



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Óige
Department of Education
and Youth



JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT (JCPA)

Handbook for 2026

April 2026

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Part 1 Introduction

1.1 What is the purpose of this Handbook?

The purpose of this handbook is to support schools in their understanding and production of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). It provides details on how to complete the JCPA for students who sat the Junior Cycle examinations in 2026, including any changes that have occurred since JCPAs were first awarded in 2017, so that it can be awarded to students before the end of this calendar year.

As required, updated versions of this document will be published on the Department's website and a notification will appear on Esinet to this effect.

1.2 What is the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)?

As part of the Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) the reporting process at junior cycle culminates in the award of the JCPA to students. The JCPA was awarded for the first time to students who completed Junior Cycle in 2017. The school are required to print out the JCPA for each student. It reports on student achievement across a broad range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle. The JCPA, alongside other reporting arrangements in Junior Cycle, offers students/teachers/parents/guardians a clear, broad picture of a child's learning journey over the three years of junior cycle. It is the final award for Junior Cycle and may be required for progression in some higher or further education programmes at home and abroad.

In the majority of cases, the JCPA will report on student achievement relating to subjects and short courses that are broadly aligned with Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

In some cases, the JCPA may report on achievement for students whose learning profiles prevent them from accessing some or all of the Junior Cycle Level 3 curricula. These students may be engaging with/participating in Level 2 Learning Programmes, or part thereof, which are broadly aligned with Level 2 of the NFQ.

Level 1 Learning Programmes, introduced in 2019, is designed for students who are likely to have significant developmental delays across a number of areas, including learning, communication, language and adaptive skills.

1.3 What is the rationale behind the awarding of the JCPA?

The JCPA captures student achievements in a number of assessment elements undertaken over the three years of junior cycle, including the grades in the state-certified final examinations at the end of the three years. It will also report on students' achievement in Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in subjects and short courses, and in Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) and achievements in Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs). The JCPA also includes reporting on Wellbeing.

The JCPA will also provide an opportunity for schools to comment on student achievement, participation or progress in other areas of learning that may have been included in the school's Junior Cycle programme.

1.4 How does ongoing reporting link to the JCPA?

Throughout a student's time in junior cycle, the school will report to parents/guardians on the progress he or she is making. Typically, ongoing reporting of this nature will include written reports at Christmas and in the summer during first and second years.

Feedback from stakeholders during consultation organised by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) highlighted the need for consistency and coherence in the way reporting on student progress and achievement is made across the three years of Junior Cycle, culminating in the award of the JCPA.

This consistency will be best achieved when the JCPA builds on the same key principles as the school's process for ongoing reporting of student progress. These principles involve aiming to encourage authentic engagement with parents. Similarly, reporting through the JCPA should aim to clearly communicate students' progress in learning, provide information on a broad range of achievements, take an inclusive approach and be sensitive to the self-esteem and general wellbeing of students.

The NCCA has published Guidelines and information on planning for reporting, see <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/reporting>

1.5 What information on student achievement will already have been reported on to students/parents in advance of students receiving the JCPA?

Reporting at the end of second year will document the achievement of students in Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) completed in that year in subjects and short courses and also student achievement in Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) and Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs), where relevant.

1.6 How does the JCPA differ from the old Junior Certificate?

The JCPA is compiled by the school, adhering to a national format. It recognises student achievement, not solely through the state-certified final examinations, but also through a range of other assessment modes and areas of learning. The state certified grades are first reported by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in provisional form some time following the end of third year. These results are subsequently confirmed and included in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) which is produced by schools. A Junior Certificate is no longer issued. The JCPAs are now the only official document containing the final results of the Junior Cycle examinations and schools are the record holders for these.

1.7 What information is required by the school on the Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) for the JCPA?

It is essential that a student's correct personal details along with the subjects that they are studying which have classroom-based assessments are recorded on PPOD. If the incorrect personal details are on PPOD then those incorrect details will appear on the JCPA. If a student is studying and sitting an examination for a subject which has a Classroom Based Assessment, then this must be recorded on PPOD in the student's 2nd year and 3rd year enrolments otherwise this subject will not appear on their JCPA.

1.8 What information is required by the schools and centres for education for producing the JCPA on the Junior Cycle Awards Database (JCAD)?

The JCAD is a database used solely for the production of the JCPA. It may be used by Mainstream schools whose student is not on PPOD for any reason (completing a Level 1 learning programme, late transfer, home-schooled or information error). It is advised that every mainstream school check their school's JCAD account on esinet to ensure all students who require the award receive a complete JCPA.

Centres of education/special schools are not on PPOD, thus will use the JCAD system to input data relating to students which will facilitate the production of JCPAs. Any student who has completed a state examination should have their examination information pre-populated in the JCAD system once it is open. All other students will need to be inputted manually by the schools and centres of education responsible for the JCPA. The student's personal details along with the subjects that they are studying which have classroom based assessments will need to be inputted and verified by the school/centre of education.

PART 2 Content and format of the JCPA

1.9 When will the JCPA be awarded to students?

As in previous years, the production of the JCPA in 2026 is estimated to begin in December 2026 and conclude in February 2027 at the latest. Schools are advised to award the JCPAs at the earliest suitable time.

The Department of Education and Youth is updating the JCPA process so that certificates can be produced and given to students much earlier in the school year. The goal is for students to receive their Junior Cycle results on their JCPA in **October every year**. The aim is for this new time line to begin in October 2027.

1.10 What will appear on the JCPA?

The JCPA will report on achievement across all areas of learning as applicable including:

- The student's achievements in the state-certified final examinations, where relevant;
- The student's achievements in the Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses, where relevant;
- The student's achievements in Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) and Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs), where relevant;
- The student's achievement in other areas of learning and wellbeing.

1.11 How many short courses can a school offer in its Junior Cycle Programme?

Students may in addition undertake up to four short courses, depending on the number of subjects they are studying. This excludes the Wellbeing curricular areas of CSPE, SPHE, and PE, which are required for all Level 3 students.

1.12 What if a school has offered more than four Short Courses for students who are due to receive their JCPA?

In the unlikely event that a school offered more than four short courses to its students finishing Junior Cycle, student achievement in these courses can be reflected under the Other Areas of Learning Section of the JCPA.

