



**To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Post-Primary Schools, Special Schools and Chief Executives of ETBs**

**Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle  
with particular reference to school year 2018/19**

**Circular Letter 0079 /2018**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Purpose of this circular

This circular supersedes Circular 15/2017 entitled “*Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19*” and Circular 29/2017 “*Junior Cycle Resources (Professional Time and Administration Grant)*” and sets out the arrangements now governing the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, with particular reference to the school year 2018/19.

Boards of Management, Principal teachers of all second-level schools, special schools and the Chief Executives (CE) of all Education and Training Boards (ETBs) are asked to ensure that this circular is brought to the immediate attention of all teachers. Boards of Management are also requested to ensure that parents/guardians are advised of these arrangements.

As the phasing of new subject specifications to schools continue up to September 2019, the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle continues to be reviewed, in partnership with school leaders, teachers and other education partners.

## 1.2 Key changes for school year 2018/19

This section summarises the main changes in Junior Cycle for schools for the school year 2018/19.

### 1.2.1 The following new subject specifications were introduced to those students entering first year in September 2018:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Introduced to 1<sup>st</sup> Year Students in:</b>	<b>First recorded on JCPA in:</b>
Mathematics	September 2018	2021
Home Economics	September 2018	2021
Music	September 2018	2021
History	September 2018	2021
Geography	September 2018	2021

### 1.2.2 Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in the school year 2018 - 2019

The key dates for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in the school year 2018 - 2019 have been changed. The time-bands during which the CBAs, Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings and Assessment Task (where relevant) in the different junior cycle subjects can be completed have been broadened.

### 1.2.3 Level 1 Learning Programmes

Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) including associated short courses are available to schools from September 2018. (L1LPs were introduced to some schools on a pilot basis during the 2017/18 year). The L1LPs address the learning needs of post-primary aged students with general learning difficulties/needs in the range of lower functioning moderate to severe and profound categories.

### 1.2.4 Arrangements in relation to CSPE

Students who commenced third year in September 2018 and who will sit the Junior Certificate/Cycle examination in 2019 will be the last cohort of students to sit the current Junior Certificate examination in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE).

CSPE, however, will remain a key component of the area of learning entitled Wellbeing. There is a range of curriculum options for CSPE as outlined in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines produced by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) including the NCCA CSPE short course (100 hours) which is the most up-to-date curriculum option available. Further advice on planning is available in the Wellbeing Guidelines. Assessment in CSPE will be school-based from the 2019/20 school year for all year groups.

## 1.3 Related documentation

This circular refers to the following documentation:

- The *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, is available at: <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015.pdf>
- The *Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* (22 May 2015) and its appendix published 5 July 2015 available at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Junior-Cycle-Reform-Joint-Statement-on-Principles-and-Implementation.pdf>
- Subject specifications for each of the subjects to be taught at Junior Cycle; these specifications are developed by the NCCA and approved by the Minister. Over time, each of the subject specifications will replace the syllabuses for each Junior Certificate subject; available at <http://www.curriculumonline.ie/>

- Level 2 Learning Programmes Guidelines for Teachers. The Level 2 Learning Programmes are designed for students with general learning difficulties/needs in the low mild to high moderate range of ability and are available at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-2-LPs>
- Level 1 Learning Programmes Guidelines for Teachers. These are designed for students with general learning difficulties/needs in the range of lower functioning moderate to severe and profound categories and are available at: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/f03b2786-2e04-454e-b0b8-56e313ff62b2/11729-NCCA-Level-2-Guidelines-V5August-2014.pdf>
- Specifications for Junior Cycle short courses designed by the NCCA for optional use by schools; available at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Short-Courses>
- Guidelines for schools on the development of short courses at Junior Cycle; available at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/subjects-and-short-courses/develop-your-own-short-course>
- Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle, developed by the NCCA; available at [https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines\\_forjunior\\_cycle.pdf](https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf)
- The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023, July 2018. <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018%E2%80%932023.pdf>

## 2 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN JUNIOR CYCLE

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### 2.1 The curriculum and assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle

The curriculum and assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle are as set out in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 and in the related specifications and syllabuses developed by the NCCA and approved by the Minister. Each school should use the Framework to plan a programme for the three years of Junior Cycle that meets the requirements set out in this circular, is informed by the particular learning needs and interests of the students, and reflects the characteristic spirit of the school. The programme planned for students entering Junior Cycle should be available for students and parents/guardians before the end of the school year prior to the student attending the school e.g. by May 2019 for those entering in 2019/2020.

## 2.2 Subjects, short courses, priority learning units and other learning activities

The *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* provides that students will study:

- A range of subjects  
OR
- A combination of subjects and short courses  
OR
- In the case of some individual students with special education needs, a combination of priority learning units, and/or short courses and/or subjects, suited to their individual needs  
AND
- A Programme in the area of Wellbeing.

Schools will ensure that the 8 key skills and 24 statements of learning, described in the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, feature appropriately and progressively in the programmes offered to their junior cycle students and in accordance with the timeline prescribed for phased implementation of the Framework.

## 2.3 Phasing of Junior Cycle Reform

During the phasing-in of the curriculum and assessment arrangements prescribed in the *Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015* students will study a number of subjects described in new Junior Cycle specifications published since 2014 and subjects described in Junior Certificate syllabuses published prior to 2012. Details of the subjects available are at *Appendix 1*.

## 2.4 Number of Subjects and Short Courses studied by Students

Typically, students will study a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10<sup>1</sup> subjects for final examination, the exact number being dependent on whether the student is also taking short courses.

Exceptions to the above requirement should in general only be made in the cases of students with additional educational needs who may take a lower number of subjects, combined in some cases with Level 2 or Level 1 learning programmes.

It will be the responsibility of the school to ensure that students are entered for the correct number of subjects for final examination as outlined above.

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<sup>1</sup> Maximum of 11 subjects for 2018/19 only as CSPE may be included as an additional subject for final examination

To help junior cycle students manage the demands of Junior Cycle and to ensure that the requirements in relation to the assessment process are not excessive, the following arrangements will apply:

Students who commenced Junior Cycle in September 2016:

In all types of recognised second-level schools, for students who commenced Junior Cycle in September 2016, the following requirements apply:

Subjects and short courses	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ study a maximum of 10 subjects (or 11 where the full CSPE syllabus is studied) for Final Examination and for reporting through the JCPA <i>OR</i></li> <li>▪ study up to 9 subjects (or 10 where the full CSPE syllabus is studied) for Final Examination and up to 2 short courses for reporting through the JCPA <i>OR</i></li> <li>▪ study up to 8 subjects (or 9 where the full CSPE syllabus is studied) for Final Examination and up to 4 short courses for reporting through the JCPA</li> </ul> <p>Note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools may continue to offer more than 10 subjects to their first year students to facilitate subject selection for study for Final Examination. The list of possible subjects will be found in <i>Appendix 1</i>.</li> <li>▪ Generally, students will study between 8 and 10 subjects.</li> <li>▪ Each student must include Irish, English and Mathematics among the subjects that he/she studies.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Schools may include a maximum of four short courses for reporting in the school's Junior Cycle programme followed by an individual student but are strongly advised to limit the number of short courses they offer. It is not the aim or intention that short courses would replace existing subjects.</li> </ul>
AND	

<sup>2</sup> Certain students may be exempted from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular M10/94.

