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Background paper and brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social

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1. Introduction

[The Senior Cycle Review: Advisory Report](#) (NCCA 2022) was published in March 2022 following the response from the Minister for Education, Norma Foley, TD. Actions outlined in the Advisory Report include a review of existing curriculum components - subjects, modules, and programmes. In March 2022, the Minister for Education requested that NCCA undertake a series of actions to support the realisation of her vision for a redeveloped senior cycle as set out in [Equity and Excellence for All](#) (Department of Education, 2022.) One key action set out in this plan was that a schedule of senior cycle subjects and modules for redevelopment be prepared for approval by the Minister.

NCCA subsequently prepared a schedule of subjects for review, which was organised into a number of tranches. The redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social is included in Tranche 3, which will be completed in 2026 for introduction to schools in September 2027.

This paper provides a context for the review of Home Economics and has been informed by the views of teachers, school leaders and students gathered through school visits conducted in a representative sample of schools.

The paper begins by considering the background of Home Economics with Section 1 presenting an overview of the current context, including consideration of relevant policy developments. Section 2 sets out how Home Economics related education is currently provided for within the Irish curriculum, before focusing in more detail on Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social. Section 3 provides an overview of the insights gained through the school visits conducted and the lived experience of teachers, students and school leaders. Section 4 considers similar Home Economics subject offerings internationally and presents an overview of four different jurisdictions. Section 5 draws on the previous sections to categorise and briefly discuss some issues identified for consideration in the redevelopment of Home Economics before finally setting out a proposed brief for this work in Section 6, which will guide the work of the development group.

2. Background and context

This section sets out some of the significant developments related to Home Economics in the two decades since the publication of the Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social syllabus (2002). It also outlines the educational and policy landscape over this period, highlighting key initiatives in areas such as sustainability, health and wellbeing, and digital literacy, which are particularly relevant to the ongoing review and redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics.

Prior to 1968, Home Economics was known as Domestic Science and was primarily taught to girls in order to prepare them for domestic responsibilities. The subject focused heavily on practical skills such as food preparation, sewing, and household management. By the 1960s, however, societal changes prompted a re-evaluation of the subject's role in education. In 1968, the subject was officially renamed Home Economics, signalling a broader and more inclusive approach that incorporated scientific and social dimensions. This renaming marked the beginning of Home Economics' transformation into a subject aimed at equipping all students, regardless of gender, with the skills necessary to manage both personal and family life in a rapidly changing world.

The introduction of the Junior Certificate Home Economics syllabus in 1991 aimed to integrate both practical and theoretical elements, enabling students to develop critical thinking alongside practical skills in areas such as food studies, textiles, and consumer education. These changes reflected a growing recognition of the importance of teaching life skills that extended beyond traditional domestic roles (NCCA, 2016).

The 2002 reform of the Leaving Certificate syllabus represented a major turning point for the subject. The *Home Economics – Scientific and Social* syllabus introduced core areas of study such as food studies, resource management, and social studies, alongside elective options that allowed for specialisation in textiles and fashion, sociology or home management and design (Department of Education, 2002).

The 2002 syllabus for Home Economics introduced a dual approach that aimed to combine theoretical knowledge with practical application, with the intention of enabling students to engage with real-world problems while mastering essential skills. Practical coursework, particularly in areas such as food studies, was envisioned as a vital component of the curriculum, allowing students to apply theoretical learning in hands-on contexts. However, according to the Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social Chief Examiner's Report 2017 despite these aspirations, the subject has increasingly become more theory-driven in practice. The practical elements, though initially intended to be central, have not been as fully realised in day-to-day teaching, with an increasing focus placed on theoretical learning at the expense of practical skill development. This shift has led to a subject that, while drawing on the interdisciplinary nature of both social and physical sciences, is often less focused on the practical, everyday challenges it originally sought to address (State Examinations Commission, 2017).

In line with the introduction of the Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015 a revised *Junior Cycle Home Economics* specification was introduced in 2018. A major feature of the 2018 specification was its focus on sustainability, embedding principles of responsible consumption, environmental stewardship, and sustainable living across key areas such as food, health, textiles, and resource management. The new curriculum placed a stronger emphasis on equipping students with the

knowledge and skills needed to manage social, economic and environmental challenges more effectively. This focus ensured that students were not only prepared for personal and family life but also encouraged to make informed, sustainable decisions in a rapidly changing world.

As we now engage with senior cycle redevelopment, the publication of the [Senior Cycle Review: Advisory Report \(NCCA, 2022\)](#) sets out an agreed purpose for senior cycle education and outlines a vision for the redevelopment of senior cycle that is underpinned by a set of guiding principles. Responding to this report, Minister Foley initiated a programme of senior cycle redevelopment. As part of this redevelopment, a set of [student key competencies](#) are being embedded across learning outcomes in new and redeveloped subjects and modules.

Home Economics has increasingly focused on sustainability and wellbeing, aligning with national and international policy frameworks, including the [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland 2030 \(ESD\)](#) and the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). These initiatives advocate embedding sustainability at all educational levels, empowering students to make informed choices around food, resource management, and consumption—critical steps in addressing today’s environmental and social challenges. Home Economics, through its practical approach, uniquely supports these goals, fostering responsible citizenship and sustainable living (McCloat & Caraher, 2020).

One of the key national policies in relation to health and wellbeing is the Healthy Ireland Framework, a framework which is regarded as the roadmap for building a healthier Ireland. [Healthy Ireland’s](#) goals—improving health at all life stages, reducing health inequalities, and creating supportive environments— are all addressed in Home Economics where students are empowered to make informed choices around nutrition, lifestyle, and personal health.

The [Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027](#) highlights the growing importance of digital literacy within education, advocating for the integration of technology across all subjects (Government of Ireland, 2022). Home Economics stands to benefit significantly from these digital advances. Digital tools can enhance the learning experience by providing students with interactive resources and data on topics such as nutrition, food systems, and environmental impacts. The inclusion of digital technologies supports both the theoretical and practical aspects of the curriculum, ensuring that students are equipped to navigate an increasingly digital world. Furthermore, the integration of digital resources allows for more innovative teaching methods, expanding the scope of how Home Economics can be taught and learned in the classroom.

The contemporary focus of Home Economics on sustainability, health, consumption and digital literacy reflects the subject’s ability to adapt to the evolving needs of society. This evolution is grounded in the recognition that education must prepare students not only for personal and family life but also for their roles as active, responsible citizens in a global context. By engaging with these critical issues, Home Economics ensures that students develop the skills and knowledge necessary to address some of the most pressing challenges of modern living, including climate change, public health, and resource management.

