NCCA
An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Draft Leaving Certificate Home Economics

For consultation

Contents

Senior cycle

Senior cycle aims to educate the whole person and contribute to human flourishing. Students' experiences throughout senior cycle enrich their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall health and wellbeing. Senior cycle has 8 guiding principles.

Senior Cycle Guiding Principles	
Wellbeing and relationships	Choice and flexibility
Inclusive education and diversity	Continuity and transitions
Challenge, engagement and creativity	Participation and citizenship
Learning to learn, learning for life	Learning environments and partnerships

These principles are a touchstone for schools and other educational settings, as they design their senior cycle. Senior cycle consists of an optional Transition Year, followed by a two-year course of subjects and modules. Building on junior cycle, learning happens in schools, communities, educational settings, and other sites, where students' increasing independence is recognised. Relationships with teachers are established on a more mature footing and students take more responsibility for their learning.

Senior cycle provides a curriculum which challenges students to aim for the highest level of educational achievement, commensurate with their individual aptitudes and abilities. During senior cycle, students have opportunities to grapple with social, environmental, economic, and technological challenges and to deepen their understanding of human rights, social justice, equity, diversity and sustainability. Students are supported to make informed choices as they choose different pathways through senior cycle and every student has opportunities to experience the joy and satisfaction of reaching significant milestones in their education. Senior cycle should establish firm foundations for students to transition to further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and participate meaningfully in society, the economy and adult life.

The educational experience in senior cycle should be inclusive of every student, respond to their learning strengths and needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity. Students vary in their family and cultural backgrounds, languages, age, ethnic status, beliefs, gender, and sexual identity as well as their strengths, needs, interests, aptitudes and prior knowledge, skills, values and dispositions. Every student's identity should be celebrated, respected, and responded to throughout their time in senior cycle.

At a practical level, senior cycle is supported by enhanced professional development; the involvement of teachers, students, parents, school leaders and other stakeholders; resources; research; clear communication; policy coherence; and a shared vision of what senior cycle seeks to achieve for our young people as they prepare to embark on their adult lives. It is brought to life in schools and other educational settings through:

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation, reflection and evaluation
- teaching and learning approaches that motivate students and enable them to improve
- a school culture that respects students and promotes a love of learning.

Rationale

Home Economics is a dynamic transdisciplinary subject that supports healthy, sustainable and optimal living for individuals, families and society. Leaving Certificate Home Economics recognises that individuals and families are continually faced with new and emergent opportunities and challenges that enable creative, confident and responsible decision-making. Through their study of Home Economics, students proactively engage with practical perennial problems, enabling them to positively influence and improve their quality of life. Home Economics adopts a transdisciplinary approach, drawing on food and health literacy, resource management, textiles and family studies to address everyday opportunities and challenges. In an ever-changing world, individuals, families and society face increasing demands in areas such as health, sustainability, consumerism, financial resilience and societal participation. This subject equips students with the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to respond to these opportunities and challenges through hands-on engagement and effective problem-solving approaches, enabling active and responsible participation in family and social life.

The subject also supports students in understanding how everyday decisions are shaped by wider societal influences, including access to services, public supports and social systems. By making these connections, students learn how individual, family and household decisions are influenced by social, cultural and economic contexts and how these choices, in turn, affect broader society. In this way, Home Economics fosters informed participation in society and equips students to engage critically with opportunities and challenges that influence the quality of life for individuals, families and society.

Leaving Certificate Home Economics encourages hands-on engagement throughout the course and supports students to link their own experiences to wider societal issues. The

subject helps students build confidence and competence to make thoughtful, sustainable decisions when facing life's opportunities and challenges. Through an integrated approach where theoretical understanding is experienced through activities such as cooking and exploring family dynamics, students develop resilience, deepen cultural awareness, and gain essential practical learning for responsible everyday life.

Aims

Leaving Certificate Home Economics aims to equip students with the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions needed to achieve healthy, sustainable and optimal living. Specifically, the subject aims to:

- develop food and health literacy by enabling students to make informed food choices, demonstrate advanced practical food skills confidently, competently and creatively, and adopt practices that promote quality of life for individuals, families and society.
- foster sustainable and responsible resource management and consumer behaviour, appreciating how everyday decisions influence sustainability in the home and wider society.
- develop students' capacity to effectively respond to practical perennial problems through structured problem-solving approaches that encourage creativity and are enacted through collaborative and hands-on learning experiences.
- foster an awareness of how personal, family and household decisions interact with wider social, cultural and economic contexts and how these choices, in turn, affect broader society.
- develop students' personal agency to support lifelong learning, meaningful engagement and participation in everyday life and society, and future opportunities.

Continuity and progression

Leaving Certificate Home Economics offers continuity and progression from early childhood through to Junior Cycle. It supports continuity in learning, while offering opportunities for progression through more complex, contextualised and applied engagement with Home Economics concepts and practices.

Junior Cycle

Junior Cycle Home Economics lays the foundation for further study by introducing students to three interconnected contextual strands: *Food*, *Health and Culinary Skills*, *Responsible Family Living*, and *Textiles and Craft*. Through active and collaborative learning, students develop skills in food literacy, consumer decision-making, textiles and responsible resource management.

At Junior Cycle, Home Economics is designed to be experienced as a practical and applied subject. Through hands-on experiences, students develop skills in food preparation, planning, safety and textiles, and are supported in connecting their learning with broader ideas such as sustainability and responsible resource use. Approaches to assessment support the students' practical learning as they engage in classroom-based assessments in creative textiles and food literacy skills, and a practical food skills examination. This practical foundation supports continuity and progression into the Leaving Certificate, where students build on these established skills through more advanced and integrated application of Home Economics knowledge, skills, values and dispositions.

Learning in Junior Cycle is further complemented by other subjects such as Business Studies, Science, CSPE and SPHE, which contribute to students' broader understanding of areas such as sustainability, social issues, entrepreneurship and quality of life.

Beyond senior cycle

Leaving Certificate Home Economics provides students with a strong foundation for progression into further, adult and higher education, training and employment. The subject develops transferable knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that are relevant to fields such as nutrition, health and social care, consumer science, food systems, textiles, sustainability, and education.

The applied and transdisciplinary nature of Home Economics supports students in navigating complex social and environmental contexts. Students develop the capacity for lifelong

learning by engaging with practical perennial problems through investigation, critical reflection and creative problem-solving.

The Leaving Certificate Home Economics specification helps students develop the ability to make informed decisions, engage in community life, and manage resources wisely. Additionally, it provides them with important learning that can help to create fairer, more inclusive, and sustainable communities both locally and globally.

Student learning in senior cycle

Student learning in senior cycle consists of everything students learn within all of the subjects and modules they engage with and everything students learn which spans and overlaps across all of their senior cycle experiences. The overarching goal is for each student to emerge from senior cycle more enriched, more engaged and more competent as a human being than they were when they commenced senior cycle.

