An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Transition Year
Programme Statement

For introduction across all schools in September 2025.

Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

Contents

Senior Cycle

Senior cycle aims to educate the whole person and contribute to human flourishing. Students' experiences throughout senior cycle enrich their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall health and wellbeing. Senior cycle has eight guiding principles.

Senior cycle guiding principles	
Wellbeing and relationships	Choice and flexibility
Inclusive education and diversity	Continuity and transitions
Challenge, engagement and creativity	Participation and citizenship
Learning to learn, learning for life	Learning environments and partnerships

These principles are a touchstone for schools and other educational settings, as they design their senior cycle. Senior cycle consists of an optional Transition Year (TY), followed by a two-year course of subjects and modules. Building on junior cycle, learning happens in schools, communities, educational settings, and other sites, where students' increasing independence is recognised. Relationships with teachers are established on a more mature footing and students take more responsibility for their learning.

Senior cycle provides a curriculum which challenges students to aim for the highest level of educational achievement, commensurate with their individual aptitudes and abilities. During senior cycle, students have opportunities to grapple with social, environmental, economic, and technological challenges and to deepen their understanding of human rights, social justice, equity, diversity and sustainability. Students are supported to make informed choices as they choose different pathways through senior cycle and every student has opportunities to experience the joy and satisfaction of reaching significant milestones in their education. Senior cycle should establish firm foundations for students to transition to further adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and participate meaningfully in society, the economy and adult life.

The educational experience in senior cycle should be inclusive of every student, respond to their learning strengths and needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity. Students vary in their family and cultural backgrounds, languages, age, ethnic status, beliefs, gender, and sexual identity as well as their strengths, needs, interests, aptitudes and prior knowledge, skills, values and dispositions. Every student's identity should be celebrated, respected and responded to throughout their time in senior cycle.

At a practical level, senior cycle is supported by enhanced professional development; the involvement of teachers, students, parents, school leaders and other stakeholders; resources; research; clear communication; policy coherence; and a shared vision of what senior cycle seeks to achieve for our young people as they prepare to embark on their adult lives. It is brought to life in schools and other educational settings through:

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation, reflection and evaluation

- teaching and learning approaches that motivate students and enable them to improve

- a school culture that respects students and promotes a love of learning.

Key competencies in senior cycle

Key competencies is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop in an integrated way during senior cycle.

KNOWLEDGE

SKILLS

VALUES AND DISPOSITIONS

Enriched, engaged and eompetent learners

Figure 1: The components of key competencies and their desired impact.

These competencies are linked and blend together, can improve students' overall learning, can help students and teachers to make meaningful connections between and across different areas of learning, and are important across the curriculum.

LITERACIES AND NUMERACY

Thinking and solving problems

Managing learning and self

Being creative

KEY COMPETENCIES IN SENIOR CYCLE

Cultivating wellbeing

Communicating

Participating in society
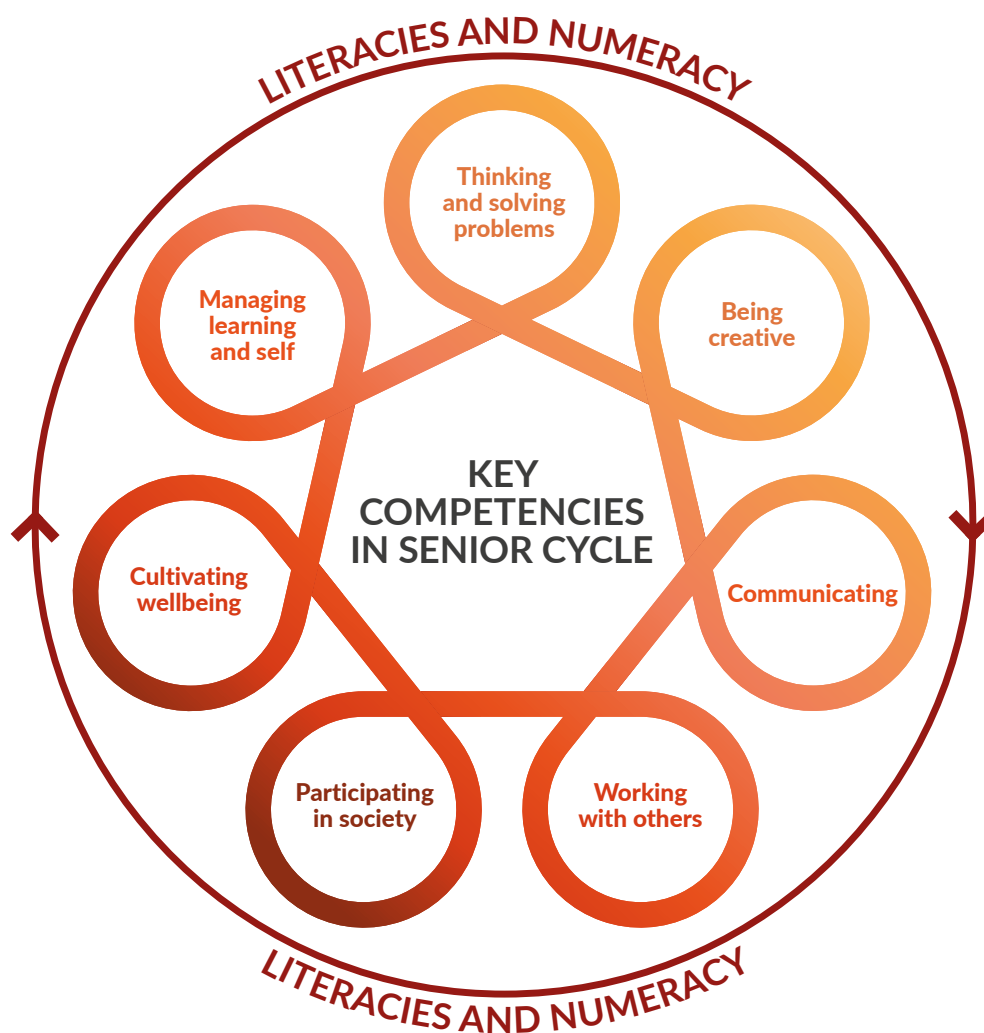
Working with others