CSPE <sup>3</sup>	Students must study Civic, Social and Political Education following <i>either</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the specification for the NCCA short course in CSPE (2016)</li> <li>▪ or as a further additional subject for Final Examination purposes following the Junior Certificate syllabus for CSPE (1996)<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>
AND	
PE <sup>3</sup>	Students must study Physical Education following <i>either</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the specification for the NCCA short course in Physical Education (2016)</li> <li>▪ or the Junior Cycle syllabus in Physical Education (2003)</li> </ul>
AND	
SPHE <sup>3</sup>	Students must study Social, Personal and Health Education following <i>either</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the specification for the NCCA short course in SPHE (2016)</li> <li>▪ or the junior cycle syllabus in SPHE (2000)</li> </ul>
AND	
Other areas of learning	Students may engage in other learning activities set out in a school's programme for junior cycle. These can include social, cultural, pastoral, scientific, entrepreneurial and other activities that can support the 24 statements of learning and the 8 key skills.  The Junior Cycle programme must include guidance education.  Some schools will also provide students with a course in religious instruction reflective of their own characteristic spirit as part of a junior cycle programme.

<sup>3</sup> Schools are reminded that there is a minimum threshold of time across the three years of junior cycle which should be provided for PE, SPHE and CSPE: PE: 135 hours spread across first, second and third year (i.e. the most common current allocation provided by schools—two class periods per week). SPHE: 70 hours spread across the three years of Junior Cycle (the same time allocation as required by the current Junior Cycle Framework for SPHE, including RSE). CSPE: 70 hours spread across the three years of Junior Cycle (the same time allocation as required currently).

<sup>4</sup> 2019 is the last year that the current Junior Certificate examination in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) is available. The cohort of students who commenced Junior Cycle in September 2016 is, therefore, the last cohort who will have access to the Junior Certificate examination in this subject.



Students studying the programme, as set out in the requirements above, will be recognised by the Department of Education and Skills for the purposes of teacher allocations and other payments to the school.

Students who commenced Junior Cycle in September 2017 and September 2018

In all types of recognised second-level schools, for students who commenced Junior Cycle in September 2017 and 2018, the following requirements apply:

Subjects and short courses	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ study a maximum of 10 subjects for Final Examination and reporting through the JCPA.<sup>5</sup> <i>OR</i></li> <li>▪ study up to 9 subjects for Final Examination and up to 2 short courses for reporting through the JCPA <i>OR</i></li> <li>▪ study up to 8 subjects for Final Examination and up to 4 short courses for reporting through the JCPA</li> </ul> <p>Note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools may continue to offer more than 10 subjects to their First Year students to facilitate subject selection for study for Final Examination.</li> <li>▪ The list of possible subjects will be found in <i>Appendix 1</i>.</li> <li>▪ Typically, students will study between 8 and 10 subjects.</li> <li>▪ Each student must include Irish, English and Mathematics among the subjects that he/she studies.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>▪ Schools may include a maximum of four short courses in the Junior Cycle programme but are strongly advised to limit the number of short courses they offer. It is not the aim or intention that short courses would replace existing subjects.</li> </ul>
AND	
WELLBEING	This area of learning will incorporate learning traditionally included in CSPE, PE, and SPHE <sup>7</sup> .

<sup>5</sup> With the introduction of the new specifications for History and Geography in September 2018, Environmental and Social Studies (ESS) is no longer a subject option. The last ESS examination will take place in 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Certain students may be exempted from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular M10/94.

<sup>7</sup> Schools are reminded that there is a minimum threshold of time across the three years of junior cycle which should be provided for PE, SPHE and CSPE: PE: 135 hours spread across first, second and third year (i.e. the most common current allocation provided by schools—two class periods per week). SPHE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year (the same time allocation as required by the current junior cycle framework for SPHE,

	<p><u>CSPE</u> Students must study CSPE. The options available are set out in the <i>Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle (2017)</i> and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the specification for the NCCA short course in CSPE (2016).</li> <li>▪ the Junior Certificate syllabus for CSPE (1996). A Junior Certificate examination will not be available for this subject after 2019. The Wellbeing Guidelines outline the manner in which wellbeing, including CSPE, is to be assessed and reported on.</li> </ul> <p><u>PE</u> Students must study Physical Education. The options available are set out in the <i>Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle (2017)</i> and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the Junior Cycle syllabus in Physical Education (2003).</li> <li>▪ the specification for the NCCA short course in Physical Education (2016).</li> </ul> <p><u>SPHE</u> Students must study Social, Personal and Health Education. The options available are set out in the <i>Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle (2017)</i> and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the Junior Cycle syllabus in SPHE (2000).</li> <li>▪ the specification for the NCCA short course in SPHE (2016).</li> </ul> <p>Note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Schools can include other areas in their provision for wellbeing, as detailed in paragraph 2.6</li> </ul>
AND	
Other areas of learning	Students may engage in other learning activities set out in a school's programme for Junior Cycle. These can include social, cultural, pastoral, scientific, entrepreneurial and other activities that can support the 24 statements of learning and the 8 key skills.

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including RSE). CSPE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year (the same time allocation as required currently).

	<p>The Junior Cycle programme must include guidance education.</p> <p>Some schools will also provide students with a course in religious instruction reflective of their own characteristic spirit as part of a Junior Cycle programme.</p>
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Students studying the programme, as set out in the requirements above, will be recognised by the Department of Education and Skills for the purposes of teacher allocations and other payments to the school.

## 2.5 Students undertaking subjects outside of a school setting

Under the Framework for Junior Cycle, the undertaking of Junior Cycle subjects is more appropriate to the school setting. The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) is a school based award which draws upon and reports on achievement across all elements of assessment including ongoing, formative assessment, Classroom-Based Assessments and State Examinations grades. The descriptors for achievement in Classroom-Based Assessments will be awarded by the class teacher using the relevant 'Features of Quality'.