For clarity, the learning which spans across all of their senior cycle experiences is outlined under the heading 'key competencies'. The learning which occurs within a specific subject or module is outlined under the heading 'strands and learning outcomes'. However, it is vital to recognise that key competencies and subject or module learning are developed in an integrated way. By design, key competencies are integrated across the rationale, aims, learning outcomes and assessment sections of specifications. In practice, key competencies are developed by students in schools via the pedagogies teachers use and the environment they develop in their classrooms and within their school. Subjects can help students to develop their key competencies; and key competencies can enhance and enable deeper subject learning. When this integration occurs, students stand to benefit

- during and throughout their senior cycle
- as they transition to diverse futures in further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and
- in their adult lives as they establish and sustain relationships with a wide range of people in their lives and participate meaningfully in society.

When teachers and students make links between the teaching methods students are experiencing, the competencies they are developing and the ways in which these competencies can deepen their subject specific learning, students become more aware of the myriad ways in which their experiences across senior cycle are contributing towards their holistic development as human beings.

Key competencies

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop in an integrated way during senior cycle.

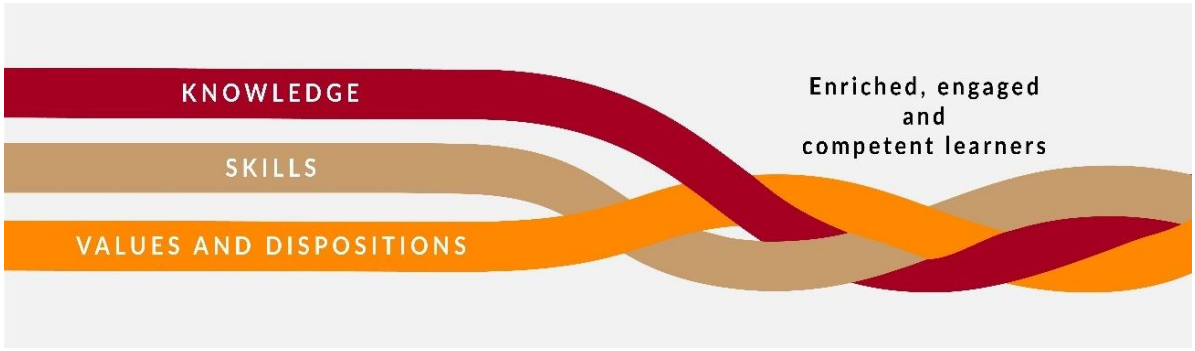

Figure 1 The components of key competencies and their desired impact

The knowledge which is specific to this subject is outlined below under 'strands of study and learning outcomes'. The epistemic knowledge which spans across subjects and modules is incorporated into the key competencies.

Figure 2 Key Competencies in Senior Cycle, supported by literacies and numeracy.

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

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

The key competencies come to life through the learning experiences and pedagogies teachers choose and through students' responses to them. Students can and should be helped to develop their key competencies irrespective of their past or present background, circumstances or experiences and should have many opportunities to make their key competencies visible. Further detail in relation to key competencies is available at https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-redevelopment/student-key-competencies/

In Home Economics, all students can be supported to improve their key competencies, with significant opportunities for mastery of the key competencies of; *Thinking and solving problems*, *Being creative*, *Cultivating wellbeing*, *and Participating in society*. These competencies can be cultivated through the subject's transdisciplinary approach, emphasis on hands-on experiences, and focus on reflective and applied learning.

Home Economics also develops students' literacies and numeracy in applied, everyday contexts. Through interpreting information, evaluating sources and using measurement, data and costing in practical tasks, students strengthen the skills needed to learn, communicate and make informed decisions.

Thinking and Solving Problems

Home Economics involves analysing everyday situations, evaluating evidence and considering alternative courses of action. Students draw on structured problem-solving and may be supported to consider how social, cultural, economic and environmental factors interact. They use investigation, critical and reflective thinking to interpret information, weigh options and justify decisions with clear reasoning. Through this approach, students develop sound judgement, sustainable and responsible awareness and confidence in applying their learning in both familiar and less familiar contexts to address practical perennial problems and support quality of life.

Being Creative

Creativity in Home Economics is expressed through the design, preparation and adaptation of food, clothing, textiles and household practices. Students generate original ideas, trial innovative methods and repurpose materials in response to sustainability, cost and lifestyle considerations. They learn that creativity extends beyond aesthetic expression; it is also a means of problem-solving, resourcefulness and adaptability. Through applied learning, students develop strategies, habits of mind and dispositions which nurture creativity that can help them to develop confidence in applying their creative thinking to everyday contexts.

Cultivating Wellbeing

Home Economics actively supports students to cultivate their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Through critical and reflective engagement, students explore family roles and responsibilities, the diversity of family structures and caregiving practices, while assessing how statutory and voluntary supports underpin family life, community health and overall quality of life. Through structured problem-solving approaches students develop confidence in addressing practical perennial problems related to everyday family and household life, building resilience and capacity to cope with and respond to challenges they may encounter in the future.

Participating in Society

Home Economics empowers students to become informed, active participants in shaping a more just, equitable and sustainable future. As they connect personal and household decisions with public services and global sustainability goals, they reflect on their values and apply learning in new contexts. Through collaborating with others on practical tasks, such as community investigation and service-related inquiries, they develop empathy, initiative and shared responsibility in contributing to family and community life.

Strands of study and learning outcomes

This Leaving Certificate Home Economics specification is designed for a minimum of 180 hours of class contact time.

Figure 3 Leaving Certificate Home Economics Overview

Learning is set out across a *Unifying Strand: Home Economics Thinking and Practice*, and three interrelated contextual strands: *Food, Nutrition and Practical Food Skills*, *Family Resource Management* and *Family in Society*. Together, these strands explore the interactions and interconnections among individuals, families and society within the context of the home. The Unifying Strand serves as a guide for structured problem-solving, applied learning and reflective practice, enabling students to connect knowledge, skills, values and dispositions across all areas of Home Economics.

Learning outcomes should be achievable relative to students' individual aptitudes and abilities. Learning outcomes promote teaching and learning approaches that develop students' knowledge, skills, values and dispositions incrementally, enabling them to apply their key competencies to different situations as they progress. Students studying at both Ordinary level and Higher level will critically engage with Home Economics, but the context, information and outcomes of that engagement will be different in breadth and depth.

Table 1 Design of learning outcomes for ordinary and higher levels

Ordinary Level	Higher Level
• Students engage with practical and theoretical knowledge, primarily concrete in nature, using everyday examples to develop confidence and competence. • Students engage with a wide range of practical skills to respond to practical perennial problems and needs in familiar and some less familiar contexts. • Students apply theoretical knowledge in familiar contexts, using information effectively to make choices and decisions. • Students demonstrate developing competence when interpreting information, creating responses to practical perennial problems and needs, and presenting their work. • Students demonstrate the ability to make informed decisions in the context of concrete applications and everyday contexts, with awareness of implications for quality of life for individuals, families and society.	• Students engage with practical and theoretical knowledge, including more advanced theoretical concepts, in greater depth, applying key concepts independently, competently and analytically. • Students engage with an extensive range of advanced practical skills to respond to practical perennial problems and needs, often in unfamiliar contexts. • Students apply theoretical knowledge in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, using information effectively to make and justify decisions as part of a structured problem-solving approach. • Students demonstrate a high level of competence when interpreting and evaluating information, creating effective responses to practical perennial problems and needs, and presenting their work. • Students demonstrate informed judgement through critical engagement with evidence and perspectives, evaluating alternative responses and their implications for quality of life for individuals, families and society.

