



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 25th April 2025 at 5pm.

Data protection and open data section

NCCA is committed to protecting your privacy and does not collect any personal information about you through this written submission, other than information that you provide by your own consent. Where a respondent selects 'yes' to the question: *Are you consenting to be listed as a respondent to this consultation*, respondents are consenting to having their name / organisation's name published in the final report as respondents to the consultation.

Where a respondent selects 'yes' to the question: *Are you consenting for your submission to be published*, respondents are consenting to having their submission published on ncca.ie.

Any personal information you volunteer to the NCCA will be respected and NCCA will apply the highest standards of security and confidentiality in accordance with GDPR (2016) and the Data Protection Acts (1998 - 2018). Further information on the NCCA's Data Protection Policy can be found at <https://ncca.ie/en/legal-disclaimer-and-data-protection/>.

NCCA, as a public body operating under the Open Data and Public Service Information Directive (2021), is required to publish publicly funded research. In accordance with this Directive, any data from this will be anonymised and aggregated and only made available after the final report is published. This is expected to be in June 2025. All open data is made available alongside the report itself on the website www.ncca.ie



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?

Institute of Guidance Counsellors

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

- ☒ **Yes** ✓
- ☐ No

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

Eimear Mc Donnell

Are you consenting to have the submission published on ncca.ie?

- ☒ **Yes** ✓
- ☐ 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 LCVP) 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.



The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) is the professional body representing over 1,500 qualified guidance counsellors working in second-level schools, Further Education and Training (FET), higher education, and private practice throughout Ireland. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the draft specification for Leaving Certificate Community, Life and Work Studies (CLWS).

We commend the NCCA for its efforts in updating the curriculum to better reflect the evolving needs of students preparing for life beyond secondary education. The proposed CLWS specification aligns with the IGC's mission to support students in their personal, educational, and career development. The emphasis on self-awareness, community engagement, and workplace readiness is timely and relevant.

While the stated rationale and aims of Community, Life and Work Studies (CLWS) are commendable and align with the values of senior cycle education, the document would benefit from clarity on the proposed new format of CLWS (i.e. whether it is intended to be stand-alone modules or a subject). Explicitly stating the intended structure and providing a rationale for that decision would support a better understanding of how CLWS fits within the broader senior cycle framework.

Greater clarity on its intended status would also help schools plan for its implementation and understand how it complements or differs from current provision. Its relevance and expected impact would be strengthened by clearer articulation of how CLWS is intended to build on or align with existing supports and programmes, including Guidance, Wellbeing, and CSPE. It is crucial that these modules complement, rather than replace or overlap with the work of the guidance counsellor and the delivery of the Whole School Guidance Programme and senior cycle guidance/careers classes.

The loss of the "Programme" status may also have implications for Programme Co-ordinators, including a potential reduction in co-ordination hours. Clarification is needed on how such roles and responsibilities will be maintained or restructured under the new model.



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.

--

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.

--

**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.

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.



Integration with Guidance Counselling Services

The successful implementation of CLWS will depend in part on how well it complements and aligns with existing student support structures, including guidance counselling, without placing additional teaching responsibilities on guidance counsellors. Research from the IGC (2024) highlights significant disparities in the allocation of guidance hours across schools, with many counsellors operating under considerable resource constraints. While collaboration with guidance counsellors can enrich the delivery of CLWS, particularly in areas like career learning and personal development, this must be supported by adequate time and staffing. The IGC recommends increasing the overall guidance allocation to prevent undue pressure and to ensure that all students have equitable access to guidance counselling services.

We are concerned about the expectations surrounding the “consultation with a guidance counsellor” under Strand 2: “Understanding My Progression Opportunities” (p.16). While collaboration with the guidance counsellor can enhance this strand, it is essential that the specification clearly defines the nature and scope of such consultation. Guidance counsellors should not be expected to deliver or assume primary responsibility for the module, especially in the absence of formal provision of additional hours and targeted continuing professional development. Any role envisaged for the guidance counsellor must respect their professional remit, ensure meaningful but manageable involvement, and be accompanied by protected and expanded guidance hours. At the same time, care must be taken to ensure that career-related work is not delivered by unqualified personnel in the absence of appropriate oversight and guidance structures.

Therefore, the IGC recommends that resources be allocated to ensure all schools have access to qualified guidance counsellors who can contribute to the delivery of CLWS modules, particularly in areas relating to personal development and career planning. The IGC also recommends the provision of appropriate training and support to assist guidance counsellors in navigating the transition from LCVP to CLWS, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary knowledge while maintaining their core counselling responsibilities.



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.

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.



