



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 2019/20

Circular Letter 0055/2019

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1 Purpose of this circular	3
1.2 Key changes for school year 2019/20.....	3
2. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN JUNIOR CYCLE	4
2.1 The curriculum and assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle	4
2.2 Subjects, short courses, priority learning units and other learning activities	4
2.3 Phasing of Junior Cycle Reform.....	5
2.4 Number of subjects and short courses studied by students	5
2.5 Students outside of a school setting.....	10
2.6 Wellbeing Programme	11
2.7 Diversity and Accessibility.....	12
2.8 Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes.....	13
2.9 Approved Subject Specifications Syllabuses and Guidelines	14
2.10 Junior Certificate School Programme	14
2.11 Timetabling	14
2.12 Assessment arrangements for subjects	14
2.13 Classroom-Based Assessments	15
2.14 Assessment Task	19
2.15 Final Examination.....	20
2.16 Assessment arrangement for students with special educational needs	21
2.17 Reporting on Student Achievement	22
2.18 Adult learners in adult education settings.....	24
3. RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS	25
3.1 Whole-School Planning and School Self-Evaluation	25
3.2 Continuing professional development (CPD) for school leaders and teachers	26

3.3 Professional Time.....	27
3.4 Resources for the coordination of Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings.....	29
3.5 Management Resources	29
4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	30
4.1 Rules and Programme.....	30
4.2 Access to Information	30
APPENDIX 1 – Related Documentation.....	31
APPENDIX 2	33

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this circular

This circular supersedes Circular 79/2018 entitled “Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school year 2018/19” and sets out the arrangements now governing the implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, with particular reference to the school year 2019/20.

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. In addition Boards of Management are also requested to ensure that parents/guardians and students are advised of the relevant elements of this circular.

September 2019 marks the final phase of the introduction of new subject specifications to schools. 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 2019/20

This section summarises the main changes and updates in Junior Cycle for schools for the school year 2019/20.

1.2.1 The following new subject specifications will be introduced for those students entering first year in September 2019:

Subject	Introduced to 1st Year Students in:	First recorded on JCPA in:
Applied Technology	September 2019	2022
Engineering	September 2019	2022
Wood Technology	September 2019	2022
Graphics	September 2019	2022
Religious Education	September 2019	2022
Jewish Studies	September 2019	2022
Classics	September 2019	2022

1.2.2 Change to the number of short courses a student may undertake

Students entering first year in September 2019 who undertake one or more of the Wellbeing short courses (CSPE, SPHE and PE) may in addition undertake up to four short courses in other areas of the curriculum.

1.2.3 Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in the school year 2019 – 2020

The time-bands during which the CBAs, Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings and Assessment Tasks (where relevant) in the different Junior Cycle subjects take

place in the school year 2019/20 were published by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) in May 2019, a link to which can be found at Appendix 1. The State Examinations Commission (SEC) will be arranging to have the materials required for the conduct of the Assessment Tasks in all subjects available in schools in time for the commencement of the Assessment Task window on 6th January 2020.

1.2.4 Arrangements in relation to CSPE

The Junior Certificate examination in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) is no longer available, 2019 being the final year in which students could sit the examination in the subject.

CSPE remains 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 curriculum planning in the area of Wellbeing is available in the Wellbeing Guidelines. Assessment in CSPE will be school-based from the 2019/20 school year.

1.2.5 Reporting on Wellbeing

The area of learning, Wellbeing, will be reported on for the first time in 2020. See section 2.6 for details.

2. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN JUNIOR CYCLE

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 each of 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 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, i.e. by May 2020 for students commencing first year in the academic year 2020/2021.

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

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

- A range of subjects

OR

- A combination of subjects and short courses

OR

- In the case of some individual students with special educational 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 24 statements of learning and the 8 key skills feature in the programmes offered to their Junior Cycle students. The learning outcomes will be clearly set out in subject and short course specifications.