LITERACIES AND NUMERACY

Figure 2: Overview of key competencies in senior cycle.

The development of students' literacies and numeracy contributes to the development of competencies and vice-versa. Key competencies are supported when students' literacies and numeracies are well developed and they can make good use of various tools, including technologies, to support their learning.

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

Continuity and progression

Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, supports children's learning from birth to six years. Learning and development are experienced through four interconnected themes of: Well-being, Identity and belonging, Communicating, and Exploring and thinking.

The Primary Curriculum Framework (2023) supports every child to thrive and flourish by facilitating broad learning which includes the development of seven interrelated key competencies. The framework supports learning, teaching and assessment that is inclusive and contributes to each child's holistic development.

The Framework for Junior Cycle (2015) facilitates broad learning, placing a renewed focus on learning in the area of wellbeing, and embracing a broader form of reporting through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. It affords flexibility to schools in the design of the curriculum, emphasises the role of assessment to support teaching and learning, and encourages students in taking a more participative role in their own learning. These features are further built upon in TY.

As an optional programme, TY builds a broad and solid foundation for students to progress from their previous experiences into the remainder of senior cycle. It develops aspects of the key competencies of senior cycle and gives opportunities to students to explore and expand their strategies for learning. While students continue their learning in some subject areas, TY helps students make informed decisions around future choices of subjects and modules.

During TY students have opportunities to explore different career options and develop some of the competencies needed to access more diverse futures. TY can also enable students to make more informed choices of possible career options by, for example, raising awareness of further adult and higher education, traineeships, apprenticeships and through direct experience of work and participating in society.

TY contributes to the development of students' sense and experience of civic and community responsibilities, empowering them to become more compassionate, active citizens. They learn to appreciate cultural diversity and actively participate in creating a more sustainable world. With a focus on continuity and progression in TY, students can build upon the foundation provided by early childhood, primary and junior cycle education and use their experience of TY to further develop the key competencies they need to move through life as local, national and global citizens.

Purpose of the TY Programme Statement

The TY Programme Statement is designed around the development and learning of students moving from junior cycle into senior cycle, and as they prepare for their future lives as local, national and global citizens. The statement offers guidance to schools on how to develop a TY programme for all students. Schools have autonomy and flexibility to design their TY programme within the parameters of this TY Programme Statement.

Rationale

Young people in Ireland are living in a rapidly changing world characterised by globalisation and urbanisation, diversifying communities, expanding digital and technological developments, changes in the world of work and career patterns, and an urgency for global sustainable living. TY is a one-year optional programme available to all post-primary schools. As a standalone programme within the senior cycle experience, the TY programme offers a unique opportunity where schools and communities can collaborate to encourage young people to thrive now and into the future.

TY offers time, space and autonomy to create enjoyable and meaningful educational experiences that support students in senior cycle. It can be a bridge to opening up a broader range of possibilities and pathways. The programme enables young people to develop a greater capacity to respond to uncertainty, manage complexity, nurture personal interests and become agents of positive, ethical change in society.

The TY Programme Statement is designed to provide schools with a flexible, collaborative approach to planning programmes for their context. The local autonomy of schools, working within the parameters of the TY Programme Statement, is fundamental to fostering school-led innovations, promoting equitable access and offering young people transformative experiences that will ground them throughout senior cycle and into their future lives. Schools can adapt their TY curriculum so that students have opportunities to develop the key competencies to thrive and flourish in this rapidly changing world.

A programme aligned to the TY Programme Statement is inclusive and embraces diversity, facilitates a sense of discovery, reports more broadly on student learning and development, and values the contribution each student can make to the programme. During TY students can develop more mature relationships with teachers and other adults, becoming more active agents in designing their own educational experiences.