Dynamic societal changes in the past number of decades and national and international priorities mean that a redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social is timely, providing an opportunity to ensure that learning in the subject remains relevant for students in

terms of their personal lives and their communities, and enabling them to appreciate broader societal challenges.

Section Summary

- The current Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social syllabus was introduced in 2002, aiming to balance theoretical knowledge with practical application, particularly in food studies. However, the subject has since become more theory-focused, with practical skills not as fully realised as initially intended.
- Home Economics has evolved from its original focus on domestic skills for girls to an inclusive subject addressing broader issues such as sustainability, health, and resource management.
- In 2018, a revised Junior Cycle specification was introduced, with a stronger emphasis on sustainability, responsible consumption, and environmental stewardship.
- Recent national and international policy places a significant emphasis on developing the skills and competencies of learners that are relevant for the current and future needs of the economy and society including climate change, public health, and resource management and digital skills.
- The redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social is timely and will ensure the subject remains relevant to students' personal lives, communities, and broader societal challenges.

3. Home Economics in the curriculum

This section provides an overview of post-primary Home Economics education in Ireland and concludes with the most recent Chief Examiner's report on Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social.

Home Economics education in junior cycle

In 2018, a new Junior Cycle Home Economics specification was introduced. This updated specification is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to promote healthy, sustainable living, both as individuals and as active members of families and society.

The aims of the Home Economics specification are to:

- foster students' understanding of how to achieve optimal health and well-being, enabling them to live sustainably and make informed lifestyle choices
- cultivate practical skills in food and health literacy, empowering students to adopt and maintain healthy habits that positively affect their personal and family well-being
- encourage resourcefulness, innovation, and adaptability, preparing students to be informed and responsible consumers
- develop creativity in design and textile work, providing opportunities for hands-on learning and innovation
- instil an awareness of environmental issues, guiding students toward a commitment to sustainable and responsible living.

The Junior Cycle Home Economics specification is structured around three interconnected strands: Food, Health and Culinary Skills; Responsible Family Living; and Textiles and Craft. This interdisciplinary approach promotes the integration of these strands, encouraging students to see the broader connections between healthy living, family responsibilities, and environmental stewardship in their learning experiences (NCCA, 2017).

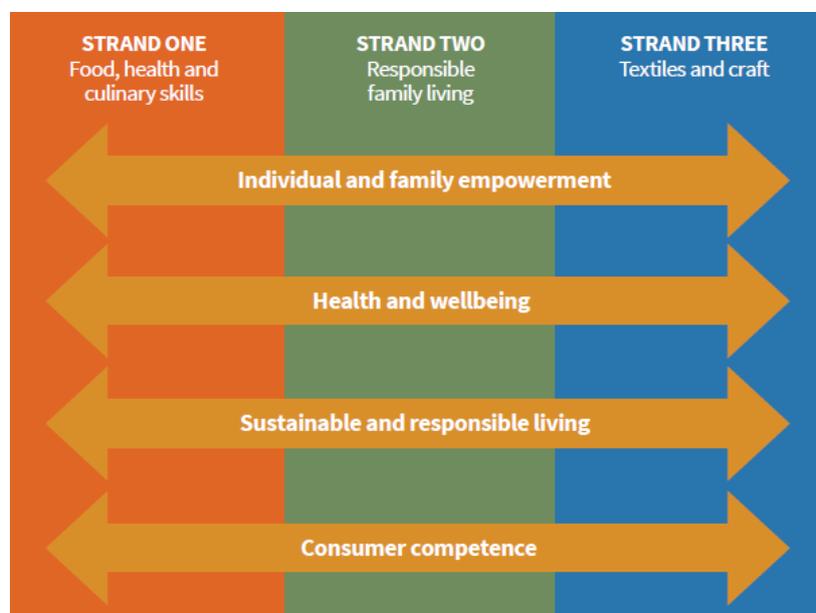


Figure 1: The elements of the contextual strands showing the integrated nature of Junior Cycle Home Economics.

Home Economics education in senior cycle

Leaving Certificate Established

The current syllabus for Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social was introduced in 2002 and examined for the first time in 2004. The rationale for the subject sets out the multidisciplinary context and applied nature of the discipline with a focus on the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to enable students to 'take control of their own lives at present and in the future' (DES, 2001, p. 2).

The syllabus is structured into three core areas:

1. Food Studies (45% of the course content): This section focuses on nutrition, diet, and health, with students gaining practical culinary skills alongside theoretical knowledge of food science. Food Studies is a core component, reflecting the ongoing importance of cooking skills in everyday life.
2. Resource Management and Consumer Studies (25% of the course content): This area examines how individuals and families manage resources, such as time, money, and goods. It covers topics like budgeting, household management, and consumer rights, preparing students for responsible living in an increasingly consumer-driven society.
3. Social Studies (10% of the course content): This section deals with family life, relationships, and societal structures. It explores how family dynamics and social institutions influence individual and collective well-being.

In addition to these core areas, students can choose one elective subject (20% of the course content) from the following options:

- Home Design and Management
- Textiles, Fashion, and Design
- Social Studies

The Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social assessment includes a written exam (70-80%); practical coursework (20-30%) focusing on Food Studies assignments in nutrition and food preparation; and an optional Textiles, Fashion, and Design elective (10%), where students design and create a themed garment supported by a design portfolio.

Transition Year

In Transition Year (TY), Home Economics education is a suggested area of experience for students with schools having a high degree of autonomy in designing their own programme. Home Economics offers opportunities for students to develop a range of practical skills. Students also have the opportunity to participate in cross-curricular and extracurricular activities like mini-company projects and 'Junk Kouture', which further develop creativity, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and leadership skills, allowing them to apply their home economics learning to broader real-world contexts.

In the revised Transition Year (TY) programme statement (2024), engaging in home economics can contribute to holistic student development, aligning with key curriculum goals. The subject supports personal growth by teaching life skills in health, nutrition, well-being, and financial management. Home economics can enable civic engagement by promoting responsible citizenship, ethical consumerism, and community initiatives. In terms of career exploration, it

introduces vocational skills and allows students to explore careers in hospitality, food science, and social services, significantly contributing to the TY programme's broader developmental aims.

Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social in focus

This section explores participation rates in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social drawing on statistics from the State Examinations Commission (SEC). It also provides an overview of assessment for certification and some insights into student engagement with different areas of the current Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social syllabus based on the most recent SEC Chief Examiner report.

Student participation

Student participation in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social has declined significantly from 21.4% in 2019 to 17.7% in 2024 as outlined in Table 1.

Year	Higher Level	Ordinary Level	Total Candidates	Total LC Candidates	Home Economics: S&S as a % of total candidates
2019	9730	2272	12002	56,071	21.4%
2020	10249	1739	11988	57,668	20.8%
2021	10915	1679	12594	57,952	21.7%
2022	10065	2067	12132	58,056	20.9%
2023	9105	2227	11332	58,006	19.5%
2024	8275	1800	10075	56,791	17.7%

Table 1: Number of students sitting Leaving Certificate Home Economics: Scientific and Social at higher and ordinary Level 2019-2024

Assessment for certification

Assessment for certification is divided into a written examination and practical coursework. The written exam accounts for 70-80% of the final grade, depending on the elective chosen. For example, students opting for Textiles, Fashion, and Design have a greater practical component (10% of the total grade), reflecting the hands-on nature of the elective, whereas those studying the other electives of Social Studies or Home Design and Management have more of their grade based on written work (Department of Education, 2002).

The key components of the assessment are as follows:

Assessment	Description
Written Examination 70-80%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written examination, at both higher and ordinary levels, requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and application of Home Economics principles.
Practical Coursework 20-30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must complete practical coursework, in the area of Food Studies. This involves a series of assignments (four in total) from different areas such as application of nutritional principles, food preparation and cooking processes, and properties of food. The practical coursework requires hands-on cooking tasks, and students are expected to evaluate their work based on planning, implementation, and specific assignment requirements.
Textiles, Fashion, and Design Elective 10%:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students who choose this elective, there is an additional practical component where they design and construct a garment based on a theme. This includes sketching, garment construction, and supporting this with a design folder.

Table 2: Outline of assessment at Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social.

The structure promotes the integration of knowledge, practical skills, and critical thinking, aligning with the syllabus goals of preparing students for life in a consumer-oriented society.

Insights from the SEC Chief Examiner’s Report 2017

The 2017 Chief Examiner’s Report for Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social offers a detailed analysis of student performance, providing valuable insights for curriculum development and teaching strategies. Students generally performed well in recalling basic facts, particularly in the short question section, though higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation, proved challenging, especially at ordinary level.

Written Examination

In the written examination, students performed satisfactorily in Section A, particularly at ordinary level, where short answer and tick-box questions allowed for successful recall of facts. However, at higher level, many students struggled with questions that required more detailed explanations, examples, and understanding of complex processes. Students at both levels demonstrated a good understanding of nutrition and health topics but found it difficult to engage with questions requiring a deeper analysis, such as consumer law or food production processes. The integration of knowledge from different parts of the syllabus was also identified as an area for improvement, with many students failing to link content effectively.

The report also noted that the ability to respond to question cues like “discuss,” “analyse,” and “explain” was a common issue, particularly for ordinary level students who often provided brief, underdeveloped answers. Higher level students occasionally misunderstood the scope of

questions, which led to incomplete or poorly justified responses. Additionally, while diagrams and specific examples were recommended to enhance answers, many students missed opportunities to use these tools, which would have improved their overall performance.

Practical Coursework

In the practical coursework, students demonstrated competence in completing assignments, particularly in Food Studies. However, some students struggled with the analytical components of the coursework, indicating a need for further guidance in research and evaluation. The Textiles, Fashion, and Design elective, although chosen by only 0.5% of students, saw good performance, with students showing creativity and technical skills in garment design.

The report provides recommendations for improving future student performance. It suggests a greater focus on developing higher order thinking skills, encouraging the use of diagrams and examples, and promoting an integrated approach to learning across different parts of the syllabus. Teachers and students are advised to pay close attention to question cues, allocate time effectively, and ensure comprehensive coverage of the syllabus to avoid limiting question options in the exam.

Section Summary

- The Junior Cycle Home Economics curriculum, introduced in 2018, emphasises skills for healthy, sustainable living, integrating strands on Food, Health and Culinary Skills; Responsible Family Living; and Textiles and Craft.
- The current syllabus for Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social, introduced in 2002, includes three core areas: Food Studies (45%), Resource Management and Consumer Studies (25%), and Social Studies (10%), with electives in Home Design and Management, Textiles, Fashion, and Design, and Social Studies.
- In Transition Year, there is flexibility in how Home Economics is provided for by schools, offering an opportunity to develop practical life skills such as cooking, sewing, budgeting, and environmental responsibility, often through hands-on projects and cross-curricular initiatives, aligning with personal development goals.
- Assessment includes a written examination (70-80% of the final grade) and practical coursework (20-30%).
- Participation in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social has declined from 21.4% in 2019 to 17.7% in 2024, reflecting a trend that may impact curriculum considerations.
- The 2017 Chief Examiner's Report highlighted students' strengths in factual recall but identified challenges in applying analytical and evaluative skills, especially when integrating knowledge across syllabus topics. Practical skills demonstrated through coursework, particularly in Food Studies, were a strong area; however, some students found the analytical aspects of assignments challenging, suggesting further opportunities for building research and evaluative skills alongside practical competencies.

4. Insights from school visits

A schedule of school visits was conducted as part of the scoping work for this Background Paper. The representative sample was selected from the 47 schools that expressed an interest in becoming involved in Leaving Certificate Home Economics curriculum developments. The six schools were selected using criteria relating to DEIS status, gender, school size and type. Visits to these schools took place in October 2024 and involved focus group meetings with 50 Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social students, 16 Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social teachers and 11 school leaders. The following section provides an overview of the insights gathered through these visits.

The insights can be organised under the following key themes. These themes are central to understanding the perceptions, challenges, and opportunities for Home Economics as it is redeveloped for Senior Cycle. The themes include:

- strengths and challenges of Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social
- assessment in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social
- textiles in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social
- resourcing.

Strengths and challenges of Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social

Among the strengths of the subject students, teachers and school leaders expressed a genuine passion for the subject, valuing its practical nature and its relevance to their daily lives. Students particularly enjoy the social studies aspect and also appreciate how home economics allows them to explore multiple fields such as nutrition, science, business, and social studies under one comprehensive subject. The practical hands-on nature of the subject, especially cooking, is a highlight, with students expressing that they relish the practical skills they can carry into life beyond school.

