

# results on the day



From left, Karen O'Mahony, Philip Donnellan and Maria Donovan all got 600 points in last year's Leaving Cert and are now studying at University College Cork. Photograph: Daragh Mac Sweeney/Provision

**Maria:** The German grammar is difficult but very structured. Practise is the only way to get to grips with it. I used to put the aural CD on at night. I slept through most of it but I think it helped.

## PHYSICS

**Antoinette:** I had an excellent physics teacher. The course is quite manageable. Make sure you know your mandatory experiments, because there's not a huge choice in that part

of the paper. If you understand physics, you save yourself a load of time.

If you get lost, it's hard to retrieve it, so make sure you ask your teacher if you have a question.

**Philip:** Physics is all about understanding. I used flashcards to test myself. Make sure you learn your definitions. Knowing them allows you to remember the material around them.

**Karen:** I never liked it, and none of us were happy coming out of the exam. Just keep going over the questions. They are more or less the same from year to year. Make sure you learn definitions and formulae, and just stick at it.

## CHEMISTRY

**Philip:** Know the basic principles behind everything. Learning off is a complete waste of time. Once you understand the material you start to enjoy the process of learning.

**Karen:** Learn the definitions and the experiments. A lot of this was about learning the theory and practising calculations. Marking schemes are useful for chemistry.

**Antoinette:** Be aware of how the exam is organised. Study the marking schemes for chemistry. Don't forget organic chemistry and your experiments. The marks are for taking.

**Maria:** Know your experiments. You're guaranteed questions on them. Organic chemistry is a massive part of the course, but once you get it, you get it, so it's worth making the effort. It's all about understanding the subject.

## BIOLOGY

**Karen:** This is all about learning theory. Once you get your head around it, it's not too bad; I learned from the book and then started practising questions towards the year's end.

**Antoinette:** There is such a huge volume of information in biology, I made a point of keeping up with it. I wouldn't recommend cramming in biology. It's not hard, it's just about maintaining a work ethic. Genetics is a guaranteed question. It would be foolish not to practise it and to do it.

**Maria:** My teacher made notes directly from the syllabus, which were excellent. Try to condense what's in the book. There's a lot of information you don't need there. The marking scheme is really important in biology, so make sure you know it. Take down the words they're looking for and memorise them. The experiment questions are easy marks, and make sure you practise the diagrams.

## ACCOUNTING

**Philip:** This is a massive course. For once, you sort of have to pick and choose your questions in the exam. Never do the bare minimum and know the questions backwards. The questions are very similar from year to year. Practise them again and again, and your confidence will go up.

**Maria:** Accounting is very repetitive and predictable. The theory is coming into it more. I couldn't believe how much theory came up last year. The accounting questions are just like maths. They're very simple once you get the hang of them. There's no trick to accountancy. Read the paper before you start. Choose the questions that suit you. Don't launch straight into it. The marking schemes are really important in accounting.

## BUSINESS

**Maria:** My enemy. I thought that business would be a doddle. You have to practically eat the book. There's a lot to learn. It only really came together for me after the mocks. Just condense the book into your own notes, and practise the exam questions – especially the ABQs.

## APPLIED MATHS

**Philip:** If you like maths, you'll love this. You have to apply yourself and there is a lot of work involved, but it's very enjoyable if you're prepared to put the work in.

**Antoinette:** Applied maths actually helped my maths more than the other way around. The papers haven't changed at all. There are distinct patterns of questions that come up, so you really have to focus on the papers.

## MUSIC

**Philip:** I've been playing the piano for most of my life. You have to be careful not to underestimate the written part of the paper, because it's hard to get a good mark in it.