Participation in TY contributes to the continuing learning and development and personal growth of students. All students are supported throughout TY to become more adaptable, empathetic, competent and resilient human beings; qualities which are modelled by the school community, evident in the nature of the TY programme itself and valued within the local community.

Through a creatively school-designed TY curriculum, all students can avail of opportunities to grow and develop, learning to make more informed choices in senior cycle and beyond.

Aims

A school's TY programme will:

1.   nurture the development of the student as a whole person by building on their previous experiences, through a curriculum designed by the school that is aligned to the TY Programme Statement

2.   create space and opportunities for meaningful, enjoyable learning experiences through which the key competencies of the student can be developed in the classroom and school, in the home and in their role as local, national and global citizens

3.   expand the student's experience and awareness of diverse future pathways and nurture the student's capacity to sustain their growth and development through a process of lifelong learning

4.   evolve continuously to support the learning and development of the student through a reflection and renewal process involving students, teachers, school leaders, parents and community partners.

Coordination of the TY programme

Coordination of TY, and the role of the TY Coordinator in particular, are central to how the TY Programme Statement can facilitate effective TY programmes. The TY Coordinator is a designated role that is underpinned and sustained by a close working relationship with the senior management team and all staff. Time, leadership and sufficient resources need to be directed towards the coordination of TY and the support of the whole school community, working collaboratively, is critical to the successful development and enactment of an effective TY programme. The parameters of the TY Programme Statement are designed to assist the TY Coordinator in their role.

The coordination of TY works best through a TY Core Team, led by the TY Coordinator, which grows from a school-wide culture of embracing teacher innovations, talents and expertise. The TY Core Team collaborates to improve the experiences for students across the entire programme. The TY Core Team will generally include the TY Coordinator, TY Year Head where the role exists, a guidance counsellor and a number of teachers who wish to be more actively involved with the coordination and development of the TY programme. Regular meetings of the TY Core Team should be facilitated by the senior management team.

Developing a TY programme

The parameters to support schools in developing their TY programme are described through Student Dimensions and Curriculum Dimensions. This section opens by presenting the four Student Dimensions as the foundation for the development of a TY programme. The four Curriculum Dimensions provide the scaffolding to realise the ambition of the Student Dimensions.

Figure 3 illustrates the centrality of the Student Dimensions to TY programmes. An effective TY programme, which will be unique to each school, is one where every aspect of the curriculum serves to develop the student in harmony with the Student Dimensions.
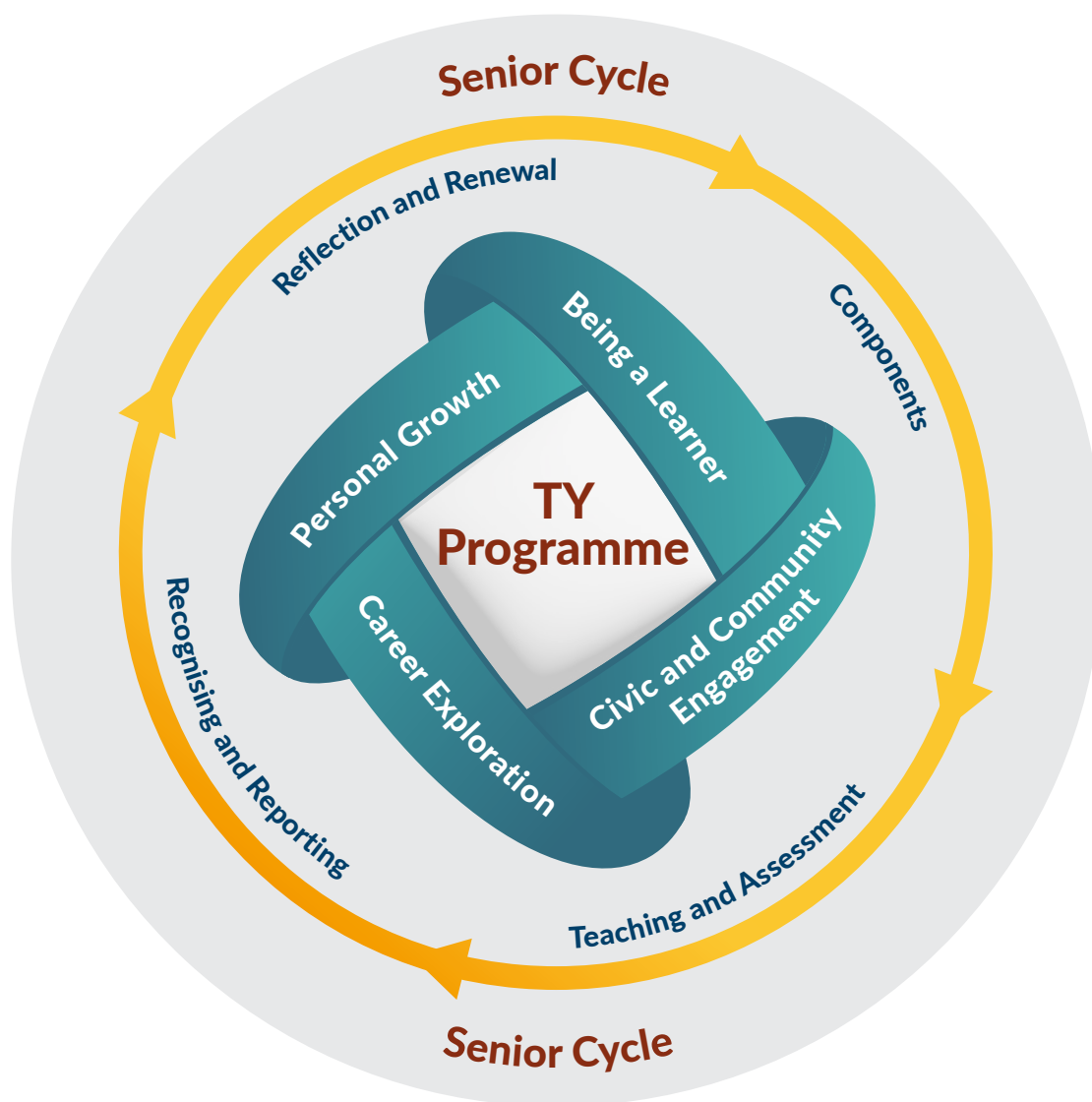

