



Circular Number 0065/2025

To: Boards of Management, Principals and Teaching Staff of Post-Primary Schools, Special Schools and Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes

1. Introduction

The purpose of this circular is to inform post-primary schools, special schools and other educational settings of curriculum and assessment related developments at Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes. This circular should be read in tandem with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's Senior Cycle Programmes: Level 1 and Level 2 [Programme Statement](#).

Boards of Management, Principals, teaching staff of all post-primary schools, special schools, and the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards are asked to ensure that this circular is brought to the immediate attention of all teachers and special needs assistants.

In addition, Boards of Management are also requested to ensure that parents/guardians and students are advised of the relevant elements of this circular.

The Department of Education and Youth aims to facilitate every individual through learning to achieve their full potential and to ensure that the education system upholds the rights of every individual to receive an education appropriate to their needs. The goal of the Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes is to prepare students for life beyond school, enabling them to be lifelong learners and to live more independently. The Level 1 and Level 2 programmes at Senior Cycle are personalised programmes that are tailored to the individual learning needs of the student.

The learning recognised for certification for the Senior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programme (SCL1LP) will be at Level 1 on the National Framework for Qualifications (NFQ). The learning recognised for certification for the Senior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programme (SCL2LP) will be at Level 2 on the NFQ. The aim of the SCL1LP and SCL2LP is to provide continuity, progression and consolidation of learning from Junior Cycle.



2. Background

As announced by the Minister for Education in March 2022, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) was asked to develop follow-on Senior Cycle programmes for students progressing from Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes at Junior Cycle level. The SCL1LP and SCL2LP have been designed for students attending a range of school and educational settings.

The Programme Statement and initial curriculum areas were approved by the Minister for Education and Youth for introduction to schools from September 2024. Further curriculum areas and elective modules are now available for introduction to schools.

The full list of elective modules and curriculum areas as it is updated will be published at [Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes | Curriculum Online](#)

The NCCA Post-Primary Special Education Development Group is continuing to develop Elective modules for these programmes.

Guidelines to support the assessment of the curriculum areas and modules will be developed by NCCA, with input from the State Examinations Commission (SEC), in consultation with teachers. These will be available by the end of 2025 on [Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes | Curriculum Online](#).

3. Designing a Senior Cycle Level 1/Level 2 Learning Programme

The SCL1LP and SCL2LP are personalised programmes that are tailored to the identified strengths, needs and interests of the student, which is necessary to achieve the best possible outcomes for the student.

Schools and educational settings should refer to the [Programme Statement](#) for detail on identifying students for whom a Learning Programme is suitable. There must be consultation with the parents/guardians and the students themselves. The learning, curricular and further education implications where the student decides to follow the programmes should form part of these discussions.

As the learning programmes are personalised, organising the programme should revolve around the individual student. The Continuum of Support (CoS) framework supports teachers to gather information, to plan and review the student's progress through the problem-solving process. This process of identification of need is a dynamic and cyclical process, which views the student's response to intervention as central to understanding their level of need. In mainstream Post-primary schools, these students may be on the School Support Plus – Few level of the CoS. Further details are



outlined in the [Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes](#).

The Student Support File (SSF) provides a process for recording and collating all information in relation to the student, in order to plan interventions aligned to their identified strengths, interests and needs, and to facilitate the documentation of the student's response to intervention.

The SSF contains the Student Support Plan (SSP), an individualised learning plan which documents the student's strengths, interests and needs, as well as the priority learning needs that have been agreed as the basis for targets and interventions. The SSP in every school context should support an appropriate progression plan for the student beyond Senior Cycle.

Students may pursue SCL1LP or SCL2LP alongside students pursuing a curriculum at other levels, provided the learning is appropriate to the student's identified individual needs and strengths.

There is flexibility for students following a SCL1LP or SCL2LP to engage in Senior Cycle at different levels, as appropriate for the student. Allocation of any resources from within a mainstream school's SET allocation should be in line with the guidelines supporting SET allocation and should be within the remit of addressing the student's individual identified learning needs.

Schools are reminded that Transition Year (TY) is a standalone year within Senior Cycle. It should not be used as a way to spread a SCL1LP or SCL2LP over three years.

Schools and educational settings have flexibility in terms of timetabling. The recommended hours of the modules, for example 60 hours, is a guideline. It may not be possible to complete some modules in the SCL1LP and SCL2LP over one year, in which case, the module may extend over two years.

Further information on designing an individualised programme can be found in the [Programme Statement](#).

4. Registration for Data Purposes and Accreditation

The Department will record data in relation to students engaging in the learning programmes. This recording of registration and assessment data will help to inform Departmental planning. Schools are strongly encouraged to return this data to the Department via the Primary Online Database (POD) or the Post-Primary Online Database (PPOD) as appropriate. A parental/guardian consent form is required for PPOD for this academic year. Full details on the process, as well as the consent form are available on gov.ie/seniorcycle.



The State Examinations Commission (SEC) will contact the schools that have indicated that they are participating to date, giving these schools access to an online portal to register students participating in a SCL1LP or SCL2LP and to record the modules undertaken by the student and their achievement in those modules.

5. Accreditation

The evidence of learning for the SCL1LP and SCL2LP will be gathered in a student portfolio, which will be presented for assessment at school level. A portfolio can be in hard copy, electronic form, or a hybrid of both.

For more detail on the flexibility afforded to schools in gathering evidence and presenting it in a portfolio, please refer to the Programme Statement, and to the Assessment Guidelines when published.

The evidence of learning, progression and achievement relating to the student will be gathered on an ongoing basis to create the student's portfolio. The evidence presented may relate to learning outcomes from across modules and it does not have to be ring-fenced to one particular module. Evidence of learning may be assessed across multiple modules; individual assessment for each learning outcome is not required.

Following an internal school-validation process, student outcomes will be communicated to the SEC and validated by the SEC for certification.

Each module under the SCL1LP and SCL2LP completed by the student will be certificated by the SEC. For students who complete modules or subjects through another Senior Cycle programme (e.g. Leaving Certificate Applied), separate certification will issue for this programme. Results for Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Programmes will be issued concurrently with the results of Leaving Certificate Established and Leaving Certificate Applied.

6. Resources to Support the Introduction of Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2

There are a range of resources available to schools to support the introduction and implementation of SC L1LP SCL2LP.

The Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools: Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes and supporting documentation, including Indicators of Effective Practice and Student Support File - Examples, to aid schools in supporting children and young people with special educational needs are available here [SET Guidelines and](#)



[supporting documentation to aid schools in supporting Children/Young people with Special Educational Needs](#)

7.1 Teacher Professional Learning

A programme of professional learning for school leaders and teachers in mainstream and special schools is being provided to support the introduction of SCL1LP and SCL2LPs. Full details are available from the support service Oide at www.oide.ie.

Additionally, the National Council for Special Education provides a comprehensive programme of Teacher Professional Learning seminars each school year covering a variety of special educational needs topics.

Links to further information

NCCA: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/senior-cycle/level-1-and-level-2-learning-programmes/>

NFQ: <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications>

Oide: [Senior Cycle Learning Programmes Level 1 – Level 2 - Oide](#)

Senior Cycle Redevelopment: gov.ie/seniorcycle

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