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 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. Students entering first year in September 2019 will study new specifications in all subjects. A link to the NCCA website where all the specifications are set out is included at Appendix 1.

2.4 Number of subjects and short courses studied by students

Students will study a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 subjects for final examination, the exact number being dependent on whether the student is also taking short courses. Exceptions to the minimum number of 8 subjects should 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.

Where a student wishes to undertake a subject outside of the recognised school setting, the school should inform parents and students at the earliest opportunity that:

- Students who choose to study a subject outside of their school cannot complete the requirements for the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) and Assessment Task;
- Subjects undertaken outside of a school setting count as part of the maximum of 10 subjects for certification.

It is the responsibility of the school authority to ensure that the Department's Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) reflects accurately the subjects each student is studying – both examination and non-examination subjects, including subjects undertaken outside of a school setting. PPOD is used to provide the State Examinations Commission (SEC) with details of students and their subjects for examination purposes. Having accurate and complete data on

PPOD is essential so that students are provided with the materials they require for their Assessment Tasks, practical and performance tests and final examinations.

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 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:

<p>Subjects and short courses</p>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study a maximum of 10¹ subjects for Final Examination and reporting through the JCPA.² <i>OR</i> • study up to 9 subjects for Final Examination and up to 2 short courses for reporting through the JCPA <i>OR</i> • study up to 8 subjects for Final Examination and up to 4³ short courses for reporting through the JCPA <p>Note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools may continue to offer more than 10 subjects to their First Year students to facilitate subject selection for study for Final Examination. However, when students enter second year, the maximum of 10 subjects must be adhered to. • The list of possible subjects can be found in Appendix 1. • Students will study between 8 and 10 subjects⁴. • Each student must include Irish, English and Mathematics among the subjects that he/she studies.⁵ • Schools may include a maximum of four short courses in the Junior Cycle programme. All short courses are designed for 100 hours of engagement⁶.
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¹ The maximum of 10 subjects includes subjects studied outside of a recognised school setting. It should be noted that students who choose to study a subject outside of their school cannot complete the requirements for the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) and Assessment Task for that subject.

² 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.

³ A student may study more than four short courses if studying one or more Wellbeing short courses in SPHE, CSPE and PE.

⁴ Exceptions to the minimum number of 8 subjects should only be made in the cases of students with additional educational needs, who may take a lower number of subjects.

⁵ Certain students may be exempted from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 52/2019.

⁶ Note that the minimum time requirement for PE remains at 135 hours.

	It is not the aim or intention that short courses would replace existing subjects.
AND	
Wellbeing	<p>This area of learning will incorporate learning traditionally included in CSPE, PE, and SPHE.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>PE: 135 hours spread across first, second and third year. SPHE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year. CSPE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year.</p> <p>Note that SPHE must be provided in each of the three years of Junior Cycle.</p> <p>The options available are*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specifications for the NCCA short courses in CSPE, SPHE, PE (100 hours each); • School-designed or externally-designed short courses in CSPE, SPHE, PE (100 hours) using the NCCA template and ‘Guidelines on developing your own Short Course’, which can be found in Appendix 1; • Other programmes/modules/units for CSPE, SPHE, PE developed using Appendix I of the NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines; • The Junior Certificate syllabus for CSPE (1996), the SPHE Junior Certificate syllabus (2000), the PE syllabus (2003). <p>Note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools can include other areas in their provision for Wellbeing, as detailed in paragraph 2.6 <p><i>* Or a combination of these options provided the minimum threshold time across the three years for PE, SPHE and CSPE is met.</i></p>
AND	
Other areas of learning	<p>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.</p> <p>The Junior Cycle programme must include guidance education. The 2017 Whole School Guidance Framework developed by the</p>

	<p>National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is a useful resource to schools for planning for Guidance in Education. A link to the Framework document can be found at Appendix 1.</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 who will commence Junior Cycle in September 2019

In all types of recognised second-level schools, for students who commenced Junior Cycle in September 2019, the following requirements apply:

