



Circular Number: 0059/2021

**To: Addressee: 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 the school year 2021/22.**

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This Circular Letter should be read in conjunction with the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, and the Junior Cycle subject specifications, assessment guidelines, L1LP and L2LP guidelines and short courses.



1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this circular

This circular supersedes Circular 76/2020 entitled *Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle with particular reference to school year 2020/21* and sets out the arrangements now governing the implementation of the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, with particular reference to the school year 2021/22.

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.

The implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle continues to be reviewed, in partnership with school leaders, teachers and other education partners. Some aspects of this review process have been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of the process of review the University of Limerick has been commissioned to conduct a research study - *Evaluating the implementation and impact of the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle in Irish post-primary schools*, it is expected that this research which began in late 2020 will continue until 2024. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is also undertaking an early stage review of the implementation of Junior Cycle Irish which is expected to be completed by Quarter 2 2022.

1.2 Impact of Covid-19 on 2020/2021 Junior Cycle Assessment and Reporting.

In the context of the ongoing challenges associated with COVID-19, and based on public health advice, it was not possible to run the Junior Cycle examinations in June 2021. To recognise the work and achievement of third year Junior Cycle students in 2021 schools provided students with a written report on the broad range of learning that they achieved in each subject, short course and/or priority learning unit at the end of 2020/21. A State Certificate of Completion from the Department of Education will also be provided stating that the student has completed the Junior Cycle programme of study.

In addition, Early School Leavers and Adult Learners have been given an opportunity to sit Junior Cycle Examinations in November 2021.

In September 2020, *Revised arrangements for the assessment and reporting of Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) and Level 2 Learning programmes (L2LPs) for the cohort of students 2018- 2021 (students in 3rd year in 2020/2021)* were issued.



1.3. Key updates for the school year 2021/2022

- Schools were asked to assist in the identification of candidates who were originally due to sit these examinations in June 2021, to sit the October 2021 Junior Cycle Examinations for Early School Leavers and Adult Learners.
- Adjustments were made to assessment arrangements for the 2021/22 academic year and published in August 2021 in the document *Assessment Arrangements For Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2022*, a link to which can be found in Appendix 1.
- Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic the new 135 hour PE specification and the History (Level 2) short course will not be available for the 2021/22 academic year.
- Schools are being given the option to defer the increase of Wellbeing provision at Junior Cycle from 300 to 400 hours by a further year until the 2022/23 school year. Further information is available in Section 2.6 of this document.
- In planning their Wellbeing programme, schools should note that from September 2022 onwards, the use of the Junior Certificate syllabuses for SPHE and CSPE should be discontinued.
- A number of changes have been made to Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs). Further information is available in Section 3.3 of this document.
- Assessment Tasks (ATs) will not be examined in 2022. Further information is available in Section 3.8 of this document.
- Wellbeing programmes will now be reported on in the Junior Cycle Programme of Achievement (JCPA) for the first time in 2022. Further information is available in Section 3.10.3 of this document
- The provision of management resource hours will be continued for the 2021/22 school year. Further information is available in Section 4.5 of this document.



- The State Examinations Commission has published sample papers for the fifth and final phase of Junior Cycle subjects; i.e. Graphics, Wood Technology, Applied Technology, Engineering, Classics, Religious Education and Jewish Studies.

2. Curriculum arrangements for Junior Cycle

2.1 Curriculum and assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle

Each school should use the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*, to plan a programme for each of the three years of the Junior Cycle that meets the requirements set out in the Framework and this circular. 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 reflects the characteristic spirit of the school.

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.

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 PLUs available is appropriate to the needs and aptitudes of every student 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 their particular special educational needs.

The programme planned for Junior Cycle should be available to students and parents/guardians as soon as is feasible for students commencing first year in the academic year 2021/22. 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.

In planning the programme, post-primary school leaders and teachers should also take account of the *Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2022*, which was published in August 2021.

2.2 Subjects, short courses, Priority Learning Units

Schools will ensure that the 24 statements of learning feature in the programmes offered to their Junior Cycle students. Each Junior Cycle specification includes links to the 8 key



skills of Junior Cycle. These skills are also embedded in the learning outcomes, which are clearly set out in subject, short course specifications and PLUs.

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 education needs, a combination of PLUs, and/or short courses and/or subjects, suited to their individual needs
- AND**
- A programme in the area of Wellbeing.

2.3 Approved Subjects Specifications, Syllabuses and Guidelines

The subject specifications and assessment guidelines setting out the curriculum and assessment arrangements for each Junior Cycle subject, short course, area of learning, and PLU and approved by the Minister are as follows;

- All junior cycle specifications and assessment guidelines are available at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/junior-cycle/>
- The relevant NCCA Junior Cycle short course specifications selected by the school (if applicable) for inclusion in its Junior Cycle programme;
- The NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2021);
- The NCCA Level 2 Learning Programme Guidelines for Teachers;
- The NCCA Level 1 Learning Programme Guidelines for Teachers.

