



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Senior Cycle Redevelopment

Schools Information Note

November 2023, Issue 1



Senior Cycle Redevelopment Information and Updates

Introduction

Senior Cycle is changing. Subjects are being updated. The student Leaving Certificate experience is being reimagined.

Over time, all subjects for the Leaving Certificate will have additional assessment components so that students can show their many talents, competencies and skills outside of the exam hall.

This is the first edition in a series of Department of Education Senior Cycle Redevelopment information notes. These notes will provide updates to school communities on the roll-out of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment programme. The Department has issued this note to all post-primary schools and requests that it be circulated to students, parents and staff in each school. The information note will also be available online and schools are welcome to provide links from their websites and other digital presences to it.

What does an acceleration mean for me?



Main updates

In September 2023, the Minister announced there will be an acceleration of the national roll-out of the programme for Senior Cycle redevelopment.

The national introduction of the first tranche of revised subject specifications will be accelerated by two years, with roll-out planned for September 2025.

As subjects are revised there will be additional assessment components in each subject. These will be worth a minimum of 40 percent of the available marks and will be externally assessed.

A schedule for Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 roll-out under this new accelerated roll-out is now available.

The NCCA consultation on the Draft Transition Year Programme Statement is now complete

Useful links and further reading

Full details of the Minister's announcement in September 2023 can be found here: [Minister Foley announces update to Senior Cycle Redevelopment](#)

On the 3 October, the Minister made statements on Senior Cycle Reform in the Seanad. The full debate can be read here: [Oireachtas.ie](#)

The Senior Cycle Redevelopment Partners' Forum facilitates information exchange and provides informed insights on the implementation of Senior Cycle Redevelopment. Membership consists of various education stakeholders including representative bodies for students, parents, and teachers. The Forum met in October to discuss updates: [Senior Cycle Redevelopment partners forum discuss updates to Senior Cycle Redevelopment](#)

Acceleration of Senior Cycle Redevelopment – key updates and what they mean

On 20 September 2023, the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, announced updates to Senior Cycle Redevelopment, building on her previous announcement of March 2022. These updates included the national rollout of nine new and revised subjects two years earlier than previously planned.

2025 will also see the introduction of two new subjects:

Drama, Film and Theatre Studies

Climate Action and Sustainable Development

These subjects will be rolled out to schools on a phased basis. An expression of interest process will be run by the Department to identify schools who wish to participate in the first phase. This phased approach is similar to the recent introduction of Leaving Certificate PE and Computer Science.

Each of the new and revised subject specifications will incorporate additional assessment components (called AACs). These components will not be a traditional written examination and will be worth a minimum of 40 percent of the overall available mark for each subject. These components (AACs) will be assessed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

The Minister has also tasked the SEC to commission research into the potential role and impact of generative A.I. in assessment.

2

new subjects

min

40%

marks for additional
assessment components

9

subjects with a new,
updated curriculum
for 2025

Tranches and revised subject specifications

New and revised subject specifications, incorporating the revised assessment arrangements will be rolled out in tranches on an annual basis.

Tranche 1

starts September 2025

Ancient Greek
Arabic
Biology
Business
Chemistry

Climate Action and Sustainable Development
Drama, Film and Theatre Studies
Latin
Physics

Tranche 2

starts September 2026

Accounting
Construction Studies
Engineering
English

Geography
LCVP Link Modules
Physical Education

There will be **five** annual tranches in total; and the subjects in later tranches will be announced in 2024. **By 2029, all subjects will be revised.** This means that all those entering fifth year as a Leaving Certificate established student in 2029 will be following revised curricula and assessment arrangements in all subjects. Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme students will also benefit from changes, outlined in the table below.

Teachers and schools will be given the support to introduce these changes and help prepare students for the upcoming changes. This will include appropriate support and professional learning led by [Oide](#), the new integrated support service for teachers that was launched in September.

Further information can be found here: <https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-redevelopment/schedule-of-senior-cycle-subjects-for-redevelopment/>

What do these changes mean for students?

As the annual updates are rolled out, more and more students will benefit from the changes. Due to the popularity of Biology (about 60% of total Leaving Certificate candidates sat the Biology examination in 2023) and Business (about 34% of total Leaving Certificate candidates sat the Business examination in 2023) in Tranche 1, many students that are beginning fifth year in 2025 will benefit from the changes. The inclusion of English in Tranche 2 means that effectively all students starting fifth year in 2026 will follow at least one revised or new subject specification.