Figure 3: Overview of the TY Programme Statement.

Student Dimensions

The four Student Dimensions are the key foundations upon which TY programmes are designed. They describe how students can develop in TY and the experiences that can support this development. The Student Dimensions are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Student Dimensions.

Student Dimension	Description
Personal Growth	Students mature socially and emotionally over the course of the year, developing in areas that include health and wellbeing, autonomy, identity, empathy and leadership.
Being a Learner	Building on their previous experiences, students begin to develop as senior cycle students, embracing opportunities and strategies for learning that work best for the student now and into the future.
Civic and Community Engagement	Students make a positive difference in their schools, communities and society. They learn to act on their responsibilities and exercise their rights as local, national and global citizens in ethical and sustainable ways.
Career Exploration	Students explore diverse future pathways in a guided and coordinated manner, gaining first-hand workplace experience, and developing career-related competencies.

The tables of student experiences are not intended to be exhaustive but to offer guidance to schools in their planning and in laying the foundations for their TY programme. While the developmental indicators set out the parameters for learning and development, students will develop in different ways and to varying degrees across each of the indicators. In this sense they also serve as reflective guidance for students.

Each of the four Student Dimensions contain a set of developmental indicators and related student experiences.

Developmental indicators are intended to guide the student and the school and set out the parameters for the learning and development of the student during TY.

Student experiences are intended to provide a variety of possible opportunities and contexts to support student learning and development consistent with the developmental indicators.

Student Dimension:

Personal Growth

Students mature socially and emotionally over the course of the year, developing in areas that include health and wellbeing, autonomy, identity, empathy and leadership.

Developmental indicators

- Becoming more assured and confident about themselves as a person.
- Taking greater care of the health and wellbeing of themselves and others.
- Setting and reviewing goals for personal development and achievement.
- Having greater capacity to negotiate ethical dilemmas and reflect on personal values.
- Knowing how to make more informed decisions.
- Persevering longer with tasks, especially when challenging.
- Coming to see challenges as further opportunities for growth.
- Adapting better to groups and new social environments.
- Interacting with others with more empathy, both in person and online.
- Increasingly taking ownership of their own behaviours and decisions.
- Showing more initiative and leadership in school, at home and in the community.

Student experiences

- Collaborative projects, competitions, activities over the year to achieve collective goals.
- Individual tasks and projects, involving digital and non-digital skills to enable self-expression.
- Guided creation of a portfolio that captures their personal growth.
- Education and guidance in personal and emotional development and social awareness.
- Activities and experiences promoting lifelong physical and emotional health.
- Opportunities for guided reflection and review of personal goals.
- Formal and informal opportunities to speak and present in class, in public and in interviews.
- Recognition of personal growth and personal challenges in all aspects of school life during the year.

Student Dimension:

Being a Learner

Building on their previous experiences, students begin to develop as senior cycle students, embracing opportunities and strategies for learning that work best for the student now and into the future.

Developmental indicators

- Being more motivated to learn and seeing education as worthwhile and enjoyable.
- Setting learning goals and reviewing them regularly.
- Becoming more skilled with digital technologies, both as a user and a creator.
- Exploring their own personal interests.
- Having a greater appreciation of lifelong learning.
- Being more willing to learn from mistakes and expand their comfort zone.
- Acquiring more knowledge and skills relevant to senior cycle.
- Seeing the importance of feedback and placing more value on it.
- Increasing their capacity for independent and self-regulated learning.
- Being more open to trying a range of learning strategies.
- Broadening their communication and presentation skills.
- Expressing their own ideas more clearly while engaging with other people's ideas.