Subjects and short courses	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study a maximum of 10⁷ subjects for Final Examination and reporting through the JCPA. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study up to 9 subjects for Final Examination and up to 2 short courses for reporting through the JCPA <p style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • study up to 8 subjects for Final Examination and up to 4⁸ short courses for reporting through the JCPA <p>Note that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools may continue to offer more than 10 subjects to their first year students to facilitate subject selection for study for Final Examination. However, when students enter second year, the maximum of 10 subjects must be adhered to. • The list of possible subjects can be found in Appendix 1. • Students will study between 8 and 10 subjects⁹. • Each student must include Irish, English and Mathematics among the subjects that he/she studies¹⁰ • Students may undertake four short courses in addition to Wellbeing short courses in CSPE, SPHE and PE. All short courses are designed for 100 hours of engagement.¹¹
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⁷ The maximum of 10 includes subjects studied outside of a recognised school setting. It should be noted that students who choose to study a subject outside of their school cannot complete the requirements for the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) and Assessment Task for that subject.

⁸ A student may study more than four short courses if studying one or more Wellbeing short courses in SPHE, CSPE and PE.

⁹ Exceptions to the minimum number of 8 subjects should only be made in the cases of students with additional educational needs, who may take a lower number of subjects.

¹⁰ Certain students may be exempted from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 52/2019.

¹¹ Note that the minimum time requirement for PE remains at 135 hours.

	It is not the aim or intention that short courses would replace existing subjects.
AND	
Wellbeing	<p>This area of learning will incorporate learning traditionally included in CSPE, PE, and SPHE.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>PE: 135 hours spread across first, second and third year. SPHE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year. CSPE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year.</p> <p>Note that SPHE must be provided in each of the three years of Junior Cycle.</p> <p>The options available are*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specifications for the NCCA short courses in CSPE, SPHE, PE (100 hours each); • School designed short courses in CSPE, SPHE, PE (100 hours) using the NCCA template and NCCA 'Guidelines on developing your own Short Course'; • School designed programmes/modules/units for CSPE, SPHE, PE developed using Appendix I of the NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines; • The Junior Certificate syllabus for CSPE (1996), the SPHE Junior Certificate syllabus (2000) the PE Syllabus (2003). <p>Note that:</p> <p>Schools can include other areas in their provision for Wellbeing, as detailed in paragraph 2.6</p> <p><i>* Or a combination of these options provided the minimum threshold time across the three years for PE, SPHE and CSPE is met.</i></p>
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.

	<p>The Junior Cycle programme must include guidance education. The 2017 Whole School Guidance Framework developed by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) is a useful resource to schools for planning for Guidance in Junior Cycle. A link to the Framework document can be found at Appendix 1.</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 outside of a school setting

The Junior Cycle Framework is designed to be delivered in a school setting and all subjects and areas of learning can only be undertaken in their entirety within a 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 assessment, Classroom-Based Assessments and State Examination grades.

The three year Junior Cycle programme is underpinned by the integration of assessment and reporting as a normal part of teaching and learning in classrooms. The Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in each subject area are assessed by the teacher, based on the learning that has taken place within the context of a classroom. 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 best practice in this area.

Study of subjects outside of a recognised school setting (even where the student is sitting less than ten subjects) cannot satisfy the requirements for Classroom-Based Assessments by recognised schools and CBAs cannot, therefore, be reported on as part of the JCPA in such cases. Where students cannot complete the CBAs and Assessment Task within a recognised school setting (or recognised centre for 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.

JCPAs will not be awarded in respect of 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.

It is important to note that the maximum number of 10 subjects allowed for examination and certification by the SEC may not be exceeded, regardless of whether subjects are being studied as extra subjects outside of a school setting.

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. It is envisioned that 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 of timetabled engagement by 2020 for students entering first year in September 2020, as the new Junior Cycle is implemented fully in schools.

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. NCCA developed short courses also include assessment advice.

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*, link to the latter of which can be found in Appendix 1.

