



Written submission: Consultation on the draft Leaving Certificate Physical Education specification

NCCA is redeveloping Leaving Certificate Physical Education. 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: [Link to Draft LCPE specification](#).

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 survey*, respondents are consenting to having their name / organisation's name published in the final report as respondents to the online survey.

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.

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



Respondent's details

What organisation are you submitting on behalf of?

The Heritage Council

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

- ☒ Yes X
- ☐ No

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

Dr Eoin Ó Donnchadha, Heritage in Education Policy Development Officer, The Heritage Council

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

- ☒ Yes X
- ☐ No



Rationale, Aim, and Key Competencies (pages 2-3, 5 -8)

Rationale: The rationale (pg. 2) outlines the nature of Physical Education and the role and importance of Physical Education in realising the purpose and vision of senior cycle.

Aim: The Aim (pg. 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 Physical Education; 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.

The “Rationale” and “Aims” sections do a good job of capturing the nature of the subject. In terms of improvement, in relation to the subject’s aims, it would be beneficial for the final specification to aim to make students aware that physical activities are aspects of their heritage. At an international level for example, hurling was inscribed in 2018 on UNESCO’s Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. At the same time, other activities, including dance, sports and games, can be considered part of our intangible cultural heritage, whether at a local, regional, national, or international level. This might be better reflected in the final text by amending “awareness of the cultural significance of physical activity and sport in Ireland” to “awareness of the cultural significance of physical activity and sport in Ireland, **including its contribution to our heritage**”.

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 Physical Education on pages 5 – 8.

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

This section does a very good job of outlining the key competencies promoted by the subject. Some room for improvement here has been identified. Specifically, there is an opportunity to further emphasise the roll PE and physical activities can have on students’ wellbeing and sense of belonging, via identity and community,



owing to the nature of these activities as part of our heritage. This might be reflected by adding the bolded text below into the final specification: “Through physical education, students cultivate their overall wellbeing by engaging in activities that enhance their physical health, build resilience, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging. **As part of their intangible cultural heritage, physical activities can help shape students’ identities and contribute to their wellbeing by fostering a sense of community too.**”

Strands of study and learning outcomes (pg. 9 - 22)

Course overview: The course overview sets out the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions for students in three strands. The specification emphasises a non-linear, integrated approach to learning across the strands.

The details of the strands are described on page 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.

Strand 1: Skill learning & being physically active pg. 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.

This section does a very good job of setting out the learning in this strand. In terms of aiding clarity for teachers and learners, one suggestion can be made. In relation to learning outcome 10, “assess physical activity participation across the life stages”, there is potential to provide greater clarity on the various benefits envisaged. The Heritage Council are particularly interested in heritage’s role here being acknowledged. This can be achieved by amending the text “benefits of physical activity at different stages including: physical health, mental health, social, cultural, economic, environmental” so that it reads as “benefits of physical activity at different stages including: physical health, mental health, social, cultural **(e.g. preservation and transmission of cultural heritage)**, economic, environmental”.



Strand 2: Physical & psychological demands of performance (pg. 15)

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.

No comment.

Strand 3: Factors influencing participation in physical activity (pg. 19).

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

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

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

This section does a very good job of outlining the learning associated with this strand. That said, to facilitate greater clarity, it may be beneficial to provide more detail in relation to the content to be considered in places. Specifically, in relation to PE's connections to heritage, it would be worth considering whether this might be explicitly flagged in relation to learning outcome 12 "evaluate strategies related to physical activity promotion". For example, consideration might be given in the text to the perception of physical activity as heritage and how such a perception might help promote specific physical activities. This is important given the connections people have to their heritage, and given the fact that one of our national games has already been internationally recognised by UNESCO as having unique heritage value for humanity. Two potential ways of accomplishing the above suggestions might be to amend the parts of the text reading "perceptions of physical activity" and "different approaches to physical activity promotion from a national and international perspective" to "perceptions of physical activity, **including as examples of cultural heritage**" and "different approaches to physical activity promotion from a national and international perspective, **including the promotion of physical activity based on its heritage value**".



Physical Activity

Practical engagement in physical activity is integral to the specification. The details relating to the physical activities is on pg.10 - 11

Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments on this section Please provide specific feedback / observations / comments.

This section, and particularly the diagram, is very informative and clear with regard to what physical activities are included in the specification and how they are conceptualised. What is striking from our perspective is that heritage has strong links across all categories of physical activity included. Indeed, all the activities could be seen as forms of intangible cultural heritage, while water-based and adventure activities have the added connection of being able to engage students with their natural heritage. While it is not suggested that these connections be made explicit in this section of the specification, it is worthwhile realising these connections exist and bearing this in mind when finalising the specification text, as explicit mention of physical activity's connection to heritage is entirely absent from the text as it stands, and this represents a missed opportunity to empower students to appreciate this aspect of PE.

Additional Assessment (AAC) [ADD PAGE NUMBERS]

The AAC for LCPE provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding and application of physical education knowledge and skills described in the learning outcomes across the specification. This assessment is intended to integrate with and support ongoing learning, motivating students to engage deeply with the processes of planning, performing, and improving in physical activities while engaging with issues affecting physical activity.

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

No comment.

Supports for Successful Enactment

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



The implementation of the redeveloped specification could benefit from the support of various stakeholders, including those in education and those in the heritage and cultural sectors. At present the Heritage Council is developing policy and initiatives relating to heritage in education with a view to doing more to support teachers and learners in this space. In line with our strategic plan, and as a leader in the heritage sector, the Heritage Council will continue to “support and enable heritage-based education and civic engagement that is inclusive and accessible to all” (Heritage Council, 2023, p. 41). We also intend to “strengthen existing partnerships and develop new collaborations with the educational sectors”, including at post-primary level (Heritage Council, 2023, p. 41). One would envisage heritage and cultural organisations and practitioners choosing to employ some of their resources to support the implementation and delivery of a PE subject specification that acknowledged and appreciated heritage’s connections to the subject and included learning outcomes which directly engaged students with, and encouraged them to appreciate, preserve, promote and protect those aspects of their heritage that are interwoven with physical activity.