Student experiences

- Continuity subjects and sampling of subjects with learning designed to develop senior cycle key competencies.
- A variety of pedagogies consistent with realising the aims of the Programme Statement and supporting developmental indicators for all students.
- Meaningful learning opportunities that incorporate student input.
- Opportunities to build on student learning in the transition from junior to senior cycle.
- Assessment of their learning and development through a variety of forms such as teacher, peer and self-assessment, and for formative and summative purposes.
- Recognition of achievement across all areas of the curriculum.
- Guided creation of a portfolio that captures development of the student, and their progress as a learner.
- A range of individual and team projects, competitions, activities over the year that are manageable and appropriately challenging.

Student Dimension:

Civic and Community Engagement

Students make a positive difference in their schools, communities and society. They learn to act on their responsibilities and exercise their rights as local, national and global citizens in ethical and sustainable ways.

Developmental indicators

- Sustaining more caring and respectful relationships with people, place and nature.
- Having a greater appreciation and respect for human dignity and diversity.
- Deepening their awareness and sense of empathy, identity and belonging.
- Recognising and engaging with complexity and uncertainty.
- Taking actions to live more sustainably.
- Showing more initiative in their schools, communities, and society.
- Setting and reviewing goals for being an active citizen.
- Working more co-operatively with others and in teams.
- Becoming more involved with creative and cultural activities.
- Wanting to contribute to a more just world.
- Understanding better the interconnections of local, national and global communities.

Student experiences

- Working with local or national organisations and businesses over the year.
- Opportunities to volunteer through community work and social placement.
- Education on sustainable development, including a meaningful action for a more sustainable world.
- Sharing of knowledge and skills within the school community and among community stakeholders.
- Guided creation of a portfolio that captures their civic and community engagement.
- Projects, competitions, activities in the classroom, in school, at home, in local communities and in society.
- Meaningful involvement with shaping school culture.
- Learning opportunities around empathy, diversity and inclusion.

Student Dimension:

Career Exploration

Students explore diverse future pathways in a guided and coordinated manner, gaining first-hand workplace experience, and developing career-related competencies.

Developmental indicators

- Being more informed on the links between education and career opportunities.
- Increasing their awareness of personal interests, aptitudes, values and dispositions.
- Identifying and reviewing career-related goals more regularly.
- Having a greater capacity to research and critically reflect upon career pathways.
- Acquiring more vocational, organisational and communication skills.
- Learning how to generate ideas and turn ideas into action.
- Improving their workplace knowledge and behaviours through first-hand experience.
- Having more awareness of the world of work and enterprise.

Student experiences

- Work placements during the year.
- Guided reflective tasks on their experiences and placements in TY.
- Subjects and modules on the senior cycle curriculum that link to a range of future pathways.
- Career guidance and classroom support on a range of future pathways.
- Guided creation of a portfolio capturing their reflections on career exploration.
- A variety of learning opportunities that improve practical and vocational skills.
- Access to career-related events or learning environments.
- Guest speakers from a diversity of backgrounds and careers.
- Short, certified courses or micro-credentials.
- Opportunities for assessing aptitudes and abilities.

Curriculum Dimensions

The four Curriculum Dimensions provide the design parameters to assist schools in developing, evaluating and renewing their TY programme. The effectiveness of a TY programme can be greatly enhanced through schools adopting an integrated approach to the enactment of the four Curriculum Dimensions. The TY Programme Statement supports schools in doing this by encouraging and promoting:

- a coordinated approach to planning for teaching, assessing and reporting in TY

- the consistent and authentic use of the student portfolio

- consistent programme renewal using an evidence-informed review and evaluation process.

Table 2: Curriculum Dimensions

Curriculum Dimension	Description
Components	A combination of continued learning in some subjects, subject sampling, TY specific modules and other components provides a balanced and broad set of experiences which encompass the Student Dimensions.
Teaching and Assessment	Appropriate and effective pedagogies, with ongoing assessment, supporting students to progress in their learning while also fostering innovative classroom practice.
Recognising and Reporting	The means by which student learning and achievement in all areas of TY are affirmed and celebrated. Reporting in TY provides a broad picture across all the Student Dimensions.
Reflection and Renewal	Reviewing, evaluating and updating the TY programme, in a continuous and inclusive manner, enables the evolution of a TY curriculum most suited to the learning and development of students.

Schools have autonomy to design a programme for TY that is suited to the school's culture, identity and context, while striving to work in collaborative and creative ways with the school community to achieve the aims and enable all students to develop across all four Student Dimensions.

Curriculum Dimension:

Components

A combination of continued learning in some subjects, subject sampling, TY specific modules and other components provides a balanced and broad set of experiences which encompass the Student Dimensions.