Please Note: Schools may opt to include short courses developed by the NCCA, or alternatively, school-developed or externally-developed short courses that have been developed in accordance with a template and guidelines set out by the NCCA. A link to these guidelines can be found in 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 (the maximum of 10 subjects includes subjects studied outside of a recognised school setting) for final examination and reporting through the JCPA, the exact number being dependent on whether the student is also taking short courses. A maximum of four short courses may be studied in the Junior Cycle programme, except in cases where a student is studying Wellbeing short courses in SPHE, CSPE or PE. It is not the aim or intention that short courses would replace existing subjects.



Exceptions to the minimum number of 8 subjects should only be made in the cases of students with special educational needs who may take a lower number of subjects, combined in some cases with Level 2 **or** Level 1 learning programmes.

Each student must include Irish, English, Mathematics and History among the subjects that he/she studies¹, along with a number of other subjects and/or short courses in their Junior Cycle programme. *Circular Letter 16/2020* provides further details regarding special core status within the Framework for Junior Cycle assigned to History. Some exemptions to the study of History will apply in the case of students with special educational needs.

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

In the case of students following a Level 3 programme of study

Subject and short courses
Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• study a maximum of 10² subjects for final examination and reporting through the JCPA, in addition to Wellbeing areas of learning - SPHE, CSPE and PE OR <ul style="list-style-type: none">• study 9 subjects for final examination and up to 2 short courses for reporting through the JCPA, in addition to Wellbeing areas of learning - SPHE, CSPE and PE OR <ul style="list-style-type: none">• study up to 8 subjects for final examination and up to 4 short courses for reporting through the JCPA, in addition to Wellbeing areas of learning - SPHE, CSPE and PE.
Wellbeing
This area of learning will incorporate learning traditionally included in CSPE, PE, and SPHE. Schools are reminded that there is a <i>minimum</i> threshold of 300 hours across the three years of Junior Cycle which should be provided for PE, SPHE and CSPE: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PE: 135 hours spread across first, second and third year (and must be provided in each of the three years.).

¹ Certain students may be exempted from the study of Irish in accordance with Circular 52/2019.

² 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 and Assessment Task for that subject.



- SPHE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year (and must be provided in each of the three years).
- CSPE: 70 hours spread across first, second and third year.

The options available are *

- Option 1:** The specifications for the NCCA short courses in CSPE, SPHE, PE (100 hours each);
- Option 2:** 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;
- Option 3:** Other programmes/modules/units for CSPE, SPHE, PE developed using Appendix I of the NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines;
- Option 4:** The Junior Certificate syllabus for CSPE (1996), the SPHE Junior Certificate syllabus (2000), the PE syllabus (2003).³

Note: Schools can include other areas in their provision for wellbeing, as detailed in section 2.6.

* Or a combination of these options provided the minimum threshold time of 300 hours across the three years for PE, SPHE and CSPE is met. The minimum threshold will increase to 400 hours from 2022/23.

Other areas of learning

- 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 Education. A link to the Framework document can be found at Appendix 1.
- 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.

³ In planning their Wellbeing programme, schools should note that from September 2022 onwards, the use of the Junior Certificate syllabuses for SPHE and CSPE should be discontinued, therefore Options 3 and 4 will no longer be available to schools. The NCCA is finalising a 135-hour programme for Physical Education (PE).



- 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.

Please also note that:

- Schools may continue to offer more than 10 subjects to their first-year students to facilitate subject selection. However, when students enter second year, the maximum of 10 subjects for final examination and reporting through the JCPA must be adhered to.
- The list of possible subjects can be found in Appendix 1.

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

2.5 Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes

2.5.1 Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs)

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.

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 - have been approved by the Minister and have been available to schools since September 2018.

L1LPs consist of six 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.

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

2.5.2 Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs)

L2LPs are designed for certain categories of students with general learning difficulties/needs in the low mild to high moderate range of ability, 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.



Some of these students 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. L2LPs are **not** suitable for students who are learning English as an additional language and should not be undertaken by these students. L2LPs consist of five PLUs and two Level 2 short courses.

2.6 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.

Due to ongoing challenges posed by COVID 19, schools are being given the option to defer the increase of wellbeing provision at Junior Cycle from 300 to 400 hours by one year, until the 2022/23 academic year.

The updated *NCCA Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (2021)* 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.

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's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*, a link to the latter of which can be found in Appendix 1. It is acknowledged that owing to COVID-19, using external facilitators to promote wellbeing may not always be possible in a physical setting.

Once a school has considered the particular needs of its students in Junior Cycle, its unique context and available resources, there is 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 *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines 2021*.

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 up to 400 hours of engagement. The programme of CPD provided to support the wellbeing promotion process will be aligned with the Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme.

2.7 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.