To support teachers in assessing students' Classroom-Based Assessments, teachers in a school involved in teaching the subject will engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs). The holding of the SLAR meeting is an important part of the assessment process and teachers have received training on the best practice in this area.

Where students cannot complete the CBAs and Assessment Task within a recognised school setting (or recognised centre of further education), the CBAs will display as "not reported" on the JCPA and the Assessment Task will not be assessed by the State Examinations Commission.

Where students take subjects outside of a recognised school setting these subjects cannot satisfy the requirements for Classroom-Based Assessments by recognised schools and cannot, therefore, be included as part of the JCPA. In addition, the study of extra subjects outside of school may lead to a student undertaking more than the maximum number of subjects for certification.

JCPAs will not be awarded in respect students who have elected to be home schooled, as the JCPA is designed as a school-based award. The State Examinations Commission (SEC) can provide these students with a statement of the results of their final examinations.

## 2.6 Wellbeing Programme

All students commencing Junior Cycle from September 2017 onwards undertake an area of learning called Wellbeing. Wellbeing crosses the three years of Junior Cycle and builds on substantial work already taking place in schools in support of students' wellbeing. The school's commitment to this area of learning will increasingly have a positive impact on the wellbeing of the students. It will include learning opportunities to further enhance the physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing of students.

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme began with a minimum of 300 hours of timetabled engagement in 2017 and will build up to 400 hours by 2020 as the new Junior Cycle is implemented fully in schools.

It is accepted that a degree of flexibility in relation to how the hours for Wellbeing are applied may be necessary in the initial years of the new Junior Cycle. A number of sample programmes are laid out in the NCCA Wellbeing Guidelines.

The NCCA Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle aim to support schools in planning and developing a coherent Wellbeing programme that builds on the understandings, practices and curricula for Wellbeing already existing in schools. When planning a Wellbeing Programme schools should consider the NCCA developed short courses in PE, SPHE, and CSPE. These are the result of widespread consultation with education partners to ensure that the courses address important, relevant and meaningful learning for young people in these subjects. They also include assessment advice both for ongoing assessment and summative assessment.

The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023, which was published in July 2018, and resources for schools being developed, will also support schools in the Wellbeing promotion, review and development process which can inform planning for 400 hours of engagement. The programme of CPD which will be provided to support the wellbeing promotion process will be aligned with the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme and the 'Schools for Health' Programme delivered through the Health Service Executive (HSE), Health Promotion Service.

In addition to programmes of study in PE, SPHE and CSPE schools may also choose to include other areas in their provision for Wellbeing. Examples are set out in the NCCA guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle and include areas such as guidance, school-provided courses/units that address aspects of wellbeing, elements of other subjects that are clearly linked to wellbeing, school initiatives and relevant courses and units developed by outside agencies and organisations. In selecting programmes or resources developed by external facilitators schools should refer to Circular 43/2018 – *Best practice guidance for post primary schools in the use of programmes and/or external facilitators in promoting wellbeing consistent with*

*the Department of Education and Skills' Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.* [Best practice in relation to external facilitators](#)

Once a school has considered the particular needs of its students in Junior Cycle, the unique context of the school and the resources available, there is a wide range of curriculum options available for consideration. These options are set out in the NCCA Wellbeing Guidelines. Schools may introduce units of learning to cover part of a Wellbeing programme. However, the rationale for the inclusion of these units in the school's Wellbeing programme must be clear. It is important that they are linked to the six wellbeing indicators, that the learning about wellbeing they address is clearly outlined and that they are inclusive of all students in junior cycle. The planning template to support schools in planning shorter units of learning in Wellbeing can be found at Appendix I of the Wellbeing Guidelines.

Optional wellbeing-related initiatives which engage a small number of students, rather than a whole class group, can be effective for those involved. However, these learning experiences should not be counted as part of the Wellbeing programme as they do not include all students in the year group. Staff, parents and students should be involved when a school's Wellbeing programme is being developed. There is a series of appendices in the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines to support schools in this process.

## 2.7 Diversity and Accessibility

Subject specifications and short courses developed by the NCCA are being designed to be as universal and inclusive as is feasible, providing meaningful and valuable learning opportunities for students from all cultural and social backgrounds and from a wide variety of individual circumstances. This includes ensuring that the learning opportunities are as accessible as possible to students with special educational needs and that statements about the skills to be developed are articulated in a way that reflects this.

When planning its Junior Cycle programme, each school is required to take account of the school's local context and the backgrounds, interests, and abilities of its students and to ensure that, within the school's Junior Cycle programme, there is sufficient flexibility to cater for the individual learning needs of all students, including those with special educational needs.

Notwithstanding the above, there will inevitably remain learning outcomes within subjects and short course specifications that cannot be achieved by some students by virtue of a particular special educational need.

Schools should be conscious of this when planning their Junior Cycle programmes in order to ensure that, as far as possible, the particular range of subjects, short courses and Priority Learning Units available is appropriate to the needs and aptitudes of each student. The

individual student and his/her parents/guardians should be made aware of the feasibility and appropriateness of the curricular options available in light of the student's ability.

## 2.8 Level 2 and Level 1 Learning Programmes

### Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP)

Level 2 Learning Programmes (the term 'Level' refers to broad alignment with the National Framework of Qualifications) and their main curriculum component - Priority Learning Units (PLUs) have been approved by the Minister and are available for certain categories of students with general learning difficulties/needs in the low mild to high moderate range of ability who commenced their Junior Cycle from September 2014. These programmes were reported on for the first time in the JCPA in 2017.

L2LPs are designed for a small number of Junior Cycle students where the needs of those students prevents them from taking some or all of the subjects or short courses on offer at Level 3. Students' learning achievements will be reported to students/parents/guardians through the JCPA.

L2LPs consist of five PLUs and two Level 2 short courses. Some students participating in a L2LP may also take a small number of subjects and/or short courses at level 3.

The NCCA has developed guidelines and an optional e-planning tool to support schools in planning, developing and assessing L2LPs. The guidelines are available at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-2-LPs>

### Level 1 Learning Programmes

Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) are available to schools from September 2018. L1LPs are designed for students with learning difficulties/needs in the low moderate and severe and profound range of ability and as such are prevented from accessing all or some of the L2LPs. L1LPs will be reported on for the first time in the JCPA in 2021.

