



## Written submission: Consultation on the draft Leaving Certificate Community, Life and Work Studies (formerly known as LCVP) specification

NCCA is redeveloping Leaving Certificate Community, Life and Work Studies (formerly known as LCVP). The aim of this consultation is to obtain the open and honest views of all stakeholders: students, teachers, parents, and other interested parties. The feedback gained from the consultation will inform the work of the development group in preparing the final specification.

NCCA would greatly appreciate your feedback on the draft specification which can be found here: <https://ncca.ie/media/dtyb0gbv/draft-specification-for-community-life-and-work-studies-formerly-known-as-lcvp-en.pdf>

When providing feedback, observations or comments, please reference the specific section and / or relevant learning outcomes.

The closing date for this consultation is 25<sup>th</sup> April 2025 at 5pm.

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### Data protection and open data section

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NCCA may use the data you provide in the form of quotations. Where this happens, the quote will be anonymised.

## Respondent's details

What organisation are you submitting on behalf of?

Transferable Skills Unit, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University of Limerick

Are you consenting to be listed as a respondent to this consultation?

- ☒ Yes X
- ☐ No

If yes, please enter the name you wish to have published in the final report.

Dr. Chris McNerney

Are you consenting to have the submission published on [ncca.ie](http://ncca.ie)?

- ☒ Yes X
- ☐ No



## Rationale, Aim, and Key Competencies p. 2 – 3, 6 - 8

**Rationale:** The rationale (p. 2) outlines the nature of Community, Life and Work Studies (formerly known as LCVF) and the role and importance of Community, Life and Work Studies in realising the purpose and vision of senior cycle.

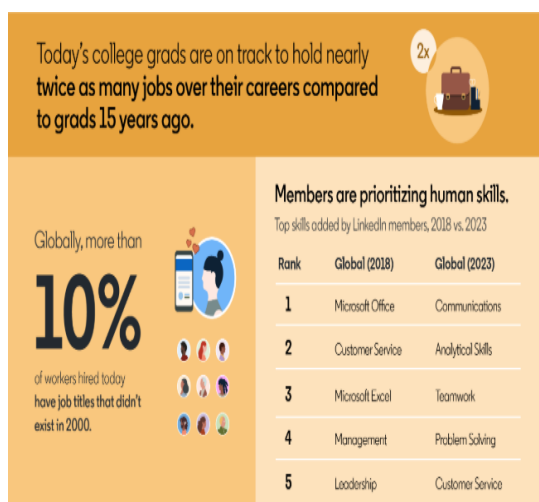
**Aim:** The Aim (p. 3) outlines the over-arching purpose of the modules and the relevance and expected impact of the modules on student learning.

In your opinion, do the rationale and aim capture the overarching purpose and nature of Community, Life and Work Studies; the importance of the modules in realising the vision of senior cycle and the relevance and expected impact of these modules on student learning. Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

Overall, this is an excellent programme and initiative. The only pity is that all senior cycle students are not required to take it. In my opinion, this type of programme would be of great value to all students going to third level, as well as those who may go directly to the workplace.

Re the **rationale**, I think it would be helpful to contextualise this programme by referring to recent, broader trends, especially in the workplace. This will show that this programme is very much 'cutting edge' and responding to broader developments, especially in the workplace. I would argue that the existing draft very much undersells the relevance and importance of the new programme content.

For example, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF), by 2030, 39% of core skills will change. For Ireland, the figure is 37%. LinkedIn data suggests that from 2015 to 2030, some 70% of the skills used in most jobs will have changed, with AI emerging as a key catalyst.



I'm also including this graphic from LinkedIn which illustrates how LinkedIn members are upskilling. You can see that much of the focus is on human, transferable skills.

By building the capacity of students to respond to rapidly changing circumstances, this programme, with its strong focus on skills and competencies, is speaking strongly to these emerging trends.



**Re the programme aims**, I'd suggest you add a reference to 'future proofing' skills as this programme certainly does this.

