

Junior Cycle Assessment Glossary

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement *(Framework p 46-4)*

The JCPA will be awarded for the first time in autumn 2017. The JCPA will reward achievement across all areas of learning as applicable: Subjects, Short courses, Wellbeing, Priority learning units, Other areas of learning. The JCPA will draw upon and report on achievement across all elements of assessment including ongoing, formative assessment; Classroom-Based Assessments; and SEC grades which include results from the state-certified examinations and the Assessment Tasks.

The JCPA will have a nationally determined format. It will be compiled by the school and received by students in the autumn following third year, when all assessment results from the SEC and the school are available and confirmed. Students will be aware of their results before receiving the JCPA. In the case of both the SEC grades and the Classroom-Based Assessment tasks, students will already have received the results of assessments prior to the awarding of the JCPA.

Formative Assessment *(Framework p 35-36)*

The Junior Cycle will be underpinned by the further integration of formative assessment as a normal part of teaching and learning in classrooms. Formative assessment involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding next steps to ensure successful outcomes. A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students. Through a range of assessment activities the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development. To facilitate the type of learning envisaged above, the role of the teacher and the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship will evolve. Teachers will place a greater emphasis on integrating assessment into their teaching so they can better monitor students' progress in learning and identify how they can support students to reflect on and critically analyse their own learning.

Classroom-Based Assessments *(Framework p 37-38)*

Work related to the Classroom-Based Assessments is best seen as an integral part of ongoing assessment and routine classroom practice. In each subject, students will undertake two Classroom-Based Assessments facilitated by their teacher. One Classroom-Based Assessment will take place in second year and a second Classroom-Based Assessment in third year. Classroom-Based Assessments will provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in a way which would not be possible in a formal examination. A particular purpose of the Classroom-Based Assessments will be to facilitate developmental feedback to students during their engagement with the assessment task and at the end of the process.

The Classroom-Based Assessments will be at a common level. The tasks involved in the Classroom-Based Assessments will be specified by the NCCA in consultation with the SEC on an annual basis. The tasks will cover a broad range of activities including oral presentations, written work of different types, practical or designing and making activities, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects or other suitable tasks.

Classroom-Based Assessments will be undertaken by students in a defined time period within class contact time to a national timetable. The NCCA will provide a specific timeline for each Classroom-Based Assessment.

For each Classroom-Based Assessment, the NCCA will articulate standards or reference points that describe performance on the Classroom-Based Assessment at a number of levels. These quality descriptors will be accompanied by exemplars of students' work at the different levels. The provision of standards and exemplars of work will provide teachers with a clear framework within which to evaluate the work of their own students for assessment purposes.

Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings (SLAR meetings) *(Framework p 39-40)*

The Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings will play a key role in developing a collegial professional culture and build confidence about the judgements that teachers make about student performance. The structured support in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings for Classroom-Based Assessments will also help to ensure consistency and fairness within and across schools in the assessment of student learning. In Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, teachers will share and discuss samples of their assessments of student work and build a common understanding about the quality of student learning.

Each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting will be subject-specific and will focus on the Classroom-Based Assessment undertaken by the particular year group. Each meeting will take approximately two hours. One teacher of each subject in the school will be allocated two additional hours by school management to facilitate the preparation for and coordination of each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. To foster capacity building in each subject department, this activity will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

Assessment Task (AT) *(Framework p 38)*

After the second of the Classroom-Based Assessments, students will complete a written Assessment Task on what they have learned and the skills and competences that they have developed in that assessment. They may be asked to describe ways in which their learning might be applied to new situations. It will relate to the learning outcomes of the second Classroom-Based Assessment.

The Assessment Task will be completed in class under the supervision of the teacher and will be sent to the SEC for marking along with the script for that subject in the state-certified examination. Marks for the Assessment Task in each subject will be incorporated into the presentation of the grade for that subject.

Final Assessment (State-certified externally assessed examinations) *(Framework p 40-41)*

This is very similar to the exam that 3rd year students current sit in June however there are some changes. All exams (except English, Irish and Maths where there will be two levels) are set at a common level. They will be no longer than 2 hours in duration in a max. of 10 subjects. They will be set, administered, marked and resulted by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). They will be recorded using a set of grades. Provisional grades will issue in September following the end of 3rd year, as is current practice, and will subsequently be confirmed and included in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).
