



Senior Cycle Review: Consultation Document

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Introduction

The NCCA commenced a review of senior cycle education in late 2016. A scoping exercise across nine jurisdictions internationally in 2017 was followed by a school review and a series of national seminars in 2018/2019. Teachers, students and parents across 41 schools worked with the NCCA to identify key strengths in senior cycle and areas where there is scope for further development.

This document seeks to continue and extend that conversation, providing the basis for a public consultation. It begins by offering some reflections on the main ideas emerging from the review and then outlines areas for future development. Participants in this consultation will have opportunities to comment on the scope of the areas for development, including whether some ideas have been given too much or too little emphasis, if there is anything they would like to see added to the conversation at this point, and what areas should be given priority in formulating a timeline for developments.

A detailed collation of the feedback gathered during senior cycle review to date is available in the accompanying document, *Interim report on the review of senior cycle education* (NCCA, 2019). This interim report outlines the process used to conduct the review to date and draws upon multiple sources of feedback, including:

- *Upper Secondary Education in Nine Jurisdictions: Overview Report* (NCCA, 2017)
- *Senior Cycle Review: Analysis of discussions in schools on the purpose of senior cycle education in Ireland* (ESRI, 2018)
- *Student, teacher and parent perspectives on senior cycle education* (ESRI, 2019)
- *National Seminars feedback summary* (NCCA, 2019)
- Research into senior cycle education in Ireland, including a number of ESRI longitudinal study reports. A bibliography is included in the *Interim report on the review of senior cycle education* (NCCA, 2019).

Senior cycle education aims to serve many purposes. It aspires to provide a high quality and holistic educational experience for all students, as they further develop their knowledge, skills and qualities as learners and young people. It seeks to support and enhance their wellbeing; to improve their life chances; and to contribute to their readiness for diverse and changing futures. It lays the foundations for full active citizenship, as young people increasingly shape and contribute to their community,

society and economy. It aims to support coherent transitions to apprenticeships, traineeships, employment and further and higher education and plays an important role in acting as a reliable, selection mechanism for entry to higher education. It is a major challenge for any educational programme to meet and fulfil all of these purposes in a balanced and proportional way.

Listening to the voices emerging from the review, it's clear that there is much that is valued in the current senior cycle. There are high levels of public trust and confidence in the education our young people currently experience. Student-teacher relationships strengthen and evolve during this phase of education as students mature and take increasing responsibility for their own learning and decisions. A wide range of learning opportunities are available to students via subjects, modules and work experience across four different senior cycle programmes. Students have many opportunities to contribute to their school community and to their wider community and society, particularly during transition year.

However, review participants also commented that as senior cycle progresses, focus on Leaving Certificate examinations often comes to dominate the senior cycle experience. Concerns were raised about the, sometimes negative, backwash effects on learning and teaching resulting from the extensive focus on and preparations for these high stakes examinations. Beyond transition year, it was suggested that there is an over-emphasis on a single pathway, the Leaving Certificate Established, with excessive societal and media focus on the very highest achievers. Attention to the full range of skills and qualities students develop during senior cycle can gradually diminish, with focus placed primarily on the knowledge and skills which are formally examined and valued for certification. A narrow, if understandable focus on examination performance and on maximising CAO points across a range of subjects can emerge and can heighten stress for teachers and students alike. Access to technical, vocational, creative and professional learning is limited and transitions to apprenticeships, traineeships and employment can lack coherence and can be unevenly supported. All of this raises questions about how well senior cycle currently meets the needs of all students.

A need for clearer lines of continuity and progression from junior into senior cycle emerged from the review. Significant changes are currently taking place at junior cycle. Across all subjects and short courses there is an increased focus on the knowledge that is deepened through embedding of a range of skills. Junior cycle now offers more flexible programme design; a wider range of curriculum components and approaches to assessment; new ways of reporting on learning and achievement; and improved provision for students with special educational needs. These changes are relevant when considering how well senior cycle builds upon students' prior learning and experiences throughout their time in education, from early childhood through primary schooling and junior cycle. Senior cycle

also has distinct qualities associated with this particular phase of education. It seeks to provide opportunities for increased specialisation, building firm foundations for making the transition to adult life and strengthening the capacity of students for participation in society as citizens and openness to lifelong learning.

