Senior Cycle 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

The key competencies come to life through the learning experiences and pedagogies teachers choose and through students' responses to them. Students can and should be helped to develop their key competencies irrespective of their past or present background, circumstances or experiences and should have many opportunities to make their key competencies visible.



The development of students' literacies and numeracy contributes to the development of competencies and vice-versa.

Curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Music (2026), p.8-9

Each competency has an introductory description, followed by the over-arching learning outcomes and the associated attributes.

The attributes help to make the competency clearer by setting out how the student will develop and apply the learning.

It is unlikely that any one individual will develop all of the attributes equally.

Key Competencies in Senior Cycle (2024), p.3

Further detail in relation to key competencies is available at
https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-redevelopment/student-key-competencies/

Participating in society



This competency is about participating meaningfully in school, families, communities, and society, at local, national and global level, in person and online. As students participate in society, they deepen their understanding of human rights and responsibilities, diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and sustainability. They demonstrate their commitment to meaningful participation in school and society in a range of ways. They are aware of and engaged with societal issues, seeking to understand why these issues arise and to mitigate their impacts. They advocate for and try to bring about positive change.

Learning outcomes Students should be able to	**Attributes** Participating in society by
participate meaningfully in their schools, communities, and wider society.	• developing and expressing your own ideas. • having choice, voice and influence both in your learning and in society. • investigating complex societal issues. • reflecting on your own role in relation to societal challenges. • learning to critique, challenge, protect and/or transform systems. • planning and taking individual and collective action to bring about positive change. • contributing to peaceful and democratic values and practices at school and community levels. • seeking solutions to situations that undermine human dignity and rights. • making choices which contribute towards creating sustainable futures. • reflecting on your values, perceptions and actions and being able to compromise or take a stand, as appropriate.
develop values and dispositions which support meaningful participation.	• acting ethically, informed by individual and collective rights and responsibilities. • showing solidarity where there is inequity and injustice. • showing respect for the needs and rights of current and future generations and for nature. • cultivating hope and efficacy in the face of uncertainty, ambiguity and risk.

Thinking and solving problems



This competency is about students using logic and reason to make well-thought-out decisions, decide what to do next, and to craft questions, responses and solutions. They figure out what works and what doesn't work in terms of their thinking strategies and the way they approach tasks. They try to improve their thinking and problem-solving using different approaches, including dialogue, study, feedback, reflection and continued practice.

Learning outcomes Students should be able to	**Attributes** Thinking and solving problems by
apply critical thinking in both familiar and new situations.	• getting knowledge, ideas, theories and concepts from different places and putting them to use. • using criteria to choose between sources e.g., reliability, suitability, relevance, cost and accessibility. • using criteria to tell the difference between opinions, judgements, biases, and facts. • thinking critically about social norms and practices. • exploring data, information, patterns, trends, connections, and relationships to gain deeper understanding and better explanations. • creating hypotheses, making predictions, exploring and weighing up arguments and evidence, and coming to clear and coherent conclusions. • challenging assumptions and errors; formulating valid arguments and counter arguments.
identify problems, come up with potential solutions and make informed decisions.	• understanding, analysing, synthesising, evaluating, interpreting and creating. • using numbers and data to make observations, estimates and calculations. • exploring different options and solutions, predicting likely consequences and results. • making informed decisions and evaluating the short-term and long-term results and consequences. • being alert to the pros and cons of hindsight. • recognising and investigating how real-world constraints affect possible solutions and actions.
develop and use a range of thinking strategies, values and dispositions to develop and respond critically to questions and tasks and to solve problems.	• asking questions and seeking challenges. • being open minded, speculating, looking for different points of view and exploring multiple possibilities. • being open to feedback and able to use it to improve their learning. • making connections across different learning and between prior knowledge and new knowledge. • reflecting on thinking strategies to improve learning. • acting with integrity, taking responsibility for your own work and the work of the group. • being transparent about sources, learning from and crediting the work and ideas of others.

Communicating



This competency is about meaningfully interacting with others and gaining a deeper understanding of how important communication is to human relationships. Through this competency, students further develop their communicative repertoire. They communicate to make connections and to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas in a clear, authentic and effective way. They develop habits and nurture dispositions which support their capacity to communicate, in person and using various media.

Learning outcomes Students should be able to	**Attributes** Communicating by
deepen their understanding of various forms of communication and of the material they are studying.	• deepening understanding words, symbols, numbers, language, sound, movement, tools, media, and texts. • listening, viewing, and reading attentively and responding meaningfully. • asking questions to figure out ideas, viewpoints and emotions. • mediating meaning and changing understanding and approach for different formats, audiences and situations. • expressing opinions, speculating and discussing, arguing, informing and persuading. • analysing and interpreting a range of texts. • developing critical understanding.
communicate meaningfully and effectively, using various tools and formats, for different purposes and audiences.	• gathering information from all of the senses. • using a variety of tools to communicate, including languages, instruments, equipment, materials and technology. • using appropriate language, formats and techniques to present data and information clearly. • being aware of the purpose and the target audience for the communication. • creating, designing and composing texts, objects, artefacts and performances.
develop habits and nurture dispositions which help them to communicate meaningfully and effectively.	• communicating authentically, in person and virtually, using various forms of communication. • listening actively and seeking clarity and understanding. • recognising and trying to counteract misinformation and disinformation. • being patient and reflective when communication challenges occur and adapting to the situation. • being open to diverse perspectives and worldviews. • understanding how tone, gestures, body language, emotions and visuals affect communication and using this understanding in an ethical and responsible way. • reflecting on what you do well and what you could do better when communicating.