1.13 Do all JCPAs follow the same format?

Yes, national templates have been developed. This will ensure consistency across post-primary schools. There are three templates for the JCPA. The general layout of JCPAs for 2026 is as the same as those used in the previous JCPA, in 2025.

Template 1

In the majority of cases, students in 2025 will receive a JCPA which reports on students' achievement in:

- The subjects they took in the state-certified examinations;
- Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) for subjects and short courses;
- Wellbeing (PE, CPSE, SPHE);
- Other areas of learning;
- Other areas of Wellbeing;

Template 2

A second template has been developed to report on the small number of cases where students are studying Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) or Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) exclusively.

Template 3

A third JCPA template is available to report on the achievements of those students who may study a Level 2 Learning Programme but who also take a small number of subjects in the state-certified examinations.

Examples of JCPAs for 2026 can be found in Appendix 1 of this manual.

1.14 How does the JCPA reflect the school identity?

The school crest and signatures of principal (with an optional year head) will appear on the JCPA if the school provides these to the Department. In order for your school crest and signatures to appear on the JCPAs issued by your school please follow the guidelines attached at Appendix 2. Please ensure that a good quality square image with little-to-no text is used, similar to profile photos you may use for a social media profile. If your school submitted a crest and signature in the past which is still valid, then it is not necessary to resubmit these. The signature and logo submitted in the past will automatically be included on JCPAs produced by your school unless a new one is provided.

1.15 Our Year Head for Third Year changes each year. Is it possible to change signatures for inclusion in the JCPA for PPOD schools each year?

Yes, the school can supply a new signature when needed. If you would like to make changes to the crest or signatures that were submitted in previous years, please complete the template at Appendix 2 and send to jcpa@education.gov.ie as soon as possible. Please include the school roll number and exam centre number in all correspondence.

Note that the names of both the principal and the year head that will appear in text beside the submitted signatures are extracted directly from the school details on Esinet. Please ensure this is updated to reflect any changes of staff.

1.16 Our school does not have a Year Head?

There is no requirement to have a Year Head signature on the JCPA. If a year head is not recorded on the PPOD application by the school then the Heading “Year Head” will not appear on the JCPA award.

Principal and Year Head are the only signatures that can be printed on the JCPA. It is not possible to substitute the signature of the Deputy Principal or any other signature for the Year Head.

PART 3 Populating the JCPA

1.17 How is data inputted to the JCPA?

For **mainstream post-primary schools** Department's Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) facilitates the production of JCPAs for most students that undertake state examinations.

There are three separate data sets on the JCPA:

- SEC data;
- Classroom Based Assessment data for subjects and short courses;
- Data relating to other areas of learning and other areas of wellbeing.

Typically, following the relevant Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting in a school, subject teachers will maintain a record of their students' achievements in CBAs in line with schools' existing reporting practices. The results of the CBAs must also be shown on the PPOD system in order for JCPAs to be produced.

This facility to enter data onto PPOD is currently available and a step by step guide is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/7ab67f-post-primary-online-database-ppod-user-guides/>

Schools will be able to enter relevant CBA descriptors using a dropdown menu with five descriptors: Exceptional, Above Expectations, In Line with Expectations, Yet to Meet Expectations, and Not Reported. In the case where a student did not do a CBA or where a descriptor has not been awarded, schools must select the option 'Not Reported' in the JCPA PPOD system and it will be represented on the JCPA in this manner.

In relation to students that also undertook Level 2 Learning Programmes, schools will have access to a drop down menu which will contain the descriptors 'Achieved' or 'Not Achieved' in respect of the relevant Priority Learning Units (PLUs). In relation to students that also undertook Level 1 Learning Programmes, schools will have access to a drop down menu which will contain the descriptors 'Successfully Completed', 'Progress Achieved' or 'Not Achieved' in respect of the relevant Priority Learning Units (PLUs). At both level 1 and Level 2 where a student does not achieve the PLU, the PLU in question will not appear on the JCPA.

As you will be aware from a letter that circulated to all principles, the Department is targeting to produce the 2027 JCPA in October 2027. To help ensure that schools and Departmental systems are fully prepared for the change, **we are asking schools to make every effort to move to a new timeline now, and to complete the input of all the necessary 2026 assessment data by the end of May 2026 to the greatest extent possible.**

Schools may sync this data through their content management systems or enter this data directly into **PPOD** however it is the schools responsibility to ensure the data on PPOD is up-to-date and accurate. If a Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) descriptor cannot be provided for any reason, please enter **"Not Reported"** as is currently the case.

It is important to note that the student details on PPOD (e.g. name) are the details that will appear on the JCPA. Any discrepancies should be amended on PPOD.

1.18 How will schools not on PPOD input data on the JCPA?

Centres of education/special schools will use the Junior Cycle Award Database (JCAD) System to input data relating to students which will facilitate the production of JCPAs.

Students' achievement in CBAs for subjects and/or short courses and/or PLUs they have undertaken will be entered onto the JCAD system by the administrator. Up to this point, results of CBAs will be stored locally.

Schools and Centres of education will be able to enter relevant descriptors using a dropdown menu with five descriptors: Exceptional, Above Expectations, In Line with Expectations, Yet to meet expectations, and Not Reported. In the case of Level 2 Learning Programmes: Achieved. In the case of Level 1 Learning Programmes: Successfully Completed and Progress Achieved.

1.19 How will schools and centres for education access JCAD?

Schools and centres of education must appoint an administrator who will have responsibility for inputting data for the JCPA. A log on account will be created for the administrator by the Department of Education. In order for the administrator account to be created schools and centres of education must provide details relating to the administrator. The administrator will be able to add students to the JCAD system, record their assessment data and produce a JCPA. Please email jcpa@education.gov.ie to request user log in details.

1.20 How does a school produce a completed JCPA where some of the assessment data for a student is missing?

There may be a number of reasons why assessment data is missing. If you are a mainstream school, firstly, check that all available assessment data has been entered on PPOD for the student. If no descriptor was awarded for a CBA, 'not reported' should be selected from the drop down menu. 'Not reported' will appear on the JCPA.

If a student sits an examination in a subject for which they have not been registered for on PPOD, any CBA that is part of that subject will appear as "Not reported" on the JCPA.