Meeting the needs of all students will involve providing a wider range of learning pathways through senior cycle, supporting students' holistic development – intellectual, personal and social – and linking into higher education, further education, apprenticeships, traineeships and the world of work. Elements of the TY, LCA and LCVP programmes, which have been in place now for over 20 years, undoubtedly have much to contribute to the development of new pathways. Senior cycle review feedback on each of the programmes, similar to much of the existing research into these programmes, will provide valuable insights as their future role is being considered.

Many participants in the review expressed the view that schools will need support to diversify provision and students will need support in navigating a wider range of choices. The range of sites of learning being used may need to expand. Career guidance and work experience may have an enhanced role to play in supporting students to make wise, informed choices. Widening the range of assessment approaches in use can broaden the range of knowledge, skills and abilities which are valued and recognised whilst, at the same time, the examinations system continues to play a very important role. Senior cycle options and reporting can evolve to recognise the wide range of post-school destinations students aspire to and need support to access, whilst the CAO system continues to act as a selection mechanism for entry to higher education.

In setting out how senior cycle may develop over the coming years, it will be important to think carefully about pacing; to maintain open lines of communication, particularly with schools; to continue and build further stakeholder engagement; to build capacity for change collaboratively and to plan carefully for enactment of any changes. A significant reform of junior cycle is still embedding in schools and developments at senior cycle will need to be considered in light of the opportunities and challenges this reform has presented to date. In this context, it would appear that growth and development rather than radical overhaul of senior cycle – evolution not revolution – is called for. This was certainly the view of educational change at senior cycle that was voiced most often in the review to date.

A clear vision for an evolved senior cycle is thus emerging from this review. In this future, students have more diverse pathways to choose from, with scope to combine learning in a variety of ways. Senior cycle builds upon the learning students have achieved across their time in education, from early childhood, through primary and junior cycle education. More technical, vocational, creative and

professional learning options are available. Enhanced support for students to assist their decision-making is provided, with flexibility for students to adapt their pathway through senior cycle as their sense of the future they envisage for themselves emerges. All pathways contribute to students' social, personal and intellectual development, across the entire duration of senior cycle, as they deepen and develop their knowledge, skills and qualities. Broader approaches to assessment complement examinations and some form of record of achievement provides a fuller picture of student learning and achievement which can be used to access a variety of post-school pathways. Learning happens in many places, including some which are outside of schools. Second-chance opportunities for learning and assessment are provided.

Achieving this future will require continued and ongoing engagement from all stakeholders and a commitment to building on the strengths of our existing senior cycle to realise an improved, more responsive and holistic senior cycle experience for all. Stakeholders will need to recognise their ideas in the developments and feel that the realisation of what is proposed is supported and is something they can meaningfully work towards.

The main areas for development emerging from the review so far are outlined in more detail below and will be explored further during this consultation. The consultation will also invite conversations about the resources, supports and capacity building across schools and stakeholders that may be required for changes proposed to be realised meaningfully in schools. As senior cycle evolves, inter-agency collaboration across a range of organisations will be needed, both within post-primary education and across those organisations who manage the transition to future pathways beyond school.

Feedback from this public consultation, along with review feedback to date and insights from research will provide the basis for an advisory report to the Minister for Education and Skills on the nature, pace and scale of senior cycle developments proposed in the coming years.

Main ideas and areas for development

The main ideas and areas for development outlined below will be explored during the consultation. For clarity, a glossary of key terms is included at the end of this document.

Purpose

Philosophers have long debated the purpose of education and the role it fulfils in society and for the individual. The values at the heart of senior cycle are outlined in *Senior Cycle: Towards Learning, Listening to Schools* (NCCA, 2009), namely equality and inclusion; justice and fairness; respect for human dignity and identity; and freedom and democracy. Eight principles underpin these values: quality, inclusive education, continuity, choice and flexibility, participation, relevance and enjoyment, wellbeing, creativity and innovation and lifelong learning.