The IGC welcomes the move towards more contemporary and relevant language in the specification, including the inclusion of topics such as the role of AI in the job application and shortlisting process and the use of competency-based application forms, which reflect current trends in recruitment and career development. To support the effective delivery of these topics, the IGC recommends the provision of appropriate training and continuing professional development for those involved in implementing the specification.

Inclusivity

The IGC welcomes the recognition that “the educational experience in senior cycle should be inclusive of every student, respond to their learning strengths and needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity” (NCCA 2025, p.1) but highlights that not all students have access to guidance counselling. Students in Special Schools have not been granted their right to “appropriate guidance” as set out in the 1998 Education Act (Indecon 2019). Furthermore, there is no additional guidance or support for students with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) in mainstream post-primary schools (IGC 2024).

Securing appropriate work experience placements can be challenging for students, particularly those with AEN, who often face additional barriers. Despite these challenges, it is essential that AEN students are facilitated and supported in securing this vital component of their education. The disparity in access to meaningful work experience opportunities undermines the principles of equity and inclusion that are fundamental to our education system.

Guidance counsellors play a crucial role in supporting students with AEN. They are well-placed to work with work experience Co-ordinators and AEN Co-ordinators to help AEN students secure meaningful work placements tailored to their unique needs. However, to effectively fulfil this role, they require adequate access to these students and an appropriate allocation of guidance hours. Without sufficient time and resources, guidance counsellors may be unable to provide the support necessary to secure meaningful work placements for AEN students.

The CLWS specification should explicitly acknowledge the unique challenges AEN students face in accessing work experience opportunities and outline strategies to address these challenges. It should also clarify who will be responsible for supporting students in securing and preparing for placements, particularly if the Programme Co-ordination role no longer exists. Adequate time and resources must be allocated to those assigned this work (e.g. guidance counsellors, teachers, or another designated staff member) to ensure AEN students are effectively supported.



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 LCVP) 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 draft specification for Community, Life and Work Studies (CLWS) introduces an Additional Assessment Component (AAC) entitled “My Learning in Practice”, accounting for 60% of the overall marks, alongside a 40% written examination. This structure offers a balanced approach to evaluating student learning.

However, the specification provides limited information regarding the structure, content, and assessment criteria of the AAC. Terms such as “brief,” “portfolio,” and “multi-modal report” require definitions to help determine how CLWS will be assessed, including examples and sample examination papers.

Components like career investigations were integral parts of the assessment for the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The absence of comparable detail in the current specification raises concerns about preparedness and consistency in implementation.

The IGC recommends providing comprehensive guidelines outlining the structure, content, and assessment criteria of the AAC, along with professional development and resources to support its effective delivery. By addressing these areas, the NCCA can enhance the clarity and effectiveness of CLWS, ensuring it meets its intended objectives and supports student development.



Implications for CAO and Minimum Entry Requirements

While the specification highlights the module's importance, it remains unclear whether CLWS will be considered a core or additional module within the school timetable. Greater clarity is needed regarding whether it will be treated as an eighth subject for Leaving Certificate purposes.

There are also implications for CAO points and minimum entry requirements, as some Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) may not recognise CLWS for entry purposes, potentially undermining its value among students. It would be beneficial if the NCCA collaborated with HEIs to explore recognition pathways.

Examination

We welcome the clarity that each component of the examination will be set and examined by the State Examinations Commission. The draft specification confirms that the examination will be at a common level and outlines the thresholds for Distinction, Merit, etc. However, there is no information on how these grades will translate into CAO points. This clarity is essential if the module is to be treated equitably within the Senior Cycle offering.



Supports for Successful Enactment

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

Integration within whole school guidance

According to the Department of Education (2025b), guidance encompasses personal and social development, educational guidance, and career guidance, delivered through a Whole School Guidance (WSG) approach. In this model, the guidance counsellor plays a “pivotal role” in leading and coordinating the school’s guidance programme in consultation with school management and other relevant staff members (DoE 2025b, p.8).

The WSG approach is designed to support the needs of all students, ensuring a balanced provision of personal, social, educational, and career guidance. Guidance counsellors operate within a continuum of support model, providing interventions at varying levels based on student needs.

The draft specification for Community, Life and Work Studies (CLWS) notably lacks references to the role of guidance, which is a critical component of student development in post-primary education (DES HSE DOH 2013; NEPS 2021; DoE 2025b).

The absence of explicit integration of guidance within the CLWS draft specification suggests a missed opportunity to align the module with the established WSG framework. This omission may lead to inconsistencies in implementation and a lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of guidance counsellors in relation to the new module.