An overview of each strand is provided below, followed by a table. The right-hand column contains learning outcomes which describe the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students should be able to demonstrate after a period of learning. The left-hand column outlines specific areas that students learn about. Taken together, these provide clarity and coherence with the other sections of the specification.

Unifying Strand: Home Economics Thinking and Practice

Overview

This strand focuses students' learning on the foundational thinking and practices of Home Economics, emphasising the importance of understanding and enhancing quality of life in everyday contexts. Students learn to recognise and engage with practical perennial problems and create thoughtful responses, through a structured problem-solving approach. Through this process students learn to refine their responses, developing the learning necessary to support responsible choices for individuals, families, and society, fostering lifelong competence and positive participation in the community.
Learning in this unifying strand is developed across the specification through engagement with the learning outcomes in the contextual strands.

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Appreciating Home Economics Thinking • The different dimensions of quality of life, such as: physical health, emotional and mental wellbeing, access to resources, meaningful relationships, personal fulfilment, safe living conditions, opportunities for participation in society. • the concept and interconnected dimensions of quality of life, and how these are experienced and interpreted in daily life by the individual, family and community	U1. appreciate how Home Economics supports responsible decision-making and quality of life for individuals, families and society
• how perspectives on quality of life, including lived experience and media representations, inform understanding and decision-making in Home Economics • why the concept of quality of life is central to Home Economics thinking and practice	U2. evaluate media-based arguments related to dimensions of quality of life

Structured Problem-Solving in Home Economics	
• what practical perennial problems are and why they are central to Home Economics • how such problems endure and evolve across contexts and generations • how to use trends in categories, tables, graphs and data in general, to deepen understanding of practical perennial problems or needs	U3. recognise practical perennial problems concerning individuals, families and society
• selecting and interpreting information from a range of sources to inform decisions, considering relevance and reliability • recording information using appropriate methods	U4. conduct research and gather information from a range of sources, evaluating reliability, accuracy, credibility and relevance
• setting clear objectives and justifying decisions made to inform responses • organising resources and steps required to enact response	U5. synthesise findings to inform the development of responses in Home Economics contexts
• applying practical Home Economics skills to realise and create responses	U6. plan and create responses to practical perennial problems or needs
• gathering information about decisions made and actions taken • identifying strengths and limitations of decisions made • consideration of different viewpoints while recognising personal or external biases • identifying specific changes or refinements that could enhance future practice or responses	U7. evaluate decisions made to refine practice and improve future responses U8. present their research and response to a practical perennial problem, including the evaluation of the response

Strand 1: Food, Nutrition and Practical Food Skills

This strand supports students in building a stronger foundation in food, nutrition and health. Students develop the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions needed to apply food literacy and practical food skills in everyday life. They develop understanding through hands-on engagement as they investigate the science of food and examine how nutrition influences health and quality of life in contemporary society. Students apply sensory and scientific learning through food preparation, evaluation and evidence-informed decision-making. Practical food skills and everyday food decision-making are placed at the forefront of learning in this strand, with nutritional, scientific and technological knowledge introduced as supports that deepen understanding and enhance practical capability.

Throughout this strand, students use a structured problem-solving approach to address practical perennial problems in modern food contexts. They apply practical and reflective processes as they consider how everyday decisions about planning, preparing and consuming food affect health, sustainability and the quality of life of individuals, families and society.

Strand 1 Learning outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Meal Planning	
• principles of meal planning, including; - nutritional balance - portion control - cost - sensory appeal - sustainability	1.1 explain the principles of meal planning
• the role of meal planning and recipe modification in supporting health-promoting and sustainable eating patterns	1.2 demonstrate recipe modification
• considerations that influence how food is presented, including; - creativity - sustainability - cultural appropriateness	1.3 explore principles of food presentation and how they can be applied

• integrating sustainable storage decisions with purchasing, menu planning and batch preparation, including; packaging, portioning and rotation systems to maintain quality and prevent waste	1.4 apply appropriate storage practices to maintain food quality, food safety and sustainability 1.5 describe how digital technologies support food planning, preparation evaluation
Advanced Practical Food Skills • how to demonstrate the principles of meal planning and recipe modification • creativity, sustainability and food safety considerations when producing and presenting food dishes • how to select and combine ingredients to achieve nutritional balance, variety, sensory appeal and health-promoting outcomes • the execution of at least one example of advanced practical food skills informed by each of the physical, chemical and biological scientific principles • how the physical, chemical and biological properties of food informs decision-making during preparation, cooking and modification to achieve desired textures, flavours and appearances	1.6 prepare nutritionally balanced meals 1.7 demonstrate effective planning, coordination and presentation of dishes during practical cooking activities 1.8 demonstrate the modification and preparation of meals that address special dietary considerations 1.9 use advanced practical food skills in the preparation, cooking and presentation of a variety of dishes informed by each of the physical scientific principles. 1.10 use advanced practical food skills in the preparation, cooking and presentation of a variety of dishes informed by each of the chemical scientific principles.

	1.11 use advanced practical food skills in the preparation, cooking and presentation of a variety of dishes informed by each of the biological scientific principles. 1.12 use digital tools and specialist kitchen technologies in food preparation, cooking and meal planning
Nutrition • macronutrients: protein, carbohydrates and lipids • micronutrients: - vitamins: A, B-group (B9 folate/folic acid, B12 cobalamin), C, D, E and K - minerals: iron, calcium, sodium, potassium and phosphorus • stages of the life cycle, including; - preconception, pregnancy and infant feeding (0–2 years) - childhood (3–10 years) - adolescence (10–19 years) - adulthood (18+ years) - older age (65+ years)	1.13 describe the functions, sources, properties, interactions and complementary functions of macronutrients and micronutrients across the stages of the life cycle
• the role of macro and micro nutrients in supporting physical, cognitive and emotional health	1.14 analyse how nutrients contribute to health and quality of life for individuals, families and society
• symptoms and conditions associated with nutrient deficiency and excess • dietary balance and moderation across the stages of the life cycle	1.15 discuss the effects of nutrient deficiency and excess on health and quality of life for individuals, families and society

Interpreting Nutritional Information	
• sources of nutrition information, including food-based dietary guidelines, food labelling and digital tools for meal planning and preparation	1.16 outline sources of nutritional information
• criteria for evaluation; - credibility and reliability of source - transparency - accuracy - use of scientific research	1.17 evaluate different sources of nutritional information
	1.18 discuss how nutrition information can be interpreted and used to support healthier everyday food choices, meal planning and recipe modification
• the aims and key messages of the Irish food-based dietary guidelines • how the Irish food-based dietary guidelines promote balanced eating patterns and support quality of life across the stages of the life cycle	1.19 explain the purpose and scope of current Irish food-based dietary guidelines
• how the guidelines are used to support informed food choices in; - the home - schools - health promotion and community settings	1.20 apply current Irish food-based dietary guidelines to support informed and balanced food decisions in everyday contexts
Food Choices and Special Considerations	
• factors, including; - personal factors - economic factors - social factors - cultural factors - stages of the life cycle	1.21 discuss the factors that influence food choices and their implications for health