Level 1 Learning Programmes consist of six Priority Learning Units (PLUs) and two Level 1 short courses. Some students participating in an L1LP may also take a small number of Level 2 PLUs (or elements of a PLU) and short courses. L1LP guidelines are available at:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/892c2232-4f91-486c-8e26-f1abbd58ae01/L1LPs-Guidelinesforteachers.pdf>

## 2.9 Approved Subject Specifications Syllabuses and Guidelines

The subject specifications, syllabuses and guidelines, setting out the curriculum and assessment arrangements for each Junior Cycle subject or area of learning, and approved by the Minister are as follows:

- The Junior Cycle subject specifications and assessment guidelines published after 2014 consistent with the planned, phased introduction of subjects.
- For students commencing in September 2018 these comprise English, Science, Business Studies, Irish, Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian), Visual Art, Mathematics, Home Economics, History, Music and Geography.
- The Junior Certificate subject syllabuses published prior to 2012 for all remaining subjects.
- The relevant NCCA Junior Cycle short course specifications selected by the school for inclusion in its Junior Cycle programme.
- The NCCA Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle.
- The NCCA Level 2 Learning Programme Guidelines for Teachers.
- The NCCA Level 1 Learning Programme Guidelines for Teachers.

## 2.10 Junior Certificate School Programme

Schools that currently offer the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) may continue to do so. A review of JCSP will commence in 2018. No new applications are currently being accepted from schools for entry to the JCSP.

## 2.11 Timetabling

The teaching, learning, assessment and reporting activities that take place in the revised Junior Cycle programmes encompass a wider range of activities, a new balance between the development of skills and competences and the development of students' knowledge. To facilitate this learning and the implementation of good formative assessment practices, a minimum class period of 40 minutes is required. Certain subjects require double class periods (2 x 40 minutes) during the school week. Schools must ensure that class periods of less than 40 minutes are no longer timetabled. Some schools may find the use of longer class periods of up to 60 minutes (rather than 40 minutes), more suited to the learning needs of their students and the subjects they study, or a combination of class periods of 40 minutes and longer class periods of up to 60 minutes.

## 2.12 Assessment arrangements for subjects

The Framework for Junior Cycle has introduced a new dual approach to assessment that supports student learning over the three years of Junior Cycle. This dual approach reduces the focus on one externally assessed examination as a means of assessing students and increases the prominence given to classroom-based assessment and formative assessment. This change of emphasis arises from an acknowledgement that students learn best when teachers provide feedback that helps students to understand how their learning can be improved.

All assessment for Final Examination purposes remains externally devised and assessed by the SEC.

For subjects, the new assessment arrangements include formative assessment that is ongoing. More information on assessment is available on the NCCA website at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>

Subjects with new specifications are assessed through two Classroom-Based Assessments (generally one in second year and one in third year), reported on to parents/guardians and students by the school, an Assessment Task (devised by the NCCA and marked by the SEC) in each subject, and a Final Examination set, held and marked by the SEC. The combination of the Assessment Task and the Final Examination, marked and awarded by the SEC, will generate a grade. Slightly modified assessment arrangements will apply in Visual Art, Music, Home Economics, and the Technology subjects.

## 2.13 Classroom-Based Assessments

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) allow students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skills and their ability to apply them in ways that may not be possible in an externally assessed examination. They are used in the assessment of learning in subjects and in short courses. CBAs are assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during junior cycle and in the JCPA.

There is a need to avoid 'over-assessment' and to minimise the cumulative burden on students and teachers of multiple assessments across the full range of subjects. In this context, the Classroom-Based Assessments will substitute for other assessments currently undertaken in the school such as in-house examinations, as appropriate. Therefore, schools should plan for the replacement of in-house examinations with Classroom-Based Assessments for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year, where relevant.



### 2.13.1 Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in Subjects

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher, generally<sup>8</sup> one in second year and one in third year. Classroom-Based Assessments in all subjects are specified at a common level.

The assessments associated with CBAs cover a broad range of activities, including oral tasks, written work of different types, practical or designing and making tasks, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects or other suitable tasks, depending on the subject in question.

A small number of subjects, (Visual Art, Music, Home Economics and the Technology subjects) involve practical work, a performance, or the creation of an artefact which is currently marked by the SEC. These subjects will continue to have an external SEC assessment of the practical work, performance or artefact, together with the related accompanying written evidence, as appropriate. In these subjects the second CBA will be linked to the forthcoming practical work, performance or artefact. The formative assessment related to the production of these artefacts and performances will be reported upon to the student and parent/guardian by the school as for all other second Classroom-Based Assessments.

CBAs will be undertaken by students within class time to a national timetable. Details of the timetable along with assessment guidelines for each subject are available on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

### 2.13.2 Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in the school year 2018-2019

The key dates for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in the school year 2018-2019 have been changed. The time-bands during which the CBAs, SLAR meetings and Assessment Task (where relevant) in the different junior cycle subjects can be completed have been broadened as shown in the table below.

Notwithstanding the increased flexibility provided the CBAs must be completed within the time period allocated (3 weeks, 4 weeks etc.) as specified in the Assessment Guidelines for each subject. The SLAR meeting should take place no more than a month after the completion of the CBA.

The Assessment Task following CBA2 should be scheduled within a week of completion of the CBA

#### Revised dates for Classroom-Based Assessments 2018/19

#### Student cohort 2016-2019 (3rd year students) – CBA2

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<sup>8</sup> For Gaeilge both CBAs will take place in 3<sup>rd</sup> year.

## English, Science and Business Studies

Students will have commenced the collection of their texts for English.

Window for student completion of CBA2 Science and Business Studies	November 12th 2018 to 15th March 2019
Latest date for student completion of The Collection of the Student's Texts in English	15 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
Latest date for completion of the Assessment Task	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2019
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2019
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2019

## Student cohort 2017-2020 (2<sup>nd</sup> year students) – CBA1

English, Science, Business Studies, Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish and Italian), and Visual Art

Window for student completion of CBA1 in English, Science, Business Studies, Visual Art, <sup>9</sup> Modern Foreign Languages	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2019 to 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2019
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2019
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2019

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<sup>9</sup> A longer 14 week window is available for CBA1 in Visual Art. Themes issued by the NCCA on 7<sup>th</sup> January.

The above change means that schools may schedule CBA2 for their third year students from early November up to the latest date for completion of the Assessment Task on 22 March 2019. Schools will receive examination numbers at the end of November 2018 to facilitate completion of the Assessment Tasks.

Schools will have similar autonomy to schedule CBA1 in second year between January 2019 and the end of May 2019.

This broadening of the time-bands in which CBAs, SLARS and Assessment Tasks may be completed will allow schools greater flexibility to organise the timing of the CBA in a way that suits the learning needs of students and the organisational needs of the school. The change also allows for greater flexibility for schools to integrate other relevant learning experiences such as co-curricular or extra-curricular activities into their yearly timetable.