If the data is not available to your school because a student transferred to your school having completed a Classroom Based Assessment in another school, firstly ensure you have followed the procedures set out in the PPOD Inter-School Transfer (IST) facility guide which can be found under PPOD User Guide 4 at gov.ie - [Post Primary Online Database \(PPOD\) User Guides \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie). These steps are taken when a pupil moves between recognised post-primary schools. It facilitates the transfer of a student's records on PPOD from their old school to their new school, including their history, assessments and exemption(s), if applicable.

It may be necessary to contact the student's previous school to obtain the missing assessment data or information for inclusion in the Other Areas of Learning section.

If the student's state examinations data is missing from the JCPA, it may be the case where the SEC data provided did not match the PPOD information. This could be for a number of reasons, such as mismatch between PPOD and SEC application name, or

late school transfers. In this case, you should check JCAD in the first instance, as it is likely the SEC data has been transferred there. You can complete the JCPA process for this student on JCAD, or contact jcpa@education.gov.ie for further assistance.

If you are not a PPOD-school, firstly, check that all available assessment data has been entered on JCAD for the student. If no descriptor was awarded for a CBA for any reason, 'not reported' should be selected from the drop down menu. 'Not reported' will appear on the JCPA.

If may be necessary to contact the student's previous centre for education / special school to obtain the missing assessment data or information for inclusion in the other areas of learning section.

1.21 Can students appeal the results and assessment descriptors on the JCPA?

The arrangements that apply to ongoing assessment and reporting in the classroom and in-house summative examinations during the three-year cycle should also apply in relation to the CBAs.

1.22 Do schools need to input data on students' achievements in (CBAs) onto the JCPA?

For mainstream schools, the outcomes in CBAs will be included on a part completed JCPA for each student once that data has been entered on PPOD by the school. Schools should ensure that all descriptors for achievement in CBAs are entered before JCPAs are generated. Any changes made after the JCPAs are generated will not be reflected on the JCPA and it will be necessary to contact JCPA_helpdesk@education.gov.ie to regenerate the JCPA. In such cases the text entered under the Other Areas of Learning and Other Areas of Wellbeing sections will also have to be re-entered.

For special schools & centres of education, the school's administrator will add these details to JCAD for each student and they will appear on the JCPA once generated.

1.23 Do schools need to input data on students' final examination results on to the JCPA?

No. The final results of the state-certified final examinations will be included on a part completed JCPA for each student who sat an exam marked by the Stat Examinations Commission.

1.24 Will information be provided on how to enter data?

Detailed guidance is provided to schools on entering data on PPOD, available here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/7ab67f-post-primary-online-database-ppod-user-guides/>. Further guidance and resources will also be available here: [gov.ie - Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement \(JCPA\) \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/7ab67f-jcpa-junior-cycle-profile-of-achievement/). If you have an issue related to PPOD specifically, please contact JCPA_Helpdesk@education.gov.ie. For all other JCPA related issues, you can contact JCPA@education.gov.ie.

1.25 Will the process to enter data be manageable?

A fast-entry screen will be available to schools using PPOD, showing all students in that school entitled to receive a JCPA award for the end of 3rd Year. The fast-entry screen can be used by schools to record results of classroom-based assessments, short courses and PLUs to facilitate ease of data entry.

1.26 How do schools input information regarding 'Other Areas of Learning' and 'Other Areas of Wellbeing' on the JCPA?

From 2026 onwards, schools and centres of education will enter the Other areas of Learning and Other Areas of Wellbeing text directly into PPOD or JCAD. This means they will be able to download, for each student, a completed JCPA via PPOD or JCAD.

Schools will then record details of student achievement in the 'Other Areas of Learning' and 'Other Areas of Wellbeing' sections for each student onto the saved JCPA. This section should be written in the third person format.

The 'Other Areas of Learning' and 'Other Areas of Wellbeing' sections of the JCPA are in a 'free text' format.

Mainstream schools will be able to input the freetext at any point on PPOD over the three year period. All other schools using JCAD will be required to enter it for the student once JCAD has opened. Each free text box will have space for no more than 500 characters, including spaces.

It will be necessary for special schools and centres of education to have this information prepared prior to the opening of the JCAD in September. In order to ensure quality of such information, schools may collect and store this information in a Word or other document format, for subject copying and pasting.

1.27 What kind of learning is reported in the Other Areas of Learning section?

In the 'Other Areas of Learning' free text section of the JCPA the school has flexibility to report on other learning experiences and events that the student has participated in during curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular aspects of the Junior Cycle Programme in the school e.g.

- Student engagement with co-curricular or extra-curricular activities offered by the school such as engaging in a science fair, participation in the school's sporting activities or debating. For example if students have participated in the BT Young Scientist Competition, or Robotics Competition or an entrepreneurial project, the school could ask students to identify the learning that had taken place (skills, including key skills and knowledge) and this could be included in this section of the JCPA
- Specific learning opportunities that do not form part of subjects or short courses, for example, leadership training; activities relating to guidance; membership of school clubs or societies; membership of their school's student council, sporting achievements, attendance record.

The eight key skills and the 24 statements of learning underpinning the Framework for Junior Cycle could be used as a basis for staff discussion and identification of the key learning that could be reported on in this section of the JCPA. Each student could keep a reflective journal during each year of junior cycle in which he/she would record his/her significant school-related learning experiences. At the end of each year or at Christmas and summer, the student could identify a small number of the most significant learning experiences, and these could be included in the report sent home to parents. At the end of third year the student could discuss with the class tutor the learning achievements that could be included in the JCPA. Teachers could maintain a record of students' significant learning experiences during junior cycle and could decide in conjunction with the student which experiences should be included in the JCPA.

In this section of the JCPA, schools may also refer in this section to student participation in short courses or subjects where the student has not completed the formal assessments and no descriptor has been awarded. For example, students who transfer to a different setting where the subject or short course is not available or students who for some reason do not complete the CBAs or final examination. Results of short courses from a school where more than four short courses were on offer can be recorded in this section also.

The school may also wish to include broader aspects of reporting in this section, or areas such as attendance, personal and social development and learning dispositions.

1.28 How should a school decide what aspects of a students' Other Areas of Learning and Other Areas of Wellbeing should be reported on in the JCPA?

This section of the JCPA has a limit of 500 characters (with spaces) to fit in the space provided on e-Esinet.