I also think it would be useful to situate / locate this programme within or with reference to recognised international transferable / transversal skill frameworks (ESCO, the ILO, UNESCO, World Economic Forum etc. This will again show that the programme is very much in line with international best practice. I'm appending a short mapping exercise that we have undertaken in UL to map our graduate attributes against some of these frameworks

### **Beyond Senior Cycle**

I would suggest that this section be expanded.

In higher education, the elements addressed in the Community, Life and Work programme are also being more frequently discussed. For example, there is an increasing focus on skills development, as well as on resilience and adaptability, in the University of Limerick, in DCU, and in the University of Galway. This programme will align with these evolving directions and I believe that it worthwhile to name these parallel developments. For students who will take this programme and who might be confident about choosing a third level option, it could be important that they see the programme as being very valuable in preparing them for a possible future 3<sup>rd</sup> level journey.

**Key Competencies:** Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop in an integrated way during senior cycle. These competencies are linked and can be combined; can improve students' overall learning; can help students and teachers to make meaningful connections between and across different areas of learning; and are important across the curriculum.

The draft specification sets out examples of how key competencies can be developed in Leaving Certificate Community, Life and Work Studies on pages 6 – 8.

In your opinion, does this section effectively capture the development of student key competencies in Leaving Certificate Community, Life and Work Studies?

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

This is an important section. However, again, it may be that the 'components of key competencies' diagram understates the impact of a Knowledge, Skills, Values and Disposition approach. This produces more than just enriched, engaged and competent learners. It also produces empowered, critical and creative problem



solvers. I think it is valuable not just to refer to the learning impact but also to the impact of the applied transferable skills development.

In general, the reference to key competencies in senior cycle, may assume that all students gain these key competencies. However, they often don't. This is equally true in the third level sector. Competencies have to be made explicit and developed in a more explicit way. This programme does this, and those who take this option will be uniquely placed to carry these competencies forward. I'd go as far as saying that those who take this programme will have a distinct 'competency' advantage over those who focus only on academically oriented subjects.

### Strands of study and learning outcomes [p. 9 - 24]

**Course overview:** The course overview sets out the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions for students in four strands, across two modules. The specification emphasises a non-linear, integrated approach to learning across the strands. The details of the strands are described on pages 9 – 24 of the specification.

The details of the **cross cutting elements** are described on pages 9 - 10 of the specification.

In your opinion, does the structure illustrate the connected nature of the strands and the development of student knowledge, skills, values and dispositions in an appropriate way? Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

There is much hugely valuable content in these sections and it is important to acknowledge the work of the development group and the NCCA staff that have produced it.

At a general level, I think it might be good to look at the sequencing of the modules and strands. For example, module 1 starts off by looking at intrapersonal development - Understanding Myself (M1S1) and moves on to understanding progression opportunities (M1S2), including skill self-assessment amongst other things. It then moves into Module 2 and a focus on Appreciating Community (M2S1) before returning to Engaging with the Workplace (M2S2). It may be that a more proximate connection between M1S2 and M2S2 could be a more logical sequence.

Alternatively, this sequence could be considered

Module 1, Strand 1: (*Appreciating and*) Understanding Myself

Module 1, Strand 2: Appreciating (*and Understanding*) my Community.

Module 2, Strand 2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities.

**Module 2, Strand 2: Engaging with the workplace****Module 1, Strand 1: Understanding Myself [p. 11 - 14]**

Please provide your views on the learning set out in this strand with reference to

- clarity for planning for teaching and learning
- alignment with the rationale and aims
- opportunities for the development of key competencies and
- access and challenge for all students.

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

This strand is very important and is a very useful starting off point for the programme. To enable linkage to be established with international frameworks, it might be useful to at some point introduce some terminology about 'Intrapersonal skills' or 'emotional intelligence'. These terms are increasingly present in the workplace and as a need in broader society, so it would be good for students to begin to be introduced to the more specific terminology that they may later encounter. In this regard it is worth looking at this UNESCO framework



Source: School and Teaching Practices for Twenty-first Century Challenges: Lessons from the Asia-Pacific Region, (UNESCO, 2016).