• how these factors interact to influence what foods are available, preferred or prioritised in everyday household contexts • how changing needs, preferences and circumstances influence food behaviour across the stages of the life cycle • diet-related illnesses, including - anaemia - cardiovascular disease - disordered eating - low fibre intake (leading to constipation, diverticular disease, etc.) - obesity - osteoporosis - type 2 diabetes • special dietary considerations; - medical considerations - non-medical considerations	1.22 compare how food choices vary across the stages of the life cycle 1.23 discuss dietary and lifestyle risk factors and their impact on the health and quality of life of individuals, families and society
Food Science in Cooking • scientific principles underpinning food preparation and cooking, including; Physical Principles: - aeration - crystallisation - emulsification - foam formation - gluten development - shortening Chemical Principles: - caramelisation - denaturation; coagulation and tenderisation - dextrinisation - gelatinisation - Maillard reaction Biological Principles: - enzymic browning - fermentation and culture use - yeast activity	1.24 explain scientific principles that influence food preparation and cooking

• assessing outcomes using criteria, including; - texture, - flavour, - appearance and - nutrient content • comparing cooking methods and outcomes when preparing similar foods using different techniques	1.25 assess how scientific properties affect the outcomes of cooking processes
Food Preservation: Principles and Practice • biological, chemical and physical causes of food spoilage • conditions that promote or inhibit microbial growth and enzyme activity • the principles of food preservation, including; - microbial growth - enzyme activity - environmental conditions • factors influencing the effectiveness of preservation methods, including; - temperature control - packaging - hygiene - storage conditions • the changes that take place in foods during preservation, including alterations in; - texture - colour - flavour - nutrient content • how preservation supports food safety, quality and reduced waste	1.26 outline the causes of food spoilage and contamination and their prevention 1.27 explain the principles of food preservation and the factors that influence it 1.28 investigate the changes that occur during food preservation and the effect of those changes on food quality

• practical application of one method of food preservation from two different categories: - Heat: jam making, pasteurisation, bottling, canning - Cold: freezing - Chemical: salting, pickling, high-sugar preservation • applying hygienic, safe and responsible practices	1.29 demonstrate methods of food preservation to maintain food safety, quality, and shelf life
Sensory Analysis	
• the purpose of sensory analysis, including; - assessing product quality - determining consumer preference - informing product development	1.30 explain the purpose and the conditions for conducting sensory analysis testing
• types and methods of sensory testing, including preference, difference and descriptive tests • conduct one test from each of the following categories: - Preference tests; Paired Preference, Hedonic Rating, Food Action Rating, Preference Ranking - Difference tests; Triangle Test, Simple and Directional Paired Comparison, Duo-Trio - Descriptive tests; Descriptive Ranking, Descriptive Rating (Line Scale or Star Diagram)	1.31 conduct sensory analysis testing to evaluate food products and dishes
• recording observations and maintaining hygiene, safe and responsible practice and objectivity during testing • organising , analysing and presenting sensory analysis results using appropriate tables, charts and diagrams	1.32 analyse and present sensory analysis data to draw conclusions about food quality and consumer preference

Food Innovation and Food Technology	
• including; - creativity - research - the application of scientific and technological knowledge in developing food products • how food innovation and food technology impact to food availability, quality, food safety and sustainability	1.33 discuss the concepts of food innovation and food technology
• criteria including; - how they are carried out - underlying scientific principles - impact on quality, food safety, and nutrition	1.34 explore a traditional and an innovative method of food production
• emerging trends in food science and technology • how advances in food science and food technology influence - cost - food availability - quality - sensory appeal • how consumer expectations drive innovation in the food industry	1.35 examine an emerging trend in food science and food technology and its influence on food products and consumer choices
• how participation in assurance and sustainability programmes supports consumer confidence, product traceability, responsible production and marketing of Irish food products	1.36 recognise the role of national quality assurance and sustainability schemes in ensuring food safety, quality and traceability
• criteria, including: - nutritional profile - sensory qualities - processing methods and use of technology - packaging, labelling and consumer information - sustainability considerations - alignment with quality assurance schemes and sustainability programmes - consumer appeal	1.37 assess the quality and suitability of a food product using appropriate criteria

Strand 2: Family Resource Management

Managing resources responsibly is important for individuals, families and society to survive and thrive. Through this strand, students engage with practical perennial problems focused on sustainable household management, responsible consumerism and financial decision-making.

Through applied learning, students use structured problem-solving approaches in real household contexts, developing their capacity to make informed, responsible and sustainable decisions. This approach helps students to learn about resource management and develop consumer competence and financial resilience, while linking household actions to broader social, economic and environmental systems.

In this strand, students are supported to act as responsible and reflective consumers who understand how everyday decisions influence sustainability and quality of life for individuals, families and society.

Strand 2 Learning Outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Circular Economy and Consumption in the Home • key principles and practices of the circular economy - reduce, reuse, repair, recycle, rethink, redesign - and their connection to everyday household decisions. • the role of personal and shared responsibility in reducing waste and conserving resources	2.1 explain the circular economy and how it applies to household resource management 2.2 examine how consumption and overconsumption affects households and wider society 2.3 apply circular economy principles and practices in everyday household contexts

Sustainable Living and Household Resources	
• everyday practices that reduce waste, save energy and conserve water	2.4 explore sustainable practices and how they can influence household decision making
• how household energy consumption, water use and waste generation impact environmental and financial sustainability • how households can evaluate the efficiency of their energy, water and waste practices using data and monitoring tools	2.5 analyse how the management of household energy, water and waste management contribute to sustainable living
• household technologies that improve efficiency and reduce environmental impact, such as; - energy-efficient appliances - smart controls and monitoring technologies - water-saving technologies	2.6 investigate how household technologies can improve efficiency in the home
• features within the home that influence energy efficiency and environmental impact, such as; - insulation and ventilation - heating and lighting systems - building layout and design decisions - renewable energy installations • supports and initiatives, such as; - household recycling schemes - energy grants - local authority initiatives - housing adaptation grants	2.7 evaluate how one feature within the home influences sustainable living, including the role of any available supports and initiatives
Household Textiles and Clothing	
• textile fibres, including; - natural - synthetic - blended	2.8 explain how fibre type influences household textiles and clothing choices