English, Irish and Mathematics each require a minimum of 240 hours of timetabled student engagement. All other Junior Cycle subjects, including History, require a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement that includes teaching, learning and assessment activities.



Priority Learning Units are designed for up to 250 hours of student engagement and are set out in terms of elements and learning outcomes. Short courses require 100 hours of student engagement over the three years of the Junior Cycle.

In schools where a sampling programme is in place for first-years, school management should ensure that such programmes do not impact on the overall time available for the subject options chosen as students progress in subsequent years of the Junior Cycle.

2.8 Subjects taken outside of a recognised 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 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 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 and descriptors.

The full suite of learning and assessment components at Junior Cycle is only available when studying in a recognised school setting. However, in some cases, students may study a subject(s) outside of a recognised school setting. In such situations (even where the student is sitting less than ten subjects in school) the requirements in relation to the conduct of Classroom-Based Assessments cannot be satisfied and CBAs cannot, therefore, be reported on as part of the JCPA. Where students cannot complete the CBAs within a recognised school setting (or recognised centre for further education), the CBAs will display as “not reported” on the JCPA. See section 3.4 for further details.

Please note that all students, including those studying outside of a recognised school setting, are subject to the maximum of 10 subjects for final examination and reporting through the JCPA.

2.9 Home schooled students

Students who have ***elected to be home schooled*** will have access to the final examination at Junior Cycle. A JCPA **will not** be provided to such students, 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.



2.10 Junior Certificate School Programme

Schools that currently offer the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP) may continue to do so. A review of JCSP is progressing, but it has not been possible to conclude this work due to other pressures including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on curriculum and assessment planning. No new applications are currently being accepted from schools for entry to the JCSP.

3. Assessment and Reporting in Junior Cycle

3.1 Assessment arrangements for subjects

The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 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.

The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 outlines the assessment of the subject specifications 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 most subjects, and a Final Examination set, administered and marked by the SEC at the end of third year.

The combination of the Assessment Task and the Final Examination, marked and awarded by the SEC, will generate a grade. Slightly modified assessment arrangements apply in Visual Art, Music, Home Economics, and the Technology subjects. Assessment Tasks (ATs) will not be examined in 2022. Further information is available in Section 3.8 of this document.

3.2 Assessment arrangements for L1LPs and L2LPs

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 or Not 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 of 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.

3.3 General information about Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs)

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.

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. 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, portfolios or other suitable tasks, depending on the subject or short course in question.

The CBAs in each subject and short course are assessed by the teacher, based on the learning that has taken place within the context of a classroom. In general, students undertake two CBAs in each subject, guided and facilitated by their class teacher, generally one in second year and one in third year⁴. Students generally take one CBA in short courses.

Classroom Based Assessments:

⁴ For Irish both CBAs will take place in 3rd year.



- Are used in the assessment of learning in subjects and in short courses and are assessed at a common level.
- Will be undertaken by students within class time to a national timetable which is available at www.ncca.ie and as per assessment guidelines for each subject and short course which are available at www.curriculumonline.ie.
- Are assessed by the students' teachers and the descriptors awarded are reported to students and parents/guardians during Junior Cycle using the normal school reporting procedures and in the JCPA.
- Additional information about CBAs can be found along with the above-mentioned assessment guidelines at www.curriculumonline.ie.

When assessing the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment teachers will use 'on-balance' judgement in relation to the Features of Quality, which are set out in four level descriptors: Exceptional; Above Expectations; In Line with Expectations and Yet to Meet Expectations

As subject specifications include ongoing feedback, formative assessment, CBAs, assessment tasks (where relevant) as well as final examinations, there is a need to consider the cumulative burden on students and teachers of multiple assessments across the full range of subjects. In this context, the CBAs **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.

3.4 CBA and student(s) studying a subject(s) outside a recognised school setting.

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

- Students who choose to study a subject outside of their school **cannot** complete the requirements for the CBA and AT;

In relevant subjects, not being able to complete the requirements for CBAs will result in students only being able to attain the marks available in the final examination.

- In the case of Music, as an exceptional measure and in light of the changes introduced regarding CBAs for 2020/21, students entering third year in 2021/22 will be permitted to continue studying outside of a school setting for reporting on their JCPA.



3.5 Arrangements for CBAs in short courses

Junior Cycle short courses will have one Classroom-Based Assessment. This includes PE where students in third year in 2021/22 will be required to complete a minimum of one CBA. Assessment Guidelines for each NCCA-developed short course can be found in Appendix 1 of this document.

3.6 Arrangements for CBAs 2021/22

A link to the full details of the revised arrangements for CBAs 2021/22 can be found in Appendix 1, with key dates included in Appendix 3.

