

**JUNIOR CYCLE REFORM**  
**APPENDIX TO JOINT STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION**  
**PROFESSIONAL TIME TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION**  
**08 JULY 2015**

**INTRODUCTION**

This document is an Appendix to the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation published by the Department of Education and Skills, the Teachers' Union of Ireland and the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland on 22 May 2015. Taken together, the main document and the Appendix provide a clear way forward for Junior Cycle Reform agreed by the Department and the leadership of both teacher unions. These documents will provide the basis for a ballot of TUI and ASTI members in September 2015.

The purpose of the Appendix is to summarise agreed arrangements in relation to teachers' professional time to support implementation in the context of the new approaches to curriculum, assessment, learning and teaching that are integral to the new Junior Cycle.

**1. TIME FOR JUNIOR CYCLE IMPLEMENTATION**

- 1.1. The Department of Education and Skills will provide systematic professional support and additional dedicated resources, including time and curriculum and assessment materials, to ensure the successful implementation of the new Junior Cycle.
- 1.2. This Appendix sets out the additional professional time that will be provided to teachers to support all aspects of the new Junior Cycle.
- 1.3. In that context, it is acknowledged that the Junior Cycle Reform will draw on the existing professional time that all teachers employ in preparing for and supporting their work. Existing collaborative planning time facilitated by schools for groups of teachers or subject department teams will also be important in supporting implementation.

**2. MAIN CATEGORIES OF PROFESSIONAL TIME**

- 2.1. When the Junior Cycle is fully implemented there will be five categories of additional professional time required as follows:
  - Whole-school Professional activities to support the Junior Cycle (All teachers)
  - Individual Teacher and Subject Department professional activity including AfL, feedback, reporting and inputs compiled for the JCPA for all teachers (All Junior Cycle teachers)
  - Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (All Junior Cycle teachers)
  - Time for some teachers to facilitate the preparation for and coordination of each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting
  - Time for administration of SEC Assessment Tasks
- 2.2. It is agreed that the additional professional time provided to support Junior Cycle implementation will be available to all teachers of Junior Cycle as a professional support to them in their work. Teachers can be assured that the time provided to them individually can be used by them for the range of purposes set out in this paper.
- 2.3. It is also accepted that the board of management of each school, along with the in-school management team, will be accountable for the overall implementation of the Junior Cycle in the school, as it is for all other aspects of the school's work. In this context, all time periods provided to support implementation of Junior Cycle must be used for this purpose under the overall direction of the school's management.

### **3. TIME FOR WHOLE-SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- 3.1. It will be important to support whole-school planning and effective implementation of the Junior Cycle. Circular 20/2014 provides for an additional 6 hours per annum to facilitate whole-school professional activities to support the Junior Cycle in the period September 2014 to June 2022. School management will facilitate this time provision through school closure.
- 3.2. This time allocation will be separate from the CPD arrangements that will be facilitated for the introduction of individual subjects.

### **4. DURATION OF CLASS PERIODS IN JUNIOR CYCLE**

- 4.1. It is noted that class periods of less than 40 minutes are too short to provide an effective period of teaching time for Junior Cycle. The updated Junior Cycle Framework which will be published in July 2015 will strongly guide that all schools should ensure that 40 minutes is the minimum duration of class periods in the timetable.
- 4.2. Separately the Department will consult with stakeholders in the coming months with a view to issuing direction to all schools regarding the appropriate minimum duration of class contact periods.