Once a school has considered the particular needs of its students in Junior Cycle, unique context and available resources, there are a wide range of curriculum options available for consideration. 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 units of learning in Wellbeing can be found at Appendix I of the NCCA 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 class. Staff, parents and students should be consulted 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.

The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023, together with the resources developed for schools can be used to support planning for 400 hours of engagement. The programme of CPD provided to support the Wellbeing promotion process will be aligned with the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme.

2.6.1 Reporting on Wellbeing through the JCPA

Reporting on students' learning in Wellbeing aims to provide a picture of what students have learned about Wellbeing and the skills they have developed to support their Wellbeing. It is expected that schools will report on student learning about Wellbeing as part of ongoing assessment and reporting throughout Junior Cycle.

Wellbeing will be reported on through the JCPA for the first time in 2020. Wellbeing will show in a separate area of the JCPA. It is in this area that schools will report on student achievement in CSPE, SPHE and PE. This will be facilitated by the use of the descriptors which have already been developed and reflect the appropriate language of learning.

The Wellbeing area of the JCPA will also include a free text space where schools can report on achievement in Wellbeing in other areas as set out in section 2.6. Further information on this may be found in the JCPA Handbook.

2.7 Diversity and Accessibility

Subject specifications, short courses and Priority Learning Units (PLUs) developed by the NCCA have been designed to be as universal and inclusive as 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 all students, including 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 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes

Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs)

Level 1 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 for certain categories of students and have been available to schools since 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.

L1LPs consist of six Priority Learning Units (PLUs) and two Level 1 short courses. Some students participating in a Level 1 Learning Programme may also take a small number of Level 2 PLUs (or elements of a PLU) and short courses. L1LP guidelines are available at Appendix 1

Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs)

Level 2 Learning Programmes 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 difficulties/needs of those students prevent them from taking some or all of the subjects or short courses on offer at Level 3 as a result of being identified as requiring additional learning supports. L2LPs are not suitable for students who are learning English as an additional language, and should not be undertaken by these students.

Some students with general learning difficulties/needs in the low mild to high moderate range of ability may also be capable of undertaking a Level 3 state examination and a CBA or only the CBA in that subject or a Level 3 short course.

Students' learning achievements will be reported to students/parents/guardians through the JCPA. L2LP guidelines are available at Appendix 1.

2.9 Approved Subject Specifications Syllabuses and Guidelines

The subject specifications and assessment 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 2019 these comprise of all of the new JC subject specifications namely: English, Science, Business Studies, Irish, Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish, Italian), Visual Art, Mathematics, Home Economics, History, Music, Geography, Classics, Technologies (Engineering, Wood Technology, Applied Technology and Graphics), Religious Education and Jewish Studies;
- 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 is underway. 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 alternatively 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 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.

More information on assessment is available on the NCCA website at:

<https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>

The new subject specifications are assessed through ongoing in-class feedback, 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, administered 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.

Students entering 1st year in September 2019 will be the first cohort of students undertaking a full programme under the new Framework for Junior Cycle. As all new subject specifications include ongoing feedback, formative assessment, CBAs, assessment tasks as well as final examinations, 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. Schools should examine their own assessment policies and must plan for the replacement of in-house examinations with Classroom-Based Assessments for students, where relevant.

2.13.1 Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in Subjects

Students undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their class teacher, generally¹² 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,

¹² For Irish both CBAs will take place in 3rd year.

scientific experiments, projects, portfolios 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.

2.13.2 Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in the school year 2019-2020

The window within which schools can complete Classroom-Based Assessments, SLAR meetings and Assessment Tasks (where relevant) is provided below. Classroom-Based Assessments must be completed within the time period allocated (e.g. 3 weeks, 4 weeks) as specified in the Assessment Guidelines for each subject. The SLAR meeting should take place no more than a month after completion of the CBA.