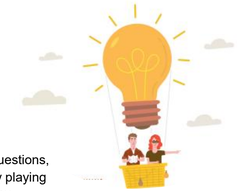
Working with others



This competency is about working cooperatively in a range of contexts for many different purposes. When structured well, working with others can enrich students' learning and deepen their understanding of the dynamics of pairs, groups, and teams. Students can further develop their social and emotional skills and their understanding and appreciation of the talents, opinions, experiences and personalities of their peers, teachers and others. Working with others can deepen students' appreciation of the importance of diversity and inclusion. It gives students opportunities to get better at navigating emotions, challenges, and conflicts which may arise, and to figure out how to negotiate a way forward. Technology is an increasingly important tool which can both support and present challenges to working with others.

Learning outcomes Students should be able to	**Attributes** Working with others by
work co-operatively in pairs, groups and teams.	• deciding things as a group and working together to achieve shared goals. • taking on different roles, including taking the lead on occasion. • contributing meaningfully to the work of the group. • evaluating the work as it progresses and changing approach if necessary. • giving and responding to feedback and understanding its importance. • understanding group dynamics, being able to give and take and navigating differences of opinion and approach.
develop strategies, values and dispositions which make working with others more meaningful.	• interacting ethically, in person and virtually. • understanding and appreciating the value of diversity within groups and promoting inclusivity. • encouraging and celebrating the success of peers. • understanding the emotional involvement needed to work well with others and managing emotional challenges which may arise. • reflecting on what you do well and what you could do better when working with others.

Being creative



This competency is about coming up with novel ideas, questions, thinking, theories, solutions, and creative works, often by playing with and combining existing concepts in new ways, and by embracing divergent thinking, the power of human imagination and the potential of technologies. Being creative can benefit individuals, groups, communities and society and can result in innovation. Creativity can help human beings to navigate difficult problems. Developing strategies, habits of mind and dispositions which nurture creativity can help students to develop and sustain a personal response to their learning.

Learning outcomes Students should be able to	**Attributes** Being creative by
be creative and develop a range of strategies and processes which support their creativity.	• participating in cultural experiences and learning from creative works. • exploring and learning from examples of innovation and entrepreneurship. • coming up with and exploring questions, identifying problems and speculating about possible answers and solutions. • trying different things to respond to tasks and situations. • combining ideas that already exist to enhance concepts, ideas, processes, products, and communities. • turning ideas into actions, creating new ideas, designs, creative works, performances, processes, and products. • imagining sustainable futures and taking steps to achieve these.
develop values and dispositions which nurture their creativity.	• being curious, open-minded, adventurous, and imaginative. • being playful and willing to take appropriate risks in pursuit of learning. • being comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, while still finding ways to move forward. • developing internal standards about how good your own and other people's work is. • reflecting on your creativity and creative process.

Cultivating wellbeing



Student wellbeing is present when students realise their abilities, take care of their physical wellbeing, can cope with the normal stresses of life, and feel a sense of purpose and belonging. When setbacks occur, students know how to cope and to ask for help when they need it. This competency helps students understand how to protect and nurture their own wellbeing and support the wellbeing of others. They come to understand how social, economic and cultural factors can positively and negatively impact on the overall quality of life and wellbeing of individuals, groups and societies. Students' overall wellbeing – their social, emotional, environmental, intellectual, spiritual, and physical wellbeing – and their academic success mutually support each other, and healthy, caring relationships are key to both.

Learning outcomes Students should be able to	**Attributes** Cultivating wellbeing by
cultivate the wellbeing of self and others.	• being aware of and looking after your physical wellbeing. • making and sustaining caring relationships. • developing and expressing your personal identity, values and beliefs. • contributing to making your class and school an inclusive, supportive space. • appreciating, celebrating and understanding diverse identities and cultures.
develop values and dispositions which support wellbeing and the capacity to cope with and respond to challenges.	• having a sense of meaning and purpose and developing your self-confidence. • recognising, accepting and regulating emotions, as appropriate. • feeling empowered to act in solidarity when others are treated unfairly. • being aware of what to do and where to go when help is needed. • building resilience when facing challenges and difficulties. • being able to assess risk and respond in healthy ways.

Managing learning and self



This competency is about students understanding who they are as people and as learners, as they set goals and make life plans. They deepen their understanding of how learning works and can use this knowledge to improve their learning. They become more aware of and nurture their aptitudes, abilities and interests. They develop strategies which help them to make decisions and to take action, to reflect on their learning and to decide next steps in learning and in life. They understand how to get things done and how to use resources effectively and become more adept and confident in acting autonomously.

Learning outcomes Students should be able to	**Attributes** Managing learning and self by
manage their own learning, with support from their teachers, other adults, their peers and technology.	• developing your commitment to improving your learning. • making choices and setting personal learning goals. • making connections across different areas of learning. • managing your learning in different contexts and environments. • figuring out ways to respond to complexity and uncertainty. • reflecting on and evaluating your learning. • developing internal standards in relation to your own and others' work.
develop strategies, values and dispositions which support their learning and their future life path.	• having a sense of self-efficacy and experiencing achievement. • being flexible, adaptable and willing to learn from your mistakes. • identifying and pursuing your hopes and goals for the future. • making informed choices and taking responsibility for your educational journey and career path, with appropriate support.

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Senior Cycle Key Competencies



- ✓ Select one key competency that sings to you.
- ✓ Identify how 1-2 attributes from your chosen Key Competency can be heard in your Music classroom.

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