Components are the means by which most of the student experiences, described in the Student Dimensions, are translated into the school's TY curriculum.

Table 3 provides guidance on design parameters for a school's TY programme and indicates where the range of components may provide opportunities for learning and development across all four Student Dimensions. A school's programme may evolve as students identify their own opportunities for growth during the year. Equally important for the successful evolution of the programme is a culture that supports and fosters teacher-led curricular innovations within TY. In this way schools can build additional capacity, offering students a wider range of components, while also supporting and promoting internal professional learning, creativity and collaboration.

All components should be integrated into a TY programme that supports students progressing across the developmental indicators. It is important that TY is distinguished as a standalone year within senior cycle. It should not be used, for example, as a way to explicitly spread leaving certificate subject specification over three years rather than the two years of 5th and 6th year, for which these curricula were designed.

Where senior cycle subjects or modules form the basis of a TY component, teachers can collectively use their professional autonomy to decide on the most stimulating and innovative pedagogies, while supporting student progression across the developmental indicators.

Table 3: Accommodation of components in a TY curriculum

Student Dimension	Components	Guidance for accommodation of components
Personal Growth	**Continuity** • Physical Education (PE) • SPHE	The time allocation for PE should be aligned to the Senior Cycle PE Framework. SPHE should be once per week, not exceeding one hour per class.
	TY specific An array of modules that provide experiences for the development and growth of the student	The organisation of the components into semesters, blocks or across the entire year is decided at school level, including provision of experiences aligned to the values, ethos and pastoral care of the school.
	Additional growth experiences For example: guest speakers, government supported developmental awards, induction, competitions, school-wide events, such as plays, musicals, market days and themed days.	Students who wish to participate in externally provided learning experiences could also be accommodated but once it is within the context of the school's TY programme. Some additional growth experiences may only arise during the year and would need to be notified to students, teachers and parents as soon as is practical.
Being a Learner	**Continuity** Supporting student learning and development in the areas of Mathematics, English and Irish.	The class time allocation for each of these subjects should not exceed two hours per week. A school can build on the learning associated with these subjects through additional TY components or other areas of learning, within the parameters of the TY Programme Statement.
	Elective Modules that support, for example, sampling of senior cycle subjects and other areas of learning and development	The combined time allocation for these components is the equivalent of three to four hours per week, depending on school context.
	Additional learning experiences For example: study/research skills, themed learning days, life-skills, literacy and numeracy initiatives.	Some additional learning experiences may only arise during the year and would need to be notified to students, teachers and parents as soon as is practical.
	Portfolio Development Supporting and guiding students to fulfil the purpose of the TY portfolio described in the Curriculum Dimension: Recognising and Reporting.	One class per week. Primary function is to support students in developing their TY portfolio over the year. The component may also be used, if feasible, to supplement other aspects of the curriculum.

Student Dimension	Components	Guidance for accommodation of components
Civic And Community Engagement	**Our own community** Local out-reach activities, community placement, social enterprise activities, education in cultural diversity	These components draw from TY specific modules, work and community placements and additional experiences.
	Our global community • Education for Sustainable Development • A meaningful student-led personal or collaborative action related to sustainable living.	These components can be supported through, for example, a TY specific module related to education for sustainable development or another relevant student experience.
Career Exploration	**Work Placement Community Placement**	An appropriate and feasible balance of work-based and community-based placements. A time allocation amounting to the equivalent of two to four weeks of the programme is suggested.
	Career guidance	One class per week or classes timed to target key career-related learning or events during the year.
	Additional career-related experiences For example: guest speakers, tasters in apprenticeships/traineeships/ further education/higher education, information days, government supported developmental awards, certified short courses.	Some additional career-related experiences provided by the school may only arise during the year and would need to be notified to students, teachers and parents as soon as is practical.

Teaching and Assessment

Appropriate and effective pedagogies, alongside ongoing assessment, supporting students to progress in their learning while also fostering innovative classroom practice.

The TY Programme Statement promotes and encourages high quality teaching and assessment practices that are aligned to the developmental indicators in each of the four Student Dimensions. The Teaching and Assessment dimension unifies student experiences across the TY components.

It is important that TY is distinguished as a standalone programme while at the same time acknowledging progression and continuity in terms of student development and learning from previous experiences and into the remainder of senior cycle.

Collective and individual classroom practices

TY affords teachers the opportunity to be innovative in devising and delivering high quality broad-based teaching and assessment opportunities to support student learning. Collective professional practice across TY, coupled with a coordinated approach to assessment are therefore essential aspects of an effective TY programme. TY provides opportunities to create environments that stimulate a collaborative learning culture both inside and outside of the classroom.

The assessment of students' learning and development in TY can be achieved and captured through:

- a TY student portfolio

- a coordinated approach to assessment.