It should focus on recognising learning achieved (skills, knowledge, and values) rather than on activities. This should be borne in mind when decisions are made as to what to include.

Schools and centres of education are asked not to submit sensitive information or special category data onto this section of the JCPA.

1.29 How is data relating to students' Other Areas of Learning gathered and stored?

Schools and centres of education have considerable flexibility in deciding the procedures through which information on 'other areas of learning' may be gathered for inclusion in this section of the JCPA. The following are some suggestions that a school could consider – they are intended only as examples, and it is for leadership/management and teachers to determine what will work best in the context of their school:

- During a single tutor class or in a single SPHE lesson teachers could lead students in a reflective exercise on their learning experiences over the course of junior cycle. Arising from this, students would provide a list of those experiences they would to have recorded in their JCPA.
- Students might be given examples to guide them as to the types of information that may be included.
- As a homework task for students: Reflecting on learning achievements might be set for homework. Students could be encouraged to discuss with their parents/guardians the set of experiences to be recorded on the JCPA.

- Teachers could maintain a record of students' significant learning experiences during junior cycle and could decide in conjunction with the student which achievements should be included in the JCPA.
- Subject departments could identify a key teacher, possibly but not necessarily the subject department co-ordinator, who will update school management, or a member of staff nominated by the Principal to coordinate this aspect of junior cycle, perhaps at the end of each year of junior cycle or whenever is deemed most appropriate, on what is happening in relation to students' learning experiences in junior cycle.
- Schools and centres of education could create an online survey for the students to complete. The answers given by students about their participation and learning could be used to populate the other areas of learning.

The learning identified by students will have to be collected from them and stored locally for entry on to Esinet at the appropriate time. Schools will choose the mechanism to do this which best suits their individual contexts. For example, a school email address specific to this purpose could be created and students invited, in third year, to email their contribution to this part of the JCPA direct to that address. Where this is not feasible, students could provide the information directly to a nominated teacher, for example, the class tutor or year head. The school/centre of education will determine who is responsible for transfer of the information into Esinet for each student. Schools/centres of education may choose to use some of the management hours which have been made available to facilitate the coordination of this work.

1.30 How many references to different learning should a school include on the JCPA under Other Areas of Learning?

It is recommended that a school includes between three and five references to *Other Areas of Learning* in this section for each student bearing in mind the limited space available on the JCPA.

1.31 How is data relating to students' Other Areas of Wellbeing gathered and stored?

In addition to programmes of study in PE, SPHE and CSPE schools may also choose to include other areas in their provision for Wellbeing. Examples are set out in the [NCCA guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle](#) and include areas such as guidance, school-provided courses/units that address aspects of wellbeing, elements of other subjects that are clearly linked to wellbeing, school initiatives and relevant courses and units developed by outside agencies and organisations.

The learning identified by students will have to be collected from them and stored locally for entry on to the JCPA at a later date. Schools will choose the mechanism to do this which best suits their individual contexts. For example, a school email address specific to this purpose could be created and students invited, in third year, to email their contribution to this part of the JCPA direct to that address. Where this is not feasible, students could provide the information directly to a nominated teacher, for example, the class tutor or year head. The school will determine who is responsible for transfer of the information into the

JCPA for each student. Schools may choose to use some of the management hours which have been made available to facilitate the coordination of this work.

Due to technical constraints, it is not possible to reflect subject descriptors for the old Junior Certificate syllabi in the Wellbeing section of the 2025 JCPA. As a result, schools which provided the Junior Certificate syllabi in CSPE, SPHE and/or PE to students will have to reflect their students' achievements in these areas of learning via the free text box entitled 'Other Areas of Wellbeing'. Suggested text has been developed and provided to schools for this purpose. Students who studied the Junior Cycle short courses are not affected by this issue.

Further details concerning wellbeing reporting, including the suggested text referred to above, are available in the letter sent to school Principals outlining arrangements for reporting on wellbeing areas of learning in the JCPA for 2022 on 25 May 2022.

1.32 Will the DoE have access to the information in the Other Areas of Learning and Other Areas of Wellbeing sections?

Note: 'other areas of learning' (OALs) and 'other areas of wellbeing' (OAWs) will not be recorded on PPOD. OALs and OAWs will be completed at school level for each student.

This OAL and OAW data will only be held by the school. The DoE will only have access to the data relating to students' achievement in the SEC examination in subjects, and the data relating to students' achievement in the CBAs, L2LPs and L1LPs, i.e. data that is recorded on PPOD and JCAD. Schools should note that should it be necessary to regenerate the JCPA it will be necessary to input the OAL and OAW data again.

1.33 How does the Junior Certificate School's Programme (JCSP) fit with the JCPA?

Acknowledgement of students' participation in the JCSP may be recorded under 'other areas of learning'. The planned review of the JCSP programme is currently underway.

1.34 How will schools enter student achievements in Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs), where relevant?

As part of the Junior Cycle, schools can now include programmes called Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) and called Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs). These are designed for a small number of students with particular special educational needs and are aligned with Level 2 and Level 1 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) respectively.

L2LPs and L1LPs are suited to students where the special/educational needs of these students are such as to prevent them from accessing some or all of the junior cycle Level 3 subjects and short courses. L2LPs and L1LPs are designed around priority learning units (PLUs) that focus on social, personal and pre-vocational skills. These students may also undertake L2LP or L1LP short courses aligned with Level 2 or Level 1 of the NFQ respectively. Finally, in some cases, L2LP students may also undertake Level 3 subjects and/or short courses at Level 3.

For students who are undertaking L2LPs in combination with a number of subjects and/or short courses, the JCPA may include a report on the students' achievement in:

- the subjects they took in the state-certified examinations

- Classroom-Based Assessments for PLUs and/or subjects and/or short courses
- the area of Wellbeing
- other areas of learning

For students who are undertaking L2LPs or L1LPs solely, through PLUs and/or short courses, the JCPA may include a report on the students' achievement in:

- Classroom-Based Assessments for PLUs and Level 2 short courses
- the area of Wellbeing
- other areas of learning

Schools will have access to a drop down menu which will contain the two descriptors 'Achieved' or 'Not Achieved' in respect of L2LP Priority Learning Units (PLUs). Where a student does not achieve the PLU, the PLU in question will not appear on the JCPA. In relation to students that also undertook Level 1 Learning Programmes, schools will have access to a drop-down menu which will contain the descriptors 'Successfully Completed', 'Progress Achieved' or 'Not Achieved' in respect of the relevant Priority Learning Units (PLUs). At both level 1 and Level 2 where a student does not achieve the PLU, the PLU in question will not appear on the JCPA.