While the existing dates in subject Assessment Guidelines are no longer mandatory, they may still serve as a guide to schools in selecting dates that complement the learning needs of students and the organisational needs of the school.

The scheduling of CBAs and associated SLAR meetings within the wider time-bands is a matter for the management of the school.

In order to ensure effective SLAR meetings, it is recommended that the timing of the completion of CBAs and SLAR meetings remain as close together as the situation in specific school contexts allows.

In some instances, students' work, developed as part of the CBA process, may need to be recorded and/or stored online. For example, teachers will record samples of presentations made by students which will be used for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings.

In all instances, when recording and storing students' work, teachers and schools are required to act in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in force since 25 May 2018, and child protection requirements.

When assessing the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment against the learning outcomes, teachers will use 'on-balance' judgement in relation to the Features of Quality, which are set out in four level descriptors:

Classroom Based Assessment Descriptors
Exceptional
Above Expectations
In Line with Expectations
Yet to Meet Expectations

### 2.13.3 Classroom-Based Assessments in Short Courses

Most of the assessment activities during the teaching of short courses will be formative in nature. The evidence of learning will be generated according to the short course specification and will relate directly to the aims and learning outcomes of the short course. Junior Cycle short courses will have one Classroom-Based Assessment. Short courses are reported on by the school to students and parents/guardians during junior cycle and in the JCPA.

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment of each NCCA-developed short course are available at <https://curriculumonline.ie/>

### 2.13.4 Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs) to support implementation of CBAs

When students have completed CBAs, the CBAs are assessed by the students' teachers, and the outcomes will be reported to the students and parents/guardians. To support teachers in assessing students' Classroom-Based Assessments, teachers engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. At these meetings, teachers share and discuss representative samples of students' work and build a common understanding about the quality of their students' learning.

Where there is a single teacher of a subject in the school, that teacher can be facilitated to participate in a SLAR meeting with another school. In the case of an Irish medium school, the teacher can be facilitated to participate in a SLAR meeting with another Irish-medium school. The potential of information and communications technology (ICT) to support such meetings may be explored.

It may be necessary, in the case of short courses, for schools to consider SLAR meetings electronically with teachers of short courses from other schools.

SLARs should take place, save in exceptional circumstances, for the assessment of CBAs that are completed in short courses and the achievement of students will be described using the same descriptors as for subjects above.

SLAR meetings play a key role in developing a collegial professional culture and building up expertise about the judgements that teachers make about student achievement.

## 2.14 Assessment Task

The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher. Details of the timeframe relating to the year 2018/19 are set at paragraph 2.13.2.

The written Assessment Task for each subject will be specified by the NCCA in conjunction with the SEC and published by the NCCA. The Assessment Task will relate to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment and will be based on activities to be completed by students as part of their study of the particular subject specification.

The Assessment Task will be returned to the SEC for marking and will be marked as part of the Final Examination. Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the calculation of the grade for that subject by the SEC. The value to be assigned to the Assessment Task is included in the assessment guidelines for each subject. Every student must have the opportunity to undertake the Assessment Task in line with the arrangements set out by the SEC in order to be eligible for the full Final Examination marks. Any logistical issues arising from the provision of access arrangements are matters to be resolved at school level, as is the case for all classroom activities linked to the state examinations.

A separate Assessment Task will not be required in practical subjects where there will be a practical examination.

Detailed guidance in relation to the arrangements for the completion of the Assessment Task in individual subjects will be issued by the State Examinations Commission as the independent body responsible for the administration of the Final Examinations.

## 2.15 Final Examination

For most<sup>10</sup> new subjects there will be a written examination which are set, administered and marked by the SEC. The written examinations will be no longer than two hours duration once the new specification has been introduced for the subject.

The final written examinations will be held in the month of June in third year. The final written examination will be at a common level, apart from English, Irish (T1 and T2) and Mathematics, where there will be two levels (higher and ordinary) available.

Student achievement in the Final Examinations will incorporate the results of the Assessment Task, also assessed by the SEC, or, in the case of the practical subjects, students' achievement in the externally assessed practical component (artefact, practical work, or performance).

Achievement will be recorded using a set of grades. These state-certified grades will first be reported by the SEC in provisional form in September following the end of third year. They will subsequently be confirmed and included in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement

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<sup>10</sup> *Visual Art is the only subject that does not have a Final SEC Examination in June*

(JCPA) which is to be issued from the school within the calendar year of the examination. The grades will appear as follows:

### Grading of the Final Examination

GRADE	RANGE (%)
Distinction	≥90 to 100
Higher Merit	≥75 and <90
Merit	≥55 and <75
Achieved	≥40 and <55
Partially Achieved	≥20 and <40
Not Graded	≥0 and <20

The existing SEC support for reasonable accommodation in the Junior Certificate examination (RACE Scheme) continue to be provided for candidates sitting the Final Examinations in the Junior Cycle subjects.

## 2.16 Assessment arrangement for students with special educational needs

Assessment is an intrinsic part of any learning programme as it promotes learning and supports teaching. There is an expectation that all students should, as far as possible, have the opportunity to present evidence of their learning in Classroom-Based Assessments. To ensure this, schools are expected to remove any barriers students may encounter arising from a spectrum of social, gender, ethnic, cultural, environmental factors, or from specific physical or learning challenges. Any arrangements should be in line with those the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the school year and are designed to ensure that students can demonstrate what they have learned rather than compensate for lack of learning/achievement.

Notwithstanding the above, there will inevitably remain learning outcomes within subjects and short course specifications that cannot be achieved by some students by virtue of a particular special educational need.

Students with special educational needs that are categorised as falling in the range of higher functioning moderate and lower functioning mild general learning disabilities may be studying, as appropriate, a combination of priority learning units (PLUs) and short courses in a Level 2 Learning Programme. Those students in the low moderate, and severe and profound range of general learning difficulties may be studying, as appropriate, a

combination of priority learning units (PLUs) and short courses in a Level 1 Learning Programme. It is not anticipated that students undertaking a Level 1 programme will be sitting Level 3 examinations.

Students undertaking a Level 2 programme may also undertake subjects and/or short courses at Level 3. Assessment arrangements for the Level 3 subjects and short courses that may be involved for these students will be as set out in sections 2.13.1 and 2.13.3.

Student learning in the PLUs and in Level 2 short courses, included in L2LPs, will be assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during Junior Cycle and in the JCPA using a single descriptor – Achieved.