• how fibre type affects durability, comfort, cost and maintenance	
• factors, including; - economic considerations - functional considerations - environmental considerations - social and cultural influences	2.9 describe the factors that influence responsible household textile and clothing decisions
• how fashion, trends, styles and social-media influence shape household textile and clothing decisions	
• practical repair and maintenance skills, such as; - simple alterations - everyday clothing repair using machine stitching - practical use of household sewing machines - *other modern equipment* • how repair supports resourcefulness and sustainability in the home • how creative upcycling can extend the life of household textiles and clothing • how digital and online resources support repair, maintenance and upcycling, such as; - tutorials on social-media - pattern libraries - maker communities	2.10 demonstrate repair and maintenance skills for household textiles and clothing 2.11 demonstrate creative upcycling skills for household textiles and clothing
• how circular economy principles in household textile and clothing decisions can reduce waste, extend product life and support more sustainable consumption, such as; - clothing swaps - recycling schemes - charity shops - upcycling - community repair initiatives	2.12 analyse how household textiles and clothing decisions contribute to more sustainable consumption

Consumer Empowerment and Decision-Making	
• national and statutory sources of consumer guidance and comparison tools, alongside commercial, digital and media-based sources of consumer information • indicators of reliability in consumer information, including; - accuracy - independence - transparency - trustworthiness - user engagement • the role of digital platforms and social media in accessing consumer information, product marketing and comparing household products and services	2.13 examine sources of consumer information to identify credible and reliable guidance
• criteria for comparing household products and services, including; cost, quality, suitability, sustainability, durability and after-sales support	2.14 compare two household products or services to make informed, sustainable and responsible purchasing decisions
• how consumers can recognise, interpret and respond to these strategies when making purchasing decisions	2.15 analyse one example of how promotion, branding and psychological strategies influence consumer decision-making
• the design of online consumer environments, such as; algorithms, targeted advertising and personalisation, and how these influence consumer behaviour	2.16 investigate how digital platforms and technologies shape consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions

Managing Household Finances • responsible use of credit and the risks of over-borrowing • decisions, such as; - maintaining emergency funds - managing repayment commitments - protecting household income	2.17 evaluate household financial decisions, including credit, borrowing and saving options, for their impact on short-term and long-term financial resilience
• strategies to support household financial resilience, including; - saving for short-term needs and emergencies - responsible borrowing and repayment planning - the role of insurance in protecting household stability • how values, priorities and socio-economic factors influence financial decisions and long-term security • supports and tools available to households in financial difficulty	2.18 apply strategies that build financial resilience and stability for individuals, families and society

Strand 3: Family in Society

Recognising families as fundamental to society, this strand examines how contemporary social, cultural and economic factors shape family experiences and influence quality of life for individuals, families and society. It supports students to develop knowledge, skills, values and dispositions needed to navigate modern family life, engage critically with supports and services, and respond to emerging family and social concerns in informed and responsible ways.

Throughout this strand, students apply a structured problem-solving approach to address practical perennial problems in everyday family contexts, and to consider how their decisions and actions contribute to quality of life for individuals, families and society.

Strand 3 Learning outcomes

Students learn about	Students should be able to
Families in Contemporary Ireland	
• family structures, including those recognised in the Irish CSO data • living arrangements and household compositions • key influences shaping family structures and living arrangements • the implications of differing family structures and living arrangements for individuals, families and society	3.1 examine family structures and living arrangements in contemporary Ireland
• family roles and responsibilities, including; - caregiving - decision-making - financial provision - emotional support - household management	3.2 explain family roles and responsibilities in contemporary Ireland
• factors that influence family roles and responsibilities, including; - culture - employment - family transitions - gender - media - stages of the life cycle	3.3 analyse factors that influence family roles and responsibilities

• how these factors impact decision-making, time management and participation in family life • how roles and responsibilities may change across the stages of the life cycle • social and economic factors, including; - economic pressures - cultural shifts - gender roles - policy changes - migration	3.4 discuss how family roles and responsibilities evolve in response to social and economic factors
Culture, Identity and Inclusion in Family Life • examples of cultural diversity represented in families and communities in Ireland, including; - languages - traditions - celebrations - beliefs and values • how cultural identity and heritage influences family roles, relationships and participation in society • how intercultural awareness supports inclusion, belonging and respect for diversity in family and community life	3.5 describe how cultural diversity and identity influence family life in Ireland today
• how cultural diversity influences household practices, such as; - food preparation - clothing and textiles - caring responsibilities - celebrations • how adapting traditions and practices when living in different cultural contexts can promote belonging and inclusion	3.6 investigate how cultural diversity and identity impact household practices

Marriage, Partnership and Cohabitation in Ireland • key requirements, including; - age - capacity - notice periods - registration processes • rights and responsibilities associated, including; - property rights - parental responsibilities - inheritance - dissolution procedures	3.7 investigate key requirements and responsibilities for marriage, civil partnership and cohabitation in Ireland
• factors, including; - financial circumstances - traditions - religion - culture - personal values and beliefs • how social expectations and changing lifestyles influence partnership and family formation choices • how these factors reflect diversity and changing social values in Ireland today	3.8 discuss the factors that influence decisions about marriage, civil partnership and cohabitation in Ireland
Families and Quality of Life • factors, including - health - housing - education - financial security - social inclusion - family relationships - family life stages and transitions • the relationship between these factors and quality of life	3.9 describe the factors that affect quality of life
• social, economic and environmental contexts: - social, such as; inclusion and participation - economic, such as; employment, income	3.10 relate social, economic and environmental lenses to factors affecting family quality of life

- environmental, such as; housing quality, sustainability	3.11 analyse two factors that affect quality of life using social, economic and environmental lenses
Communication in Family Life • factors that can enhance or limit effective communication • families' use of digital communication and technologies to support relationships, organisation and connection • the opportunities and challenges that technology brings to family life • how families can promote positive digital wellbeing and responsible technology use at home	3.12 explain why effective communication supports family relationships and quality of life 3.13 evaluate how digital communication and technology influence family relationships and quality of life
Supports for Families and Communities • how statutory, voluntary and community supports can impact quality of life for individuals and families • how factors, including; - awareness - accessibility - affordability - communication affect how families use statutory, voluntary and community supports in everyday life	3.14 describe statutory, voluntary and community supports available to individuals, families and communities in Ireland 3.15 explore the role of statutory, voluntary and community supports in promoting quality of life

Care Responsibilities Across the Stages of the Life Cycle • how care needs and responsibilities change as families move through stages of the life cycle • criteria including; - opportunities and challenges created by the care responsibility - the balance between informal and formal care - the role of statutory, voluntary and community supports - available supports and how they promote quality of life - the impact of caregiving on quality of life	3.16 describe family care responsibilities across stages of the life cycle 3.17 investigate family care responsibilities during one stage of the life cycle and its impact on quality of life

Teaching for student learning

Leaving Certificate Home Economics supports the use of a wide range of learning and teaching approaches that respond to the strengths, needs and interests of all students. Learning is most effective when teachers deliberately integrate Home Economics theory with practical application, enabling students to make connections between ideas and action in meaningful, everyday contexts related to individuals, family and society. Approaches grounded in hands-on learning actively engage students through practical interactions with the resources, technologies and contexts related to Home Economics. This engagement can occur across various settings, such as the classroom, at home, or out of school settings.

