



NCCA

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Brief for the review and redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Physical Education

March 2024

Brief for the review and redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Physical Education

NCCA has established a development group to undertake the task of redeveloping the curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Physical Education. The work of the Development Group is, in general terms, agreed by the NCCA Board for Senior Cycle and approved by the Council in the form of the brief set out below.

This brief is designed to provide the basis for redeveloping the curriculum specification. While the brief is derived from the recommendations set out in the Early Enactment Review of Leaving Certificate Physical Education (NCCA, 2023a), and the Minister's consideration of same, it is also guided by the parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 2 subjects (Appendix 1). Typically, as noted in appendix 1, there should be two assessment components: one written examination and one other assessment component. However, there may be exceptions to this that are justified even after extensive consideration of the overall assessment load on students.

The redevelopment of the new specification for Leaving Certificate Physical Education will take account of current research and developments in the field of Physical Education. It will remain student-centred and outcomes-based and, in general terms, the specification should be aligned with levels 4 and 5 of the National Framework of Qualifications.

The specification will align to the template, agreed by Council, for curriculum specifications as set out in the *Technical form of curriculum specifications for subjects and modules in a redeveloped senior cycle* (NCCA, 2023b).

The Senior Cycle Key Competencies will be embedded in the learning outcomes. Leaving Certificate Physical Education will be available at both Higher and Ordinary level. It will be designed to be taught and assessed in a minimum of 180 hours. The development will be completed in Q2, 2025.

More specifically, the updating of the specification will consider and address the following:

- How the specification aligns with the guiding principles of senior cycle and the vision for senior cycle education.
- How the specification can support continuity and progression, including how to connect with and build on related learning at junior cycle, transition year and in other senior cycle subjects and modules as well as future learning in life, study, entrepreneurship, further education and training, higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships, and the world of work.
- How to widen the appeal of the subject and re-balance gender uptake and participation.
- How to make the curriculum more inclusive and ensure that access to adapted physical activities is enabled within the specification.
- The Physical Activity Areas including the breadth of the Games category .

- The clarity of learning outcomes, with special regard to specific learning outcomes identified in Topics 1 and 2 during the early enactment review.
- How the specification, in its presentation and language register, can be strongly student-centred and have a clear focus on how students develop and demonstrate their knowledge, skills, values and dispositions.
- How to develop assessment arrangements that are aligned to the parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 2 subjects (Appendix 1).
- How the specification, in its presentation, can support teachers in planning for teaching, learning and assessment.
- How to embrace and embed technology in teaching, learning and assessment.

The development group will also support the work of progressing the short term recommended responses to key insights from the early enactment review that were approved by the Minister. The following actions are to be completed for introduction in schools in September 2024 and require:

- Review and update of the skills and expectations in Section 6 of the current specification for each of the physical activity areas and consider how to present in a separate guidance document.

The work of the Leaving Certificate PE Development Group will be based, in the first instance, on this Brief. In the course of the work and deliberations of the Development Group, elaborations of some of these points and additional points may be added to the brief.

References

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) 2023a. *Technical form curriculum specifications for subjects and modules in a redeveloped senior cycle* [online] available <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/technical-form-curriculum-specifications-for-subjects-and-modules-in-a-redeveloped-senior-cycle/> [accessed on 15 February 2024]

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) 2023b. *Early enactment review of Leaving Certificate Physical Education*.

Appendix 1: Overarching parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 2 subjects.

Executive summary

- The Minister for Education announced an update on September 20, 2023, on the approach to be taken to the introduction of new and revised subject specifications including how assessment would be addressed in those specifications. Specifically, each subject shall have an assessment component in addition to the terminal written examination.
- This assessment component will be worth at least 40% of the total available marks.
- Each subject is to have one written examination; typically marks for the written examination will be 60%.
- Typically, there should be two assessment components: One written examination and one other assessment component. However, there may be exceptions to this that are justified even after extensive consideration of the overall assessment load on students.