- PLUs: the evidence of learning will be generated with reference to the NCCA specifications for the PLUs as outlined in the NCCA publication *Level 2 Learning Programmes: Guidelines for Teachers* and will be directly related to the learning outcomes of those PLUs
- Level 2 short courses: there will be one Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) for each short course. Any arrangements to ensure the accessibility of these CBAs for students should be in line with those the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the school year. These should be designed to ensure that students can demonstrate what they have learned, rather than to compensate for lack of learning/achievement.

Over the three years in Junior Cycle, students assemble evidence of their learning in a Level 2 Learning Programme in a portfolio. Students submit this portfolio to their teachers and the students' work is assessed and reported on. A toolkit to support schools and teachers in the assessment of PLUs and short courses is available on the NCCA website [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

The JCPA can document a student's achievements in Level 1 and/or Level 2 Learning Programmes, as reported by the school. When the student has submitted evidence of achievement in the majority of learning outcomes for each element in a particular PLU (up to the maximum of five PLUs), the title of the PLU will appear in the relevant section of the JCPA. Where a student does not submit evidence of achievement in a particular PLU that PLU will not appear on the JCPA. Apart from the requirements related to PLUs, students will also include evidence of learning in Level 1 and Level 2 short courses. When the student has successfully completed a CBA for a Level 2 short course, the descriptor 'Achieved' will be recorded in the relevant section of the JCPA with the title of the relevant short course. Where a student has not successfully completed a CBA for a Level 2 short course, the title of the short course will not appear on the JCPA. Achievement in both PLUs and Short Courses (Level 1) is on the basis of one of the following descriptors: **Successfully Completed** or **Progress Achieved**

## 2.17 Reporting on Student Achievement

### 2.17.1 Reporting

Formal reporting on the progress and achievements of students will be through annual reports in first year and second year, and through the composite Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement which is to issue from the school within the calendar year of the examination. This will complement reporting on progress to parents/guardians during parent-teacher meetings and through normal student feedback sessions, including feedback after the completion of each CBA.

The NCCA has developed reporting templates in line with the style and format of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Schools are encouraged to develop their own reporting formats along similar lines. The draft templates prepared by the NCCA provide some examples of how student progress might be reported at the end of second year in junior cycle. The template illustrate how a school might adopt a phased approach to the inclusion of the new terminology of junior cycle within their reports. This formal report will be supplemented by a range of other forms of reporting throughout the school year, including parents' meetings and a range of informal written and oral feedback on student progress.

Guidelines on Reporting, including examples of templates for use by schools, are available at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>

### 2.17.2 Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

Before the end of the calendar year following the completion of the Junior Cycle, each student will receive a composite Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement from his/her school.

The Department will advise schools by email and through the Esinet portal of the window in which the JCPAs should be issued to all students.

The JCPA will report student achievement across a range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle, including in:

- SEC Final Examinations inclusive of the Assessment Tasks;
- Short Courses;
- Classroom-Based Assessments;
- Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) (where appropriate);
- Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) (where appropriate) (will first appear on JCPAs in 2021)
- The area of Wellbeing (will first appear on JCPAs from 2020);
- Other areas of learning.



In the transitional period, the JCPA will reflect results provided by the SEC for both new and existing junior cycle subjects, with new subjects increasing in number year on year until all new subject specifications are examined in summer 2022.

### 2.17.3 Recording and reporting arrangements

The following paragraphs provide a broad outline of the technical arrangements currently in place for the production of JCPAs in respect of the various schools and centres where students undertake the Junior Cycle.

From September 2019 it will be possible for each school to enter more than four short courses on the Department's Post Primary Online Database System (PPOD).

It will be possible for students who enter first year in September 2019 to undertake one or more of the NCCA Wellbeing short courses as part of a Wellbeing Programme, in addition to a maximum of four other non-wellbeing short courses, and these will first be reported in the JCPA in 2022. This JCPA design is currently being developed.

**Recognised post-primary schools** will record the outcome of Classroom Based Assessments (in subjects and short courses), as well as achievements in PLUs (where appropriate), for their students onto the Department's Post Primary Online Database System (PPOD). This data, along with the outcome from the SEC Final Examinations (following the appeals process and incorporating the Assessment Task) will be recorded on a JCPA for each student. The part-completed JCPA will then be made available electronically to schools who will record details of achievements in the 'Other Areas of Learning' section in respect of each student. The completed JCPAs will be supplied by schools to their students and parents/guardians.

In the case of **Special Schools, Youthreach Centres, Detention Centres and Adult Learners in other non-standard school centres** where students undertake the Junior Cycle, a part-completed JCPA template will be provided to these schools and centres through an automated system developed by the Department. The system is the Junior Cycle Assessment Database (JCAD). The template will include the outcomes of any SEC Final Examinations (incorporating the Assessment Task) taken by students where applicable. Schools will record locally on the JCPA, the outcome of students' Classroom-Based Assessments (in subjects and short courses as appropriate), students' achievements in PLUs, as well as achievements under 'Other Areas of Learning' The completed JCPA will be supplied by these schools to their students and parents/guardians.

#### 2.17.4 JCPA Retention and Records Management

Schools will be required to save the JCPA of each student – either electronically or in paper copy. In order to save a full copy of the JCPA, which includes details of Other Areas of Learning, the final JCPA for each student should be scanned and retained electronically or alternatively a hard copy should be retained on file. Schools should retain copies of the JCPA for 7 years after the age of majority (18). The retained records should be used to meet requests by students for their JCPA, including after the students have left the school. Schools should have regard in this context to the GDPR requirements introduced in May 2018.

#### 2.17.5 Administration resources for schools to input JCPA data on PPOD

As the technology to support data entry and JCPA production is in development and evolving, it is recognised that there remains a particular data entry requirement on schools regarding the production of the JCPA in respect of the 2018 examinations. In recognition of this, it is proposed to pay an administration grant to schools to support this in 2018. Further details in this matter will be issued shortly.

The data entry process will be refined and streamlined in future years with the intention that data relating to student achievement will be entered only once. The inputting of this information will form an integral part of the role of individual teachers as part of their allocation of professional time in the future.

It should be noted that the administration grant is in addition to the management resource hours provided to schools for Junior Cycle.

The continued co-operation of schools in relation to the above matters is acknowledged.

### 2.18 Adult learners in adult education settings

Adult learners in the school year 2018/19 will continue to have the flexibility to study a subject or subjects at Junior Cycle level within one academic year. These adult learners will undertake one Classroom-Based Assessment (that completed in third year by students in mainstream schools), complete the related Assessment Task along the same lines as takes place in mainstream schools, and the Final Examination. Adult learners may also study short courses and Priority Learning Units as suited to their learning needs.