However, notable challenges exist, and a consistent concern expressed by students is the imbalance between theory and practical work, with many students expecting more hands-on experiences similar to those in Junior Cycle Home Economics. The transition to Leaving Certificate Home Economics brings a curriculum that is notably more theory-intensive, and many students expressed disappointment with the limited practical engagement. Teachers also find this shift challenging, as the emphasis on theoretical content limits their ability to incorporate more hands-on pedagogy in areas such as food practical skills and textiles. Consequently, practical activities are often restricted to those directly related to the practical coursework assessment. Additionally, the breadth and depth of the syllabus present difficulties, with teachers expressing concerns about the feasibility of covering the current syllabus in the time allocated. Students also feel the volume of material required in the current syllabus is extensive and challenging to master, which can make the subject seem overwhelming. For this reason, the feedback showed that Home Economics is often perceived as a difficult subject at Leaving Certificate level. Teachers believe this reputation has a negative impact on subject uptake, which is evident in the SEC statistics on declining student participation. Participation of male students in Leaving Certificate

Home Economics Scientific and Social is low, with a sharp decline from junior cycle to senior cycle. Feedback from a small number of male students who chose the subject at leaving certificate level highlighted disappointment with the course's theoretical focus, which contrasted with the practical cooking emphasis they experienced in junior cycle and Transition Year. While some students appreciated the nutrition aspects due to their relevance to sports, Home Economics remains a female-dominated subject.

Assessment in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social

The current assessment structure in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social is widely viewed as overly focused on theory, with both students and teachers across the focus groups expressing a strong desire for more practical assessments to reflect the subject's real-world application. Students appreciated that 20% of their assessment is completed through the practical coursework assignments, which allows them to spread the workload. Additionally, the timing of this assessment was well-received, with students commenting positively on its completion by November of 6th year. During the focus group the possibility of completing these assignments over different time frames was discussed. Many students supported the idea of completing them even earlier, seeing it as a way to reduce pressure in their final year.

Students, teachers, and school leaders all spoke favourably about the potential of a practical assessment component, focused on demonstrating skills specific to Home Economics. Feedback indicated that a practical food skills assessment would better align with the Junior Cycle Home Economics specification, where practical food skills are assessed as 50% of the overall grade. Participants indicated that incorporating a practical food skills assessment in Leaving Certificate Home Economics would help restore greater balance between the emphasis on practical skills and theoretical knowledge, which many feel is currently skewed towards theory.

Textiles in Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social

It should be noted that, as part of the focus groups, we did not speak to any schools offering the Textiles, Fashion, and Design elective within their curriculum for Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social. According to the Chief Examiner's Report from 2017, only 0.5% of all students studying Leaving Certificate Home Economics Scientific and Social opted for this elective (State Examination Commission, 2017). Consequently, many teachers and students did not initially mention textiles in their feedback on the curriculum, only engaging with the topic when prompted.

The focus group discussions revealed mixed views among students and teachers regarding the role of textiles in Leaving Certificate Home Economics. Some student and teachers were enthusiastic about incorporating textiles, particularly if it were approached with a practical focus on areas like fashion design, sustainability, and fast fashion, as well as interior and room design. They felt these areas would offer valuable hands-on skills and relevant life knowledge, aligning with growing interests in sustainable practices.

However, there were also students and teachers who suggested that textile studies should not have a significant place in the Leaving Certificate curriculum. They argued that removing textile studies from the syllabus would allow more time to focus on other core areas within Home Economics which are more relevant.

Resourcing

Many school leaders and teachers highlighted the challenges of timetabling and resourcing in Home Economics. They emphasised that the practical nature of the subject places significant expense on schools which often requires additional funding. They reiterated that schools require fully equipped kitchens and textile rooms to effectively support the practical components of Home Economics.

These insights and feedback drawn from across the school visits indicate key areas to address in redeveloping Leaving Certificate Home Economics to make it accessible and engaging for all students.

Section Summary

- Students show a strong enthusiasm for Home Economics, valuing its practical aspects and relevance to daily life, particularly in cooking and social studies. However, challenges were noted, including a perceived imbalance between theory and practice, low male participation, and the difficulty of covering the syllabus within the available time. Teachers highlighted that these factors may contribute to the declining enrolment in Home Economics at Leaving Certificate level.
- Feedback consistently supports introducing a practical food skills assessment to better align with Junior Cycle Home Economics and address the current over-emphasis on theoretical content. Students and teachers feel that a practical assessment would allow students to demonstrate their hands-on skills, particularly in cooking, and create a more balanced approach to assessment.
- There were mixed views on textiles in the curriculum. While some students and teachers saw value in a practical focus on textiles, such as fashion design and sustainability, others felt that excluding textiles would allow more focus on other areas of Home Economics. Notably, many participants only addressed textiles when prompted, indicating varied levels of interest.
- Schools face ongoing challenges of timetabling and the need for additional funding to support essential facilities such as fully equipped kitchens and textiles rooms, which are vital for supporting the practical elements of the subject.

5. International trends in upper secondary Home Economics

The international review of upper secondary Home Economics curricula offers an insight into how different countries structure and implement Home Economics or related subjects at this level of education. This section explores the approaches to curriculum and assessment in four jurisdictions: Finland, Northern Ireland, Victoria (Australia), and Malta.

Finland

In Finland, general upper secondary education usually lasts three years and requires students to complete a minimum of 150 credits across compulsory and optional subjects. Home Economics is offered as an optional high school diploma supplement, while schools may also offer it as a school specific thematic study option.

Before opting for Home Economics at the upper secondary level, Finnish students will have studied it as a compulsory subject in the lower secondary phase (Grades 7-9, age 13-16) in the Finnish national core curriculum for basic education. The national core curriculum emphasises fundamental skills in cooking, cleaning, health, nutrition, consumer rights, and sustainability. This early exposure ensures that all students gain practical household knowledge before advancing to more specialised studies.

The upper secondary diploma in Home Economics focuses on household management skills, aiming to enable students to showcase their competence in practical areas through enquiry-based learning and applied studies. The diploma covers a wide range of topics, including cooking, cleaning, home technology, family life, and sustainability. Each unit involves 50 hours of scheduled classroom instruction, resulting in a total of 200 hours across the two-year programme. Students choose a specific theme or task for their diploma project and plan, execute, and evaluate their work to ensure that the chosen content, ideas, and methods align.