Student cohort 2017-2020 (3rd years)

Junior Cycle English, Science, Business Studies, Modern Foreign Languages, Visual Art and Irish Classroom-Based Assessments and Assessment Task (where applicable)

CBA1 Irish date for portfolio completion	Friday 22nd November 2019
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 29th November 2019
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 6th December 2019
CBA2 Visual Art window for completion	Monday September 9th 2019 – Friday 29th November 2019
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 6th December 2019
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 13th December 2019

CBA2 Science, Business Studies window for completion	Monday 18th November 2019 – Friday 13th March 2020
CBA2 English, MFL earliest date for collection/portfolio completion latest date for collection/portfolio completion	Friday 6th December 2019 Friday 13th March 2020
CBA2 Irish window for completion	Monday 6th January 2020 – Friday 13th March 2020
Earliest date for commencement of Assessment Task	Monday 6th January 2020
Latest date for completion of Assessment Task	Monday 23rd March 2020
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 27th March 2020
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 3rd April 2020

Student cohort 2018 – 2021 (2nd years)

Junior Cycle English, Science, Business Studies, Modern Foreign Languages, Visual Art, Maths, Music, History, Geography, Home Economics Classroom-Based Assessment 1

CBA1 ¹³ window for completion English, Science, Business Studies, Modern Foreign Languages, Visual Art, Maths, History, Geography	Monday 6th January 2020 to Friday 15th May 2020
CBA1 Music latest date for portfolio completion	Friday 15th May 2020
CBA1 Home Economics window for completion	Monday 4th November 2019 to Friday 15th May 2020
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 20th May 2020
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 27th May 2020

The broad time-bands in which CBAs, SLARS and Assessment Tasks may be completed 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. This also allows for greater

¹³ A 14-week window is available for Visual Art CBA1 with themes issued by the NCCA on 6th January 2020.

flexibility for schools to integrate other relevant learning experiences such as co-curricular or extra-curricular activities into their yearly timetable.

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 25th 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 Appendix 1.

2.13.4 Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLARs) meetings 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 digital technologies 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.

Discussions are ongoing between the parties to the Junior Cycle Implementation Committee (DES, ASTI, TUI) with a view to clarifying issues surrounding the implementation of SLAR meetings. Further guidance on this matter will issue in due course.

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 2019/20 are set at paragraph 2.13.2.

The SEC will arrange to have the materials required for the conduct of the Assessment Tasks in all subjects available in schools in time for the commencement of the Assessment Task window on the 6th of January 2020.

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 SEC will post the Assessment Task completion booklets to schools. It is the responsibility of the school authority to ensure that the Department's Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) reflects accurately the subjects each student is studying – both examination and non-examination subjects, including subjects undertaken outside of a school setting. PPOD is used to provide the State Examinations Commission (SEC) with details of students and their subjects for examination purposes. Having accurate and complete data on PPOD is essential so that students are provided with the materials they require for their assessment tasks, practical and performance tests and final examinations.

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 for those 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 most¹⁴ new subjects there will be a written examination which is 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, student 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/early October following the end of third year. They will subsequently be confirmed and included in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) which is to be issued from the school. 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

¹⁴ Visual Art is the only Junior Cycle subject that does not have a Final SEC Examination in June

Achieved	≥40 and <55
Partially Achieved	≥20 and <40
Not Graded	≥0 and <20

The existing SEC supports 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.

Students undertaking a Level 2 Learning 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.

It is not anticipated that students undertaking a Level 1 programme will be sitting Level 3 Learning Programme examinations.

Student learning in the PLUs and in short courses included in L1LPs and L2LPs, will be assessed by the students' teachers and reported on to students and parents/guardians during Junior

Cycle and in the JCPA using appropriate descriptors – Achieved (L2LPs) and Successfully Completed or Progress Achieved (L1LPs).

- 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 1 and/or Level 2 Learning Programme in a portfolio. Students submit this portfolio to their teachers and the students' work is assessed and reported on.