As a result of the further disruption to learning caused by school closures in 2021 an extension of arrangements associated with the completion of CBAs and with assessment tasks was announced. The following assessment arrangements now apply for third year 2021/2022:

- An extension of the deadline for completion of CBA 1s into the school year 2021/22, while also allowing for the possibility that some schools may have been able to complete these before the end of the school year 2020/21.
- Students entering third year of Junior Cycle in 2021/22 must complete a minimum of one CBA in each subject and one CBA in each short course.
- School management, following consultation with relevant teachers (and where feasible, discussion with students), will decide whether to complete one or two CBAs in each subject. There will be some exceptions to the choices made by schools:
 - To ensure assessment of oral communications skills, students must complete CBA 2: Communicative Task in Irish and CBA 1: Oral Communication in Modern Foreign Languages;
 - As they are linked in each case with the final examination in the subject, students studying Visual Art, Home Economics, Music, Applied Technology, Engineering, Graphics and Wood Technology must complete CBA 2.

Arrangements for the cohort of students entering second year of Junior Cycle 2021/2022 are as per the *Framework for Junior Cycle* (2015).

The window within which schools can schedule Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) and Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings is shown in Appendix 3. Classroom-Based Assessments should be completed within the time period allocated (e.g. 3 weeks, 4 weeks) as specified in the Assessment Guidelines for each subject.



Students who are certified absent owing to COVID-19 can be facilitated to research, create and complete their CBA remotely, with support and guidance from their teacher.

3.7 Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs)

To support teachers in assessing students' Classroom-Based Assessments, teachers engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. 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.

At these meetings, teachers share and discuss representative samples of students' work and build a common understanding about the quality of their students' learning.

The SLAR meeting should take place no more than a month after completion of the CBA.

The scheduling of CBAs and associated SLAR meetings within the wider time-bands is a matter for the management of the school, in liaison with subject departments. 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.

If a school encounters difficulties in completing the CBAs and SLARs within the wider time-bands due to COVID-19 specific circumstances then the key dates may be amended.

It is best practice to hold SLAR meetings in person and it is recommended that this should be the default approach. However, it is recognised that, given the particular circumstances that arise from COVID-19 in the current school year, schools may need to transact these meetings in different ways. Where practicable⁵, and subject to the agreement of all subject teachers involved, schools may explore the use of digital platforms as a method of transacting SLAR meetings. The option of holding of SLAR meetings in an online environment will be reviewed at the end of the 2021/22 academic year.

⁵ It is acknowledged that certain aspects of the SLAR process cannot be transacted online such as meetings involving the physical examination of artefacts.



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 using digital technologies to support such meetings may be explored. It may also be necessary, in the case of short courses, for schools to consider on-line SLAR meetings with teachers of short courses from other schools. SLAR meetings 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.

As outlined in Circular Letter 76/2020 schools should use one of the following options to organise SLAR meetings, while noting the scope, in the context of Covid-19, to explore digital technologies for the holding of these meetings:

Option A

- Schools may choose to maintain or implement a timetable having four long days and one shorter day.
- This timetable will facilitate SLAR and other meetings relating to Junior Cycle to be held in the period following the conclusion of tuition on the shorter day, or at another time that does not impinge on student tuition time.
- Schools will be required to maintain the currently defined levels of student tuition time, i.e. 28 hours per week.
- Schools must not incur any additional costs through Substitution.
- Substitution and Supervision must not be used in facilitating SLAR meetings.
- A SLAR meeting will be a single meeting of approximately 2 hours duration.

Option B

- An agreement is reached at school level between teachers and management that SLAR meetings will be held at a time suitable to the teachers in the subject groups without impinging on tuition time.
- Should circumstances allow, a meeting, or portion thereof, may take place within normal school tuition hours.
- Schools will be required to maintain the currently defined levels of student tuition time, i.e. 28 hours per week.
- Schools must not incur any additional costs through Substitution.
- Substitution and Supervision must not be used in facilitating SLAR meetings.
- A SLAR meeting will be a single meeting of approximately 2 hours duration.

Option C



- The SLAR process will constitute 40 minutes of preparation time from within a teacher's professional time, and a collaborative portion of a minimum of 80 minutes' duration, the latter to be held as a single meeting.
- Once students have completed their CBA, their subject class teacher will carry out a provisional assessment of the students' learning as developed and evidenced by the CBA process, based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the SLAR meeting.
- In preparation for the collaborative portion of the SLAR process, each teacher will identify one sample of students' work for each descriptor, where feasible, for discussion at the meeting. Each teacher will submit his/her samples to the Facilitator, together with a brief note on each sample of students' work showing their reasons for their provisional assessment of the students' work. This will support all relevant teachers in reviewing the samples of students' work in the preparatory phase.
- The Facilitator will assemble and make available the appropriate examples of student work and attached notes supplied by the subject teachers some days prior to the commencement of the collaborative portion of the SLAR process.
- Teachers will use 40 minutes of their professional time to access this material, examine the samples and attached notes, and familiarise themselves with their content.
- The balance of the SLAR process (a meeting of a minimum 80 minutes' duration) will be held at a time suitable to the teachers in the subject group, without impinging on student tuition time and without the use of any substitution.
- Schools will be required to maintain the currently defined levels of student contact time, i.e. 28 hours per week.
- Schools must not incur any additional costs through Substitution.
- Supervision and Substitution must not be used in facilitating SLAR meetings.