Adult learners are not required to undertake study in any specific subject and they are not required to study Physical Education, CSPE or SPHE or other elements in the area of learning known as Wellbeing.

## 3 RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

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To ensure that the necessary time and resources are available to implement the new Junior Cycle, the following resources will continue to be made available to schools:

- (a) An extensive programme of CPD for school leaders and teachers (details available from the Junior Cycle for Teachers support service [www.jct.ie](http://www.jct.ie))
- (b) Professional time for teachers (i.e. non-student contact time in which teachers will participate in a range of professional and collaborative activities to support the implementation of Junior Cycle)
- (c) Additional paid hours for the coordination of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- (d) Management resources (i.e. additional paid hours that schools will devote for the sole purpose of the management of activities associated with the implementation of Junior Cycle).

### 3.1 Extensive Programme of CPD for School Leaders and Teachers

CPD will continue to be delivered by Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), the Department's dedicated CPD support service supporting schools in their implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle.

### 3.2 Whole-School Planning and School Self-Evaluation

Requirements in respect of School Self-Evaluation (SSE) are set out in Circular 40/2016. This circular requires that schools engage in self-evaluation of teaching and learning, and strongly advises that second-level schools should use their school self-evaluation process to support the implementation of Junior Cycle reform. Advice on how school self-evaluation may be used in this way, together with Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-primary Schools, School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020: Post-primary, copies of SSE Updates referring to Junior Cycle implementation and other resources are available at [www.schoolself-evaluation.ie](http://www.schoolself-evaluation.ie)

Approval continues for schools to close, with board of management or ETB approval, as appropriate, for a day of whole-school planning and self-evaluation for Junior Cycle implementation for each year of implementation up to the school year 2021/22.

The purpose of this day will change over time, but in 2018/19 it may be used by schools to support the embedding and/or continued development of the underlying Junior Cycle

Framework on a whole-school basis. This may involve schools reviewing their current policies and practices, as well as planning and monitoring for the changes being introduced under the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015.

JCT will continue to be available to assist schools in planning for and implementing this whole-school day and will liaise with schools directly on this matter.

### 3.3 Continuing professional development (CPD) for school leaders and teachers

#### (a) Models of CPD delivery

JCT continues to provide a comprehensive and long-term national programme of CPD for school leaders and teachers.

A variety of CPD delivery models is employed including school clustering, in-school visits, off-site workshops and on-line professional development, particularly webinars. JCT's CPD provision takes cognisance of the needs identified by the education partners. JCT also collaborates with other Department of Education and Skills school support services in the context of its work.

To assist schools in planning for closures, JCT will notify schools of the arrangements for CPD events as soon as possible.

#### (b) CPD for school leaders

School leaders will be offered two Junior Cycle related workshops in each of 2018/19 and 2019/2020. JCT will liaise directly with school leaders in relation to these workshops and their content will take account of the expressed needs of school leaders. School Leaders are also encouraged to attend and participate in all Junior Cycle Whole School Workshops in their school.

#### (c) CPD for teachers

In general, teachers will be provided with subject specific CPD at a school closure event and schools may close, with board of management or ETB approval, as appropriate, to allow teachers' attendance. Where a school closes, all teachers must attend the school cluster event and engage in CPD activity.

JCT will liaise directly with schools regarding their cluster events, including assigning each school a cluster event date. Efforts will continue to be made to minimise disruption to

teaching and learning in schools and the school cluster model of CPD delivery significantly reduces disruption in classrooms.

Teachers registered with JCT with a second teaching subject are being provided with CPD in this subject off-site in their local education centre. Paid substitution will be available. These teachers will therefore, undertake a third day of Junior Cycle related CPD in 2018/19.

#### (d) CPD arrangements for 2019/20 onwards

The arrangements for the delivery of the CPD programme for 2019/20 and 2020/21 will be published in 2018/ 2019 and will take account of the views of school leaders, teachers and their teacher representative associations, and the experience of implementation to that point in time.

#### (e) Summary of CPD school closure arrangements

During the 2018/19 school year, schools may close for two days for the following purposes:

- Day 1: For Whole School Planning and School Self-Evaluation
- Day 2: To facilitate CPD activities, including subject specific CPD, being delivered by the JCT, using the school cluster model.

Schools are advised that they should plan the 2018/19 school year so as to make optimal use of the closure days to embed Junior Cycle in their schools.

It is essential that all teachers have sufficient opportunity to avail of Junior Cycle CPD so that they are fully informed about the changes to teaching, learning, assessment and reporting required for the implementation of the *Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)*. Accordingly, management in each school is required to register all teachers with JCT and facilitate their attendance at CPD events.

### 3.4 Professional Time

The *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* recognises that teachers need professional time to engage in a range of professional collaborative activities, a proportion of which will involve collaboration with teaching colleagues, to support teaching, learning, assessment and reporting.

This time will facilitate teachers engaging, as necessary, with a range of professional and collaborative activities, namely:

1. Whole-school professional activities to support the junior cycle
2. Individual teacher and subject department professional activities, including activities related to formative assessment, feedback, reporting and inputs being compiled for the JCPA
3. Attendance at Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
4. Preparation for, and overseeing the outcomes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
5. Administration of the Assessment Tasks in classrooms.

In relation to Youthreach settings, those delivering Junior Cycle are entitled to professional time. This time should come from within existing time for administrative duties and does not therefore lead to a reduction in teaching time.

The provision of individual professional time for teachers reflects the commitment under the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 to provide such support to allow teachers engage in professional collaborative activities to support teaching, learning and assessment. From September 2017, in all subject areas, full-time teachers involved in the delivery of Junior Cycle are entitled to 22 hours of professional time, with a pro-rata entitlement for part-time teachers as set out in Appendix 2. As set out above, this is subject to the full co-operation of a teacher with all elements of the Framework. The provision of professional time is supported by the allocation of additional 670 whole-time equivalent posts to schools. This allocation is designed to avoid reducing overall class contact time for students. The allocation is shown separately on the staffing schedule as set out in the Approved Allocations of Teaching Posts Circulars for individual schools and equates to the additional allocation which would be provided by a reduction in the Pupil Teacher Ratio of 0.53.

The provision of 22 hours maximum professional time for full-time teachers involved in the delivery of junior cycle (and pro-rata provision for part-time teachers) will mean that each full-time teacher's class contact time (including teaching time and time allocated for other assigned management and coordination duties), in a school with a timetable laid out in 40 minute periods, will be reduced from 33 teaching periods in the timetable to 32 teaching periods.