Introduction

This document outlines the overarching assessment arrangements and parameters to guide the design of specifications for all Tranche 2 subjects/ modules. These subjects/modules are:

- Accounting
- Construction Studies
- Engineering
- English
- Geography
- LCVP Link Modules
- Physical Education.

This advice is informed by ongoing work with Tranche 1 subjects and will be amended, as appropriate, for future tranches which may take account of their subject areas and existing assessment arrangements.

The arrangements as detailed here reflect the policy direction issued by the Minister of Education that all subjects will have an assessment component, to be in a form that is not a traditional written examination, for those components to be set and assessed by the SEC and thereby lead to a reduced emphasis on final examinations in June of 6th year.

Specifically, the arrangements for all assessment components as outlined in this document are framed by the Minister's announcement(s) on March 29, 2022, and subsequently on September 20th, 2023. Underpinned by the following understandings, the assessment components:

- will not take the form of traditional written examinations.
- will be set and marked by the SEC.
- will be subject to SEC arrangements for their completion, authentication, and submission.

In developing the arrangements outlined below, the following rationale for moving towards all subjects having another assessment component is central. This rationale is informed by deliberations on research commissioned by the NCCA and the SEC, and on the assessment literature more generally. From this work, it is evident that these components have the potential to:

- **Reduce dependence** on written summative examinations and therefore provide for a **broader assessment system**; written examinations have an important role but can be seen as a 'snapshot' of learning and can lead to teaching and learning having an excessive focus on examination preparation; other forms of assessment can mitigate the potential for this narrowing of learning by assessing aspects of student learning better and/or more comprehensively than written examinations alone can do; or assess learning that is not readily assessable through written examinations.
- Support and enhance teachers' understanding and assessment of **key competencies** by contributing to a greater understanding of how students' knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions are assessed.
- Provide opportunities for students and teachers to **reflect on student learning**, boost students' motivation to learn and enhance opportunities for formative feedback practices.
- Extend the range and diversity of assessment opportunities; **spread the assessment load** and thus contribute to a reduction in or spreading of pressure on students.
- Build and develop **teachers' assessment skills and assessment literacy** as teachers support students in working through the assessment activities as detailed within assessment briefs or guidelines.
- Generate student assessment data which can help reduce the vulnerability of the system to future unprecedented or unexpected system shocks such as COVID.
- Allow for assessment opportunities that are more **authentic** than a system relying on terminal written examinations solely.

It is also important to note that a review of the assessment literature more generally also indicates that when introducing other assessment components, it is necessary to consider how to mitigate risks, for example, of:

- over-assessment of students
- over-rehearsal of assessments
- the assessments becoming overly structured, compartmentalised, repetitive, and routine.

As is already the case where other forms of assessment apply, the new assessment arrangements will be guided by the overarching principles of equity, fairness, and integrity.

Table 1 below sets out the general parameters and processes to guide the work of the subject development groups (SDG) as they consider the most appropriate assessment for every subject. The specific parameters for each of the Tranche 2 subjects are set out in Table 2.

Table 1: Assessment parameters and processes – general application to tranche 2 subjects

Considerations	Parameters to guide the work of the development group.
Nature	<p>The purpose and nature of the assessment component will be clearly outlined in the subject specification and accompanying guidelines to support the completion of the assessment. Details will be provided on the nature of the component. Existing examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research project/extended essay • oral assessment • performance assessment • portfolio assessment • creation of an artefact • field study • experiment/ proof of concept/ practical investigation. <p>The subject specification and the accompanying guidelines will articulate clearly what the students are required to do, the form(s) in which it can be carried out and submitted, and the workload expectations associated with the assessment. The alignment of the assessment component to a particular set of learning outcomes from the subject specification will be provided, as well as details on which key competencies and associated learning outcomes will be assessed. This does not preclude the same LOs from being assessed in the final examination.</p>
Weighting	<p>The assessment component in each subject will be worth at least 40% of the total available marks. There will be the option for this weighting to be worth 50% in the cases of Construction Studies, Engineering and PE, and up to 60% for the LCVP Link Modules.</p>
Timing	<p>The SDG will advise on the time required for the carrying out of the assessment component.</p> <p>While the SDG may suggest when this may occur, the final decision will need to be made following consideration of the overall schedule of completion dates for all assessments across all subjects and this will be finalized by the SEC further to collaboration with NCCA and DE.</p> <p>The date for completion of the assessment component by the student will be published by the SEC and this detail will not be included in the subject specification.</p>
Design	<p>The majority of assessment components will result in an artefact/document being transmitted to the SEC and assessed by the SEC.</p>

