

Wider Horizons Programme 2019-20

for Transition Year students

What is the Wider Horizons Programme?

The programme is a one-year bridging programme undertaken in Transition Year that enables students to develop in a broad range of personal skills and ultimately approach Senior Cycle with a greater degree of ability, confidence and maturity.

How does learning take place within the programme?

During the year, learning takes place *in school* and *outside school*, and students and parents are encouraged to make the most of both.

In school, learning takes place on two levels:

- through class work and project work (the latter is graded by the school): this learning is integrated into the academic syllabus of the year.
- through participation (not graded): this involves learning how to become organised and self-motivated by fully taking part in all TY activities: class trips, outings, whole school drama and music activities, work experience, extra sporting events, competitions and so forth. All of these are important learning opportunities.

Outside school, learning is facilitated by students having less study to do at home, and therefore more time to dedicate to advancing in other areas, such as music, art, sports, computing, languages, travel, work experience, additional subjects, useful hobbies etc.

Not all life-learning takes place within a classroom! Both students and parents should explore before the year begins how best a student's free time outside school in TY can be used effectively for furthering personal development. Time will be in short supply in 5th and 6th year due to study, and so now is an opportunity to make the most of it.

How is the programme syllabus structured?

Work occurs within the context of the six Learning Modules which together form the structure of the *Wider Horizons* academic syllabus:

- Languages & Literature
- Humanities
- Contemporary World Affairs
- Business & Enterprise
- Applied Sciences
- Sport & Performance

Which subjects are taken in the programme?

Of the subjects taken within the six modules, some run throughout the whole year, others for half the year. Subjects are as follows:

Module	Subjects
<i>Languages & Literature</i>	Irish English Spanish
<i>Humanities</i>	Philosophy & Civilisation Drama Religion <i>Creative Arts Programme</i> (Art / Crafts/ Music etc.)
<i>Contemporary World Affairs</i>	History Geo-politics Economics Media Studies
<i>Business & Enterprise</i>	Maths Business Studies Business I.T. Careers
<i>Applied Sciences</i>	Chemistry, Physics Biology
<i>Sport & Performance</i>	P.E. Leadership Personal Development

In addition to these subjects, there are many short-term and once-off courses for students, such as:

- Watersports
- First Aid
- TV Production
- Radio Production
- Cardio-combat
- Driving Skills
- Robotics
- Cooking

Is there 'homework'?

Yes, there will be work to do at home. Core subjects assign homework after every lesson (development on lesson work covered that day, preparatory work to do for subsequent lessons, longer-term revision etc.), some of which accumulates to form part of, or all of, the graded Subject Projects of that subject. Teachers of other subjects generally do not have the same level of contact to maintain this momentum of traditional homework, so they assign work on a weekly basis, which naturally accumulates to form part of, or all of, the Subject Project.

What is 'project work'?

There are two types of project work: term projects and subject projects.

- Term projects:
 - These are carried out by a team over the duration of a term.
 - One project is due in Term 1, and a second one in Term 2.
 - These projects operate *outside* the normal lesson structure.
- Subject projects:
 - These are pursued individually over the duration of a subject course.
 - Students are consistently engaged in subject projects in the course of the year.
 - These projects operate *inside* the normal lesson structure.

How does a 'term project' work?

- The class is divided into teams, each comprising three or four students.
 - The teams will change for each term project.
 - The term projects must be accomplished and presented as a team effort (everyone in the team will get the same grade).
- Options for the project are made available by the TY Coordinator at the beginning of each term, from which a team chooses one. The options will correspond to the programme modules.
 - There will be an emphasis on the team articulating which skills they will develop by their choice of term project.
 - Each of the two sets of term projects will be themed, which will be reflected in the project options.
 - Once a team has chosen its term project, it must seek on its own a Supervisory Teacher to assist them in their planning and keep an eye on them as they make progress.
 - A team is appointed a 5th Year student who will act as a Team Advisor.
 - A final grade is gained on foot of presenting the term project to the 'Dragons' (an assessment group made of up teachers, and others).
 - Completed term projects can be displayed publically during the year (within a classroom or in the corridor areas of the school).

How does a 'subject project' work?

- Students undertake these in every subject in the course of the year.
 - Whole-year subjects assign two projects, one in Term 1 and one in Term 2.
 - Half-year subjects assign one project each.
- Subject project work is assigned to students under the following guidelines:
 - Subject projects are generally submitted by individual students, but at times a teacher may make student pairs within the class, each pair working on the same project (and getting the same grade ultimately).
 - Students are given choice with regard to subject project titles.

- Teachers communicate to students at the start of their course the exact nature of the subject project options, and provide adequate training to the class in how to approach them.
- There is an emphasis on the student articulating which skills he will develop by his choice of subject project.
- The natures of the subject projects should be creative and diverse (i.e. not all essays or PowerPoint presentations).
- Subject projects are *cumulative* (i.e. built up over the duration of the subject course, not simply put together in the last week or so of a course).
- The grade for a subject project is never split over two projects: if a teacher wishes to facilitate more work from students, he can split the project into two or three parts, but each part is not then marked separately.
- There is quality and grade parity across subject projects in different subjects.
- When giving the grade, the teacher does so on a Subject Project Report.
 - Besides the grade, the teacher provides these additional details:
 - What the student did well.
 - What the students didn't do so well.
 - Areas for improvement.
- These Reports are the basis on which the Term Reports are compiled and sent home.
- Completed subject projects can be displayed publically during the year (within a classroom or in the corridor areas of the school).

How are students assessed?

Only project work is formally assessed and graded. Term project work is assessed following a presentation to an assessor group. Subject project work is graded by the subject teachers. Assessment is through a grading system of:

- Distinction
- High Merit
- Merit
- Pass
- No Pass

Teachers give a grade for project work based on the following criteria:

Distinction	Project work that is excellent in all regards.
High Merit	Project work that is very good in all regards.
Merit	Project work that is average for the class.
Pass	Project work that just meets the minimum standard expected.
No Pass	Project work that clearly does not meet the standard.

Due recognition for carrying out relevant activities outside of the modules structure can be given to students in teachers' comments in the reports home; these activities include:

- Level of commitment to the spirit of the programme and its implementation (i.e. acknowledging class leadership etc.).
- Organising/participating in TY activities outside of the standard lesson programme.
- Engaging in exceptionally worthwhile work experience

Poor participation in class can also be communicated by means of teachers' comments in the reports home.

Will it be possible to get all the projects completed?

- Yes. The important thing is how well a student plans his time, which is a key skill to be learned during the year. Oftentimes a number of projects, across different subjects, might be due at the same time, and so students need to plan their work schedule in advance in order to get all of them done.
 - Students should aim to talk to their teachers and meet their mentors regularly and seek advice on drawing up a project work schedule.

When are reports sent home?

- Three reports are sent home during the year:
 - These reports account for the grades gained for both term project work and subject project work.
 - The first and second of these reports include comments from teachers and the TY Coordinator.

Are there additional costs?

The additional fee for taking part in the *Wider Horizons* programme covers all of the standard programme subjects and activities delivered by the school to students; extra charges are levied for any extra activities which occur.

Do all activities take place within the school day?

Tuition for TY takes place during the standard school day, but some activities may require time commitment outside of school hours. Typically Thursday is the day allocated to off-site activities.