The 40 minute professional time period provided within timetable is available to teachers on the basis that they will use this time flexibly including bundling time periods and carrying forward time to facilitate professional collaboration. Teachers may also use the time periods for individual planning, feedback or reporting activities relating to Junior Cycle. In particular, time periods will need to be bundled to facilitate Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings. Since professional collaboration meetings can only be held when the relevant subject teachers can be present, a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers' bundled time to run beyond normal school tuition hours for some of the duration

of the meeting. Each meeting will take approximately two hours. This flexibility will be required for and will generally be restricted to the organisation of SLAR meetings.

The deployment of all professional time is a matter for the management of the school acting in accordance with the terms of this Circular Letter. All time periods provided to support implementation of the Junior Cycle must be used for this purpose under the overall direction of the school's management and the use of professional time may be subject to inspection in whole-school evaluation and other inspections.

The allocation model for professional time (including the discrete allocation relating to SEN teachers) that was agreed for the 2017/18 school year is being maintained and, where necessary, will increase to reflect any additional whole-time equivalent teaching positions that arise because of increased student numbers.

### 3.5 Resources for the coordination of Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings

An additional two hours will be allocated by school management to a teacher on a rotational basis for the preparation and co-ordination of each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting for an individual subject or short course, including providing confirmation to school management that the meeting has taken place and descriptors awarded and reported. The two hour allocation may be facilitated through the provision of additional paid substitution hours to the school – not within the Supervision and Substitution scheme. This is in addition to the 22 hours of professional time allocated within the timetable for each full-time teacher from 2017/18 onwards.

### 3.6 Management Resources

The board of management of each school or the ETB, as appropriate, along with the in-school management team, will be accountable for the overall implementation of the Junior Cycle in the school, as it is for all other aspects of the school's work.

In recognition of the fact that the introduction of the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* has implications for school leaders, extra hours were allocated to schools (via substitution) with effect from 2016 on an interim basis pending the restoration of leadership posts in schools, to help with the facilitation of this additional work.

Circular letter 3/2018 - 'Leadership and Management In Post-Primary Schools' - which was published in January 2018, provided details regarding the restoration of leadership and management posts in those schools. As a result of Circular 3/2018 some 1,300 leadership posts are being restored to post-primary schools. Pending the rollout of these leadership posts in schools, it is proposed to retain the provision of the management resources hours for

the 2018/19 academic year, at a reduced level. The revised allocation of hours for 2018/19 is as follows:

<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>In-school weekly coordination hours</b>
700 +	2.25 hours
600 – 699	2.45 hours
400 – 599	1.95 hours
< 399	1.5 hours

The provision of these additional resources is contingent on schools confirming that their Junior Cycle students have access to teaching, learning and assessment practices in line with the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 and the associated specifications designed by the NCCA and approved by the Minister, including all assessment arrangements set out in this circular.

The Principal will, with the approval of the Board of Management, following an open invitation for expressions of interest from the teachers in the school, allocate the additional teaching hours granted to the school to support him/her in implementing the new Junior Cycle. The allocation came into effect from January 2016 in recognition of the additional coordination tasks that arose from that time. This additional time allocation is in the form of weekly coordination hours and can be drawn down over the school year.

The hours can be bundled to reflect the fact that the work associated with junior cycle coordination in a school year may vary in quantity from week to week.

Some or all of the following activities may be included:

- Supporting the Principal/Deputy Principal with planning, communication and organising substitution for teachers attending in-service;
- Scheduling of in-school CPD events and liaison with JCT in planning visits;
- Overseeing the scheduling of SLAR meetings;
- Liaising with the coordinators of SLAR meetings;
- Overseeing the new Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) reporting procedures for subjects and for L2LPs, L1LPs and short courses to parents/guardians.
- Organising administration of the Assessment Tasks and making the necessary arrangements for returning the Assessment Task to the SEC.

Existing pro-rata arrangement for partial implementation will apply.



## 4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### 4.1 Rules and Programme

All references to Junior Cycle and Junior Certificate examinations in Rules 20, 21, 32, 33 and 34 of the *Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools 2004/2005* are superseded by the provisions within this circular.

### 4.2 Access to Information

Further information can be accessed on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment website [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) and [www.ict.ie](http://www.ict.ie)

Both host information and a range of practical materials aimed at supporting schools.

This Circular may also be accessed at [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

## Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit

November 2018

### APPENDIX 1

#### List of Junior Cycle Subjects for 2018/19

Ancient Greek  
Business Studies  
Civic, Social and Political Education  
Classical Studies  
English  
Environmental and Social Studies\*  
French  
Geography  
German  
History  
Home Economics  
Irish  
Italian  
Jewish Studies  
Latin  
Materials Technology (Wood)  
Mathematics  
Metalwork

Music  
 Physical Education  
 Religious Education  
 Science  
 Social, Personal and Health Education  
 Spanish  
 Technical Graphics  
 Technology  
 Visual Art

\*As the new specifications for History and Geography have been introduced in 2018, Environmental and Social Studies (ESS) will no longer be on offer as a subject to first year students from 2018 on. The last ESS examination will be in 2020.

## APPENDIX 2

### PRO-RATA ALLOCATION OF PROFESSIONAL TIME TO PART-TIME TEACHERS FROM 2017

The annual pro-rata application of the Professional Time to teachers on less than full hours is set out below.

Hours in teacher's contract	Professional time p.a. - Class periods ( x 40 min)	Professional Time: Total p.a.
11 hours or less	17	= 11 hours, 20 mins
11h 1 min - 11h 29 min	17	= 11 hours, 20 mins
11h 30 min - 11h 59 min	18	= 12 hours
12 hours - 12h 29 min	18	= 12 hours
12h 30 min - 12h 59 min	19	= 12 hours, 40 mins
13 hours - 13h 29 min	20	= 13 hours, 20 mins
13h 30 min - 13h 59 min	21	= 14 hours
14 hours - 14h 29 min	21	= 14 hours
14h 30 min - 14h 59 min	22	= 14 hours, 40 min
15 hours - 15h 29 min	23	= 15 hours, 20 min
15h 30 min - 15h 59 min	24	= 16 hours
16 hours - 16h 29 min	24	= 16 hours
16h 30 min - 16h 59 min	25	= 16 hours, 40 min

17 hours - 17h 59 min	26	= 17 hours, 20 min
18 hours or more	33	= 22 hours

The total number of hours assigned to a teacher - which encompasses teaching time and other assigned management and co-ordination duties - is the quantum of hours upon which application of the above schedule in respect of professional time is based.