Fundamental to a review of senior cycle education is the task of identifying and agreeing the purpose underpinning education in the senior cycle of post-primary schooling. In the review to date, the purpose that has emerged could be described along the following lines:

Senior cycle education aims to help every student towards fulfilling their potential. Every student is empowered to deepen their knowledge and skills throughout senior cycle as they mature and develop intellectually, personally and socially. The educational experience at senior cycle equips students for diverse and sustainable futures so that they can embrace full, active citizenship and participation in society and the economy as they learn and as they make the transition to life beyond school.

Lifelong learning was evoked during the review as a strong desire to help students develop a love of learning; to provide them with second chance opportunities for learning and to learn at a pace suited to their needs, abilities and aptitudes. A strong desire for improved *continuity* from school to post-school destinations emerged, whilst mixed views were expressed about the transition from junior cycle and/or transition year into leaving certificate programmes. *Participation, relevance and enjoyment* and *creativity and innovation* are seen as important aspects of senior cycle which are currently most evident during transition year and in students' subject choices. Mixed views were expressed about the extent to which the current senior cycle is *inclusive* with improved *flexibility* and *choice* seen as one factor with the potential to significantly enhance and create a more inclusive senior cycle. The *quality* of senior cycle students' current experience was both affirmed (through high quality teaching) and queried (in the perceived over-emphasis on examinations). *Wellbeing* was seen as both supported and challenged by the senior cycle experience. Wellbeing support factors identified during the review include an open, supportive school climate; positive student-teacher relationships; work experience and career guidance; high quality teaching, high quality CPD and teacher collaboration, whilst challenges to wellbeing identified include curriculum overload across seven subjects; excessive focus on terminal examinations leading to narrowing of teaching and learning; high stress and/or disengagement; and concerns about the future.

For further elaboration on the purpose of senior cycle education emerging from the review to date, please see pages 26 – 34 of the *Interim Report on the Review of Senior Cycle Education* (NCCA, 2019). Feedback relating specifically to inclusive education and wellbeing is on pages 54 – 60 of the same report.

In coming to an agreed purpose for senior cycle education, feedback from the review and from this consultation, alongside insights from philosophy, research and recent developments in education will be considered further.

Purpose - focus for consultation

To what extent do you agree with the purposes for senior cycle emerging from the review?

Is there too much or too little emphasis on particular aspects?

Is there anything you would like to see added to the conversation about the purposes of senior cycle education?

A vision for senior cycle learners

In exploring the kind of senior cycle education students should experience now and in the future, review participants discussed a range of interconnected ideas. The holistic nature of the senior cycle experience, taking the whole student into account, was affirmed. Living a vision of senior cycle which contributes to meaningful inclusion and enhances wellbeing for all was considered very important.

Knowledge, skills and qualities

The central importance of disciplinary knowledge was fully affirmed and the need for students to be challenged cognitively and creatively as they learn and deepen their knowledge and skills was repeatedly iterated during the review. Review participants considered the skills and qualities students should have opportunities to develop further as they engage with and apply knowledge within and across a range of disciplines. The skills and qualities they evoked can be grouped as follows:

- higher-order thinking; critical thinking and analysis; problem solving and information processing; independent and collaborative learning; creativity and innovation; and skills in the areas of research, writing, communication, presentation and digital technologies

- intrapersonal and interpersonal qualities, including resilience, self-respect, self-acceptance and confidence, compassion, empathy, responsibility, self-management and organisation, teamwork, curiosity and a love of learning
- life skills such as financial management, the ability to navigate and actively participate in the real world and the digital world; and knowledge and understanding of social, personal and health education (including relationships and sexuality) and the world of work.

Further feedback on the knowledge, skills and qualities senior cycle should help students to develop and the teaching and learning approaches review participants spoke about can be found on pages 27 – 33 of the *Interim Report on the Review of Senior Cycle Education* (NCCA, 2019).

Knowledge, skills and qualities - focus for consultation

To what extent do you agree that these are the skills and qualities students should develop during senior cycle as they engage with knowledge across a range of disciplines?

Is there too much or too little emphasis on particular aspects?

Is there anything you would like to see added to the conversation about the knowledge, skills and qualities students should develop throughout senior cycle?

