



## Written submission: Consultation on the draft Leaving Certificate Geography specification

NCCA is redeveloping Leaving Certificate Geography. 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: [Draft Leaving Certificate Geography specification](#)

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

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

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## Respondent's details

What organisation are you submitting on behalf of?

Ardee Community School

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

- ☐ Yes

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

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

- ☐ Yes



## Rationale, Aim, and Key Competencies (pages 2-7)

**Rationale:** The rationale (page 2) outlines the nature of Geography and the role and importance of Geography in realising the purpose and vision of senior cycle.

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

In your opinion, do the rationale and aim capture the overarching purpose and nature of Geography; the importance of the subject in realising the vision of senior cycle and the relevance and expected impact of this subject on student learning. Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

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**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 Geography on pages 5-7.

In your opinion, does this section effectively capture the development of student key competencies in Leaving Certificate Geography? Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

Page 7 Paragraph on thinking and problem solving: Teachers suggest trying to use word "consultation" when referring to conflict resolution or challenges around planning.
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## Strands of study and learning outcomes (pages 8-23)

**Course overview:** The course overview sets out the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions for students in 4 strands (the unifying strand and 3 contextual strands). The specification emphasises a non-linear, integrated approach to learning across the strands.

The details of the strands are described on pages 8-9 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.

Yes we feel that the structure illustrates the connected nature of the strands well however some members of staff suggested renaming the strands.

## Unifying strand: Applying geographical thinking and skills (pages 10-12)

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.

As a subject dept teachers really liked this strand and were excited about how it could be incorporated into their classroom teaching.

## Strand 1: Where we live – the physical environment (pages 13-17)

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.



1.11: More detail required here. Does it just mean to identify of a map/diagram. Concern over this aspect and the lack of coastal/glacial content covered considering we are a small island that is heavily influenced by both. Teachers also concerned by this is the AAC brief would be based on either of these topics they feel that students may be at a disadvantage doing such investigations because of the lack of prior knowledge. Would this mean that Physical AACs based on processes would all need to be done on fluvial environments.

Teachers would like to see isostatic/Eustatic adjustment removed. If it needs to be retained it could be examined under 1.12.

Happy with the rest of the material however concern raised over breadth/detail and time it would take to complete out of the 180 hours

## **Strand 2: Where we live – the human environment (pages 18-20)**

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.

A concern raised by the school Geography Dept was the points 7 and 8 in the SLA column on Human Settlement seem to include too many examples of problems/solutions. To investigate all of these in the detail required would take a huge amount of time.

Query if this list all needs to be examined in depth or can students just focus on the ones relevant to the examples that they focus on in 2.5.

SLA point 3 in Population and Migration refers to policy impacting B Rates etc in Ireland and 1 Global South Setting. (Could China or Romania be used as examples even though not global South countries)

2.7 already covered well in JC is there a need to redo? (JC LOs 3.1, 3.3, 3.9)

2.10 could it maybe include a SLA on migration policies (need for, different attitudes to etc)



### **Strand 3: How we live – the connected environment (pages 21-23)**

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

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

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

Overall teachers liked this section. Feel it is interesting and contemporary so students should enjoy.

As stated in previous strands the main issue teachers have is the worry about depth and detail that they have to cover these massive issues in. Especially given the already highlighted worry about timing to deliver the course.

3.8 and 3.9 is covered well in the JC LO's 3.8 and 3.9 so no need to over focus on these points. Could over an opportunity to cut something from this section.

### **Additional Assessment (AAC) (pages 26-28)**

The Applied Geography Project provides an opportunity for students to apply and showcase the learning set out in the unifying strand in the context of one or more of the three contextual strands. To complete the Applied Geography Project, students will conduct an inquiry in line with the contents and requirements of the SEC brief. This will involve completing research into an area related to the contents of the brief. They will plan and carry out their inquiry. They will gather and analyse data which will contribute to their learning and facilitate them to draw and communicate informed conclusions.

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments on the AAC in Leaving Certificate Geography 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.

We recommend that the SEC issues a common brief that could possibly last 2 years (similar to the DBQ in LC History). This way it would alleviate some of the pressure on the class room teacher from having to help plan and facilitate a different AAC each year.



Possibly alter the theme/Brief on each cycle so that it deals with each of the 3 strands. E.g. Brief one based on Physical Environment, Brief 2 to focus on Human environment etc....

Be helpful to get the briefs released by October mid-term in 5<sup>th</sup> Year to allow teachers ample time to prepare for it.

Brief needs to be broad to allow all students/schools access it.

Query on how long teachers should allocate to deliver the AAC, 20 hours for 20% as it stands. With the brief here teachers are extremely worried about the time needed to deliver the content as well as a new AAC if it requires more time from the 180 hours.

### Supports for Successful Enactment

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

We believe that all teachers will need a huge amount of CPD around the new curriculum. In particular the teachers in the school are worried about the vast amount of topics to be covered. We feel that it is unrealistic that all of it could be covered in an interesting and meaningful way that would allow for maximum student engagement and in a way that would facilitate all of the Geographical skills we want students to gain experience in.

We see that access to IT is an ongoing problem within schools and this will only be exacerbated when all subjects AAC's come on board. We believe that schools will need more support and funding for this.

For the AAC teachers will need funding to buy equipment to conduct the different studies. Currently our schools equipment would be more useful for an AAC based on the Physical Environment.

Sample papers accurately reflecting what the paper will look like will be required by Sept 2025 to help guide teachers and students alike.

It is vital that on the exam paper the marks allocated to each individual question is clearly shown. (Teachers highlighted that this is not the case in all JC subjects and it creates a huge amount of issues)