Home Economics covers various practical life skills, but specific Textile Studies is not integrated into it or typically offered as a distinct subject at this level. Textile crafts are more commonly included in the earlier stages of education (basic education) under the subject of Craft Education, which combines both textile and technical crafts.

Assessment for the upper secondary diploma in Home Economics is tailored to students' competence levels and is based on demonstrating knowledge and skills aligned with their chosen project theme, tasks, and execution. Evaluation is conducted individually or in groups at the end of the course and includes self-assessment. Students demonstrate their learning through practical work, a written essay, and a portfolio that showcases their understanding and self-reflection. Teachers grade the diploma supplement as pass or fail, awarding 2 credits, and completion is certified through a separate document attached to the general upper secondary education certificate.

Northern Ireland

The CCEA GCE A Level in Nutrition and Food Science is a two-year course for senior secondary students aged 16-18, emphasising the importance of good nutrition for a healthy lifestyle. The qualification is offered at two levels: AS Level (Year 1) and the full A Level (A2) in Year 2. The AS Level can be taken as a standalone qualification, while completing both years leads to the full A Level. Nutrition and Food Science is divided into four units, with two AS Units in Year 1 and two A2 Units in Year 2.

The course involves 180 guided learning hours for the AS Level and 360 hours for the full A Level. The current specification was introduced in 2016, with the first AS qualifications awarded in 2017 and the first full A Level qualifications in 2018.

In Year 1 (Unit AS 1 & 2), students cover topics such as macronutrients, micronutrients, dietary requirements across different life stages, and research on diet, lifestyle, and health. In Year 2 (Unit A2 1), students have the opportunity to delve into either consumer behaviour regarding food choices and the implications of these choices (Food Security and Sustainability) or explore the journey of food safety from the producer to the consumer (Food Safety and Quality). Unit A2 2 involves an independent research project applying knowledge from the course.

The A Level qualification is based on AS Level (40%) and A2 Level (60%) marks, with three external exams and one internally assessed project. Unit AS 1 and Unit AS 2 are each assessed by a 1 hour and 30-minute external exam, making up 20% of the total A Level each. At A2 Level, students choose one Unit A2 option, assessed by a 2 hour and 30-minute external exam for 30% of the A Level. The final unit, A2 2, is a 4,000-word research project assessed internally, also contributing 30% to the A Level.

Victoria, Australia

Food Studies is a senior secondary subject within the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), where students explore a broad range of perspectives related to food, including historical and cultural patterns, Australian and global food production systems, and the physical and social roles of food. The curriculum encourages students to critically evaluate aspects of sustainability, and the legal, economic, psychological, sociocultural, health, ethical, and political dimensions of food systems, while also analysing marketing trends and new developments.

VCE Food Studies is designed to equip students to become informed and discerning food citizens, capable of making responsible food choices. It focuses on practical skills for planning, preparing, and evaluating food, and deepens understanding of nutrition, food science, and sensory evaluation. Additionally, students study the origins and cultural significance of food, the systems of food production and governance, and the various influences on food choices. Practical activities are integral to the course, including cooking, food testing, dietary analysis, scientific experiments, and responding to design briefs.

There are no prerequisites for entry to the two-year course, which involves at least 200 hours of tuition.

The VCE Food Studies curriculum consists of four units, each requiring a minimum of 50 hours of classroom instruction. In Unit 1, "Food Origins," students explore food from historical and cultural perspectives, investigating its origins and roles globally and in Australia. Unit 2, "Food Makers," covers Australia's food systems, focusing on commercial food production and small-scale food production in homes. Unit 3, "Food in Daily Life," examines the roles and influences of food, with studies on food science and the relationship between food choices, health, and wellbeing. Finally, Unit 4, "Food Issues, Challenges, and Futures," addresses debates surrounding Australia's food systems within global contexts, focusing on the challenges of feeding a growing population, environmental and ethical concerns, and navigating food information.

Assessment in VCE Food Studies combines school-based coursework and an external examination. For Units 1 and 2, all assessment tasks are managed internally by the school. In Units 3 and 4, coursework contributes 60% to the overall study score, with each unit accounting for 30%, based on tasks completed throughout the course. The remaining 40% is determined by an external exam at the end of the two-year programme, which assesses students' knowledge and skills from both Units 3 and 4.

Malta

In Malta, upon completing compulsory education, students can pursue post-secondary education through a 2-year upper secondary programme (ages 16–18) or opt for vocational training programmes lasting between 2 and 4 years (ages 16–20).

Home Economics & Human Ecology is offered as a subject at both Intermediate and Advanced levels. At its core, the subject covers the disciplines of nutrition, family studies, resource management, and human ecology. It encompasses some aspects of textiles, such as fabric care and use.

Intermediate Level:

This level provides a foundational understanding, building on topics covered at the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) level, with a focus on the areas of family, food science, and consumer issues. The curriculum covers the following core topics:

- The Family in Society: Emphasizes changing family structures, the needs of family members across the lifecycle, and support services.
- Food Science and Nutrition: Includes the study of nutrients, diet-health relationships, and food preservation.
- Consumer Issues: Focuses on consumer behaviour, financial management, and environmental concerns related to consumption.

Assessment is based on a three-hour written examination.

Advanced Level:

The curriculum at this level is more extensive, incorporating both theoretical studies and practical applications. Topics include:

- The Family, Home, and Society: Examines human development, changing societal values, and family wellbeing.

- **Food, Nutrition, and Health:** Covers the scientific principles of food production, applied nutrition, dietary needs across the lifecycle, and the impact of diet on health.
- **Coursework Component:** Includes practical tasks such as a Food Study Task, which involves an experiment and food production, and an Investigation in topics like textiles, hospitality, or nutrition. This component allows students to develop skills in research, critical analysis, and hands-on application.

The coursework encourages independent learning through tasks related to dietary guidelines, food preparation, and consumer research.

The Advanced Level assessment is more comprehensive, comprising three components: two written examinations and coursework, which together ensure a balanced evaluation of students' theoretical and practical competencies. The coursework contributes 25% to the overall grade. It consists of two parts:

- **Part I: Food Study Task (10% of total mark):** In this practical task, students conduct a food experiment and a related food production activity. They are required to explore a food commodity, make modifications to recipes or cooking methods, and analyse the outcomes. The task includes a written report based on criteria such as the quality of the experiment, scientific understanding, creativity, and presentation of findings.
- **Part II: Investigation (15% of total mark):** Students select a topic from the syllabus, such as textiles, nutrition, or hospitality, and conduct in-depth research using methods like surveys, interviews, or practical demonstrations. The investigation involves planning, data collection, analysis, and a written report.