Collective Practices

Teaching and Assessment across the entire TY programme are characterised by:

- identifying and setting high expectations for all students

- whole-school practices that respond to the strengths and needs of all students and encourage student inputs and contributions to the programme

- opportunities for planning, preparation and implementation of teaching and assessment approaches

- increased opportunities for student involvement, enjoyment and agency in their own learning

- the provision of experiences that are challenging and engaging, which can stimulate creative critical thinking inside and outside the classroom, and across the TY curriculum

- sharing of expertise and experience with colleagues in a professional environment, within the school and, where feasible, with other schools

- gathering and sharing evidence of learning to inform the other Curriculum Dimensions, particularly Recognising and Reporting

- consistent evaluation of collective practice across the year of the programme, informed by feedback and reflection.

Individual Classroom Practices

Teaching and Assessment in the classroom are characterised by:

- appropriate student-centred approaches which are aligned with learning outcomes and develop all four Student Dimensions

- planning of learning opportunities to support each student and address their educational needs

- preparation of appropriate resources and use of digital technologies

- opportunities for students to work on extended tasks, such as projects, investigations and competitions to promote ownership of learning and develop rigour in their approaches

- genuine and meaningful collaboration between students, both within and across TY components. This collaboration, where feasible, can be achieved through team tasks and team projects enhancing group cohesion

- creating and sharing of success criteria with students to enable peer and self-assessment

- opportunities for students to experience success within and across curriculum components

- the use of a variety of modes of assessment, for both summative and formative purposes

- constructive and timely feedback from the teacher designed to improve learning and development

- effective questioning and opportunities for the student to give and use feedback.

Curriculum Dimension:

Recognising and Reporting

The means by which student learning and achievement in all areas of TY are affirmed and celebrated. Reporting in TY provides a broad picture across all the Student Dimensions.

Recognising

The development of the student across all four Student Dimensions is one of the aims of TY programmes. It is important to recognise and report on the learning and development of the student in ways that genuinely reflect their level of engagement.

Recognition across the year, from daily classroom interactions to engagement with the broader school community, will itself nurture a deeper sense of belonging and achievement. As the year progresses, student motivation can be enhanced through genuine recognition of their work and achievements.

An end-of-year TY celebration event could be an opportunity for students to publicly demonstrate their development, learning and maturity as young people. Teachers, parents and school community partners can come together to collectively acknowledge the successes and achievements of the entire TY group. It also affords the school the opportunity to recognise students with some meaningful and tangible record of their participation in TY that is informed by the variety of assessment and reporting throughout the year.

Reporting

There are three elements to reporting in TY, as shown in Figure 4. They are:

- the student's TY portfolio
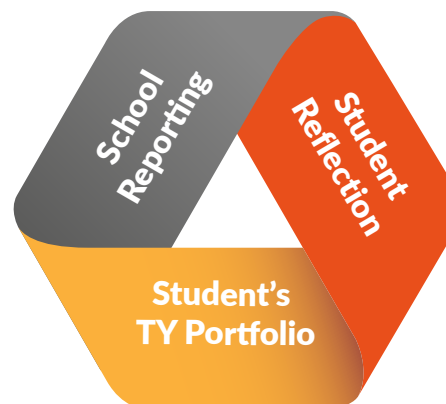
- student reflection

- school reporting.

Figure 4: Three Elements to reporting

All three elements working together are intended to be part of a broader picture of learning and development of the student during TY. Reporting is managed and coordinated by the TY Coordinator, with support from the senior management team, the TY Core Team and each of the teachers in the TY programme.

The student's TY portfolio

An individual student portfolio, digital and/or physical, can be a powerful tool for capturing the uniqueness of the student experience in TY. The purpose of a portfolio is to give students the opportunity to apply reflective and critical thinking to their experiences across the four Student Dimensions. In this way, they can evaluate their own experiences and generate a more personalised profile of themselves as a learner and as a maturing young adult. Students can showcase learning and achievements, and review their developmental goals from the start, middle and end of the year.

The integration of the student's use of a portfolio into teaching and assessment practice, and the inclusion of a reflective practice component, are intended to support students in the creation of their portfolio. The developmental indicators of each of the four Student Dimensions can be used to inform reflection within the portfolio.

Some of the essential elements of a TY portfolio include:

- goal setting and ongoing review of goals

- a chronological review of student experiences and learning over the year

- overall progress across each of the four Student Dimensions: Personal Growth, Being a Learner, Civic and Community Engagement, and Career Exploration

- critical reflections on key learning and achievement.

Student reflection

The TY portfolio and the school report are further enhanced by a student reflection towards the end of the programme. This is the opportunity for students to speak to their experiences and is based on their critical reflections on key learning and achievements in their portfolio. The school can decide the most appropriate form for their students, such as an end-of-year interview, a short presentation by the student to their peers or a similar mode of student reflection. The student reflection is a form of assessment and can also be a significant learning experience for the student. It affords the school the opportunity to assess how students have developed across all four Student Dimensions and gives immediate feedback on how their TY programme could be improved.