Examples of JCPAs for 2026, adhering to this format, can be found in Appendix 4 of this document. This type of JCPA will contain only information provided by the school, with no information from the SEC.

When generating JCPAs for students who have only completed L2LPs or L1LPs and therefore did not sit State Examinations or undertake level 3 CBAs, please refer to the Junior Cycle Award Database (JCAD) handbook.

PART 4 Generating the JCPA

1.35 How is the JCPA generated?

The JCPA is generated by schools using the Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) or Junior Cycle Awards Database (JCAD) applications, both of which are the Department's Esinet application. There is a facility allowing schools to update data onto PPOD by way of a synchronisation function on the school Content Management System

Following the updating of school based information on PPOD or JCAD, such as CBAs, PLUs, and freetext for Other Areas of Learning and Other Areas of Wellbeing, a pre-populated JCPA for each student is made available for download to the school in the term following the completion of third year. This will include students' final results in the state-certified final examinations, the descriptors of students' achievement in relevant CBAs or PLUs, and the other Areas of Learning and wellbeing for each student prior to printing the JCPA award. The JCPA for each student should be saved locally by the school.

1.36 Can I download all of my school's Level 3 JCPAs at once instead of Individually?

For those using PPOD, a download all option has been added to the Download JCPA section under Junior Cycle Award on PPOD.

This can be selected only once so please ensure all student data is correct **before** using the Download all function. If any student data has been changed this will only be reflected after the automatic overnight regeneration and not on JCPAs downloaded on the same day as the change. This will download a folder containing all of your available JCPAs for this year, it is important to check that all of your eligible student JCPAs are accounted for, if a student is missing and does not appear on your download on PPOD either please contact JCPA@Education.gov.ie

After this Download all function has been used it will no longer appear and if any changes are made to any student data which require re-downloading this will need to be done on an individual student by student basis as in previous years.

The JCAD application does not have this functionality. Downloading on JCAD is only possible on an individual student by student basis.

1.37 Are schools required to have the JCPA printed by a professional printing company?

It is not a requirement to engage a professional printing company to carry out the print job. It is at the discretion of each school whether they choose to print the JCPA themselves or employ a professional printer to do so.

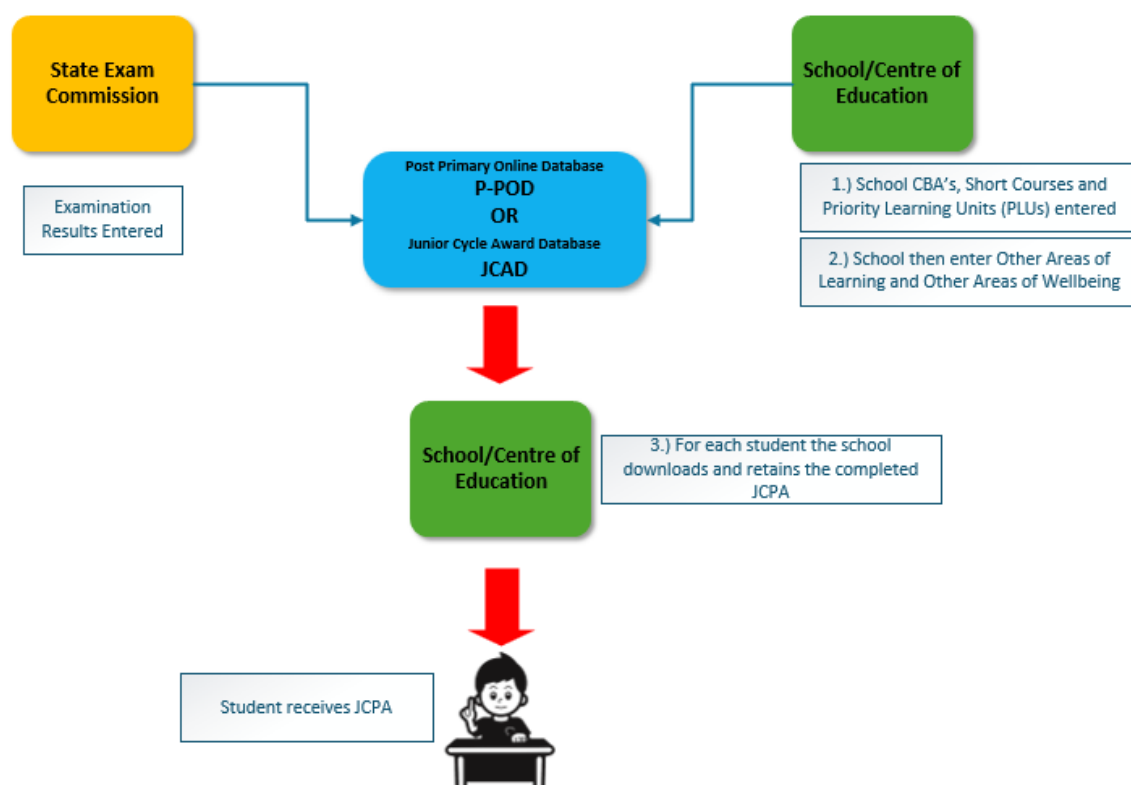
DATA PROTECTION

1.38 Are there data protection issues for consideration by schools?

It is required by data protection law that before schools commence processing of any personal data a school must first bring a privacy notice on how the student's personal data

will be processed to the attention of parents/guardians. Appendix 4 includes templates for Privacy Notices which should be brought to the attention of parents/guardians of students who will receive a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) award in 2025.

The diagram below shows the data flow process in relation to student JCPA data.



1.39 Will a copy of the JCPA be saved electronically on a school's IT system?

Not necessarily. Schools are advised to check and ensure a virtual copy of the JCPA on file.