Structured problem-solving is a key pedagogical approach of Home Economics and is used to support students in engaging effectively with practical perennial problems. Through structured problem-solving, students are supported to investigate, trial and collaborate as they research, plan, create and reflect on possible responses to everyday opportunities and problems. The process is iterative and open-ended, enabling students to refine their responses over time and to recognise that different responses may be appropriate in different contexts. For example, preparing, cooking and evaluating a dish to explore recipe modification for a special diet can combine theoretical knowledge with practical food skills in an applied context. Teachers facilitate this learning through demonstration, supported practice and formative feedback, gradually reducing guidance as students develop confidence and competence in applying structured problem-solving approaches and practical skills in both familiar and less familiar situations. Through creating, trialling and refining responses, students also develop resilience as they learn from disappointments and adapt their approaches to overcome problems.

Planning for learning and teaching in Home Economics is designed to support students in making connections across the four strands, by creating opportunities to examine issues through more than one contextual lens. Teachers draw on transdisciplinary perspectives to support students in exploring how social, economic, cultural and environmental factors influence decisions in everyday contexts related to the home. For example, students may consider how information from different sources, family practices and wider social influences shape choices related to food, household resource use or family life, enabling connections across food, resource management and family contexts. Through engagement with learning in this way, students apply their understanding in practical contexts that reflect everyday experiences.

Teachers facilitate applied and hands-on, practical learning by designing opportunities for students to plan, organise and carry out practical activities in food, resource management and family contexts. This includes supporting students to manage multiple tasks, use equipment efficiently and in a safe and responsible manner, and make informed and sustainable choices in the home. Through guidance and formative feedback, teachers support students to evaluate outcomes and refine their approaches over time, building independence and competence.

The use of digital tools and household technologies in Home Economics is focused on enhancing learning in meaningful and purposeful ways. Teachers support students to use digital applications, research tools and media thoughtfully and in a safe and responsible manner, with awareness of the wider impacts of technology on individuals, families and society. Students also work with kitchen equipment, textile technologies and household appliances to plan, create and evaluate their work, completing practical activities efficiently and safely.

In Home Economics, scaffolded learning, appropriate differentiation and inclusive practices ensure that all students develop confidence and competence. Teachers may use a range of approaches to support learning and participation, recognising the diversity of students' experiences, strengths and abilities. Learning activities are designed with multiple entry points, enabling students to engage with the same task or learning outcome at different levels of support, complexity or independence. Collaborative tasks and ongoing formative feedback support engagement, build confidence and enable students to learn from one another as they develop knowledge, skills, values and dispositions over time.

Progression in Home Economics is supported through scaffolded learning that gradually reduces levels of support, enabling students to move from guided participation towards greater autonomy over time. Students are provided with opportunities to plan, implement and evaluate their responses with increasing independence, and to consider how feedback informs future decisions.

Assessment

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting, using and reporting information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for students through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of strength or difficulty for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping students and teachers to identify next steps in the teaching and learning process.

As well as varied teaching strategies, varied assessment strategies will support student learning and provide information to teachers and students that can be used as feedback so that teaching and learning activities can be modified in ways that best suit individual learners. By setting appropriate and engaging tasks, asking questions and giving feedback that promotes learner autonomy, assessment will support learning and promote progression, support the development of student key competencies and summarise achievement.

Assessment for certification

Assessment for certification is based on the rationale, aims and learning outcomes of this specification. There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising of the Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task. The written examination will be at higher and ordinary level. The Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task will be based on a common brief. Each component will be set and examined by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

In the written examination, Leaving Certificate Home Economics will be assessed at two levels, Higher and Ordinary (Table X). Examination questions will require students to demonstrate learning appropriate to each level. Differentiation at the point of assessment will also be achieved through the stimulus material used, and the extent of the structured support provided for examination students at different levels.

Table 2 Overview of assessment for certification

Assessment component	Weighting	Level
Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task	40%	Common Brief
Written examination	60%	Higher and Ordinary Levels

Additional Assessment Component[1]: Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task

The Additional Assessment Component (AAC) in Leaving Certificate Home Economics provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate evidence of their learning across all strands of the specification. The Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task requires students to use a structured problem-solving approach to investigate a food and health-related practical perennial problem or need and to develop a creative, evidence-based response. The Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task enables students to demonstrate evidence of informed and creative decision-making, proficiency in their learning, increasing independence and confidence. The senior cycle key competencies of thinking and solving problems, being creative, cultivating wellbeing, and participating in society, developed through working with learning outcomes across the specification, will be applied through the student's engagement with the task.

A brief will be issued nationally by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The brief will outline the task and will:

- set a context related to a practical perennial food-related problem or need;
- provide guidance to students in developing their response;
- allow students to demonstrate evidence of their learning in areas related to the brief;
- facilitate teachers and students in planning for the task.

The brief will be designed to enable students to demonstrate practical food skills, and their ability to problem-solve and make decisions as they investigate, plan, create, evaluate and document their progress throughout engagement with the task. The task will primarily assess learning outcomes from the Unifying Strand: Home Economics Thinking and Practice and Strand 1: Food, Nutrition and Practical Food Skills, with particular emphasis on structured problem-solving, food literacy and the application of practical food skills. Students will draw on relevant learning outcomes from Strand 2: Family Resource Management and Strand 3: Family in Society to develop comprehensive, evidence-based responses.
This AAC should be integrated into the teaching and learning process, maximising its potential to motivate and engage students, where students can engage in practical perennial problems and needs, enhancing their understanding of Home Economics. As part of their engagement

[1] It is envisaged that the Applied Assessment Component will take up to 20 hours to complete. Further details will be provided in the Guidelines to support the Leaving Certificate Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task.

with the brief, students participate in a range of practical activities appropriate to the focus of the task.

The Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task involves the following:

- **Investigating:** students will be required to investigate a practical perennial food-related problem or need outlined in the brief. This involves exploring the context of the problem or need, and researching, gathering and evaluating relevant information from practical food-based trialling and exploration. As part of investigating, students will also evaluate information from secondary sources to help inform their practical exploration.
- **Planning:** students develop an informed and creative plan for a possible response, making decisions about resources, relevant information and the rationale for their chosen approach.
- **Realising and Creating:** in realising and creating their response, students will be required to demonstrate a range of practical food literacy skills. Students draw on their knowledge, skills, values and dispositions with increasing independence and competence.
- **Evaluating:** students evaluate the effectiveness of their response in relation to the brief through reflection on outcomes, decisions made during the process and information gathered.
- **Documenting and Presenting:** throughout the task students will select and present evidence that demonstrates their engagement with all stages of the task, using appropriate and effective formats to communicate their process and response.

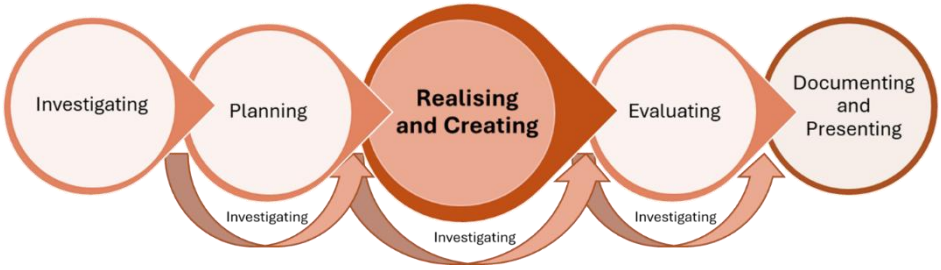

Figure 4 Overview of the process for undertaking the AAC

Upon completion of the AAC, students submit evidence of their learning [2]for assessment in a format and manner prescribed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The AAC will be marked by the SEC.