### **5. TIME FOR GREATER PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION**

- 5.1. In each subject, students will undertake two structured Classroom-Based Assessments, one in second year and one in third year. To support Classroom-Based Assessment all teachers will engage in *Subject Learning and Assessment Review* meetings where they will share and discuss samples of their assessments of students' work and build common understanding about the quality of students' learning.
- 5.2. 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. This means that when fully implemented teachers will be facilitated to participate in a review meeting for each subject they teach in respect of the second year Classroom-Based Assessment and also for the third year Classroom-Based Assessment.
- 5.3. A teacher of two subjects to second year and third year students will attend four review meetings amounting to eight hours of professional collaboration time.
- 5.4. 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 for that subject. To foster capacity building in each subject department this activity will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

### **6. TIME FOR FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN THE JUNIOR CYCLE**

- 6.1. The Junior Cycle will be underpinned by the further integration of formative assessment as a normal part of learning and teaching in classrooms. Formative assessment is not an additional bolt-on to the work teachers do. It involves teachers and students reflecting on how learning is progressing and deciding next steps to ensure successful outcomes.
- 6.2. Formative assessment involves a shift from focusing mainly on summative judgements to engaging in ongoing activities that can be used to support next stages of learning. A vital part of formative assessment is the feedback that teachers provide to their students. Through a range of assessment for learning strategies the teacher helps the student to identify what has been achieved and where there is room for further learning and development.
- 6.3. In implementing formative assessment teachers use their professional judgement to select appropriate formative assessment strategies having regard to the context of the learning setting and the needs and abilities of students.
- 6.4. The emphasis on formative assessment in the Junior Cycle reflects the effective practice that is already evident in many classrooms. The CPD provided to support Junior Cycle will encourage schools,

teachers and students to continue to build skills and capacities in this regard. The professional time provided for in this Appendix will be a significant support to teachers in implementing the new curriculum and assessment approaches underpinning the Junior Cycle.

## **7. TIME FOR ADMINISTRATION OF SEC ASSESSMENT TASK**

- 7.1. After the second Classroom-Based Assessment students will complete a written Assessment Task (AT) on what they have learned and the skills and competencies that they have developed in that assessment.
- 7.2. While the Assessment Task will be completed during normal class time and will not involve an additional burden of work on teachers. The whole-school administration of this Assessment Task will be resourced through an allocation of additional hours and necessary resources to the school's management to enable the effective and secure administration of the SEC Assessment Task.

## **8. TIME FOR REPORTING IN THE JUNIOR CYCLE INCLUDING THE JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT**

- 8.1. The joint statement on principles and implementation affirmed the objective that all of the learning opportunities and experiences encountered during the Junior Cycle will be valued, acknowledged and affirmed and that parents/guardians and students will be given a broad picture of each student's learning.
- 8.2. The NCCA will be requested to develop standard reporting templates, appropriate to the second level curriculum context, for use in first and second year. Before the end of the first term following the completion of the Junior Cycle, each student will receive a composite Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement from his/her school.
- 8.3. In developing the reporting templates the NCCA will be requested to have regard to the following:
  - o Templates will be user-friendly and easily interpreted by students and parents
  - o Report inputs of teachers will be concise and templates will not require extensive discursive description
  - o Design of templates will be practical and facilitate easy completion by teachers and efficient compilation at school level
- 8.4. The NCCA report templates and the report for the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement will be designed for hard copy and online completion. The user-friendly features of existing online reporting systems used by schools will be exploited including in-built, drop-down menus and a library of appropriate standard descriptors. The Department in collaboration with NCCA will engage with online providers to ensure that schools will have access to online reporting.
- 8.5. The NCCA will engage with all relevant stakeholders in the development of the report templates and ensure that appropriate consultation arrangements are in place to ensure that the needs of all users of Junior Cycle reports are taken into account.
- 8.6. It is envisaged that the move from current arrangements for reporting to students and parents to the new reporting requirements of Junior Cycle will not require significant additional time for teachers. However, the provision of professional time to teachers within their timetable throughout the year will ensure that all reporting requirements can be implemented successfully.