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning approaches, school culture, individual, familial and societal factors all contribute towards helping students to develop their knowledge, skills and qualities and contribute to varying degrees towards their overall wellbeing. Whilst familial and societal factors undoubtedly impact on young people’s engagement with and readiness for learning, quality teaching and learning and an inclusive school culture also profoundly impact on students’ cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and wellbeing.

Teacher judgement is pivotal to deciding the range of pedagogical approaches to use, adapting them to meet the needs of students; to suit the disciplinary knowledge and skills being developed; and to assist students in developing a range of intrapersonal and interpersonal qualities which have the potential to enhance their learning, their experience of education and their lives.

Arising from the review to date, an emerging vision for the teaching and learning that should be experienced by all students at senior cycle is one that:

- is appropriately challenging, enabling students to use their minds well and to be open to new and deeper learning experiences and possibilities
- empowers all students to learn
- recognises and affirms all talents and abilities
- addresses all learning needs
- enhances peer-to-peer and student-teacher relationships
- contributes to students' personal development, maturity and responsibility for their own learning
- encourages reflection on the learning process and lays a foundation for lifelong learning
- provides links within and across learning areas
- has meaning for students and connects with their lives and the wider world.

During the review, various teaching and learning approaches were affirmed, including direct instruction, class discussion, peer learning, pair and group work, linking learning to real world examples and applications, project and research-based learning, portfolios, practical learning by making/creating, oral communication of learning and interdisciplinary learning. The potential of digital technologies to enhance learning and improve accessibility across all disciplines was also discussed. It was suggested that active teaching and learning approaches can enhance engagement and deepen understanding, when utilised skilfully, but that it can be difficult to find time for and generate engagement with these approaches within the current context of the Leaving Certificate Established programme.

Teaching and learning - focus for consultation

To what extent do you agree with the vision for teaching and learning emerging from the review?

Is there too much or too little emphasis on particular aspects?

Is there anything you would like to see added to the conversation about teaching and learning in senior cycle?

Pathways and programmes

In considering the question of duration, programmes and pathways that students experience in senior cycle, it was suggested that students should continue to have choice in how long they spend in senior cycle (two or three years). Participants in the review reaffirmed the need for senior cycle to recognise and affirm all talents and abilities, supporting all students towards fulfilling their potential. Over-emphasis on a single pathway, the Leaving Certificate Established, was seen as contributing to areas such as technical, vocational, creative and professional learning being under-developed. Restrictions on the choices available and pressure to conform to familial and societal expectations can lead students to make strategic choices about programmes, subjects and level which did not necessarily reflect their interests, abilities, dispositions and aptitudes. Ring-fencing was seen as limiting students' opportunities and choices. In this context, there is strong support for providing a wider range of options for learning pathways at senior cycle, with flexibility to combine learning in a variety of ways and linking in to higher education, further education, apprenticeships, traineeships and the working world. This is seen as having the potential to make senior cycle fully inclusive and the choices that students make more meaningful as they figure out what further learning and career options they might like to pursue. A wider range of options could be achieved by adapting the pathways currently available within senior cycle and adding further options. Areas for development discussed include to:

- reduce the ring-fencing of existing programmes
- explore the possibility of combining existing programmes into a single senior cycle curriculum for all students with multiple pathways and combinations available for students to choose and follow, accompanied by appropriate assessment and reporting arrangements
- enhance career guidance to support students in making decisions about what pathways and combinations might best suit their needs and future plans
- explore ways of providing further options in the areas of technical, vocational, creative and professional learning
- scope ways for senior cycle learning to be experienced and optimised across a range of contexts and locations, including across schools, through online courses, in the Youthreach sector, in special schools, in adult education settings etc.
- provide follow-on learning for students who complete junior cycle at Level 1 and Level 2, thus allowing for age-related participation in senior cycle programmes whilst a different level of qualification is being achieved

- explore ways to further enhance second-chance opportunities for those wishing to return to senior cycle following a break in full-time education and/or wishing to use a record of senior cycle achievement to date to access further education
- explore the range of off-site learning currently in use (such as work experience locations, co-location of schools on a single campus, utilising the learning available where a school is co-situated with a further education centre,) and those with potential for further expansion (such as online learning opportunities) with a view to enhancing the range of sites for learning in senior cycle
- explore meaningful ways to support at-risk groups of students, including supporting schools in creating and maintaining safe, supportive and inclusive environments

Further feedback on pathways and programmes in senior cycle can be found on pages 43 - 53 of the *Interim Report on the Review of Senior Cycle Education* (NCCA, 2019).