3.8 Assessment Task Arrangements for third year 2021/22 students

The requirement to complete Assessment Tasks has been removed for 3rd year Junior Cycle students in the 2021/22 academic year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assessment Tasks have previously accounted for 10% of the final mark in the relevant subjects. For 3rd year students in the 2021/22 academic year, this 10% will be subsumed into the final examination, which will account for 100% of the final marks in the relevant subjects.

3.9 Final Examination for third year 2021/22 students

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>



For most⁶ Junior Cycle subjects there is a written examination which is set, administered and marked by the SEC. The written examinations are no longer than two hours duration now that new Junior Cycle specifications have been introduced for all subjects and the old Junior Certificate syllabi are no longer available for study.

In light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic specific guidance *Assessment Arrangements For Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2022* on assessment arrangements for students taking the Certificate Examinations in 2022 was published in August 2021. A link to this document can be found in Appendix 1. These arrangements are designed to take account of the disruption to learning experienced by these students.

Final written examinations are scheduled to take place in June 2022. The final written examinations are set and assessed at a common level, apart from English, Irish (L1 and L2) and Mathematics, where there are two levels (higher and ordinary) available.

Student achievement in the Final Examinations incorporates, in the case of the practical subjects, student achievement in the externally assessed practical component (artefact, practical work, or performance). Achievement is recorded using a set of state-certified grades which will first be reported by the SEC in provisional form following the end of third year. They will subsequently be confirmed and included in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) which is issued from the school. The grades will appear as follows:

Grading of the Final Examination:

Grade	Range (%)
Distinction	≥ 90 to 100
High Merit	≥ 75 and < 90
Merit	≥ 55 and < 75
Achieved	≥ 40 and < 55
Partially Achieved	≥ 20 and < 40
Not Graded	≥ 0 and < 20

⁶ Visual Art is the only Junior Cycle subject that does not have a Final SEC Examination in June



Existing SEC supports for reasonable accommodations in the Junior Cycle examinations (RACE Scheme) continue to be provided for candidates sitting final examinations in Junior Cycle subjects.

3.10 Reporting on Student Achievement

3.10.1 Reporting

Formal reporting by the school to students and their parents/guardians on the progress and achievements of students in their subjects, short courses, PLUs, wellbeing, and short courses, as appropriate, will take place in first year and second year. The school will issue the composite Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) 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.

This formal reporting 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.

The NCCA has developed reporting templates in line with the style and format of the JCPA. Schools are encouraged to develop their own reporting formats along similar lines. Guidelines on Reporting, including examples of templates for use by schools, are available at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>.

3.10.2 Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

Due to the cancellation of the 2021 Junior Cycle examinations as a result of COVID-19, no JCPA will be awarded to students who were in third year in 2020/21. Instead, alternative arrangements have been put in place as detailed in Section 1.2 of this circular.

For the cohort of students in third year in academic year 2021/22, the JCPA will report student achievement across a range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle, including in:

- SEC Final Examinations;
- Short Courses;
- Classroom-Based Assessments⁷;
- Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) (where appropriate);

⁷ The design of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) for 2022 will be adjusted to take account of the revised arrangements for CBAs.



- Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) (where appropriate) (will first appear on JCPAs in 2022);
- The area of Wellbeing (will first appear on JCPAs from 2022);
- Other areas of learning.

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

3.10.3 Reporting on students' achievements in the area of Wellbeing

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 in the area of wellbeing as part of ongoing assessment and reporting throughout Junior Cycle.

Wellbeing will show in a separate area of the JCPA with free text space where schools can report on achievement in Wellbeing in other areas as set out in Section 2.6. 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 learning⁸.

3.10.4 Reporting on students' achievements in other areas of learning

In the 'other areas of learning' free text section of the JCPA the school has flexibility to report on other learning experiences and events that the student has participated in during co-curricular and extra-curricular aspects of the Junior Cycle Programme in the school.

3.10.5 Reporting on students' achievements in the area of L1LPs and L2LPs

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 (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

⁸ Where students are not following the short course, the descriptor awarded by the teacher should reflect the student's learning and achievement during the course of study.



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

3.11 Technical arrangements for schools

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

3.11.1 Recording of the programme of study for students

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 recognised school setting, which are included as part of the previously outlined maximum of 10 subjects.

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 Tasks⁹ where relevant, practical and performance tests and final examinations.

3.11.2 Recording and reporting arrangements for the publication of the JCPA

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 Task¹⁰) will be recorded on a JCPA for each student.