Evidence of learning may include documentation of decision-making, practical processes and outcomes, reflecting the student's engagement with the structured problem-solving process.

[2] Evidence of learning is proposed as a structured multimodal submission, which comprises of a digital written submission supported by multimodal digital evidence (e.g. photographs, tables, graphs etc.) and a video submission. The written submission and the video are both required to offer a complete record of the students' work.

Descriptors of quality for additional assessment component

The descriptors below relate to the learning achieved by students in the Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task. They describe performance across the stages of a structured problem-solving approach and the application of practical food skills.

Table 3: Descriptors of quality: Food Literacy and Applied Practice Task

	Students demonstrating a high level of achievement	Students demonstrating a moderate level of achievement	Students demonstrating a low level of achievement
Investigating	Generate, analyse and evaluate information from a wide range of appropriate sources, demonstrating a clear and well-informed understanding of the practical perennial problem or need outlined in the brief. Relevant and appropriate considerations for responses are thoroughly explored.	Generate, analyse and evaluate information from a range of appropriate sources, demonstrating an informed understanding of the practical perennial problem or need outlined in the brief. Relevant and appropriate considerations for responses are reasonably explored.	Generate, analyse and evaluate information from some sources, demonstrating a basic and general understanding of the practical perennial problem or need outlined in the brief. Some relevant and appropriate considerations for responses are evident.
Planning	Develop a clear, well-structured and creative plan for a possible response that fully addresses all aspects of the brief. Decisions are well justified using relevant evidence, clear reasoning and consideration of alternatives where appropriate.	Develop a workable plan for a possible response that addresses most aspects of the brief. Decisions show some justification, using sufficient evidence and reasoning.	Develop a basic plan for a possible response that addresses some aspects of the brief. Decisions are justified using minimal evidence and reasoning.

Realising and Creating	Prepare, cook and present a response to the brief that demonstrates a broad range of and competency in practical food literacy skills. The response comprehensively meets the requirements of the brief and is well suited to the needs of the intended user, demonstrating well-judged decision-making and creativity through effective execution.	Prepare, cook and present a response to the brief that demonstrates an appropriate range of practical food literacy skills with developing competence. The response addresses the main requirements of the brief and is generally suited to the needs of the intended user, with evidence of effective decision-making and creativity in aspects of the work.	Prepare, cook and present a response to the brief demonstrating a limited range of practical food literacy skills with limited competence. The response addresses some requirements of the brief but does not fully meet the needs of the intended user, with limited evidence of effective decision-making or creativity.
Evaluating	Evaluate the effectiveness of the response through critical and evidence-informed reflection on outcomes and decisions made throughout the process. Offer considered and well-justified reflections on strengths, limitations and areas for improvement.	Evaluate the effectiveness of the response with some evidence-informed reflection on outcomes and decisions made throughout the process. Offer reflections on strengths, limitations and areas for improvement, with some justification.	Evaluate the response in a limited or mainly descriptive manner. Reflection on outcomes, decisions and evidence is minimal, with basic identification of strengths, limitations or areas for improvement.
Documenting and Presenting	Select and present clear, relevant and well-organised evidence that demonstrates sustained engagement with all stages of the task. Decisions, practical responses and evaluation are communicated clearly, with insight into learning and decision-making.	Select and present relevant evidence that demonstrates engagement with all stages of the task. Decisions, practical responses and evaluation are communicated clearly, with an appropriate level of detail.	Select and present some evidence that demonstrates engagement with stages of the task, though evidence may be inconsistent or incomplete. Decisions, practical responses and evaluation are communicated with limited detail.

Written examination

The written examination will consist of a range of question types. The senior cycle key competencies (figure 2) are embedded in the learning outcomes and will be assessed in the context of the learning outcomes. The written examination paper will include a selection of questions that will assess, appropriate to each level:

- the learning described in the four strands of study.
- Application of learning to everyday scenarios involving individuals, families and society.

Differentiation between Higher and Ordinary level will be achieved through the cognitive demands of questions, the structure and complexity of stimulus materials, and the nature of the required responses.

Reasonable accommodations

This Leaving Certificate Home Economics specification requires that students engage with the nature of the subject on an ongoing basis throughout the course. The assessment for certification in Leaving Certificate Home Economics involves a written examination worth 60% of the available marks and an additional component worth 40%. In this context, the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations, operated by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), is designed to assist students who would have difficulty in accessing the examination or communicating what they know to an examiner because of a physical, visual, sensory, hearing, or learning difficulty. The scheme assists such students to demonstrate what they know and can do, without compromising the integrity of the assessment. The focus of the scheme is on removing barriers to access, while retaining the need to assess the same underlying knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions as are assessed for all other students and to apply the same standards of achievement as apply to all other students The Commission makes every effort when implementing this scheme to accommodate individual assessment needs through these accommodations.

There are circumstances in which the requirement to demonstrate certain areas of learning when students are being assessed for certification can be waived or exempted, provided that this does not compromise the overall integrity of the assessment. However, some of the areas of learning in a subject specification cannot be waived because they are core to the subject specification. In Leaving Certificate Home Economics, this includes the application of subject knowledge, skills, values and dispositions through practical engagement, using a structured problem-solving approach to address a practical perennial food-related problem.

More detailed information about the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations in the Certificate Examinations, including the accommodations available and the circumstances in which they may apply, is available from the State Examinations Commission's Reasonable Accommodations Section.

Before deciding to study Leaving Certificate Home Economics, students, in consultation with their school and parents/guardians should review the learning outcomes of this specification and the details of the assessment arrangements. They should carefully consider whether or not they can achieve the learning outcomes, or whether they may have a special educational need that may prevent them from demonstrating their achievement of the outcomes, even after reasonable accommodations have been applied. It is essential that if a school believes that a student may not be in a position to engage fully with the assessment for certification arrangements, they contact the State Examinations Commission.

Leaving Certificate Grading

Leaving Certificate Home Economics will be graded using an 8-point grading scale. The highest grade is a Grade 1; the lowest grade is a Grade 8. The highest seven grades (1-7) divide the marks range 100% to 30% into seven equal grade bands 10% wide, with a grade 8 being awarded for percentage marks of less than 30%. The grades at Higher level and Ordinary level are distinguished by prefixing the grade with H or O respectively, giving H1-H8 at Higher level, and O1-O8 at Ordinary level.