	In some instances, the design of the assessment may require examiners to visit schools to conduct the assessment but manageability at school and system level will need to be considered.
Guidance	<p>Guidelines to support the assessment components will be specific to each subject. These guidelines will be developed collaboratively by the NCCA and SEC. They will be informed by the deliberations of the SDG during the development of the specification and will detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the purpose of the component concerned i.e., what it is intended to assess. • the nature of the assessment component/activity. • descriptors of quality in the form of a graduated rubric and details on assessment standards at higher and ordinary levels if deemed necessary by the assessment method. • details on the timing of the assessment (its duration and when it could happen). • guidance on the processes that may be used for the administration of the assessment.

Table 2: Parameters for assessment arrangements for each Tranche 2 subject

Subject	Current arrangements	Parameters for new assessment arrangements
Accounting	One written examination. (3 hrs)	<p>Written examination: 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC based on a common brief.</p>
Construction Studies	<p>Written examination (OL: 40%; HL: 50%) 1 paper (OL: 2.5 hours; HL: 3 hours)</p> <p>Coursework (artefact and portfolio) (OL: 30%; HL: 25%)</p> <p>Practical skills test (OL: 30%; HL: 25%)</p>	<p>Written examination: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p>

	<p>Coursework and practical are examined at a common level. Written examination is examined at higher and ordinary levels.</p>	<p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC based on a common brief.</p>
Engineering	<p>Written examination (OL: 40%; HL: 50%) 1 paper (OL: 2.5 hours; HL 3 hours) Coursework (artefact and portfolio) (OL: 30%; HL: 25%) Practical skills test (OL: 30%; HL: 25%)</p> <p>Coursework is assessed at Higher and Ordinary levels.</p> <p>Practical skills test is examined at a common level. Written examination is examined at higher and ordinary levels.</p>	<p>Written examination: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC based on a common brief.</p>
English	<p>Two papers with a 50/50 % split. Paper 1: Broadly essay and comprehension focused (2 hours 30 + 20 minutes reading time).</p> <p>Paper 2: Poetry, Literature focused (3 hours + 20 minutes reading time).</p>	<p>Written exam: 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC based on a common brief.</p>
Geography	<p>Written examination: 80% weighting (2 hours 30 + 20 minutes reading time).</p> <p>Geographical Investigation: 20% weighting.</p>	<p>Written exam: 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC based on a common brief.</p>

<p>LCVP Link Modules</p>	<p>Portfolio: 60% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination: 40% weighting</p> <p>Portfolio submitted with written exam in March of 6th year.</p> <p>Written examination has 3 aspects: Case study, audio visual and extended answer questions.</p> <p>Portfolio has combination of core and choice aspects and completed under supervision of class teacher.</p>	<p>Portfolio: 60% weighting.</p> <p>Written exam: 40% weighting.</p>
<p>Physical Education</p>	<p>Physical Activity Project: 20% (to a common brief)</p> <p>Performance assessment: 30% (to a common brief)</p> <p>Written examination: 50% (at Higher and Ordinary Level)</p> <p>PAP: over an 8- to 10-week period and submitted as digital format.</p> <p>PA: choose one of 3 physical activities; submit as digital artefact.</p>	<p>Written examination: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: 50% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC based on a common brief.</p>



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