School CBAs, Short Courses and PLUs entered.
Student's personal data and subjects studied.

cal and/or

1.40 Will schools be required to keep copies of JCPAs for their students?

Schools are required to save the JCPA for each student – either electronically or in paper copy. Current guidelines to schools on data retention which have been prepared by the Management Bodies advise retention of “results of in-school tests/exams (i.e. end of term, end of year exams, assessment results)” for 7 years after the age of majority (18). Schools may also choose to issue the JCPA electronically to students, in addition to the print version of the JCPA formally presented to students.

NB: Schools need to be fully aware of their responsibility to retain a JCPA for each individual student for 7 years after the age of majority (18) and to provide JCPAs to students on request.

Appendix 1 – Checklist for Schools

Checklist to be consulted when downloading the JCPA

Question?	Yes / No
Did every student who is entitled to a JCPA appear on PPOD or JCAD?	
Are all CBA descriptors entered accurately?	
Is the correct JCPA saved for each student?	
Have I got a JCPA for a student(s) that left/transferred after Junior Cycle 2026 and are now in a new school?	
Am I missing a JCPA for any student new to the school since completing their Junior Cycle in 2026?	
Are students' details on PPOD of JCAD correct, name, dob etc.?	
Are students' exam subjects correct on PPOD including subjects' CBAs	
Are OALs and OAWs displaying correctly once printed? Do they appear the same in print as they do on the screen?	
Is the crest and signature displaying correctly?	

Help can be obtained by emailing jcpa@education.gov.ie. Please ensure to include the following information on any correspondence to this address.

- i. School name
- ii. Roll number
- iii. Student's name
- iv. Pupil ID
- v. Nature of issue.

Appendix 2 – Logos and Signatures

JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT (JCPA)

Guidelines for inclusion of the School Logo and/or Signatures on the JCPA award

The following 2 images may be pre-populated on the JCPA award, should the school/centre for Education wish to do so:

School/Centre Crest/Logo: This image appears in two separate areas on the JCPA award.

- a. The cover page (large image)
- b. Results page (small image – appears at the bottom of the JCPA results page)

Signature of Principal/Year Head (appears at the bottom of JCPA results page)

In order for the above to be automatically pre-populated upon the generation of the JCPA the school/centre for Education should forward the above to the Department of Education and Youth. Details on how to send the images to the Department are as follows:

School/Centre Crest or Logo

- 1) School/Centre for Education crest or logo should not contain any additional text beyond the central logo.
- 2) Sample crest shown (shown opposite; size 5.4 cm x 5.7 cm)) is the **actual** size which will be printed on the JCPA cover page. Please ensure that your crest is of sufficient quality/resolution to render clearly at this size.
- 3) Larger images will be accepted by the Department and will be resized to render clearly at the appropriate size.
- 4) Images will be accepted as any image file (.jpg/.tiff etc)
- 5) Where an image is sent to the Department with additional text (school name under, over or around the main image) then this will be removed by the Department.
- 6) Please save the image as “YourSchoolCentreNumber”_Crest. (e.g. for school roll number 12345X the image should be named 12345X_Crest.jpg OR 12345X_Crest.tiff).



Signatures

- 1) Where a school/centre for Education chooses, the Principal and/or Year head signature can be included on the JCPAs which will be generated by the system.
- 2) In order to include the image then please:-
 - a. Complete the details as contained in the form below.
 - b. Scan the completed page and save the file as "YourSchoolRollNumber"_signature. (e.g. for school roll number 12345X the file should be named 12345X_signature.jpg OR 12345X_signatures.pdf).

Please forward both (i) Crest/Logo Image and (ii) Signature Image to JCPA@education.gov.ie in one single email as soon as possible before commencing the download process for your school

Any queries on this should be addressed to JCPA@education.gov.ie.

Signatures for inclusion in the JCPA

	Name (block capitals)	Signature (please ensure signature fits within the container)
Signature		
☐ Principal		
☐ Year Head		

Appendix 3 – Privacy Notice and Consent Form

PRIVACY NOTICE - Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement Award

For the information of parents/guardians of students who will receive a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) award

Introduction

It is required by data protection law that before Awarding Bodies (schools) commence processing of any personal data a school must first bring a privacy notice on how the student's personal data will be processed to the attention of parents/guardians. This privacy notice relates to those students who have undertaken **Junior Cycle at Level 3, Level 2 or Level 1** of the National Qualifications Framework. Junior Cycle Level 3 includes exams set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), where the provisional results are provided to schools and students in the September following the sitting of the State examinations. Junior Cycle Level 2 and Level 1 Learning Programmes are designed for students with particular special educational needs and is broadly aligned to Level 2 and 1 of the National Framework for Qualifications (NFQ) respectively. In some instances students will undertake a combination of a Level 1, 2 and Level 3 programme.

Process

This document sets out the information in relation to how students' Junior Cycle assessment data will be used to produce the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA). The JCPA has replaced the Junior Certificate award.

Where student details are currently maintained on the Department's Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD¹) the JCPA will be produced by schools via PPOD. Where student details are not held on PPOD (e.g. special schools) the JCPA will be produced via the Junior Cycle Assessment Database (JCAD²).

Schools will be enabled to record additional assessment student data on PPOD or JCAD for the purpose of producing a **Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement** (JCPA) for each of their students who completes the Junior Cycle.

This approach enables

- a. Awarding Bodies (schools/centres of education) to record on PPOD or JCAD the descriptors awarded in Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses and also reflect achievement in Priority Learning Units (PLUs) for students with special educational needs.

¹ Please see separate Privacy Notice on general use of P-POD at <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/43ddb5-post-primary-online-database-p-pod/#data-protection>

² JCAD is the DES database developed to facilitate the production by Special Schools and Centres of Education of the JCPA.

- b. the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to provide state examinations final results electronically to the Department of Education and Youth for upload to PPOD and JCAD and association of these results with each student.
- c. the Department of Education and Youth to facilitate the schools/centres of education to produce the JCPAs for each student electronically.
- d. Awarding Bodies (schools/centres of education) to complete the 'other areas of learning' section of the JCPA for each student and deliver the award to students. The 'other areas of learning' section of the JCPA allows the school/centre of education to report on other learning experiences and events that the student has participated in outside the formal timetabled curriculum. The data entered at school level for 'other areas of learning' will not be stored on the Department's database.
- e. following production of the JCPA for each student the Awarding Bodies (school/centre of education) to retain a copy of the full JCPA for each student. The Department will retain copies of JCPAs for at least 30 years. The Department would retain some data indefinitely for statistical purposes. The data will be retained for the lifetime of the student. Please note that Department's obligations under the National Archives Act, 1986 may require it to retain the data for archiving purposes. See guidance from the National Archives: [National Archives GDPR Guidance](#)
- f. the data to be anonymised once JCPAs are produced and used in statistical analysis. No identifiable individual data is used by the Department except to provide, on request, draft copies of the JCPA to the Awarding Bodies (schools/centres of education).