Pathways and programmes - focus for consultation

To what extent do you agree with the proposed areas for development above?

Is there too much or too little emphasis on particular aspects?

Is there anything you would like to see added to the conversation about pathways and programmes in senior cycle?

Curriculum components

Review participants spoke in positive terms about the wide variety of curriculum components currently available in senior cycle. Students in TY experience modular components often organised thematically and with a strong interdisciplinary orientation. In LCA, the curriculum is organised in modules over four sessions aligned according to four discipline areas, with reporting at the end of each session. In LCE the curriculum is organised in terms of subjects, with some modules in subject areas which are not examined. LCVP students engage in two modules in addition to their LCE subjects. Many review participants expressed a desire for subjects and their related foundational, disciplinary knowledge to continue to be the lens through which the majority of senior cycle learning takes place.

In the review to date, when asked what curriculum components, if any, should be compulsory, English/literacy, mathematics/numeracy and life skills were most frequently suggested. Digital literacy; financial literacy; work experience; social, personal and health education (including

relationships and sexuality education); citizenship and political education; Gaeilge; sustainability and climate change education; culture and multiculturalism; and opportunities for interdisciplinary learning were also proposed, with mixed views as to whether these areas should be optional or compulsory. Mixed views were expressed on retaining Gaeilge as a compulsory subject.

Areas for development related to curriculum components in senior cycle include to:

- review the current list of subjects and consider whether subjects should remain/be added/be discontinued within the overall context of continuing to offer a wide range and variety of subjects
- scope ways for students to combine full subjects with shorter-duration learning in the programme they are following. This would facilitate breadth of experience whilst also allowing for increased specialisation and greater flexibility in the curricular components students can select and combine
- explore the practical challenges and resource implications in offering a wide-range of subjects, modules and learning experiences to all students and devising solutions to support all schools, including small and single-sex schools, to do so
- consider what provision, if any, should be made for subject areas that have the potential to directly enhance student wellbeing such as physical education, CSPE and SPHE and explore other factors which enhance and inhibit wellbeing in senior cycle.

In exploring curriculum components, key questions relating to curriculum breadth, curriculum overload and compulsory curriculum areas and subjects were raised during the review. Areas for development include to:

- maintain breadth by making modules available in areas such as civic, social and political education, social, personal and health education, career guidance, work experience, volunteering, etc.
- develop all senior cycle curriculum components, including subjects, in manageable but substantial units to facilitate flexible school programme design and also provide the flexibility to students to follow pathways and change them.
- explore the overall volume of learning/curriculum components/time that should be associated with senior cycle programmes, including the number of full subjects studied in the Leaving Certificate Established
- scope which curriculum components or curriculum areas, if any, should be compulsory in a revised senior cycle.

Further feedback on structure and curriculum components in senior cycle can be found on pages 35-42 of the *Interim Report on the Review of Senior Cycle Education* (NCCA, 2019).

Curriculum components - focus for consultation

To what extent do you agree with the proposed areas for development above?

What solutions do you envisage for addressing problems relating to curriculum overload?

What curriculum components, if any, do you think should be compulsory in senior cycle?

Is there anything you would like to see added to the conversation about curriculum components in senior cycle?