'What it means for me' student guide can be found at the back of this note and online here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/45b09-senior-cycle-redevelopment-what-does-this-mean-for-me/>

Do you want to get involved in subject specification?

Subject Development Groups play a key role in redevelopment of the senior cycle curriculum. The Groups include nominees of the education partners, the Department of Education and other key education agencies.

The NCCA is currently convening a number of Subject Development Groups and is seeking expressions of interests from individuals who would like to contribute to work on the following specifications: Leaving Certificate Accounting, Leaving Certificate Construction Studies, Leaving Certificate Engineering, Leaving Certificate English, Leaving Certificate Geography, LCVP Link Modules and Leaving Certificate Physical Education.



Full details on the application process are available here: <https://ncca.ie/en/senior-cycle/senior-cycle-redevelopment/interested-in-curriculum-development/>

The deadline is 10 January 2024.

The NCCA has also issued an expression of interest to all post-primary schools, inviting them to become involved in the consultation phases associated with Tranches 1 and 2, as outlined above.

Transition Year: new developments

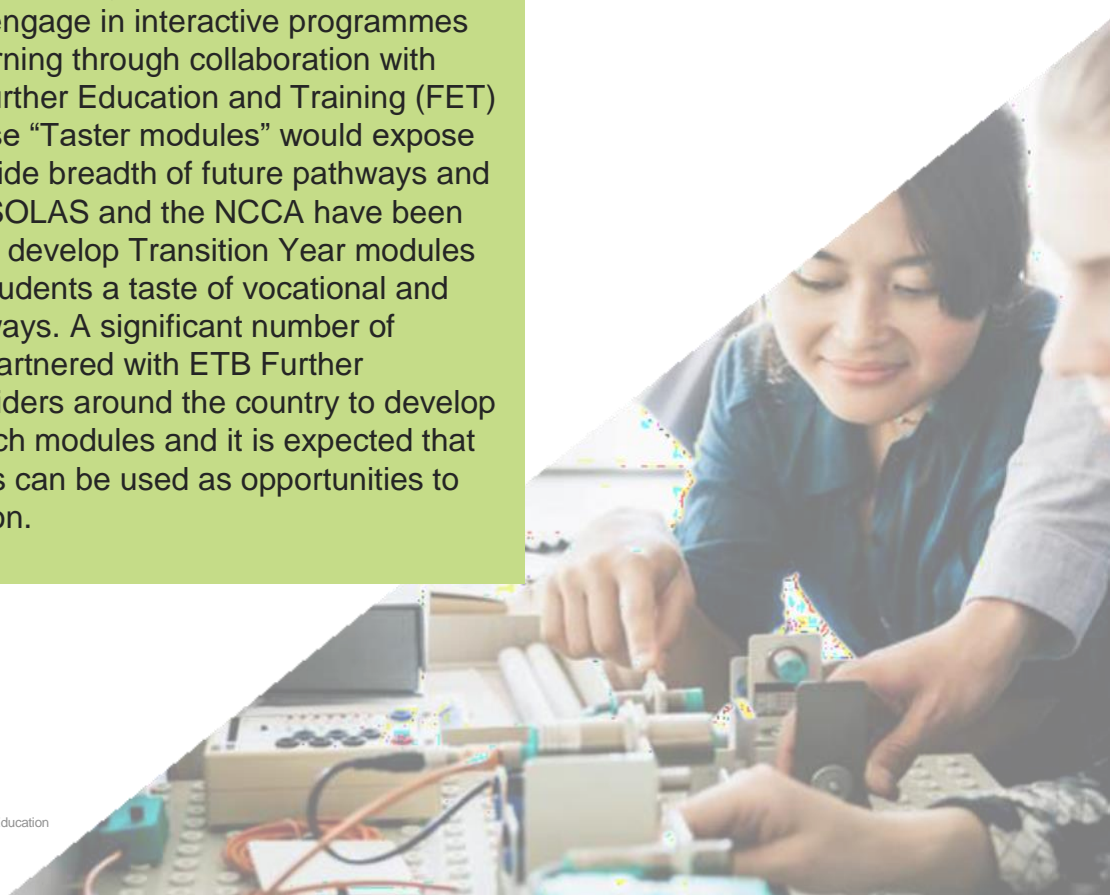
As part of the programme of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment, the Minister committed to making Transition Year (TY) universally available, so that every student in every school who wishes to participate in the programme can do so. The Minister also announced the development of a revised Transition Year Programme Statement, to be introduced in 2024.