It should be noted that only a small number of staff within the Department of Education and Youth has access to the personal data and then solely to provide technical support to your school/centre of education when it is using the PPOD or JCAD application. Student data as set out below will not be shared with anyone else other than another post-primary school in which the student enrolls.

Pursuant to Section 3 and Section 4 of the Data Protection Acts, you may access your personal data and request a copy of your data held on PPOD by contacting your school, or if you are a former student by contacting the Department of Education and Youth. Under data protection law you may object to the processing of your data or seek to have the data corrected.

More detail on use of personal data by the Department is contained in the FAQ on PPOD available on <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Data-Protection/FAQ.html>.

The Department of Education and Youth Data Controller for PPOD is the Principal Officer in the Parents, Learners and Database Section within the Department who can be contacted by e-mailing ppodhelpdesk@education.gov.ie

The Data Protection Officer for the Department may be contacted by e-mailing dpo@education.gov.ie

List of post-primary student personal data³ recorded by Awarding Bodies (post-primary schools, special schools, and centres of education) on PPOD or JCAD for the purpose of producing the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Sensitive Personal Data for some students with a special education need

- Priority Learning Unit descriptor
- Priority Learning Unit medium – Irish/English
- Priority Learning Unit outcome

Written consent should be sought from the parents/guardians of students with special educational needs (see template below).

For each subject where an examination held by the State Examinations Commission was taken

- Level taken in the final examination
- Outcome of Classroom-Based Assessments 1 and 2 (NB Only if recorded on PPOD)
- Predicted medium through which final examination taken *Irish/English*
- Overall grade awarded by State Examinations Commission
- Annotation of result to indicate a subject was assessed except for a particular element e.g. aural is missing

For each short course taken

- Title
- Level of Learning Programme - 2 or 3
- Medium Irish/English
- Outcome of Classroom- Based Assessment

In addition, the following data provide by the State Examinations Commission will be printed on your JCPA

- Forename and Surname – as provided to the State Examination Commission
- Date of Birth – to aid identification whether there are more than two students with the same name
- State examination candidate number – to assist with any follow up query with State Examinations

Information on other personal data stored outside of PPOD and used by your school in producing your JCPA is available in your school's *Data Protection Policy* a copy of which may be obtained from your school.

Information on the all other personal data of students collected and processed by schools using PPOD is available in the ***Fair Processing Note for PPOD*** copies of which are available at www.education.ie

³ Details on retention periods, legal basis for collection by the Department and the school are contained in the Fair Processing Notice for PPOD

CONSENT FORM for the recording of assessment data relating to the Level 2 Learning Programmes and Level 1 Learning Programmes for students with particular special educational needs.

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

ADDRESS OF SCHOOL _____

NAME OF STUDENT _____

Date of Birth of Student _____

I consent to details of the outcomes of any Level 2 Learning Programmes and Level 1 Learning Programmes undertaken by the above named student being recorded on the Department of Education PPOD or JCAD computer applications in order that the above school may include this information on the student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Signed

PRINT NAME

DATE

Please return completed forms to the student's school

This form should be retained by the school for the duration of the student's enrolment and made available for inspection by an officer of the Department or the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, if required.

Appendix 4 – Sample JCPAs

SAMPLE Level 3 JCPA



JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT

JANE DOE 2024



State Certified Final Examination

Irish L2 (H)	Achieved
English (H)	Achieved
Mathematics (H)	Achieved
History (C)	Achieved
Geography (C)	Achieved
Engineering (C)	Achieved
Business Studies (C)	Merit
Science (C)	Merit
Wood Technology (C)	Achieved
Religious Education (C)	Achieved

Classroom-Based Assessments - Subjects

Irish L2	Language Portfolio	Not Reported
	Communicative task	Not Reported
English	Oral Communication	In Line with Expectations
	The Collection of the Student Texts	Not Reported
Mathematics	Mathematical Investigation	Yet to Meet Expectations
	Statistical Investigation	Not Reported
History	The Past in My Place	In Line with Expectations
	A Life in Time	Not Reported
Geography	Geography in the news	In Line with Expectations
	My geography	Not Reported
Engineering	Engineering in action	Not Reported
	Research and Development	Not Reported
Business Studies	Business in action	In Line with Expectations
	Presentation	Not Reported
Science	Extended Experimental Investigation	In Line with Expectations
	Science in Society Investigation	Not Reported
Wood Technology	Wood science in our environment	In Line with Expectations
	Student self-analysis and evaluation	Not Reported
Religious Education	A Person of Commitment	In Line with Expectations
	The human search for meaning	Not Reported

Other Areas of Learning

?

Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses

Wellbeing

Physical Education	
SPHE (Social, Personal, Health Education)	
CSPE (Civic, Social, Political Education)	

Other Areas of Wellbeing

?

Principal

Year Head

Roll Number:

10000X

Mr. John Smith



Testing

My Schoolá

Cornamaddy, Ballymahon New Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

N37 TR23



This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.

JANE DOE

My Schoola



JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT

UNDERSTANDING YOUR JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT (JCPA)

This Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement records student achievement in subjects and short courses broadly aligned to Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and Priority Learning Units (PLUs) and short courses broadly aligned to Level 2 and Level 1 of the NFQ.

Grading of the Final Examinations

Grade Descriptor	Percentage
Distinction	≥ 90 to 100
Higher Merit	≥ 75 and < 90
Merit	≥ 55 and < 75
Achieved	≥ 40 and < 55
Partially Achieved	≥ 20 and < 40
Not Graded	≥ 0 and < 20

CBA Descriptors

Exceptional
Above Expectations
In line with Expectations
Yet to Meet Expectations
Where a student does not receive a descriptor for a CBA, the term 'not reported' is used.

