

Why Change?

Research completed by Emer Smyth highlighted, amongst other reasons, the need to improve in the following areas:

- Literacy & numeracy to ensure learning for life,
- Purpose of 2nd year,
- Need for ongoing assessment to support learning
- Transition from primary to post primary

Junior Cycle Reform

In response to this the Junior Cycle reform emerged to encourage:

- A learner centred education
- A dual approach to assessment
- Reporting to support the learners progression
- Preparing the student for life long learning
- A modernised curriculum to suit the needs of the 21st century learner

Principles, Key Skills and Statements of Learning

Underpinning the new junior cycle are a set of principles, key skills and statements of learning. These will ensure that your child receives a rich educational experience that has both breadth and depth. Your child will have access to a varied curriculum of knowledge, skills and values. Eight principles underpin the framework for Junior Cycle. These inform the planning for, as well as the development and implementation of, junior cycle programmes in all schools.

The eight principles of Junior Cycle are:

Learning to Learn, Choice and Flexibility, Quality, Creativity and Innovation, Engagement and Participation, Continuity and Development, Inclusive Education and Wellbeing. Eight key skills permeate across the entire curriculum

Through engaging with the key skills students will:

- be more actively engaged with learning
- take greater ownership of their learning
- have a critical engagement with digital technology
- be encouraged to problem



solve and think creatively

Subjects

Schools will be able to choose from a total of 21 different subjects for inclusion on their junior cycle programme. All subjects are being revised and each one will have its own specification replacing what was previously known as a syllabus. Each specification describes the learning that takes place as part of the student's study of a subject in junior cycle.

By 2019 all new subject specifications will have been introduced. Students can study a maximum of 10 subjects for the JCPA, and if their school offers short courses they can study 9 subjects plus 2 short courses or 8 subjects plus 4 short courses for certification purposes.

The state examination that students sit in their subject at the end of their junior cycle will also be graded differently.

Instead of A, B, C, D, E, F and NG the following descriptors will now be used:

- Distinction 90 to 100 %
- Higher Merit 75 to 89 %
- Merit 55 to 74 %
- Achieved 40 to 54 %
- Partially Achieved 20 to 39 %
- (not graded) 0 to 19 %

How student achievement at Junior Cycle will be assessed

The release of the Junior Certificate results by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in September 2016 marked the end of an era. In the future, junior cycle students will receive a new Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). The JCPA will reflect a much wider range of your child's achievements over the three years of junior cycle. The JCPA will report on a number of areas, including:- 1. Subjects 2. Classroom Based Assessments 3. Short courses 4. Other Learning Experiences. This is a separate certificate to their results from SEC.

Other Areas of Learning

Students will have the opportunity to engage with a range of other learning experiences as part of their Junior Cycle Programme and these can be recorded in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

Other Areas of Learning play a critical role in insuring that students are provided with a broad and balanced educational experience. These learning experiences could include student engagement with a science fair, student council, sports, musical performances etc.

Classroom Based Assessments

Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their learning and skills in ways not possible in a pen and paper examination, for example, their verbal communication and investigation skills. CBAs will be undertaken in subjects and short courses and will be facilitated by the classroom teacher.

CBA 1 - Takes place in 2nd Year and is assessed using the 'Features of Quality' by the students' subject teacher. This reported to the student and teacher during Parent Teacher Meetings and in the JCPA. It is taken at common level and will be specified by the NCCA. It is to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of skills and concepts. Completed during class time.

CBA 2 – Is completed during 3rd Year and as above. CBA's will include assessment in a variety of activities; oral, written, practical

or designing & making tasks, artistic performance, experiments, projects or other suitable tasks (depending on the subject).

Assessment Task - This is the written task based on the 2nd CBA. (Completed in 3rd Year also). It is completed during class time. The AT requires the students to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have acquired through the completion of CBA 2. It is submitted and assessed by the State Examinations Commissions. This Assessment Task will be worth 10% of the overall mark in the case of most subjects.

At the end of 3rd Year, students will sit the final SEC examination in June.

Wellbeing

Your child's wellbeing is of central importance to his/her educational success and overall happiness. As a result Wellbeing will become a core part of your child's junior cycle experience. This area of learning includes, amongst others, Physical Education, Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Guidance.

L2LP's – Level 2 Learning Programmes

The Level 2 Learning Programmes have been designed for students with a high moderate to low mild general learning disability. A Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP) is made up of: Priority Learning Units and Short Courses

Phasing of the Junior Cycle Subjects



For further information on the new Junior Cycle visit:

www.curriculumonline.ie – for subject and short course specifications and information regarding assessment.

www.jct.ie – for general information regarding the new Junior Cycle



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