

One third take alternative programmes

by Kevin Cronin

MORE than 15,000 students sat the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) this year while an additional 3,000 students completed the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) — between them representing just under a third of all students receiving results today.

The LCVP combines formal academic subjects with a links module consisting of a written exam and a portfolio which is prepared over two years. The links module is counted as the students' sixth subject and includes compulsory work experience and enterprise activity with vocational exploration and a focus on information technology.

"The programme promotes self-directed learning and it's extremely practical, which is hugely important in the current economic climate when there's so

YEAR	DISTINCTION	MERIT	PASS	RECORD OF CREDITS	TOTAL
2006	499	1,603	608	455	3,155
2007	569	1,532	522	433	3,056
2008	587	1,809	553	496	3,445
2009	583	1,667	543	466	3,259

YEAR	DISTINCTION	MERIT	PASS	UN-GRADED	TOTAL
2006	1,568	6,343	4,548	1,568	14,023
2007	1,554	6,920	4,329	1,277	14,080
2008	1,902	7,002	4,354	1,247	14,505
2009	1,673	7,097	4,706	1,608	15,084

much focus on enterprise," said LCVP national coordinator Caroline McHale. Students of the LCVP sat a written examination in May — comprising video, case study and syllabus components — with the portfolio worth 60% of their final grade.

The 15,084 LCVP candidates represented a 4% rise on the numbers completing the programme in 2008 and made up 26.3% of the total number of students who completed the Leaving Certificate this year. A distinction grade meriting 70 CAO points

was awarded to 11% of LCVP students, while 47% of students received merit (50 points) and 31% gained a pass grade (30 points).

Numbers taking the LCA were down 5% this year, with only 3,259 receiving their results in the programme today, compared to 3,445 last year.

The numbers sitting Leaving Certificate exams in non-curricular foreign languages saw an increase of more than 50% compared to last year.

A total of 817 students sat non-curricular languages in 2009, which was up from 541 in 2008, a figure boosted by students from recently-accessed EU member states.

Polish topped the non-curricular languages table, with 328 students taking the exam, followed by Lithuanian (176), Romanian (92), Portuguese (55), Latvian (48) and Dutch (31).

MATHEMATICS

LCVP and LCA prove popular with pupils

**Mary
O'Donnell**

PEOPLE sometimes confuse the Leaving Certificate Vocational (LCVP) with the Leaving Certificate Applied, but they are two separate programmes.

The LCVP is a senior-cycle programme designed to give a strong vocational dimension to the established Leaving Certificate programme. It is not a separate star-alone programme, but is taken in association with the established Leaving Certificate.

Students who take the LCVP must take a minimum of five established Leaving Certificate subjects at higher, ordinary or foundation level, including Irish, unless they are exempted from it. Two of these subjects must be selected from a designated vocational group of subjects.

The students must study two LCVP "link modules": preparation for the world of work, and enterprise education.

So the LCVP is like an additional subject taken alongside established Leaving Certificate subjects, although different in character to the conventional subjects. It may be counted for points purposes.

Results are awarded in three grades, Distinction, Merit or Pass. All Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) award points for results in the LCVP Link modules in place of a sixth Leaving Certificate subject, with 70 points being awarded for Distinction, 50 for a Merit and 30 for a Pass.

Its popularity increases from year to year. This year over 15,700 of the 55,383 Leaving Certificate entrants were taking the LCVP.

Meanwhile, over 3,200 students receiving their Leaving Certificate results today will be spared the stress of converting their results into points, because they have chosen to do the alternative Leaving Certificate Applied programme.