Table 4: Leaving Certificate Grading

Grade	% marks
H1/O1	90 - 100
H2/O2	80 < 90
H3/O3	70 < 80
H4/O4	60 < 70
H5/O5	50 < 60
H6/O6	40 < 50
H7/O7	30 < 40
H8/O8	< 30

Appendices

Appendix 1: Action Verbs

Action verb	Students should be able to
Analyse	study or examine something in detail, break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure; identify parts and relationships, and to interpret information to reach conclusions
Apply	select and use information and/or knowledge and understanding to explain a given situation or real circumstances
Assess	judge, evaluate or estimate the nature, ability, quality or value of something
Appreciate	recognise the meaning, value or importance of
Compare	give an account of the similarities and (or) differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout
Conduct	organise and carry out
Demonstrate	prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application
Describe	give a detailed account of the main points of the topic, using words, diagrams and/or images
Discuss	offer a considered, balanced review that includes a range of arguments, perspectives, factors or hypotheses, grounded in appropriate evidence
Evaluate (data/ information)	collect and examine data to make judgements and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a conclusion in an inquiry or investigation; identify the limitations of data in conclusions; make judgements about the ideas, solutions or methods
Evaluate (ethical judgement)	collect and examine evidence to make judgements and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgements about the ideas, solutions or methods
Examine	look closely at arguments, data, information and/or stories in order to uncover origins, assumptions, perspectives, trends and/or relationships
Explain	give a detailed account supported by reasons or causes
Explore	systematically look into something closely; scrutinise or probe
Investigate	observe, study or examine in detail in order to establish facts, and reach new insights and/or conclusions
Outline	give the main points, restricting to essential pieces of information
Prepare	make something ready for use or presentation
Present	promote or propose an idea; deliver or illustrate evidence; show something for others to examine
Recognise	Identify facts, characteristics or concepts that are critical to understanding a situation, event, process or phenomenon
Reflect	give thoughtful consideration to actions, experiences, values and learning in order to gain new insights and make meaning
Relate	associate, giving reasons
Synthesise	combine different ideas to create new or enhanced understanding
Use	apply knowledge or rules to put theory into practice

Appendix 2: Glossary of Key Terms for Home Economics

This glossary supports a shared understanding of key concepts, values and processes that underpin Home Economics learning and assessment.

Home Economics terms and meaning	
Circular economy principles	An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and keeping products and materials in use through reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling, applied in Home Economics to food, textiles and household resources.
Community supports	Supports, services, networks, and initiatives available within a local community that contribute to the quality of life of individuals and families. These may be provided through statutory services, voluntary organisations, community groups, or informal networks, and include both formal and informal forms of support that respond to local needs. They are the wider ecosystem of local supports, formal and informal.
Consumption and overconsumption	Consumption refers to the use of goods and services to meet needs; overconsumption refers to excessive use beyond what is needed, leading to negative social, economic or environmental consequences.
Dietary and lifestyle risk factors	Aspects of eating behaviour and lifestyle that may increase the risk of chronic health conditions, including high intake of sugar, salt or saturated fat; low fibre intake; overconsumption of energy-dense or ultra-processed foods; irregular eating; inadequate fluid intake; physical inactivity; and drug use.
Diet-related diseases	Diseases that may result from dietary intake that deviates from population dietary recommendations, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and dental disease.
Food innovation	The creation and application of new ideas, products, processes or technologies in the food sector, including improving existing products and adopting sustainable or consumer-driven approaches.
Food literacy	The scaffolding that empowers individuals, families and society to protect quality of life through diet change and supports dietary resilience over time. It incorporates the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions required to plan, manage, select, prepare and eat food, while considering the social, cultural and environmental impacts of these choices
Food safety	Practices and conditions that protect food from contamination and harm during planning, preparation, cooking, storage and preservation, ensuring food is safe to consume and supports health and quality of life.
Food technology	The application of scientific and technological principles to the production, processing, preservation, packaging and distribution of food to ensure food safety, quality, nutrition and sustainability.

Food-based dietary guidelines	Nationally developed advice providing practical, culturally relevant recommendations on healthy eating patterns, often presented using visual tools such as food pyramids or food plates. Ireland currently uses the Food Pyramid.
Innovative food production	Methods of producing, preparing or preserving food that involve new or emerging processes, technologies or systems, developed in response to changing needs such as efficiency, sustainability or food security.
Kitchen technologies	Tools, equipment and digital systems used in food preparation, cooking, preservation and evaluation to support safe, efficient and sustainable practice.
Practical food skills	The application of food preparation, cooking and planning techniques that demonstrate understanding of nutrition, food safety, creativity, precision and sustainability, using scientific properties and reflective decision-making.
Practical perennial problems	Concerns endured from generation to generation by families, both locally and globally. They require thoughtful action, reflection and critical decision-making skills to resolve. These problems evolve with changing social contexts but remain fundamentally relevant to family life and quality of life. Examples include; Food and Health (Nutrition) ➢ The Perennial Problem: How do we provide a nutritious, balanced diet for the family? ➢ Example: Deciding how to provide healthy, affordable meals for a family while navigating the modern rise of ultra-processed foods and increasingly busy work-life schedules. Sustainability (Resource Management) ➢ The Perennial Problem: How do we manage household resources responsibly? ➢ Example: Making ethical consumer choices regarding household textiles and clothing to reduce environmental impact, such as 'fast fashion' waste, while maintaining a family budget. Family Care (Intergenerational Support) ➢ The Perennial Problem: How do we care for vulnerable or aging family members? ➢ Example: Balancing the physical and emotional care of elderly relatives with the demands of childcare and the digital safety of children in the home.
Quality assurance schemes	Independent or industry-supported programmes that verify standards of quality, safety, traceability or sustainability in food and textile products, supporting consumer confidence and informed decision-making.

Quality of life	A comprehensive measure of personal and social wellbeing that encompasses physical health, emotional and mental wellbeing, access to resources, meaningful relationships, personal fulfilment, safe living conditions, and opportunities for participation in society.
Sensory analysis	The systematic evaluation of food using the senses of sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing to assess quality, consumer preference and acceptability.
Special dietary considerations	Dietary needs or choices that differ from population dietary recommendations for medical reasons (e.g. coeliac disease, food allergies, intolerances) or non-medical reasons (e.g. vegetarian, cultural or religious practices).
Statutory supports	Services, payments or schemes funded or delivered by the State to assist individuals and families in meeting care and household responsibilities, such as parental leave entitlements, carers' allowance, public childcare and community care services.
Structured problem-solving	A systematic and reflective approach used to recognise, investigate, plan, create and evaluate responses to practical perennial problems. In Home Economics, structured problem-solving involves gathering and evaluating information, applying practical skills, making informed decisions, and reflecting on outcomes to refine practice over time. This approach supports critical and creative thinking and may be enacted through approaches such as the design brief process or other inquiry-based, iterative models.
Sustainable household management	The responsible use and management of household resources such as energy, water, food and textiles to reduce waste, promote efficiency and support sustainable living.
Traditional food production	Methods of producing, preparing or preserving food based on long-established practices and cultural traditions, often using minimal processing and techniques developed over time within particular social and environmental contexts.
Voluntary supports	Services provided by charities, non-profit organisations or community groups that assist individuals and families in meeting everyday needs or care responsibilities, including counselling, respite care, food provision and parenting support.