The draft Programme Statement has been developed with a public consultation on the draft concluded in October 2023. The consultation included a public survey, evening webinars for teachers and parents, focus groups and a survey. Information can be found on ncca.ie/ty

The vast majority of schools offer TY, and there is a range of participation levels across schools - 79% of students who completed third year in 2021/22 undertook TY in the 2022/23 school year. Just under 55,000 students undertook the Transition Year programme in 2022/2023, which is a record level of participation. The Department is now working on how schools can be supported in the provision of the programme to all students wishing to take part.

Further Education Pathways and Taster Modules

The Department is exploring how “Taster Modules” could be developed to give students the opportunity to engage in interactive programmes and off-site learning through collaboration with industry and Further Education and Training (FET) providers. These “Taster modules” would expose students to a wide breadth of future pathways and opportunities. SOLAS and the NCCA have been collaborating to develop Transition Year modules that can give students a taste of vocational and technical pathways. A significant number of schools have partnered with ETB Further Education providers around the country to develop and provide such modules and it is expected that these examples can be used as opportunities to expand provision.



Students' Guide to Senior Cycle Redevelopment

I begin fifth year in.... Changes to the Leaving Certificate Examination

I began fifth year in 2023 or will begin fifth year in 2024

If you began fifth year in 2023, or are due to begin fifth year in 2024, the Minister's announcement of 20 September 2023 will not impact you. You can find further information on the current Leaving Certificate curriculum on the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment website [curriculumonline.ie](https://www.curriculumonline.ie)

I begin fifth year in 2025

The following subjects will have a revised curriculum (called 'specifications'): Business, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Arabic, Latin, and Ancient Greek (Tranche 1 subjects).

These subjects will feature additional assessment component(s) (AACs)

AACs will not be a traditional written exam.

AACs will be externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission.

Two new subjects will be introduced to a network of schools in 2025. For later years, it will be introduced to more schools on a phased basis. These subjects are (1) Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and (2) Climate Action and Sustainable Development. If your school becomes part of a network of schools to offer either of these subjects, you may be able to avail of them.

I begin fifth year in 2026 or later

The following subjects will have revised curriculum (called "specifications"): Business; Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Arabic, Latin, and Ancient Greek (Tranche 1 subjects) and Accounting; Construction Studies; Engineering; English; Geography; LCVP Link Modules and Physical Education (Tranche 2 subjects)

These subjects will feature an externally assessed additional component(s) (AACs).

AACs will not be a traditional written exam.

AACs will be externally assessed by the State Examinations Commission.

Two new subjects, first launched in 2025, will continue to be introduced to a network of schools on a phased basis. These subjects are (1) Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and (2) Climate Action and Sustainable Development. If your school is in the second or later phase of schools to offer either of these subjects, you may be able to avail of them

Students' Guide to Senior Cycle Redevelopment

I begin fifth year in....

Changes to the Leaving Certificate Examination

I am Leaving Certificate Applied student/I will be a Leaving Certificate Applied student

You may now access LCE Mathematics and an LCE Modern Foreign Language (MFL), subject to your school's timetabling

You may study LCE Mathematics either in addition to LCA Mathematical Applications, or instead of LCA Mathematical Applications.

You may study an LCE MFL in addition to the LCA programme.

An updated LCA Programme Statement reflecting these changes is available at curriculumonline.ie.

I am a Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme student/I will be a Leaving Certificate Vocation Programme student

The changes outlined above may apply to you as an LCVP student, depending on the year you are due to begin fifth year.

You can now access the LCVP Link Modules (Preparation for the World of Work and Enterprise Education) without meeting the vocational subject grouping criteria or the Modern European Language (MEL) requirements set out in Circular Letter 0040/2013.

All other requirements for participation in the LCVP continue to apply, including the Irish language requirement.

An updated LCVP Programme Statement reflecting these changes is available at the following link: curriculumonline.ie



Learn more
gov.ie/seniorcycle

Further information on Senior Cycle Redevelopment can be found at <https://www.gov.ie/seniorcycle>

Queries in relation to this information note can be directed to: scr_info@education.gov.ie



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