Priority Learning Units

Level 2 PLU and Short Course Descriptor Achieved
Level 1 PLU and Short Course Descriptors Successfully Completed
Progress Achieved

For the cohort of students who completed their Junior Cycle in 2024, revised assessment arrangements for the completion of classroom-based assessments were introduced as a result of the disruption to learning students experienced. These revised assessment arrangements required each student to complete a minimum of one CBA in each subject rather than the usual two.

Other Areas of Learning

This section provides an opportunity for schools to report on achievements in other areas of learning in which the students has engaged.

Inclusiveness measures in the State Examinations

Inclusiveness and transparency are core principles underpinning the Junior Cycle Examination. In certain circumstances it is open to a candidate to choose to have his/her result in a particular subject based upon all except some element of the examination in that subject. The State Examinations Commission emphasises that in all cases the grade descriptor awarded is a full and accurate reflection of the candidate's performance in the examination.

Explanation of the various numeric codes that accompany a grade in any case where an element of the examination was not assessed:

- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the aural element.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the practical element.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and written punctuation elements.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the reading element.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and some grammatical elements.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the project element.
- All parts of this examination were assessed except for the testing of graphical skills in the written paper.

		JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT		JOHN DOE 2024	
 State Certified Final Examination		Classroom-Based Assessments - Subjects			
English (O)	Merit	English	Oral Communication	Exceptional	
			The Collection of the Student Texts	Exceptional	
Mathematics (O)	Merit	Mathematics	Mathematical Investigation	Exceptional	
			Statistical Investigation	Exceptional	
History (C)	Merit	History	The Past in My Place	In Line with Expectations	
			A Life in Time	Yet to Meet Expectations	
French (C)	Merit	French	Oral Communication	Above Expectations	
			The Student Language Portfolio	In Line with Expectations	
Science (C)	Merit	Science	Extended Experimental Investigation	Exceptional	
			Science in Society Investigation	In Line with Expectations	
Wood Technology (C)	Merit	Wood Technology	Wood science in our environment	Not Reported	
			Student self-analysis and evaluation	Exceptional	
		Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses			
		CSi: Exploring Forensic Science (Level 2)		Achieved	
		Artistic Performance		Exceptional	
		Chinese Language and Culture		Above Expectations	
		Digital Media Literacy		Yet to Meet Expectations	
Priority Learning Units		Wellbeing			
Preparing for Work (Level 2)	Achieved				
Living in a Community (Level 2)	Achieved				
Personal Care (Level 2)	Achieved				
Communicating and Literacy (Level 2)	Achieved				
		Other Areas of Wellbeing 			
					
Other Areas of Learning 					
Principal		Roll Number:		10000X	
John Hancock 		Springfield Elementary School 19 Plympton Street, Springfield D11 X999			
This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.					

JOHN DOE

Springfield Elementary School



JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT

UNDERSTANDING YOUR JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT (JCPA)

This Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement records student achievement in subjects and short courses broadly aligned to Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and Priority Learning Units (PLUs) and short courses broadly aligned to Level 2 and Level 1 of the NFQ.

Grading of the Final Examinations

Grade Descriptor	Percentage
Distinction	≥ 90 to 100
Higher Merit	≥ 75 and < 90
Merit	≥ 55 and < 75
Achieved	≥ 40 and < 55
Partially Achieved	≥ 20 and < 40
Not Graded	≥ 0 and < 20

CBA Descriptors

Exceptional
Above Expectations
In line with Expectations
Yet to Meet Expectations
Where a student does not receive a descriptor for a CBA, the term 'not reported' is used.

Priority Learning Units

Level 2 PLU and Short Course Descriptor Achieved
Level 1 PLU and Short Course Descriptors Successfully Completed
Progress Achieved

For the cohort of students who completed their Junior Cycle in 2024, revised assessment arrangements for the completion of classroom-based assessments were introduced as a result of the disruption to learning students experienced. These revised assessment arrangements required each student to complete a minimum of one CBA in each subject rather than the usual two.

Other Areas of Learning

This section provides an opportunity for schools to report on achievements in other areas of learning in which the students has engaged.

Inclusiveness measures in the State Examinations

Inclusiveness and transparency are core principles underpinning the Junior Cycle Examination. In certain circumstances it is open to a candidate to choose to have his/her result in a particular subject based upon all except some element of the examination in that subject. The State Examinations Commission emphasises that in all cases the grade descriptor awarded is a full and accurate reflection of the candidate's performance in the examination.

Explanation of the various numeric codes that accompany a grade in any case where an element of the examination was not assessed:

- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the aural element.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the practical element.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and written punctuation elements.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the reading element.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except spelling and some grammatical elements.
- All parts of the examination in this subject were assessed except the project element.
- All parts of this examination were assessed except for the testing of graphical skills in the written paper.

Joseph Bloggs

DOB: 25 November 2008 Student ID number: 16808

Priority Learning Units	
Preparing for Work (Level 2)	Achieved
Living in a Community (Level 2)	Achieved
Personal Care (Level 2)	Achieved
Numeracy (Level 2)	Achieved
Communicating and Literacy (Level 2)	Achieved

Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses	
A Personal Project:Caring for Animals (Level 2)	Achieved
CS1: Exploring Forensic Science (Level 2)	Achieved

Wellbeing?

Other Areas of Learning?

Principal

John Hancock

Roll Number:

10000X

Springfield Elementary School
19 Plympton Street,
Springfield
D11 X999



This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.

This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.

Examination number :

DOB: 25 November 2008

Joseph Bloggs

Springfield Elementary School



JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT

UNDERSTANDING YOUR JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT (JCPA)

This Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement records student achievement in subjects and short courses broadly aligned to Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and Priority Learning Units (PLUs) and short courses broadly aligned to Level 2 and Level 1 of the NFQ.

Priority Learning Units

Level 2 PLU and Short Course Descriptor
Achieved

Level 1 PLU and Short Course Descriptors
Successfully Achieved
Partially Achieved

For the cohort of students who completed their Junior Cycle in 2024, revised assessment arrangements for the completion of classroom-based assessments were introduced as a result of the disruption to learning students experienced. These revised assessment arrangements required each student to complete a minimum of one CBA in each subject rather than the usual two.

Other Areas of Learning

This section provides an opportunity for schools to report on achievements in other areas of learning in which the students has engaged.