⁹ It should be noted that, as a result of specific arrangements put in place for students entering third year in are 2021/22 due to COVID-19 school closures, there are **no** Assessment Tasks for students in their year of Junior Cycle 2021/22.

¹⁰ Students in third year in academic year 2021/22 will not be required to complete Assessment Tasks for the relevant subjects.



The part-completed JCPA template 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 issued 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 called the Junior Cycle Assessment Database (JCAD). The template will include the outcomes of any SEC Final Examinations (incorporating the Assessment Task¹¹) taken by students where applicable.

Schools and other centres where students undertake the Junior Cycle 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 and centres to their students and parents/guardians.

It should be noted that where student(s) cannot complete the CBAs within a recognised school setting (or recognised centre for further education), the CBAs will display as "not reported" on the JCPA.

3.11.3 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.

3.12 Adult learners in adult education settings

Adult learners in the school year 2021/22 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) and the final examination.

¹¹ Students entering third year in September 2021 will not be required to complete Assessment Tasks for the relevant subjects.



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, more appropriate alternative learning programmes for adult learners in the future will be identified.

4. 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).

An extensive programme of CPD for School Leaders and Teachers 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.

4.1 Whole-School Planning and School Self-Evaluation

Requirements in respect of School Self-Evaluation (SSE) are set out in *Circular Letter 33/2021* (A link to this Circular Letter can be found in Appendix 1 of this document). In light of the additional challenges faced by schools in the pandemic context and to allow consultation on the third cycle of SSE to take place, the Department of Education is extending the second cycle of SSE until June 2022. Consequently, the third cycle of SSE, which had been due to commence in September 2021, will now commence in September 2022.

Looking at Our School 2016: A Quality Framework for Post-primary Schools, School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020: Post-primary is available in Appendix 1. Advice on



how school self-evaluation may be used in this way, together with copies of SSE Updates referring to Junior Cycle implementation and other resources are to be found on <http://schoolself-evaluation.ie/post-primary/junior-cycle/>

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 and including the school year 2021/22. Owing to COVID-19, this may take place remotely.

The purpose of this day will change over time, but in 2021/22 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.

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

4.2.1 Models of CPD delivery

Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) continues to provide a comprehensive programme of CPD for school leaders and teachers. JCT professional learning events in the 2021/2022 school year will reflect the pedagogical environments in which teachers will be working, the restrictions that may need to be applied, for health reasons, regarding attendance at CPD events, and the need to minimise, insofar as possible, any disruption to class contact time over the school year.

Online provision of CPD and relevant supports will feature strongly in the programme of CPD planned by JCT in 2021/2022. While a more blended approach to the provision of Junior Cycle related CPD is planned (i.e. an appropriate mix of face-to-face and online supports), the provision of face-to-face CPD will be reviewed on an ongoing basis throughout 2021/2022 in light of relevant advice available from the health authorities.

4.2.2 CPD for school leaders

Supports will be provided for school leaders regularly throughout the 2021/2022 school year and will address the expressed needs of school leaders. One focus of these supports, particularly at the commencement of the new school year, will be on the implications of the provisions contained within this Circular Letter 0059/2021 for the



implementation of Junior Cycle in schools, particularly in the context of the Wellbeing programme in schools.

School leaders will receive notification of these events, which will issue well in advance of their delivery. School leaders are encouraged to engage with JCT events in order to keep abreast of developments at Junior Cycle.

4.2.3 Whole-school CPD

A new Junior Cycle Implementation Support (JCIS) team has been established in JCT with the aim of facilitating a bespoke Junior Cycle CPD experience for schools and teachers. The JCIS team will work with schools to co-design and co-facilitate their whole-school CPD day, which may include, as relevant, one or more key Junior Cycle face-to-face or online modules developed by JCT.

The JCT JCIS team will also provide ongoing supports for teachers throughout 2021/2022. These supports will address, but will not be limited to, Wellbeing, SLAR meetings, dedicated supports for teachers with Junior Cycle management resource hours and support in relation to the use of teacher professional time. The JCIS team will also work to provide a wide range of elective supports for teachers, in collaboration with JCIS associates. All events will be notified to schools and teachers well in advance.

4.2.4 Subject-Specific CPD

The impact of COVID-19 resulted in the need to move subject-specific CPD into the online space for the 2020/2021 school year. It is planned to also provide subject-specific CPD in the online space in the 2021/2022 school year. In this context it is planned to provide subject CPD for teachers online in the period from January to March 2022. This will require a one-day school closure to students for clusters of schools, and teachers will attend their relevant subject CPD online.

Schools may close, with board of management/ETB approval, as appropriate, to enable teachers' engagement. Where a school closes, all teachers must attend the school cluster online event and engage in the CPD activity. JCT will liaise directly with schools regarding these cluster events, including scheduling the events and assigning each school in good time prior to these events.