In the section on 'My skillset', reference is made to '*soft skills*'. In my experience, the term '*soft skills*' is not favoured by people working in this area as it may suggest that these skills that are of secondary importance and are in some way dispensable or optional. Terms like transferable, transversal, 21st century skills, core skills, power skills are used instead. (I'm going to call this list *transferable skills* + from here on). The importance of these skills is increasingly emphasised.

I would also suggest that this statement needs to be revised:

*'soft skills which are typically developed as a result of one's personality, and include people and personal skills'*

Apart from the use of the 'soft skills' terminology, this could be seen to suggest that *transferable skills* + cannot be learned or developed. I don't believe that this is the case and I have not seen any evidence to suggest it. Transferable skills are not just personality based. They include things like critical thinking, problem solving, communications, collaboration and others, all of which can be taught, learned and developed.

### **Module 1, Strand 2: Understanding my Progression Opportunities [p. 15 - 18]**

Please provide your views on the learning set out in this strand with reference to

- clarity for planning for teaching and learning
- alignment with the rationale and aims
- opportunities for the development of key competencies and
- access and challenge for all students.

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

This is a very important section and contains some very innovative and empowering content.

To strengthen it, I would suggest that some reference to skills recognition be included. In UL, as well as facilitating students to develop their skills, we are focusing on 3 Rs, *Recognise, Record and Reward*. A key challenge is encouraging students to recognise that they have and are developing skills. We are also facilitating students to record their skills using an E-Portfolio (we are currently using an E-Portfolio product called Portflow from a Dutch company called Drieam). As well as providing a flexible, student led portfolio platform, completion of an e-portfolio enhances students digital skills.





Consideration might be given to the use of a centrally procured E-Portfolio. While this would be of value within the specific context of the programme, it could also allow students to recognise and record how they are developing skills and competencies beyond of the confines of the programme e.g. in a part time job, in a sports club etc. As such, it could help them to build a practice of reflection on their evolving skill base.

## Module 2, Strand 1: Appreciating my Community [p. 19 - 21]

Please provide your views on the learning set out in this strand with reference to

- clarity for planning for teaching and learning
- alignment with the rationale and aims
- opportunities for the development of key competencies and
- access and challenge for all students.

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

I have earlier referred to the sequencing issues and wonder if the M2S2 section would follow on more naturally here. Alternatively, the Appreciating my Community section could be moved to module one and follow on from a retitled as 'Appreciating and Understanding Myself'. You would then have two 'Appreciating' strands, a self-focused one and a community focused one.

Again, referring back to the UNESCO framework mentioned earlier, it might be helpful to make a connection between this section and ideas about 'Global Citizenship'

This section could also offer an opportunity to opportunity to explore the changing nature of community in Ireland, including doing profiles of the community they live in. It will also be necessary to recognise that people will be part of multiple communities at different times, and might well not identify with a geographic community. They could potentially be quite marginalised from it. As a task, having to complete and present a profile of their own community could also be used as a way of introducing students to data from the most recent census and to searching for and making sense of such data. The Central Statistics Office would be a really useful resource for this.

Reference is also made to **volunteering**. The role of volunteering in developing transferable skills + could also be emphasised. Linking to the operation of local volunteer offices or third level colleges with volunteering programmes could also be very useful.





This strand also contains a section on **collaborative problem solving**. However, I'm not sure what this is picked out as a skill / set of skills to focus on, albeit that it is welcome to see. What about others, communication, digital skills, critical thinking, creativity etc. It might be useful to consider renaming this as something like 'your skills toolkit' and also include some of these other skills in it. For example, presentation is already named in the 'students should be able to' column. This implies the development of communication skills.

