

## Frequently Questions on the SLAR Meeting

**NOTE: All references to 'Assessment Guidelines' and page references pertain to the Junior Cycle Science Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments and Assessment Task, Second Edition, 2018**

### 1. Should every Science teacher in a subject department attend a SLAR meeting?

Section 2.12.3 of [DES circular 0015/2017](#) (page 16) states that “When students have completed CBAs, the CBAs will be assessed by the students’ teachers, and the outcomes will be reported to the students and parents/guardians. To support teachers in assessing students’ Classroom-Based Assessments, teachers will engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs).” If you, as a Science Department, feel there is merit in other teachers attending, then you have the freedom at a local level to decide if they do attend and the nature of their involvement at the SLAR meeting.

### 2. When does the SLAR meeting happen?

After the EEI has been completed (which is between Friday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and Friday May 18<sup>th</sup> 2018). The latest date for the SLAR meeting is Monday May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (page 14). CBA and SLAR window dates are updated annually by the NCCA on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie).

### 3. What if a teacher is absent on the planned date for the SLAR meeting?

The Assessment Guidelines (page 13) state that “It is important to set the times and dates for implementation as early as possible. The key date to establish at the outset is the timing of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting for the EEI. In setting this date the school will be guided by its own local circumstances.” Ensuring that you have an agreed date at the outset for the SLAR meeting will help to ensure everybody is available to attend. If there is an unavoidable absence, local circumstances will dictate whether the meeting can be rescheduled or not.

### 4. Does the SLAR facilitator get a time allowance?

Section 3.3 of Circular 0015/2017 states that (page 26) “An additional **two hours** will be allocated by school management to a teacher on a **rotational basis** for the **preparation and co-ordination** of each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting for an individual subject or short course, including providing confirmation to school management that the meeting has taken place and descriptors awarded and reported. This is **in addition to the 22 hours of professional time allocated** within the timetable for each full-time teacher from 2017/18 onwards.”

### 5. What happens if consensus cannot be reached in a SLAR meeting?

In a SLAR meeting, teachers will “share and discuss samples of their assessments of students’ work and build a common understanding about the quality of students’ learning. This structured support for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) will help to ensure consistency and fairness within and across schools in the appraisal of student learning.” (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, pages 8-9). It is through discussion that consensus about standards are reached. In the event that consensus cannot be reached, this should be noted in the facilitator’s report of the meeting.

### 6. What if you do not have a sample from each descriptor?

You as a teacher, will nominate 4 samples of student work. One of the purposes of the SLAR meeting is to develop a shared understanding of standards and teachers should consider

bringing samples to the meeting that they think would support discussion to develop this shared understanding. Having discussed with their departmental colleagues which samples they would like to share at the SLAR, the facilitator will generate a running order of samples of students' work to be considered at the SLAR meeting.

**7. How will the extent of teacher support given to students during the CBA be communicated during the SLAR meeting?**

It is envisaged that teachers will guide and supervise throughout the process through 'reasonable support' (see pages 8 and 9 of the Assessment Guidelines). If a student requires more than what is deemed to be 'reasonable support', the teacher can make a note of the level of assistance provided.

**8. Do you have to reassess all of the students' work after the SLAR meeting?**

"After the meeting, each individual teacher re-considers the judgement of their student's work based on the outcomes of the meeting and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work." (Assessment Guidelines page 21)

**9. Are decisions shared with the Principal of the school?**

The SLAR facilitator will complete a report based on the decisions and the outcomes of the SLAR meeting and this will be shared with the Principal of your school. You might like to keep a copy of the report for your department records and to inform future subject learning.

**10. What do you do with the results, so that they can be put on the JCPA?**

Further information in relation to reporting Classroom-Based Assessment descriptors for the JCPA is available from the DES at the following link <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services>Returns/Post-PrimaryOnline-Database-P-POD-Project/>

**11. Can a descriptor be appealed?**

Queries in relation to the EEI, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school. (Assessment Guidelines page 22).

**12. Is the work returned to students or stored in the school?**

Yes, the work is returned to the students once you, the teacher, have reconsidered the judgement of the student's work based on the outcomes of the SLAR meeting and the work has been awarded a final descriptor. The facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to contribute some student work to a bank of examples:

- To support the induction of new teachers.
- To support further Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings.
- To use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.

**13. Should the CBA replace summer tests?**

[Circular 0015/2017](#) (page 15, section 2.12) states that "There is a need to avoid 'over-assessment' and to minimise the cumulative burden on students and teachers of multiple assessments across the full range of subjects. In this context, the Classroom-Based Assessments will substitute other assessments currently undertaken in the school such as in-house examinations."