School reporting

A broad form of reporting that is aligned to the developmental indicators across all four Student Dimensions is necessary in order to recognise the development of the student. Some form of coordinated approach is required to assess curriculum components taken by the student.

The school's report should take account of:

- student development across the developmental indicators for each of the four Student Dimensions

- assessment of learning in the curriculum components taken by the student

- accredited and non-accredited micro-credentials from recognised bodies.

Recognition by the school of the progress and development of the student could also be presented to each student at a TY end-of-year celebration.

The TY reporting mechanism is supported and affirmed throughout the year by ongoing communication with the home through meetings, term reports, TY bulletins and informal communication between home and school.

Curriculum Dimension:

Reflection and Renewal

Reviewing, evaluating and updating the TY programme, in a continuous and inclusive manner, enables the evolution of a TY curriculum most suited to the learning and development of students.

Embedding reflective practice across all Student and Curriculum Dimensions is a cornerstone of building an effective TY programme in schools. A review undertaken by the TY Core Team and supported by school management could evaluate all four Curriculum Dimensions in order to affirm and improve, where possible, the school's TY programme. This is most effective when informed by evidence across the Curriculum Dimensions, but it is important to consider the manageability of gathering authentic and inclusive evidence.

Review and Evaluation

Reviews of the programme itself can be done in a variety of ways such as verbal feedback, online surveys or school community focus groups. This feedback can be supplemented by evidence from other occasions or from forms of assessment, such as the student reflection or TY portfolios, where the student input can be immediate and relevant. The data gathered from these reviews and other occasions could then be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme in meeting the developmental indicators across all four Student Dimensions.

Schools need to consider the following broad questions when evaluating their TY programme:

- how is the school's TY programme fulfilling the aspirations of the rationale of the TY Programme Statement?

- how can the aims of the TY Programme Statement be better achieved?

- how is the TY programme supporting development across all four Student Dimensions and how could it be improved?

Each of the four Curriculum Dimensions need to be individually evaluated, considering for example:

- reflecting back - the evaluation needs to consider what worked well and what did not work well in each Curriculum Dimension

- reflecting forward - the evaluation needs to plan how to build on successes and learn from shortcomings in each Curriculum Dimension.

The task of evaluating the effectiveness of the programme is carried out in contexts that are unique to each school. Contexts can be shaped by, for example, school location and size, costs, whole-school planning for the next academic year, local community needs and access to external learning environments. The process of reflection and renewal would also benefit from a school culture of professional learning, internal and external to the school, coupled with the sharing of expertise and resources through relevant national bodies. In addition, a clear and accessible description of the programme can also provide a focus for ongoing reflection and renewal of the programme, and an additional scaffold within which teachers can plan.

The senior leadership team and Board of Management are key stakeholders, particularly in the reflection and renewal process, and their support is essential for developing an effective TY programme.

Encouraging participation and engagement

Participation in the TY programme

Participation in TY can be encouraged and promoted by sharing a clear and accessible overview of the school's TY programme with parents/guardians and the wider school community. Sharing this information with students early in junior cycle, and in TY itself, raises awareness of the benefits of participating in the programme. Students who have benefited from TY can often be the most effective communicators to students and parents. Some of the components themselves, where TY students organise activities with junior cycle students, work with primary schools or act in mentoring roles for example, will themselves implicitly raise awareness of TY and of the benefits of participation.

Engagement with the TY programme

The opportunity for students to participate brings with it the responsibility for students to engage as fully as possible across the entire year of the programme. This can create a reinforcing cycle where students develop through an evolving curriculum that is aligned to the aims of the TY Programme Statement, and where the curriculum in turn creates further opportunities to encourage student growth and development.

Sustaining engagement across the full year of the TY programme is complex and highly contextual. However, some of the other factors that can encourage and sustain student engagement include:

- greater school community understanding of the purpose and benefits of the TY programme and community support to fulfil that purpose

- consistent communication between student, home and school, including updates on what is happening in the programme

- implementation of a coherent approach to assessment across TY.

A TY programme that is aligned to the Curriculum Dimensions will evolve more sustainably and be more accessible for a wider range of student abilities and socio-economic backgrounds.

Glossary

This glossary is intended to clarify concepts and terms used in this TY Programme Statement.

An effective TY programme	which will be unique to each school, is one where every aspect of the curriculum serves to develop the student in harmony with the Student Dimensions.
Curriculum Dimensions	guide schools in how best to steer the design and progression of their TY programme. They provide the design parameters to assist schools in developing, evaluating and renewing their TY programme.
Developmental indicators	are statements within the Student Dimensions which are intended to illustrate how the student progresses and develops through their participation in TY.
Key competencies	is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop during senior cycle.
Student Dimensions	describe the ways in which students can develop in Transition Year (TY) and the experiences that can support this development. The Student Dimensions set out the parameters for the development of the student and are the key foundations upon which TY programmes are designed.
Student experiences	emanate from the Developmental Indicators and provide the opportunities and contexts for the student to learn and develop.

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