Finally, I'm not sure how well this focus on problem solving sits in a section on 'appreciating community'. The skills / competency elements mentioned here could just as easily have been in sections relating to the workplace, skills development etc.

The inclusion of a **component on design thinking** is very welcome. However, in the 'student should be able to' column it is expected that the su.... *"collaborate to respond to an issue in their community, by engaging in a design thinking problem-solving approach"* may be too much to ask of 2<sup>nd</sup> level students. It may be that they could instead be asked to work through some of the earlier stages of the design thinking framework within a given community, their own or somebody else's.. For example, 'students should be able to create an empathy immersion experience about a particular need in their community, for example, how the transport needs of older people are responded to'.

## Module 2, Strand 2: Engaging with the Workplace [p. 22 - 25]

Please provide your views on the learning set out in this strand with reference to

- clarity for planning for teaching and learning
- alignment with the rationale and aims
- opportunities for the development of key competencies and
- access and challenge for all students.

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

Overall, I think is a very well-developed section and will be of substantial benefit to participating students.

Digital technology



*Brief reference is made to digital technology. I think this should be in the modules, not just a possible add on. Might it be possible to incorporate 'digital literacy' elements, including a focus on understanding AI.*

### **Additional Assessment (AAC) [p. 28 - 30]**

The Additional Assessment Component (AAC), My Learning in Practice, provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning across the Community, Life and Work Studies course. Students will be required to understand and critically explore an issue(s) related to a brief and develop a personal profile, by using and drawing their portfolio. A portfolio is an individual collection of evidence and reflections of a student's engagement with a variety of learning experiences over the two years of study. A brief, topical in nature, that relates to the learning outcomes of the specification, will be published annually by the SEC in Term 2 of Year 1. Students will complete and submit a multi-modal digital report to the SEC in Term 2 of Year 2.

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments on the AAC in Leaving Certificate Community, Life and Work Studies (formerly known as LCVF) with reference to how the AAC might motivate students, how it aligns to the learning outcomes in the specification and how it facilitates the development of key competencies.

The only comment I would add here is to refer to my earlier point about the use of an E-Portfolio. This could add considerable value to the student learning experience.

### **Supports for Successful Enactment**

- Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments on supports that might be needed for successful enactment of this specification.

I believe that there would be a value in creating links with higher education institutions that are active and interested in this area. This would be of benefit to educators, both in second and third level.

It could also be valuable to establish an accompanying research component to draw learning from the roll out of the new programme, in particular, about the impact of skills development on the work and life prospects of student participants.

## Appendix: UL Mapping Transferable Skills / Competences against the UL Graduate attributes

Source	Components						
UL Graduate Attributes	Curious	Responsible	Articulate	Courageous	Agile		
	Problem solver, critical, knowledgeable, Inquisitive, imaginative	Personally, socially, professionally, sustainably, ethically	Inter and intrapersonal, empathetic, collaborative	Tenacious, resilient, robust, transformative, enterprising	Open minded, independent, adaptive, flexible, responsive		
ESCO Transversal Skills and Competencies <sup>1</sup>	Thinking	Social and communication		Self-management		Core Skills	Life Skills and competences
ESCO Skills and competences clusters	Processing information, ideas and concepts Planning and organising Dealing with problems Thinking creatively and innovatively	Communicating Supporting others Collaborating in teams and network Leading others Following ethical code of conduct		Working efficiently Taking a proactive approach Maintaining a positive attitude Demonstrating willingness to learn		Mastering languages Working with numbers and measures Working with digital devices and applications <sup>2</sup>	Applying entrepreneurial and financial skills and competences Applying health-related skills and competences Applying cultural skills and competences Applying civic skills and competences Applying general knowledge Applying environmental skills and competences
WEF 2023 <sup>3</sup>	Analytical thinking (1) Creative thinking (2)	Dependability and attention to detail (7) Empathy and active listening (8) Leadership and social influence (9)		Resilience, flexibility and agility (3) Motivation and self-awareness (4) Quality Control (10)		Technological Literacy Resource management & operations (14)	

<sup>1</sup> <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco/publications/publication/towards-structured-and-consistent-terminology-transversal>

<sup>2</sup> Working with digital devices and applications, Operate digital hardware, Conduct web searches, Use communications software, Manage digital identity, Apply digital security measures, Create and edit digital content, Use coding skills

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/> Skills are listed along with their ranking on the World Economic Forum list.