Assessment

The many strengths of current senior cycle assessment approaches were affirmed during the review. Review participants spoke positively about the varied ways teachers use assessment to scaffold and support student learning, with a variety of approaches to assessment used across the four programmes, including projects, tasks, key assignments, reports, portfolios, practicals, orals, interviews and examinations. Teachers and parents place high value on having a system of assessment at senior cycle which is widely viewed as objective and fair. A desire to broaden and rebalance existing assessment approaches, building on key strengths already evident in senior cycle assessment emerged from the review. It was also suggested that assessment could be further spread out over time. This could have a range of benefits such as providing a way to complete aspects of senior cycle in one year, thus facilitating students in keeping a broad focus in fifth year and specialising more in sixth year, and, overall, reducing pressure on a single examination. It could also have a range of drawbacks, including spacing out rather than reducing pressure; creating challenges in devising school timetables; having logistical and resource implications. Arising from the review to date, areas for development in assessment include to:

- further develop existing assessment arrangements experienced in LCA, LCVP, TY and LCE, for example by exploring the possibility of utilising portfolios, interviews, task completion and accumulation of credits in aspects of senior cycle assessment

- explore the role that additional assessment components currently play in subjects and scope the suitability of the range and number of assessment components in use across all subjects (currently, 24 of 37 subjects include two or more assessment components in the form of projects, orals, practicals etc.)
- review the potential to increase the weighting currently given to additional assessment components
- consider the potential benefits and drawbacks of further spreading out assessments over time, for example, by having two examinations in each subject, one at the end of fifth year, one at the end of sixth year
- explore ways to provide assessment arrangements that enhance second-chance opportunities for learners
- in general, scope ways to broaden assessment and examination approaches and methods so that students have opportunities to display a wider range of learning in a variety of ways.

Further feedback on assessment in senior cycle can be found on pages 61 – 67 of the *Interim Report on the Review of Senior Cycle Education* (NCCA, 2019).

Assessment - focus for consultation

To what extent do you agree with the proposed areas for development above?

Is there too much or too little emphasis on particular aspects?

Is there anything you would like to see added to the conversation about assessment in senior cycle?

Reporting

Reporting at senior cycle serves many purposes including as a statement of learning, as a student record of their achievements in post-primary school and as a selection mechanism for third level based on their assessment results. In the review it was suggested that reporting of student achievement needs to more fully reflect the range of learning experiences, knowledge, skills, qualities and achievements students have gained from their time in senior cycle or may be gaining from a future senior cycle. It should also recognise and affirm the diverse range of talents and abilities displayed by students and so provide for meaningful and coherent transitions to further learning.

In order to achieve these aims, areas for further development include:

- exploring ways to provide a fuller picture of students' achievements and contribute towards making reporting broader, more valued and more meaningful
- explore the reporting needs of students, further education institutions and other learning environments, including the needs of students returning to education
- explore creative and practical ways of incorporating broader reporting arrangements, building on existing broad reporting practices in TY and LCA, and at junior cycle.

Further feedback on reporting in senior cycle can be found on pages 68 – 74 of the *Interim Report on the Review of Senior Cycle Education* (NCCA, 2019)

Reporting - focus for consultation

To what extent do you agree with the proposed areas for development above?

Is there too much or too little emphasis on particular aspects?

Is there anything you would like to see added to the conversation about reporting in senior cycle?

Priorities and supports

There were many discussions during the review about the nature, pace and scale of change in and introduction of any possible developments at senior cycle. In this context, there were calls to:

- identify key priorities for senior cycle and create a suggested timeline for developments, taking into account the system's capacity for change
- explore supports needed for schools, teachers, school leaders, students and the system in order to facilitate further evolution in senior cycle
- consider research relating to curricular change and the potential to move towards professional learning communities, with additional support, as a key means of supporting change
- focus on the implications for career guidance provision in schools of providing a range of pathways through senior cycle

Priorities and supports - focus for consultation

Which of the areas for development for senior cycle do you think should be prioritised in creating a timeline for developments over the coming years?

What supports do you think are most needed to facilitate and create sustainable and meaningful evolution in senior cycle?

Is there anything further you would like to see added to the conversation about priorities and supports?

Next steps

An information bulletin (the third in a series) will issue to all post-primary schools and to a wide range of stakeholders and will be available online to mark the commencement of, and inform educationalists and the general public about, the consultation. All groups and stakeholders who have participated in senior cycle review to date will be invited to take part in this consultation and asked to help raise awareness among others that the consultation is happening. The consultation is open to everyone.

Consultation event details will also be posted on social media and we encourage all stakeholders to raise awareness of and promote engagement with the consultation.