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 six PLUs for L1LPs and five PLUs for L2LPs), 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 take place in first year and second year, and the school will issue the composite Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement following final 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 templates 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 parent teacher 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)

The Department will advise schools by email and through the Esinet portal of the window in which the JCPAs should be issued. Schools should award JCPAs to students during this window. It is anticipated that for 2019 the window will be during December and January.

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. Further information on this may be found in the JCPA Handbook.

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).

Students entering first year in September 2019 who undertake one or more of the Wellbeing short courses (CSPE, SPHE and PE) may in addition undertake up to four short courses in other areas of the curriculum.

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 and these details will be uploaded 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 relevant details of achievements in the 'Other Areas of Learning' and 'Wellbeing' sections 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' and Wellbeing. 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 hard copy. 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 JCPA Administration Grant

Following changes made to the data entry requirements in schools in relation to JCPA production, the JCPA administration grant has been discontinued.

2.18 Adult learners in adult education settings

Adult learners in the school year 2019/20 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.

Because the Framework for Junior Cycle is designed as a three-year school-based programme it is not suited to be undertaken within a shorter timeframe. For this reason it is proposed to identify more appropriate alternative learning programmes for adult learners in the future.

3. RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

To ensure that the necessary time and resources are available to implement the Framework for 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)
- 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).

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.

3.1 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

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 2019/20 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.

3.2 Continuing professional development (CPD) for school leaders and teachers

(a) Models of CPD delivery

JCT continues to provide a comprehensive 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 design, delivery and review of its work

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

(b) CPD for school leaders

School leaders are offered two distinct Junior Cycle related workshops in any school year. 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 encouraged to attend these workshops by way of keeping abreast of developments at Junior Cycle level, and are also encouraged to attend and participate in Junior Cycle whole-school CPD days in their school.

(c) CPD for teachers

In general, teachers are 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 liaises directly with schools regarding their cluster events, including assigning each school a cluster event date. Efforts 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 provided with CPD in this subject off-site in their local education centre. Paid substitution is made available. Such teachers, therefore, undertake a third day of Junior Cycle related CPD per annum.

(d) Summary of CPD school closure arrangements

During the 2019/2020 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 2019/2020 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 effective 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.

3.3 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 an 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.

Discussions are ongoing between the parties to the Junior Cycle Implementation Committee (DES, ASTI, TUI) with a view to clarifying issues surrounding the implementation of SLAR meetings. Further guidance on this matter will issue in due course.

3.4 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.

3.5 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' provided details regarding the restoration of leadership and management posts in those schools,, including some 1,300 leadership posts being restored to post-primary schools. In order to assist schools in completing the rollout and embedding of the Junior Cycle, it is proposed to retain the provision of the management resources hours for the 2019/20 academic year, at the same level as for 2018/19. The allocation of hours for 2019/20 is as follows:

Enrolment	In-school weekly coordination hours
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. 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.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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 and the Junior Cycle for Teachers website www.jct.ie and www.curriculumonline.ie

These websites host information and a range of practical materials aimed at supporting school leaders, teachers and parents.

This Circular may also be accessed at www.education.ie

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit

September 2019

APPENDIX 1 – 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 have been developed by the NCCA and approved by the Minister. Each of the subject specifications is available at: <https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle?lang=en-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/getmedia/f03b2786-2e04-454e-b0b8-56e313ff62b2/11729-NCCA-Level-2-Guidelines-V5August-2014.pdf>
- 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>
- Key dates for the classroom based assessments for the 2019/2020 school year are available: https://www.ncca.ie/media/3959/junior_cycle_key_dates_2019_2020.pdf
- More information on Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes can be found at: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/level-one-and-level-two-programmes>
- Specifications for Junior Cycle short courses designed by the NCCA for 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>

- Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, developed by the NCCA; available at 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>
- 2017 Whole School Guidance Framework; available at <https://www.ncge.ie/wsg/resources>
- 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; available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0043_2018.pdf

APPENDIX 2

PRO-RATA ALLOCATION OF PROFESSIONAL TIME TO PART-TIME TEACHERS

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.