Observations and conclusions of the international trends in upper secondary Home Economics

The international trends in upper secondary Home Economics education reveal diverse approaches to curriculum design and assessment across different jurisdictions. Finland's emphasis on project-based learning and transversal competences contrasts with Northern Ireland's integration of theoretical study and practical skills in Nutrition and Food Science. Victoria, Australia focuses on a broader understanding of food systems, incorporating historical, cultural, social, and environmental dimensions alongside practical skills. Malta adopts a multidisciplinary approach, with Home Economics and Human Ecology covering a broad range of topics, including nutrition, family studies, and practical investigations in textiles.

At upper secondary, Ireland is almost unique in presenting textile studies as an integrated area of learning within the Home Economics curriculum. The other jurisdictions take different approaches and place varying emphasis on the areas prioritised in the Irish context, integrating or in some cases, not integrating these elements in ways reflective of their own unique educational frameworks and priorities. For example, while textile studies is not universally integrated into Home Economics in these regions, aspects of textiles are included within broader subjects like Home Economics (Malta), Art and Design (Finland and Northern Ireland), or Product Design and Technology (Victoria, Australia).

Despite the differences, common themes emerge across these regions, including sustainable living, health education, and the development of practical life skills. These shared priorities highlight the importance of equipping students with a balance of theoretical knowledge and

practical experience to navigate modern challenges effectively. These international examples underscore the importance of balancing theoretical knowledge with practical experiences to prepare students for modern challenges.

Section Summary

- The review of upper secondary Home Economics education across Finland, Northern Ireland, Victoria (Australia), and Malta highlights the varied approaches to curriculum design, and assessment within the subject.
- While Finland's curriculum focuses on project-based learning and transversal competences, Northern Ireland's approach integrates in-depth theoretical study and practical activities to address nutrition and food science. Victoria's curriculum covers a broad range of food-related perspectives, combining practical skills with critical evaluation of sustainability and health issues. Malta offers a multidisciplinary curriculum at both Intermediate and Advanced levels, with a strong emphasis on practical coursework in areas such as nutrition, family studies, and consumer behaviour.
- Common themes identified across these jurisdictions include a focus on sustainable living, health and nutrition education, and equipping students with essential life skills to prepare them for adulthood and future career opportunities.
- Assessment practices vary, with some countries favouring a combination of practical work and written examinations, while others incorporate project-based assessments to evaluate both practical skills and theoretical understanding.
- The insights gained from this international review provide valuable considerations for the redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics, aiming to ensure a relevant and balanced curriculum that meets the evolving needs of students in Ireland.

6. Issues for consideration

This section sets out a number of issues for consideration in the development of a new specification for Leaving Certificate Home Economics. These arise from the nature of the subject itself, and the experience of teachers and students in their engagement with the current syllabus in addition to drawing on themes emerging in the previous sections of this background paper.

Nature of Leaving Certificate Home Economics

The redevelopment offers a timely opportunity to reflect on the nature of Home Economics as a senior cycle subject within Irish post-primary education. This will involve considering the rationale and aims of the subject to ensure its relevance for now and into the future; emphasising the development of practical life skills; and enhancing understanding and appreciation of sustainability, health and social concerns. The study of Home Economics can contribute to addressing complex social, environmental and economic needs of society, and the specification should reflect this by remaining flexible and adaptable to evolving demands.

Scope of Leaving Certificate Home Economics

The development of Home Economics has followed its own unique path, with recent subject curriculum updates at junior cycle increasingly focused on critical life skills such as sustainability, health literacy, and resource management. As the curriculum continues to evolve at senior cycle, there are opportunities to consider global trends, such as expanded sustainability practices and options for specialisation to create a more adaptable and relevant programme. Exploring the international approaches could enrich the approach to Home Economics, better preparing students with skills aligned to their personal aspirations and global citizenship.

The redevelopment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics also offers a timely opportunity to re-evaluate the place of textiles within the subject. Balancing students' desires for a Home Economics curriculum that is relevant and responsive, that enables the development of more practical skills, particularly in cookery, with challenges regarding the current nature and breadth of the subject requires careful consideration. Considering the growing interest in sustainability, the study of textiles allows for in-depth exploration of sustainable fashion, textile and product innovation, and practical skills. Reassessing the place of textiles in the curriculum would help align the curriculum with student interests and societal goals around sustainability and practical life skills.

In the context of the multidisciplinary nature of Home Economics, as seen in the diverse approaches across international jurisdictions, it may also be timely to reflect on the name of the subject. A discussion of the subject's name could consider how it symbolises what Home Economics is envisioned to become in the future. As the curriculum evolves, the name should reflect its future direction, whether that involves maintaining its broad and multidisciplinary scope or adopting a more focused approach. Such a reflection could ensure the subject remains modern, inclusive, and representative of its diverse and evolving content.

Engagement and Progression

There is a pressing need for Leaving Certificate Home Economics to pursue greater student uptake, particularly male students. This requires consideration of traditional norms and beliefs, in order to make the subject relevant and appealing to all students. This approach aligns with national priorities related to promoting inclusivity.

In order to remain relevant and responsive to changing demands, careful consideration will need to be given to the balance between theoretical and practical elements in the Home Economics curriculum. A rebalanced curriculum, with a stronger emphasis on practical skills, would better align with student expectations and the real-world applicability and relevance of the subject. Additionally, developing a curriculum that retains practical skill-building from junior to senior cycle would support a smoother transition between these stages and maintain the practical relevance of the subject established with the introduction of the new specification in junior cycle. This could sustain students' interest in the subject and support progression into senior cycle.

Assessment

There is widespread support among students, teachers, and school leaders to consider the nature of assessment in Home Economics. Given the subject's practical nature combined with a growing demand for a greater emphasis on more practical skills, the extent to which assessment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics aligns with the curriculum, teaching and learning requires consideration.

Section Summary

- The redevelopment offers an opportunity to reassess the subject's nature and scope, potentially rebalancing theoretical and practical elements to better align with students' needs, interests and real-world applicability.
- The redevelopment provides a timely chance to re-evaluate the role of textiles education, balancing students' demand for practical skills with curriculum breadth, and potentially aligning it with international practices and sustainability-focused goals.
- Reflecting on the subject's name is important to ensure it symbolises its future direction, whether maintaining a broad multidisciplinary scope or adopting a more focused approach.
- Increasing student engagement, particularly among male students, is critical to promoting inclusivity and aligning with national priorities.
- A rebalanced curriculum with stronger emphasis on practical skills and smoother progression from junior to senior cycle could enhance the subject's relevance and appeal.
- There is a recognised need to consider assessment methods to ensure alignment with the curriculum's practical nature, addressing calls for a stronger focus on skill development.

7. Brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Home Economics

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

This brief is designed to provide the basis for redeveloping Leaving Certificate Home Economics. While the brief is derived from the key insights and issues for consideration identified in the previous sections of this paper, it is also guided by the parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 3 subjects (Appendix 1).

The specification will be student-centred and outcomes-based and in general terms, the specification should be broadly aligned with levels 4 and 5 of the National Framework of Qualifications. It will be available at both Higher and Ordinary level, and it will be designed to be taught and assessed in a minimum of 180 hours.

The specification will align to the template, agreed by Council, for curriculum specifications as set out in the [*Technical form of curriculum specifications for subjects and modules in a redeveloped senior cycle*](#) (NCCA, 2023). The Senior Cycle Key Competencies will be embedded in the learning outcomes.

The specification will be completed for Q2 2026.

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

- How the specification aligns with the guiding principles of the Senior Cycle and the vision for senior cycle education, ensuring relevance and appeal to a broad cohort of students.
- How the specification can support continuity and progression, including connections with related learning at Junior Cycle, Transition Year, and other Senior Cycle subjects and modules, as well as future learning in further education, apprenticeships, higher education, and the world of work.
- The rationale for Leaving Certificate Home Economics, making it transparent and meaningful for students, teachers, and parents/guardians, while widening its appeal to ensure balanced gender participation and promote broader uptake.
- How the specification can support the development of a range of key competencies, including those where Home Economics can make a tangible impact, such as, cultivating wellbeing, participating in society and thinking and solving problems, through its emphasis on sustainable resource management, food and nutrition literacy, and practical life skills.
- How the specification, in its presentation and language, can be student-centred, with a clear focus on how students develop and demonstrate their knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions in practical, real-world contexts.
- How the specification can support the development of students' practical skills as they engage with cookery, health, resource management and textiles.
- How to incorporate digital skills relevant to home economics, such as digital resource management, and a strong emphasis on sustainability and environmental stewardship, aligning with global issues and trends in education.

- The breadth and depth of Home Economics, its multidisciplinary nature, and how these aspects will be shaped to reflect the subject's evolving role and focus in the future.
- The assessment of Leaving Certificate Home Economics that is aligned to the parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 3 subjects and modules (Appendix 1). Typically, as noted in appendix 1, there should be two assessment components: one written examination and one other assessment component.
- How the specification, in its presentation, can support teachers in planning for teaching, learning and assessment.
- How the subject name, given the nature and scope of the specification, reflects course content and skills, promotes inclusivity and appeals to all students.

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

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Appendix 1: Overarching parameters for the design of assessment arrangements in the development of specifications for all Tranche 3 subjects.

1. Executive summary

- The Minister for Education announced an update on September 20, 2023, on the approach to be taken to the introduction of new and revised subject specifications including how assessment would be addressed in those specifications. Specifically, each subject shall have an assessment component in addition to the final written examination.
- This assessment component (an AAC) will be worth at least 40% of the total available marks.
- Each subject is to have one written examination; typically marks for the written examination will be 60%.
- Typically, there should be two assessment components: One written examination and one other assessment component (an AAC).
- More than one AAC or written examination may be justified in exceptional circumstances and after extensive consideration of the overall assessment load on students. Such exception, however, would be based on strong, clear evidence that a second AAC or a second written paper in the final examination is essential to assess student learning which cannot be achieved through a single AAC and a single written examination paper.

2. Introduction

This document outlines the overarching assessment arrangements and parameters to guide the design of specifications for all Tranche 3 subjects which include:

- Agricultural Science
- Computer Science
- Design and Communication Graphics
- History
- Home Economics
- Mathematics
- Music
- Physics and Chemistry.

This advice is informed by ongoing work with Tranche 1 and 2 subjects and will be amended, as appropriate, for future tranches which may take account of their subject areas and existing assessment arrangements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In addition, at a programme wide level (i.e. taking account of all subjects and modules implemented across schools), it is necessary to have regard to the overall assessment load on students primarily as well as on schools more generally. Whilst it can be expected that SDGs might focus on the approach to assessment in their own subject initially, they are encouraged to be mindful of the overall assessment load across all subjects and modules. Such programme level considerations will also include the methods of assessment being undertaken. As stated above more than one AAC or written examination may be justified in exceptional circumstances and the following section outlines the process for such cases.

3. Process

This section sets out the process through which a variation to the parameters defined in this document will be considered and decided upon; for example, an additional AAC or a second final written examination.

1. Following extensive discussion by the SDG and after exploration of a range of options for a single suitable AAC/single written examination for the subject, the NCCA Executive generates a written note setting out the strong, clear case being made by the Development Group.
2. The written case is agreed and signed off by the Development Group.
3. The written case is discussed with the Board for Senior Cycle.
4. The written case is discussed with the Council. On foot of this discussion, the Council decides whether or not to send the case forward to the Department.
 - a) Having considered the importance of managing and spreading the assessment load for students, if the Council decides that the case isn't sufficiently strong to merit consideration by the Department, the Council requests the Development Group to work on the basis of one AAC and one written examination.

OR

- b) Having considered the importance of managing and spreading the assessment load for students, if the Council decides that the case is sufficiently strong to merit consideration by the Department, the Council agrees to send the case forward to the Department of Education.
5. In the case of 4b, the written case is sent to the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Programme Management Office (SCRPMO) in the Department of Education for consideration and response.
6. The Department may convene the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Implementation Group (SCRIG) to support its consideration of the request for a variation. The SCRIG is a Department-led structure established to provide oversight and support the co-ordination of work across the key agencies/organisations contributing to the redevelopment of senior cycle. Its members include senior officials from the Department (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit, Inspectorate, Teacher Professional Learning [TPL]), NCCA, SEC and Oide.
7. The Department decides to support or decline the request for the variation sought and communicates its decision in writing to the NCCA in a timely manner.
8. The Subject Development Group progresses its work in line with the Council's response (arising from 4a) or the Department's response (arising from 4b and 7).

