

Junior Cycle Framework 2014

Background

- The Junior Certificate examination will be replaced by a new school-based model of assessment.
- Focus will be on awareness of how students learn – moving from exams mentality to a philosophy of Learning to Learn and Assessment (particularly on Assessment for Learning).
- NCCA: “Course is no longer an entity to be covered. Rather, it becomes the focus for learning. There is more to learn than subject content”.
- New focus on assessment will require significant CPD for Principals and teachers – schedule to begin in 2013.

Structure

- Most students will be assessed at NFQ Level 3; students with special educational needs assessed at NFQ Level 2.
- Each school will design its own unique programme, combining Subjects and Short Courses, which embed 24 Statements of Learning and 6 Key Skills.
- Max of 10 subjects (minimum of 8) and max of 4 Short Courses can be certified by the SEC but schools can offer more.

Certification will be based on **one of**:

| | | | | | |
|----|-------------|----|------------------------------|----|------------------------------|
| 1. | 8 Subjects | or | 7 Subjects + 2 Short Courses | or | 6 Subjects + 4 Short Courses |
| 2. | 9 Subjects | or | 8 Subjects + 2 Short Courses | or | 7 Subjects + 4 Short Courses |
| 3. | 10 Subjects | or | 9 Subjects + 2 Short Courses | or | 8 Subjects + 4 Short Courses |

Introduction of the 21 Subjects

| Introduced | Subjects | Certified |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 2014 | English | 2017 |
| 2015 | Irish, Science, Business Studies | 2018 |
| 2016 | Art/Craft/Design, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Home Economics, Music, Geography | 2019 |
| 2017 | Maths, Technology, Technical Graphics, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork, Religious Education, Jewish Studies, Classics, History | 2020 |

- Subject Specifications (previously called syllabi) will be published online by NCCA; will have less content, giving scope to develop curriculum; will provide details of subject assessment.
- English specification will be published in 2013.
- Maths, English & Irish must be taken for NFQ Level 3 Certification; offered at higher and lower levels; each requires a minimum of 240 taught hours.
- All other Subjects, offered at common level only, each requires a minimum of 200 taught hours.
- Short Courses require a minimum of 100 taught hours.
- CSPE, SPHE and PE will become Short Courses. Schools can also develop their own Short Courses.
- Specifications for 7 Short Courses are being prepared by NCCA in CSPE, SPHE, PE, Digital Media Literacy, Artistic Performance, Chinese, Programming/Coding.
- NFQ Level 2: Five Priority Learning Units (PLUs), each requires a minimum of 250 taught hours.

Assessment

60% Final Assessment

| | Initial Phase* | After Initial Phase* |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Irish English Maths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papers set by SEC Exam (2 hours) administered by SEC in early days of Leaving Cert (2 hour papers) Corrected by SEC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papers set by teachers Exam (max 2 hours) administered by school in May Corrected by teachers |
| Other Subjects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papers set by SEC Exam (max 2 hours) administered by school in May Corrected by teachers using SEC marking schemes | |

* The term “initial phase” is used in the Framework document. While reference is made to it meaning the time when Standardised Tests in Reading and Mathematics become established, it would appear that the intention of the DES is to remain in the “initial phase” for subjects until the new school-based system of assessment is established.

- Assessment for certification purposes takes place in years 2 and 3 only.
- Assessment: “generally” 40% school work component + 60% final assessment.
- 5 possible grades – Not Achieved (0-39%), Achieved (40-54%), Achieved with Merit (55-74%), Achieved with Higher Merit (75-89%) and Achieved with Distinction (90-100%).
- Short Courses (and PLUs at NFQ Level 2) will be assessed in the school and will include internal moderation.
- From 2014 National Standardised Testing will be used at end of second year in English Reading and Maths, and Irish Reading in Irish-medium schools and from 2016 in Science.
- NCCA will provide an Assessment and Moderation Toolkit as a key resource for teachers.
- NCCA will develop a new Report Card for informing parents.
- The reporting system (2017) comprises (1) School Certificate and (2) Report on other learning experiences - both parts issued by the school.
- The DES will monitor national and school patterns of Junior Cycle results along with the results in the Standardised Testing to identify local or national anomalies.
- The DES will provide each school with a Data Profile to identify patterns relative to national norms and patterns relative to schools with a similar school context.

