

Table 4.

Summary of Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle Curriculum Components

Curriculum component	Assessment by	Weighting	Moderation
Subjects	Examination	60%	External by SEC
	Portfolio	40%	Internal by school External moderation by SEC
Short Courses	Portfolio	100%	Internal by school
Priority Learning Units (PLUs)	Portfolio	100%	Internal by school External moderation

September 2012: Preparing for a new junior cycle

From 2012 schools will start planning for the introduction of the *Framework for Junior Cycle* in 2014. In the NCCA, work is already underway on establishing networks of schools to support the preparation of guidelines on how schools can plan for their junior cycle programmes in this period before the new Framework is introduced. Of note is that a number of schools have already volunteered for participation in such a network.

A starting point for a new junior cycle in schools, and a lead-in to the introduction of the two new qualifications, could be a decision by the school to reduce the number of subjects a student takes in the existing Junior Certificate examination. This reduction could start with those students who commence junior cycle in 2012 and sit the Junior Certificate examination in 2015. The reduction would not imply any restriction on what is studied as part of the student’s junior cycle programme.

During the period leading to the introduction of the Framework, student learning and achievement across all aspects of the curriculum will continue to be recorded and reported, including those subjects that may not be taken for examination. NCCA will develop **Report Card Templates** in a variety of formats for use by all schools in this context. At the end of junior cycle, as well as the certificate provided by SEC of the grades achieved in the Junior Certificate examinations taken, students could have a report of their

achievement across all areas and subjects of their junior cycle programmes, including reporting, for the first time, on literacy and numeracy in junior cycle.

September 2014: the new Junior Cycle commences

It is envisaged that the new Junior Cycle will commence in all schools in September 2014, with the new qualifications available for the completion of junior cycle in 2017. The introduction of revised specifications for subjects will take place on a phased basis from 2014. At that point, the subject English (and possibly Art, Craft, Design), will be introduced, followed each school year by a number of other subjects. The phasing in of subjects is intended to support schools, teachers and the education system in becoming accustomed to using the *Framework for Junior Cycle* and the changed assessment and qualifications arrangements and to allow for the generation of monitoring data to support evaluation of the impact of the changes as they are introduced.

2014–2017: the new assessment and qualifications arrangements are introduced

The move to new arrangements for assessment and qualifications in the junior cycle will commence in 2014 in the relevant subjects, short courses and PLUs. From that date, the rolling out of some externally moderated school-based assessment in junior cycle will commence, with the portfolio component being assessed by schools and the examination being assessed externally.