4. Timelines

The process outlined above will require time. Such time, if involving a number of weeks, could have significant implications for the timeline for specific stages of work on the subject specification and/or the overall completion of the specification ahead of sending it to the Department for consideration. This time factor may necessitate NCCA organising additional online meetings of the Board for Senior Cycle and the Council in order to ensure the development work remains within the overall timelines.

Table 1 below sets out the general parameters and processes to guide the work of the subject development groups (SDG) as they consider the most appropriate assessment for each subject. The specific parameters for each of the Tranche 3 subjects are set out in Table 2.

Table 1: Assessment parameters and processes – general application to tranche 3 subjects

Considerations	Parameters to guide the work of the development group.
Nature	<p>The purpose and nature of the assessment component will be clearly outlined in the subject specification and accompanying guidelines to support the completion of the assessment. Details will be provided on the nature of the component. Existing examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research project/extended essay • oral assessment • performance assessment • portfolio assessment • creation of an artefact • field study • experiment/ proof of concept/ practical investigation. <p>The subject specification and the accompanying guidelines will articulate clearly what the students are required to do, the form(s) in which it can be carried out and submitted, and the workload expectations associated with the assessment. The alignment of the assessment component to a particular set of learning outcomes from the subject specification will be provided, as well as details on which key competencies and associated learning outcomes will be assessed. This does not preclude the same LOs from being assessed in the final examination.</p>
Weighting	The assessment component in each subject will be worth at least 40% of the total available marks.
Timing	The SDG will advise on the time required for the carrying out of the assessment component across the course of study.
Completion and Submission	<p>While the SDG may suggest when this may occur (as referenced above having regard to the assessment load on students in particular), a final decision will be made by the SEC following consideration of the overall schedule of completion dates for all assessments across all subjects. This will be finalised by the SEC following engagement with the NCCA and DE.</p> <p>The dates for final completion and/or submission of the assessment component by the student will be published by the SEC and this detail will not be included in the subject specification. (See table 1 below in relation to Mathematics also)</p>
Design	The majority of assessment components will result in a completed item that is materially different to a traditional written examination and which tests different competencies being transmitted to the SEC and assessed by the SEC.

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

Table 2: Parameters for assessment arrangements for each Tranche 3 subject

Subject	Current arrangements	Parameters for new assessment arrangements
Agricultural Science	<p>Written examination is 2.5 hours duration for higher level and ordinary level students and is awarded 300 of the 400 marks available (75%).</p> <p>Coursework is an Individual Investigative Study, which is done in response to a common brief from SEC and is worth 100 marks (25%).</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a common brief.</p>
Computer Science	<p>The final examination is worth 70% and is 2.5 hours duration on one day towards the end of May. There is a paper-based element (1.5 hrs.; 130 marks) followed by a computer-based element (1 hr.; 80 marks).</p> <p>The coursework is worth 30% of the final marks. The common brief is released in December of 6th year and a report and summary video (90 marks) is typically submitted in March of 6th year. This is completed over a 10-week period.</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a common brief.</p>

	<p>Coursework and practical are set at a common level but are graded in line with the standards that apply to the level at which the candidate sits the written examination.</p> <p>Written examination is examined at higher and ordinary levels.</p>	
Design and Communication Graphics	<p>Written examination has 1 paper worth 240 marks which is 60% of the marks available. This paper is 3 hours in duration.</p> <p>Written examination is examined at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Student assignment is worth 160 marks which is 40% of the marks available. The student assignment at higher level differs from the student assignment at ordinary level with a different brief set for HL and OL students. There are 9 outputs required in a portfolio for both levels with the HL page limit set at 14 pages and OL page limit 12 pages.</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a common brief.</p>
History	<p>Written examination is worth 80% of the total marks available, and the exam is 2 hour 50 minutes in duration.</p> <p>Coursework is a Research Study Report (RSR) and is allocated the remaining 20%. There is a different word count for HL and OL students, with the OL word count set at 800 words and the HL word count set at 1600.</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a common brief.</p>
Home Economics	<p>Written examination is 2 hr 30 minutes duration and worth 280 or 320 marks (out of 400) depending on the elective chosen.</p> <p>For students who choose the Home Design and Management or Social Studies electives, the written examination is worth 80% and the Food Studies Coursework is worth 20%.</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a common brief.</p>

	<p>For those who choose the Textile Fashion and Design elective, the written exam is worth 70%; the Food Studies Coursework is worth 20% and the TFD Coursework is allocated 10%.</p> <p>Food Studies Coursework is based on 4 assignments completed by the beginning of November of 6th year and submitted to the SEC.</p>	
Mathematics	<p>There are 2 written papers that are worth the full allocation of marks.</p> <p>Paper 1: HL OL and FL is 2.5 hrs duration.</p> <p>Paper 2: HI and OL 2.5 hrs duration.</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher ordinary and foundation levels and it would be expected to take the form of a single paper.</p> <p>Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a common brief. Assessment component to be completed in Year 1 of the two-year programme.</p>
Music	<p>There are 3 areas for assessment:</p> <p>Composing element is worth 25% and assessed by a written paper of 1.5 hours duration.</p> <p>Performing element is worth 25% and is assessed by a performance of 3 or 4 pieces depending on the selection of one performance format or 2.</p> <p>Listening element is worth 25% and is assessed by an aural exam and written paper of 1.5 hours duration.</p> <p>HL Elective: Higher level students select one of the 3 areas above and choose to increase mark allocation to 50% by including an additional assessment activity.</p> <p>For ordinary level students, their best mark in one out of the three</p>	<p>Written examination: typically, 60% weighting.</p> <p>Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting.</p> <p>Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels.</p> <p>Assessment component will be based on a brief issued by the SEC.</p>

	areas is doubled to reach 100%-mark allocation.	
Physics and Chemistry	Written paper at HL and OL worth full mark allocation of 400 marks. 3-hour paper. Section 1 Physics worth 200 marks. Section 2 Chemistry worth 200 marks.	Written examination: typically, 60% weighting. Assessment component: minimum 40% weighting. Written examination will be set at higher and ordinary levels. Assessment component would be based on one submission to SEC in response to a common brief.

Whilst an AAC in each subject must have a minimum weighting of 40%; an SDG may propose a weighting of 50%. In these circumstances, the process outlined at Section 3 above will apply to determine if such a weighting receives further consideration as to whether it shall be applied or not. It would not be anticipated that an SDG would seek to apply a weighting to the AAC above this level.



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