Source	Components				
	Curiosity and lifelong learning (5) <b>Systems thinking</b> (11)	Talent management (12) Service orientation and customer service (13) <b>Design and user experience</b> (17) Multilingualism (18) Teaching and mentoring (19)		<b>AI &amp; Big Data (15)</b> Reading, writing and maths (16) Programming (20)	
<b>UNESCO<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Critical and innovative thinking</b>	<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	<b>Intrapersonal skills</b>	<b>Media and information literacy</b>	<b>Global Citizenship</b>
	<b>Creativity, entrepreneurship, resourcefulness, reflective thinking, reasoned decision making</b> , application skills	<b>Communication, Organisational skills, teamwork and collaboration</b> , sociability and collegiality, <b>empathy</b> and compassion	Self-discipline, ability to learn independently, flexibility and adaptability, self-awareness, perseverance and self-motivation, integrity and self-respect, compassion	Ability to critically evaluate information and media content  Ability to analyse information through ICT  Ethical use of ICT	<b>Awareness and openness, Tolerance and respect for diversity</b> , responsibility and ability to resolve conflict <b>Ethical and intercultural understanding</b> Democratic Participation Respect for the environment, National identity and sense of belonging  Other: Appreciation of a healthy lifestyle, respect for religious views
<b>International Labour Organisation<sup>5</sup></b>	<b>Cognitive and meta cognitive skills</b>	<b>Social and emotional skills</b>		<b>Basic Digital Skills</b>	<b>Basic Skills for Green jobs</b>
	Foundational literacies Analytical and critical thinking Creative and innovative thinking Strategic thinking	Communication Collaboration and teamwork Conflict resolution and negotiation Emotional intelligence		Use basic hardware Use basic software Operate safely in an online environment	Environmental awareness Waste reduction and waste management Energy and water efficiency

<sup>4</sup> Care E., Vista A., & Helyn K. (2019) Assessment of Transversal Competencies. Current Tools in the Asian Region. UNESCO Transversal Competencies

<sup>5</sup> ILO (2021) Global framework on core skills for life and work in the 21st century



Source	Components						
	Problem-solving and decision-making Self-reflection and learning to learn Collect, organize and analyse information Planning and organizing Career management						
US National Research Council. 2012 <sup>6</sup>	<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Intrapersonal</b>				
	i. cognitive processes and strategies, ii. knowledge, and iii. creativity e.g. critical thinking, information literacy, reasoning and argumentation, and innovation	i. teamwork and collaboration and ii. leadership e.g. communication, collaboration, responsibility, and conflict resolution	I. Intellectual openness, ii. work ethic and conscientiousness, and iii. positive core self-evaluation. e.g. flexibility, initiative, appreciation for diversity, and metacognition				
ATC21S <sup>7</sup>	<b>Ways of thinking</b>	<b>Ways of working</b>				<b>Tools for working</b>	<b>Living in the world</b>
	Creativity and innovation <b>Critical thinking,</b> <b>problem solving,</b> decision making <b>Learning to learn,</b> metacognition	<b>Communication</b> <b>Collaboration</b> (teamwork)				<b>Information literacy</b> (includes research on sources, evidence, biases, etc.) ICT literacy	<b>Citizenship</b> – local and global; Life and career Personal and social responsibility – including cultural awareness and competence

<sup>6</sup> Pellegrino J.W. & Hilton M.L. (2012) Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century <http://nap.nationalacademies.org/13398>

<sup>7</sup> [The ATC21S Method | SpringerLink](#)