4.2.5 Second Teaching Subject Supports

Teachers who teach a second subject in Junior Cycle are provided with the opportunity to engage in CPD supports in that subject at the start of successive school years (generally September and October each year). This year, because of the impact of the COVID-19



pandemic, it is not possible to provide real time second teaching subject CPD in a face-to-face or online setting. As a result, JCT has repurposed all of its 2020/2021 subject CPD workshops for the online space and these are available at www.jct.ie for all teachers who teach a second subject.

4.2.6 Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes

Support for Level 1 and Level 2 learning programmes will continue for both mainstream post-primary and special schools. These supports will be facilitated online, in the main, for the 2021/2022 school year. Bespoke supports for schools can be arranged in collaboration with relevant JCT L1/L2 Advisors.

4.2.7 Elective CPD

An extensive programme of elective, or supplementary, CPD will be provided by JCT throughout 2021/2022, in an online/face-to-face format and in collaboration with education centers nationwide and a range of external partners, which teachers may engage with in their own time.

To complement the core CPD events being provided during the 2021/2022 school year, JCT will organise two concentrated elective online CPD events during the 2021/2022 school year, one held in October 2021 and another in April 2022. These events comprise, but will not be limited to, webinars, podcasts and live CPD events covering a wide range of areas and topics applicable to Junior Cycle.

The JCT Arts in Junior Cycle programme (www.artsinjuniorcycle.ie) will present a series of professional development workshops aimed to inspire, support and empower Junior Cycle teachers to engage with and be enriched by the arts and learning.

The JCT STE(A)M initiative (<https://www.jct.ie/steAm/steAm>), in collaboration with outreach partners from fields of STEM and The Arts, will provide Junior Cycle teachers with rich STE(A)M professional learning experiences in keeping with national and international best standards, and which will allow for interdisciplinary responses to societal challenges in subject specific and cross curricular contexts.

4.2.8 Miscellaneous

Management in each school is required to register all teachers with JCT, including their school-based email addresses, and facilitate their attendance at CPD events, where applicable.



JCT collaborates with the Inspectorate and other Department of Education agencies and school support services in the context of design, facilitation and review of its work.

4.3 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. This will not be required for academic year 2021/22.

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 have been entitled to 22 hours of professional time, with a pro-rata entitlement for part-time teachers as set out in Appendix 2 of this document. 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 715 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) means 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, is 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 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. More detailed information on SLAR meetings is included at Section 3.7.

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.

4.4 Resources for the co-ordination 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 SLAR 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.

4.5 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. The provision of management resource hours will be continued for one further year (2021/22 academic year).

The allocation for the academic year 2021/22 is set out as follows:

Enrolment	Weekly Management Resource Hours
700+	2 hours
600-699	2 hours 40 mins
400-599	2 hours
<399	2 hours

Existing pro-rata arrangements for partial implementation will apply.

Schools are receiving these additional resources on the basis that their Junior Cycle students have access to teaching, learning and assessment practices, including the holding of SLAR Review meetings, 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 Junior Cycle circulars.

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 co-ordination 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 or online CPD events and liaison with JCT;
- 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. This will not be required for academic year 2021/22.

5. Additional Information

5.1 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.

5.2 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 leader, teachers and parents/guardians.

Access to past papers and sample papers can be found at www.examinations.ie

This Circular Letter may also be accessed at www.gov.ie

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Appendix 1 – Related Documentation

This circular refers to the following documentation:

1. The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, is available at:
<https://assets.gov.ie/24478/f0edee58373142918ad24abf6db8075f.pdf>
2. Arrangements for Inspection and School Self-Evaluation for the 2020/2021 School Year Circular Number: 0033/2021 at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/94384-arrangements-for-inspectorate-engagement-with-post-primary-schools-and-centres-for-education-20212022-school-year/>
3. *Framework for Junior Cycle – History in Schools from September 2020 onwards* Circular number 16/2020 at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/d1752a-framework-for-junior-cycle-history-in-schools-from-september-2020-on/>
4. *Guidance on the Junior Cycle Subject Learning and Assessment Review Process* Circular Number 00017/2020 at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/bfc17d-guidance-on-the-junior-cycle-subject-learning-and-assessment-review/>
5. The Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation (22 May 2015) and its appendix published 5 July 2015 available at
<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/bb7a69-junior-cycle-reform/>
6. 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://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/>
7. 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-Learning-Programmes/>
8. 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://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-1-Learning-Programmes-\(L1LPs\)/](https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Level-1-Learning-Programmes-(L1LPs)/)
9. 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>
10. Key dates for the classroom based assessments for the 2021/2022 school year issued April 2021 are available at : https://ncca.ie/en/resources/cba-revised-arrangements_september-2021/