People and organisations will be invited to participate in a number of different ways, including through:

- an online survey
- written submissions
- focus group meetings
- a national consultation conference
- meetings with stakeholders.

Please take part in the public consultation by completing our survey at www.ncca.ie/seniorcycle, by emailing a written submission or by sending expressions of interest to get involved in focus group meetings to seniorcycle@ncca.ie. This document and its accompanying report are open for public consultation until 1st November 2019.

Following the consultation, priority areas, longer-term goals and a proposed timeline and advice on the pace and scale for developments in senior cycle education will be generated in the form of an advisory report, which will issue to the Minister for Education and Skills for consideration.

Glossary of key terms

The glossary of terms included below seeks to provide clarity on the terms used in this document, with the aim of supporting consultation discussions.

Module

At present in senior cycle, students may study modules in Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied or in LCVP. These modules usually indicate the learning that should be specified over a shorter timeframe than a traditional subject in LCE. The methods of assessment for the completion of modules also vary. Some are rewarded on completion (TY) some by completion of key assignments (LCA), some by portfolio (LCVP) and some by terminal assessment (LCA). For the purpose of this consultation a module will be taken to mean learning that is completed over a shorter timeframe than a traditional LCE subject.

Unit of learning

For the purpose of this consultation, a unit of learning will be taken to mean the division of the learning specified in current curriculum documentation into two or more units.

Technical, vocational, creative and professional pathways

The traditional view of vocational education has focused on linking this learning to a narrow range of career options mainly in the apprenticeship sector. To broaden this view, this report and consultation has used the term 'technical, vocational, professional and creative pathways' to focus on valuing this learning in its own right, as well as thinking about how it might link to post-school destinations including further education, apprenticeships, traineeships and higher education. Such pathways include, for example, cyber security, accounting, insurance, financial services, software developer, hospitality sector, auctioneering, agri-management, biopharma, logistics, engineering, graphic design, construction, health and beauty, CGI artist, dance, drama, performance, etc.

Wellbeing

Schools have a central role to play in supporting and promoting students' learning about wellbeing and for wellbeing. Students learn for wellbeing when their whole experience of school life including all the day-to-day interactions, both within and beyond the classroom, are respectful and caring. Thinking about learning for wellbeing requires that we consider not only what students learn but also how they learn it. Learning for wellbeing can be nurtured in all subjects and by all teachers. Students

learn about wellbeing through specific areas of the curriculum and various wellbeing events and initiatives that are organised to develop awareness, knowledge and skills about wellbeing.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and, as such, it is used to support and improve learning by helping learners and teachers to identify next steps in their learning. In this sense, the most valuable assessment takes place at the site of learning where learners receive support and guidance. Learning is best supported in the classroom context when clear goals are established between teacher and learner and when images of successful learning can be shared by reference to those goals.

At senior cycle, there are a range of assessment approaches currently used for certification purposes. These include: terminal written examinations (most subjects in LCE), oral examinations (language subjects), practical examinations (home economic, music), project work (history, geography, construction studies, DCG), portfolio (LCVP link modules), interviews (LCA), coursework (politics and society, PE, computer science).

Reporting

Reporting at senior cycle should contribute to the personal development of students, support learning and teaching while being manageable and accessible for everyone involved. It should clearly communicate the student's progress in learning and provide information on a broad range of achievement. It should also be of value to the student, to further/higher education institutions, employers, those offering apprenticeships and traineeships and other sites of learning, including second chance education and adult education.

List of Acronyms

CAO	Central Applications Office
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
L1LP	Level one learning programme is a programme for a specific group of students with general learning disabilities in the range of lower functioning moderate to severe and profound categories.
L2LP	Level two learning programme is a programme for a specific group of students who have general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories.
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied is a two-year Leaving Certificate available to students who wish to follow a programme with a strong practical and vocational emphasis.
LCE	Leaving Certificate Established is the leaving certificate course followed by the majority of students in senior cycle.
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme is designed to give a strong vocational dimension to the Leaving Certificate (established) and is followed by some LCE students if they fulfil certain criteria.
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
SEC	State Examinations Commission
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TY	Transition Year refers to an optional year that can be taken by students after junior cycle before starting senior cycle