Role Clarification

To facilitate a smooth transition and maintain the effectiveness of vocational education within schools, the IGC recommends defining the responsibilities of the CLWS teacher to ensure clarity in relation to the previous Programme Co-ordinator role. Additionally, establishing guidelines for collaboration between CLWS teachers and guidance counsellors is essential, emphasising complementary roles and shared objectives. By addressing these considerations, schools can ensure that the transition from LCVP to CLWS enhances vocational education and supports students’ preparation for life and work.



Evidence base

The IGC emphasises the importance of explicitly referencing the policy and research documents that inform the CLWS specification. Incorporating a reference list of key documents adds credibility and demonstrates a commitment to well-informed, research-based, and data-driven decisions that serve the best interests of the school community.

Key documents such as Circular 0001/2025 on Whole School Guidance (WSG) (DoE 2025a), the National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance 2024–2030 (Government of Ireland 2023a; 2023b), and the Draft Guidelines on the Implementation of Whole School Guidance in Post-Primary Schools (DoE 2025b) are particularly pertinent. Referencing these would help situate the specification within the broader policy landscape. However, care must be taken to ensure that CLWS is not perceived as a replacement for formal guidance provision but rather as a complementary component that supports, without duplicating, the holistic aims of the WSG model.

Furthermore, terminology should be consistent throughout the document e.g. the term “Link Modules” appears on page 31 but is not used elsewhere, potentially causing confusion given its association with the previous LCVP framework.

By providing a comprehensive reference list and ensuring consistent terminology, the specification would facilitate better understanding and implementation among all those in education, including guidance counsellors who operate within the WSG framework.

Conclusion

The IGC supports the direction of the proposed CLWS specification and its focus on holistic student development. This initiative aligns with the IGC’s mission to support students in their personal, educational, and career development.

While we welcome the development of CWLS, it must complement rather than replace or blur the role of the guidance counsellor. Clear guidance must be issued to schools about how it fits into the timetable and subject choices, and its status regarding minimum entry requirements should be clarified. Any engagement with guidance counsellors must be appropriately resourced to protect the integrity of existing Whole School Guidance structures.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this consultation and look forward to the successful implementation of CWLS.



References

Department of Education (2025a) *Guidance in Post-Primary Schools (Updating Circular 0041/2024)*, Circular: 0001/2025, available:

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/316065/3792e579-f481-4a54-8620-e148294b2f25.pdf#page=null> [accessed 7 Jan 2025].

Department of Education (2025b) *Draft guidelines on the implementation of Whole-School Guidance in Post-Primary Schools*, available:

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/319315/836050dd-9c13-48dd-b1fb-13294028d493.pdf#page=null> [accessed 6 Mar 2025].

Department of Education and Science (DES) (1994) *LCVP Syllabus and Guidelines*,

available: <https://ncca.ie/media/2556/lcvpprogrammestatement.pdf> [accessed 12 Jun 2024].

DES HSE DOH (2013) *Well Being in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention*, available:

<https://assets.gov.ie/25105/b32a40105ca541688f3ab73d9687cccb.pdf> [accessed 30 Sep 2024].

Government of Ireland (2023a) *National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance: Strategic Action Plan (2024-2030) December 2023*, available:

<https://assets.gov.ie/279196/ac7dfa38-00fb-4dcf-8285-0f187b76469c.pdf#page=null> [accessed 1 May 2024].

Government of Ireland (2023b) *National Strategic Framework for Lifelong Guidance*

(2024-2030) December 2023, available: <https://assets.gov.ie/279193/8b0c3c0a-380f-4c82-9a7e-35af3432a318.pdf#page=null> [accessed 1 May 2024].

Indecon (2019) *Indecon Review of Career Guidance*, available:

<https://assets.gov.ie/24951/dffde726604b451aa6cc50239a375299.pdf#page=null> [accessed 14 Jul 2023].

Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) (2024) *IGC National Survey 2022 2023 Report & Appendix A*, available:

<https://igc.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/IGC-National-Survey-2022-2023-final.pdf> [accessed 5 Apr 2024].

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2022) *Revised-LCVP-Programme-Statement_June-22_EN.Pdf*, available:

https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/997056e3-2792-4ef6-8b6c-ef80c0dfccd8/Revised-LCVP-Programme-Statement_June-22_EN.pdf [accessed 12 Jun 2024].

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2024) *Background Paper and Brief for the Review of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme Link Modules*,



available: https://ncca.ie/media/4toieraf/lcyp-link-modules_background-paper-and-brief.pdf [accessed 12 Jun 2024].

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2025) *Draft Specification for Community Life and Work Studies (Formerly Known as LCVP) For Consultation*, available: <https://ncca.ie/media/dtyb0gbv/draft-specification-for-community-life-and-work-studies-formerly-known-as-lcyp-en.pdf> [accessed 6 Mar 2025].