11. Specifications for Junior Cycle short courses designed by the NCCA for use by schools; available at <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Short-Courses>
12. Guidelines for schools on the development of short courses at Junior Cycle; available at <https://ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/subjects-and-short-courses/develop-your-own-short-course>
13. Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines, and other wellbeing planning material, developed by the NCCA 2021: https://ncca.ie/media/4940/updated_guidelines_2021.pdf
14. The Department's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023, July 2018: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/35100b-wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-20182023/>
15. 2017 Whole School Guidance Framework: <https://www.ncge.ie/wsg/resources>
16. 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's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice; available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/88ca5c44bb1d45e09c2ac3152ea5bcb0/>
17. DE announcement of 17 February 2021 regarding revised assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle 2021: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/e882f-minister-foley-confirms-leaving-certificate-2021-written-coursework-oral-and-practical-performance-examinations-will-be-held-and-a-corresponding-process-of-grades-accredited-by-state-examinations-commission-will-be-available-to-students/>
18. Assessment and Reporting on Students' Learning – Junior Cycle 2021 (March 2021): <https://assets.gov.ie/125999/f15185a7-88e2-46a4-a197-926ca73b6116.pdf>
19. Assessment and Reporting – NCCA guidelines: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>
20. Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate 2022: <https://assets.gov.ie/194453/ec4f7a59-afc9-424d-929e-b19e1f6beada.pdf>
21. Looking at Our Schools: <https://assets.gov.ie/25261/c97d1cc531f249c9a050a9b3b4a0f62b.pdf>
22. School Self-Evaluation Guidelines 2016-2020: Post-primary: <https://assets.gov.ie/25263/dcc85452ad6d451f89ed8e7b1967f200.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 (x40 min)	Professional Time Total p a.
11 hours or less	17	= 11hours 20 mins
11 h 1min- 11h 29 min	17	= 11hours 20 mins
11 h 30 min – 11h 59min	18	= 12 hours
12 hours- 12h 29 min	18	= 12 hours
12 h 30 min- 12h 59 min	19	= 12 hours 40mins
13 hours - 13 h 29 min	20	= 13 hours 20 mins
13 h 30 min – 13h 59min	21	= 14hours
14 hours- 14h 29min	21	= 14hours
14 h 30 mins- 14 h 59 mins	22	= 14 hours 40 mins
15 hours- 15 h 29 mins	23	=15 hours 20 mins
15 h 30 mins – 15 h 59 mins	24	=16 hours
16hours – 16 h 29 mins	24	= 16 hours
16h 30 min -16 h 59 mins	25	= 16 hours 40 mins
17 hours- 17 h 59mins	26	= 17 hours 20 mins
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.



Appendix 3: Key Dates for CBA 2021/2022

Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Student cohort 2019 – 2022 (students in third year in 2021/2022)

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in English, Science, Business Studies, Home Economics, Mathematics, History, Geography, Music, Religious Education, Jewish Studies, Classics (optional)¹²

Latest date for completion	Friday 1 st October 2021
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 8 th October 2021
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 22 nd October 2021

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in Modern Foreign Languages (required¹³)

Latest date for completion	Friday 3 rd December 2021
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 10 th December 2021
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 17 th December 2021

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in Gaeilge (optional)

Latest date for completion	Friday 3 rd December 2021
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 10 th December 2021
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 17 th December 2021

¹² Note that the latest date for completion of CBA1 in Visual Art, Applied Technology, Engineering, Graphics, and Wood Technology (May 2021) has now passed.

¹³ Students in this cohort (current third years) complete a minimum of one Classroom-Based Assessment per subject. Note exceptions to the choices to be made by schools, listed on page 15/16 above.



Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Student cohort 2019 – 2022 (students in third year in 2021/2022)

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in Applied Technology, Engineering, Graphics and Wood Technology¹⁴
(required)

Latest date for completion	Friday 8th October 2021
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 15th October 2021
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 22nd October 2021

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in Visual Art (required)

Latest date for completion	Friday 19th November 2021
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 26th November 2021
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 3rd December 2021

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in Gaeilge, Home Economics, Music (required)

Latest date for completion	Friday 11th March 2022
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 18th March 2022
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 25th March 2022

Classroom-Based Assessment 2 in English, Science, Business Studies, Modern Foreign Languages,
Mathematics, History, Geography, Religious Education, Jewish Studies, Classics (optional)

Latest date for completion	Friday 25th March 2022
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Friday 1st April 2022
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Friday 8th April 2022

Key dates for Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Student cohort 2020 – 2023 (students in 2nd year in 2021/2022)

Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in all subjects, with the exception of Gaeilge¹⁵

Window for completion	Monday 1st November 2021 – Friday 13th May 2022
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 18th May 2022
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 25th May 2022

¹⁴ Relevant brief or project document for technologies subjects will issue immediately after the completion date for CBA2. See *Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2022*

¹⁵ Classroom-Based Assessments 1 and 2 in Gaeilge are completed by students during their third year of junior cycle.