CIAT
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

397 City Road
London EC1V 1NH
United Kingdom

+44(0)20 7278 2206
info@ciat.global

ROI Centre Contact:
chair.ciatireland@gmail.com
pr.ciatireland@gmail.com
architecturaltechnology.com
@ciatechnologist
@ciatireland

By email: scconsultations@ncca.ie

2 May 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

We write from the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists, Republic of Ireland Centre Committee in support of the NCCA Leaving Certificate Construction Technology revised draft syllabus.

CIAT are the leading professional body for qualified Architectural Technologists. The CIAT ROI Centre Committee consists of Chartered members and affiliates who work in practice, industry and academia throughout the country.

Our members are involved with accreditation of third level Architectural Technology honours and ordinary level degree courses in ATU Donegal and Galway, DKIT, MTU, SETU Carlow and Waterford and TUDublin. Our members also act as External Examiners on these programmes. Therefore, we have seen at first hand the knowledge, skills and potential of students who have progressed through the current Leaving Certificate Construction Studies course. Our members offer work placement to Transition Year students and semester long placements to third level students studying construction related courses and apprenticeships.

Below are our main points and recommendations on the Draft Leaving Certificate Construction Technology Specification:

Technological Education

- We welcome the shift to technological education as recognised globally, raising critical awareness of technological literacy and the change of subject title to Construction Technology to reflect the progression in the construction industry.
- This change in title should be emphasised within the school setting to encourage a wider uptake of the subject. The Government should be concerned that only 17.6% of students in 2023 studied Leaving Certificate Construction Studies.

- We recognise the holistic approach to the built environment subject and how the student learning focuses on a sustainable future alongside an appreciation of architectural heritage while promoting innovation, traditional craft and environmentally responsible design.
- We appreciate the breadth of the construction related topics covered in the specification including: the built environment; design, craft skills and materials; building fabric; services and control technology. Passive House design will continue to be the gold standard in architectural design and construction; therefore, the Passive House principles and requirements should be at the core of the sustainable design teachings.
- Across the board, NZEB (nearly zero energy buildings) should be replaced with ZEB (zero emissions buildings). The time for NZEB has now passed and the industry is engaged with zero emissions and positive energy new buildings.
- Whole life carbon theory should be infused throughout all practical, social and STEM subjects including Construction Technology to bring awareness to our young people and society that everything we do in our modern world has a carbon cost and associated environmental impact.

Practical vs. Theoretical Skills

- We note the comments from the Chief Examiner's Report regarding the quality of sketches provided by students was often poor. Development of sketching skills requires time and nurturing, which may not be possible within a classroom setting when the curriculum is so vast. Students should be encouraged to sketch in a less formal and point scoring way so as not to discourage less artistic students from involvement in the subject. Computer aided design and building information modelling is the norm for graphical communication in the workplace. Similarly with marking out and scaled drawing. Where sketching is beneficial is on construction sites, working out real-world challenges in real-time.
- Marking out is possibly an outdated process given the use of laser technology. It should be investigated that if marking out was removed from the practical exam question, would the student be competent in the other skills required to complete or assemble the task? It seems unfair that a student with a particular learning difficulty for marking out would be penalised in a practical setting if they have the practical skills required for the craft. This should be explored especially as the practical assessments and class-based assessments are set at common level. The emphasis on knowledge and skills should be geared toward career readiness and industry preparation and not simply to obtain CAO points.

Junior Certification Progression

- In our opinion, the transition from Junior Certificate Wood Work is not the best fit to progress to Leaving Certificate Construction Technology. A beginners Construction Technology course at Junior Certificate would give students a better insight into the subject at an earlier stage and give a better basis for students who are less 'hands on'.
- Parents often see Wood Work as a subject for a student who will progress into a trade, which is not always the case as Leaving Certificate Construction Studies/Technology often leads to a professional career (architecture, engineering or surveying).
- Wood Work and Construction Technology are two distinctly separate subjects. Both should have a Leaving Certificate programme. When enforcing JC Wood Work prior to LC Construction Technology, we are potentially losing high calibre STEM students from the construction industry.

Construction Industry

- Schools should be encouraged to engage with the local construction industry and professionals working or living in the area as guest speakers. Class based assessments or project work could be loosely based on local buildings or sites, including class visit to these locations.
- Career Guidance teachers should be kept informed of the industry changes and emerging new career paths including Building Information Modelling and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Architectural Technology (AT) should be included on list of future careers beyond Senior Cycle.
- Particular emphasis should be on encouraging females to participate in Construction Technology.
- It should also be known that apprenticeships are not only for skilled or craft careers - professional qualifications can also be achieved in construction disciplines through apprenticeships to Level 8, followed by Chartership in the related discipline.

As a professional body with members working in the construction industry, we are encouraged by the aim of the Construction Technology specification. Students will have the opportunity to experience and develop their interest and enthusiasm for the built environment. This programme will provide an invaluable basis for a modern and sustainable construction and architectural industry, with an ethical and sustainable mind set for lifelong learning.

We thank you for the opportunity to be involved in this process.

Yours sincerely

Michael O'Keeffe FCIAT

Chair | CIAT Republic of Ireland Centre
ATR Admissions and Assessment Board Member

AWARDS
Gold Award Recipient

Patricia Mulvey FCIAT

Councillor & PR Officer | CIAT Republic of Ireland Centre
CIAT Executive Board Trustee