They are attractively presented using an appropriate range of methodologies. It is important that the student show individuality rather than a stereotypical presentation. There is opportunity for creativity in format and illustration. Selectivity also comes into play - sometimes less is more and a logical and clear sequence will be better than a plethora of unedited information.

The accompanying report should be concise and focused. During the interview, the student's ability to communicate his/her task both in the report/portfolio he/she presents and through the interview process itself will be assessed. It is important that the student is aware of the fact that the interview provides him/her with a very real opportunity to improve his/her marks for the Student Task he/she has presented.

Key Questions

Does my report include the following sections?

Name of my Student Task

My aim(s)

My plan

What I found out and what it means if my Student Task was an investigation

Or

What I made and how suitable it is for its purpose if my Student Task was a product

Or

The event we staged and how it turned out if my Student Task was an event

Or

The action I took and how effective it was if my Student Task was an action

Or

The service I provided and how effective it was if my Student Task was a service

Or

What I did and what I thought about it if my Student Task was a personal reflection

What I think of my work on the Student Task

What other courses helped me with my Student Task

In terms of presentation of my report/portfolio

How neat and attractive is my presentation?

Is everything orderly and in the right place?

Can I use the computer to do parts of my Student Task report e.g. text, charts etc.

Have I written the report in my own words and not copied chunks from other students or from books or the Internet?

Is my report easy to read?

Can I include any other material to make my Student Task easier to understand?

Have I put too little/too much content into my report and portfolio?

Have I kept my report separate from my diary/log/portfolio?

If I was part of a group task, have I got a good understanding of the whole task and can I describe what I did in particular?

Can I talk about teamwork?

At the interview

Do I know enough about my Student Task to be able to discuss it with the interviewer?

Can I explain why I choose this idea for my Student Task?

Can I talk comfortably about each section of my report?

Can I talk about the knowledge I have gained?

Can I talk about the skills I have used to complete this Student Task?

Can I talk about any changes I had to make or any problems I encountered?

Can I suggest any changes that I would make if I were to do this Student Task again?

Do I know what I have used from other courses to help me complete my Student Task?

Can I describe how this Student Task brings together a lot of what I have learnt from doing the Leaving Certificate Applied programme?

Do I have any ideas of how this Student Task could help me in the future?

Personal Reflection Task: Reflecting on learning – some key questions

1. Looking Back

What have I learned from the programme so far?

What do I know now that I didn't know before?

What do I understand now that I didn't understand before?

What can I do now that I couldn't do before?

What has helped me to learn?

Which of these things has helped me to learn?

- The class as a whole
- Particular class members
- The learning methods used in the programme (say which ones)
- The teachers/tutors
- The equipment and materials used
- Work experience
- Visits out of school
- Visitors to the class
- The general atmosphere
- Anything else
- In what way were they helpful?

The ways of learning that I find helpful

How many of these methods of learning suit me?

- Trying things out
- Learning from books
- Being instructed by other people
- Working independently
- Using videos
- Using computers
- Using other learning aids

What style of learning do I like best?

- Working alone
- Working in small groups
- Working co-operatively
- Competing against other people

What personal skill do I use in learning?

- Observing
- Listening
- Memorising
- Comparing one thing with another
- Making notes

- drawing

Looking Forward

How can what I have found out about the way I learn help me to learn in the future?

Personal Reflection Task

Reflecting on the Vocational Dimension – some key questions

At the beginning of the programme what type of career had I in mind?

What do I now feel I am suited to?

What aspects of the Leaving Certificate Applied programme helped me to realise this?

- Work experience
- Enterprise
- Community work
- Vocational preparation classes
- Other courses
- Career guidance
- Teachers
- Visitors to classes
- Class outing/visit
- A specific task
- Other things I did in school/out of school

How did aspects and activities of the programme help?

What interests, talents, skills and strengths have I discovered I have?

What do I hope to do after completing the Leaving Certificate Applied?

If undecided

- Can I list some possibilities?
- What do I think would help me to decide?

Why do I think this is a suitable plan for me?

What steps do I need to take to achieve my career goal or find out what I want to do?

What do I plan to do now?

- Over the summer?
- By Christmas?

- Next year?
- By _____?

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