## **9. AGREED TIME ALLOCATION FOR JUNIOR CYCLE IMPLEMENTATION**

- 9.1. Junior Cycle subjects are being introduced in five phases according to a specified timetable in the period 2014 to 2019 with the final phase subjects completing the cycle in June 2022.
- 9.2. In line with the phasing plan set out in Section 10 below, each full-time teacher's class contact time will be reduced from 33 teaching periods in the timetable to 32 teaching periods to provide 1 Junior Cycle professional period of 40 minutes for each of the 33 weeks of the year (based on a school timetable of 40 minute periods). This time allocation equates to 22 hours of professional time within timetable for each full-time teacher each year.

- 9.3. School management will ensure that professional time for Junior Cycle, which is facilitated through a reduction in class contact time, is provided on the basis that full-time teachers are already fully deployed (i.e. for 22 hours of professional duties which include teaching time and other assigned management and coordination duties). Teachers of Junior Cycle classes who are fulfilling a maximum 22 hour class contact contract will have the class contact time reduced to a maximum of 21 hours 20 minutes.
- 9.4. Part-time teachers will be facilitated to avail of professional time to support implementation of the Junior Cycle on a pro-rata basis which will incorporate a minimum level of time provision.
- 9.5. A minimum of 11 hours' professional time per year will be available to all part-time teachers on contracts of up to 11 hours' teaching time. This approximates to 17 class periods of 40 mins duration. Part-time teachers on contracts of 12 to 17 hours' teaching per week will have a pro rata allocation of 12 to 17 hours' of Junior Cycle professional time annually. The approximate pro-rata allocation of extra teaching periods will be as follows: 12 hours (18 periods of 40 mins.), 13 hours (20 periods), 14 hours (21 periods), 15 hours (23 periods), 16 hours (24 periods), and 17 hours (26 periods). The additional professional time periods may be facilitated through increasing the part-time teacher's contracted hours by the additional periods or through paid substitution, as appropriate.
- 9.6. Part-time teachers on 18 hours or more (who are not paid on a full-time basis) will be treated according to the arrangements for full time teachers and will be allocated 40 minutes for each of the 33 weeks of the year equating to 22 hours of additional professional time.
- 9.7. The 40 minute professional time period provided within timetable is available to teachers on the basis that they will use this time flexibly including bundling time periods and carrying forward time to facilitate professional collaboration. Teachers may also use the time periods for individual planning, feedback or reporting activities relating to Junior Cycle. In particular, time periods will need to be bundled to facilitate SLAR meetings. Since professional collaboration meetings can only be held when the relevant subject teachers can be present, a limited number of meetings may need to draw on teachers' bundled time to run beyond normal school tuition hours for some of the duration of the meeting.

## **10. PHASING OF TIME ALLOCATION**

- 10.1. It is recognised that frontloading the introduction of professional time will be highly beneficial in advancing whole-school implementation of Junior Cycle reform including engaging at an early stage with the embedding of formative assessment from first year through to third year.
- 10.2. In light of this it is agreed that all teachers of Junior Cycle will be provided with the additional time allocation from the commencement of the 2017/2018 school year.
- 10.3. In advance of the introduction of professional time for all teachers in September 2017, teachers of English, Science and Business will be provided with an appropriate allocation of professional time as their subjects are implemented in the period 2015 to 2017.
- 10.4. In addition to the 6 hours and the separate CPD provided under Section 3, English teachers will be provided with 10 hours of professional time in 2015/16 (when the revised English specification is being taught in first and second year) and 14 hours in 2016/17 (when English is being taught in all three years). Science and Business teachers will be provided with 8 hours in 2016/17 to support the first year of introduction of these subjects. This time will be provided through additional paid substitution hours allocated to the school.
- 10.5. As noted in Section 3, and in accordance with Circular 20/2014, an additional 6 hours is provided to facilitate whole-school professional activities to support the Junior Cycle during the phasing period up to June 2022. School management will facilitate this time provision through school closure.

## **11. IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

- 11.1. Interpretation issues that arise with regard to this Appendix will be referred to the Implementation Committee as provided for in 7.4 of the Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation.