

THE SHORT COURSE IN JUNIOR CYCLE

GETTING STARTED

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Introduction

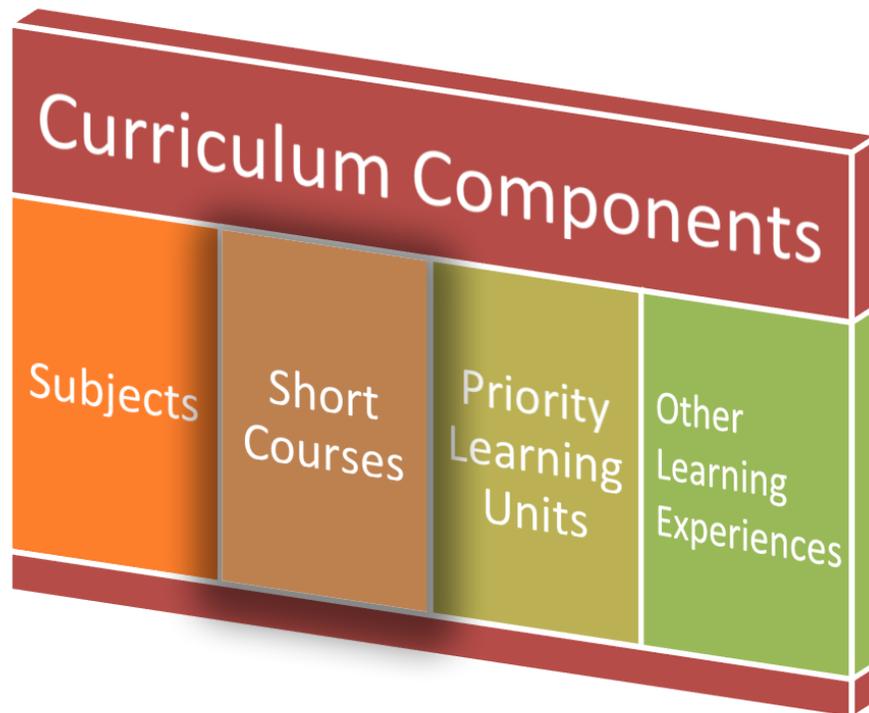
Welcome to Short Course Development.

The short course is a new curriculum component in Junior Cycle.

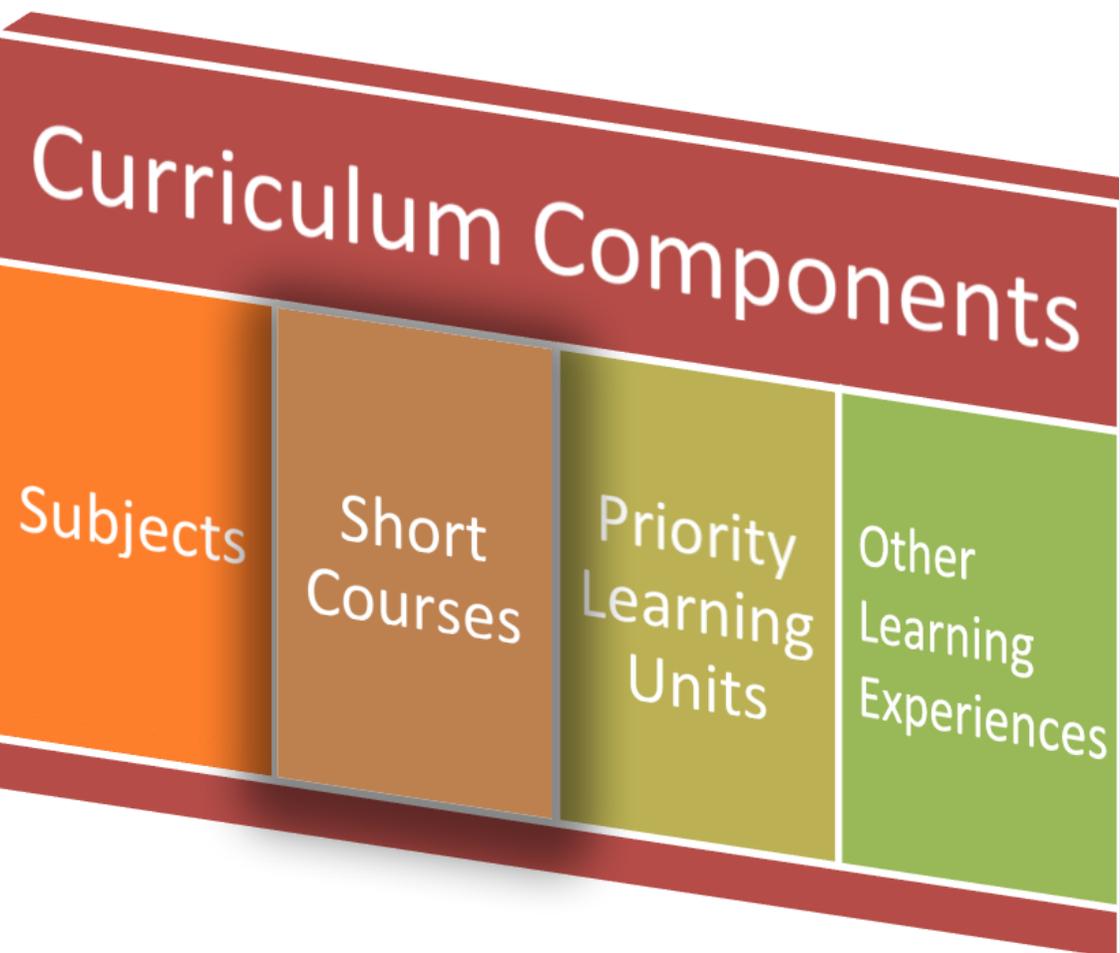
During the NCCA consultation about Junior Cycle, schools asked for opportunities to include new and different learning experiences for their learners .

The introduction of short courses provides opportunities for schools to

- to broaden the range of educational experiences they offer in Junior Cycle
- to recognise and certify different types and smaller units of learning
- to engage in curriculum development and planning at local level.



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Introduction / What is a short course

The short course is designed for approximately 100 hours of learner learning. Most subjects are designed for 200 hours with the exception of Irish, English and Mathematics which are 240 hours.

Short courses may be devised 'from scratch' – opening up a new area of learning e.g. Digital Media.

Some short courses might look like shorter versions of subjects but be based on a particular learning focus e.g. Everyday Maths or Local History.

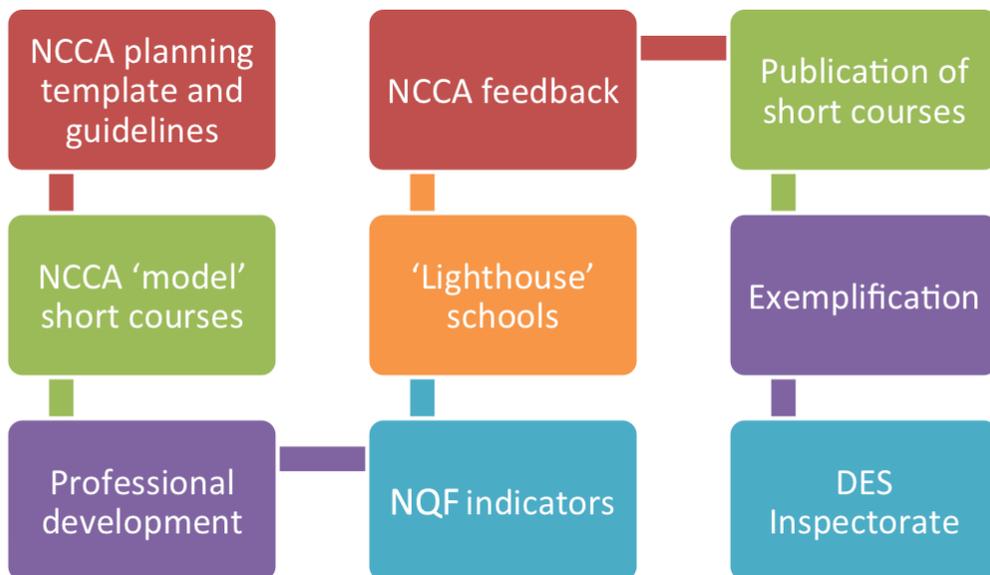
Short courses are flexible enough to encompass specific events or initiatives such as school musicals, Young Scientist or Active School Flag.

In some cases, short courses may be made up of two or more separate but complementary parts which might be taught by more than one teacher, e.g. a Home Economics teacher and an English teacher working on a cook book.

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Introduction / Quality assurance

There are a number of elements designed to assure quality in the development of short courses.



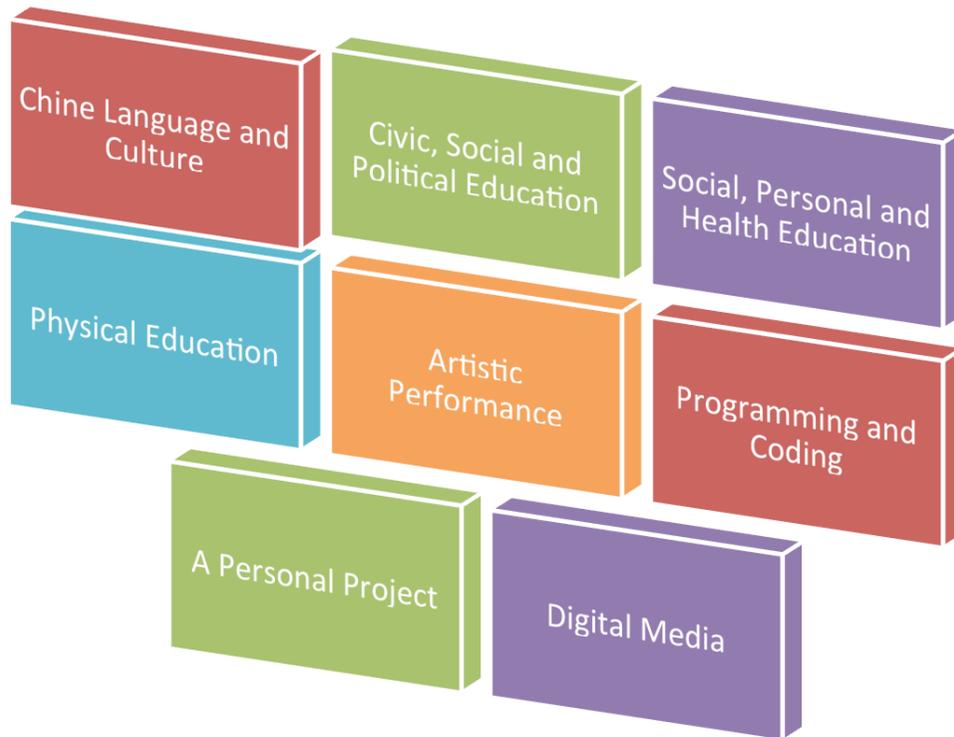
- Short course developers will be required to use the NCCA planning template and guidelines.
- The NCCA will publish eight 'model' short courses.
- Professional development will be made available.
- Feedback will be given by the DES Inspectorate following school inspections
- Schools will be encouraged to publish their short courses.
- Schools will be encouraged to look at the short courses that have been developed by 'lighthouse schools'.
- Feedback will be given to schools about one short course.
- Short Courses will aligned with level indicators for the relevant level of the **National Framework of Qualifications**.

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Introduction / NCCA 'Model' Short Courses

The NCCA is currently working with a group of developers on the development of eight short courses in the

- Civic, Social and Political Education
- Digital Media
- Social, Personal and Health Education
- Artistic Performance
- A personal Project: Caring for animals
- Programming and Coding
- Chinese Language and Culture
- Physical Education.



Planning

Based on our experience of working with NCCA short course developers, we know that the process takes time and is best done collaboratively. It is also recommended that developers work through the steps outlined in the Getting Started section.

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Getting Started

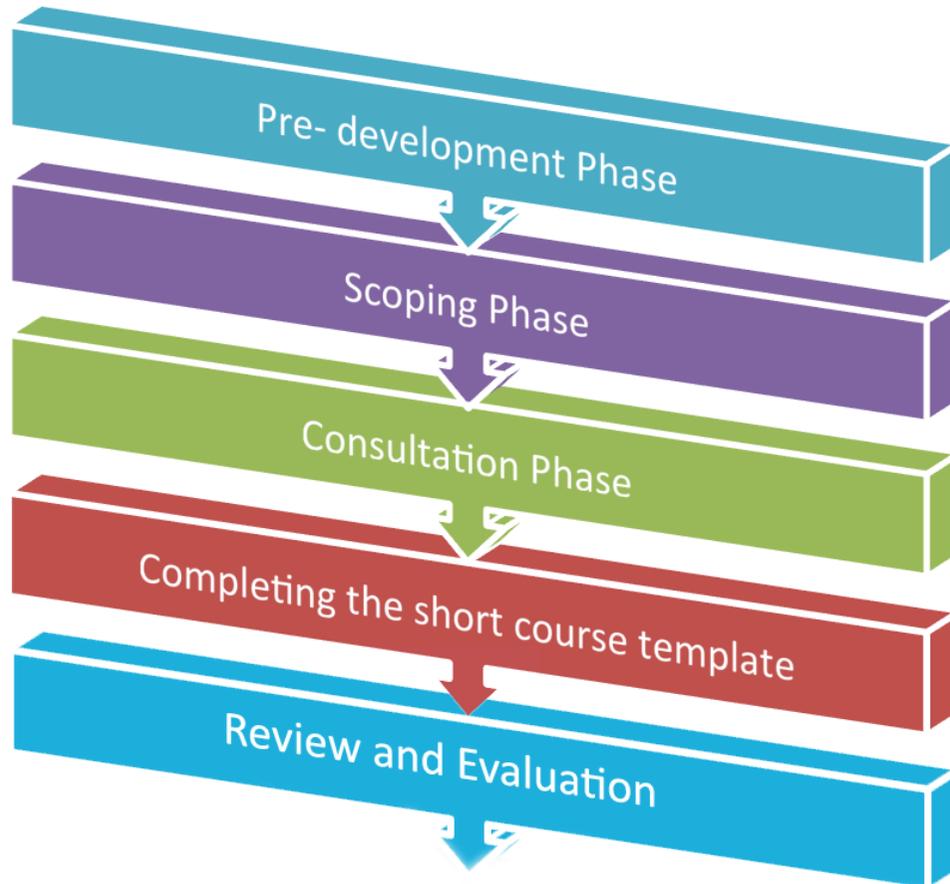
There are five phases involved in developing a short course.

Three of these phases are completed **before** the work begins on the NCCA short course template.

The five phases are:

- Pre-development phase
- Scoping phase
- Consultation phase
- Completing the short course template.
- Review and evaluation

By working through each of the phases, developers can be assured that they have explored fully the different ideas for the course, consulted widely and refined their thinking before embarking on the completion of the template.



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Getting Started / Pre-development Phase

We recommend that you set up a small working group to look at the following questions about your school.

- What is working well in Junior Cycle?
(Review School Self Evaluation Outcomes.)
- What are the gaps in learners' learning experiences ?
- What areas of learning might be of interest to and worthwhile for your learners?
- Could you use a short course to deepen or extend learners' learning in a junior cycle subject?
- What expertise do you have available in your school community to contribute to the development of short courses?
- Who might be interested in getting involved in the development of short courses?
- How do these considerations link to your overall for Junior Cycle?



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Getting Started/Scoping Document

The short course development group is then established. Their first task is to complete a scoping document for each proposed short course. You can download the scoping document **here**.

Points to note:

Significant learning in this short course:

What is the important knowledge and understanding that learners can learn in this short course? What skills, values and attitudes can learners develop in this course?

Remember – it won't be possible to include everything!
When making choices, ask the question...

What will be of interest to and worthwhile for a learners in junior cycle to learn in this area?



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Getting Started/Scoping Document

Some short courses may be closely related to an existing junior cycle subject(s). If this is the case, have you examined the relevant syllabuses?

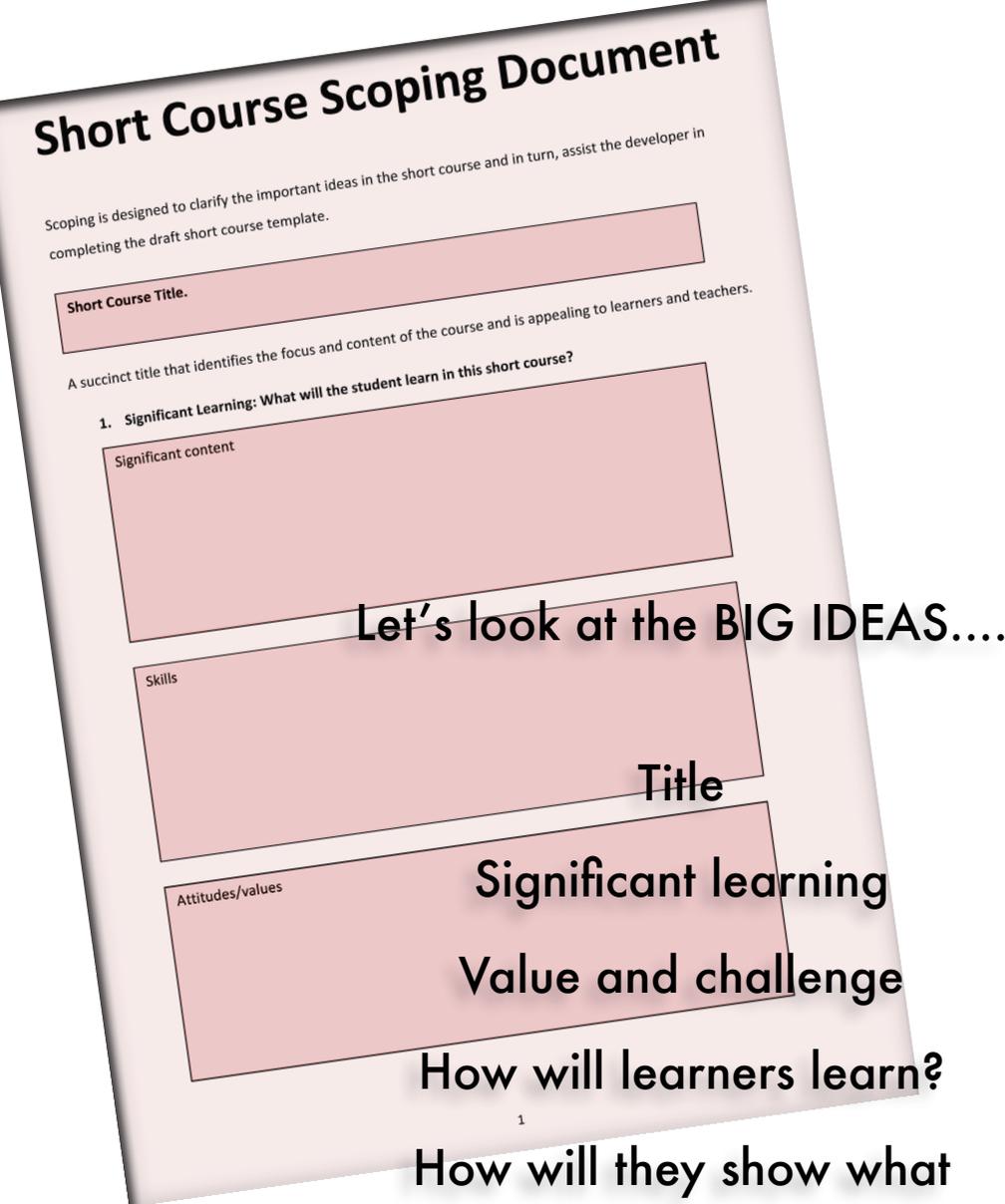
Is there likely to be overlap with the significant learning that you have chosen for the short course? Is this overlap likely to be helpful or unhelpful for learners' learning?

Value and challenge

When answering these questions, the student should always be the central consideration.

In what way will learners see learning in this short course as being

- enjoyable?
- interesting and challenging?
- connected to prior learning?
- relevant to future learning?
- useful now and in the future?



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Getting Started/Scoping Document

How will learners learn in this short course?

It is important to describe how learners will be learning in this short course, e.g. researching, creating, presenting, performing, discussing, designing, debating. A helpful question might be ...what will learners' be telling their parents they are doing in the short course? Check out different approaches to teaching and learning here.

The Junior Cycle Key Skills Overview provides an outline of how learners will learn in Junior Cycle and can be viewed here. The Overview may prompt different ideas about how learners might learn in the short course.

What are the assessment approaches that will support the learner's learning?

What might learners be asked to **say, do, write and/or make** to show evidence of their learning? This evidence can be used to provide feedback to learners about their learning. More ideas on assessment here.



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Getting Started/Consultation phase

The short course scoping document can now be used as a basis for discussion about the proposed short course, it's relevance for learners and the possibility of the school being able to facilitate it.

Consider consulting with teaching colleagues, learners, parents and others relevant individuals/groups.



The NCCA Short Course planning template

Title of short course

For Example:

The Joy of Garbage: Learning about sustainable living.

Its news to me: The role of media in our lives.

1. Introduction to junior cycle

Junior cycle education places learners at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all learners and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all.

The junior cycle allows learners make a greater connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, and relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute directly to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of learners, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity, innovation and enterprise. The learner's junior cycle programme builds on their learning to date and actively supports their progress in learning and in addition, supports them in developing the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

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Getting Started/Planning template

You can download the short course planning template [here](#).

Title of short course

The title should clearly identify the content and focus of the short course. It should be interesting and attractive for junior cycle learners and their teachers.

1. Introduction to junior cycle

This section is common to all specifications and summarises the main features of the Framework. The NCCA provides this text and this will be common to all short courses.

2. Rationale

'Physical Activity in my Life – Participate and Perform' aims to develop skilful and creative participants who are confident and competent in a wide range of physical activities. The course also aims to develop learners' commitment to regular participation in physical activity now and in the future.

3. Aim

Young people in junior cycle are at an important stage of their lives where they are making lifestyle decisions including whether and how they will participate in regular physical activity. This course aims to build learners' motivation and commitment to physical activity and sport within and beyond school. The emphasis is on providing all learners with enjoyable opportunities to participate in and improve their competence and confidence in a range of physical activities. It is now more important than ever that learners appreciate the importance of physical activity in a healthy lifestyle and how to build personal fitness. The course will provide learning opportunities designed to motivate and support learners in being more physically active. It recognises the importance of 'social modelling' on young peoples' involvement in physical activity and sport and therefore encourages all learners to get involved in both playing and leadership roles irrespective of their previous experiences in physical activity and sport. The course also provides an opportunity for learners to have their learning in physical education recognised in their junior cycle certificate.

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Getting Started/Planning template

2. Rationale

The rationale should answer questions such as ...

Why is the learning in this short course important?

What are the general demands and capacities it will place on and require of learners?

Check out the ideas you have already identified in the **Value and Challenge section of the scoping document** to inform the writing of the rationale.

3. Aim

The aim should be a brief statement that outlines the expected impact of the course on learners' learning.

Written from the writer's perspective, the aim is aspirational in nature and should describe the 'big picture' thinking behind the short course.

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Getting Started/Planning template

4. Links

a) Statements of learning	
Statement	Examples of relevant learning in the course
appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives	Strand One engages learners in a comparative study of local and global case studies on the topic of human dignity. The study includes examining the different perspectives where there is a conflict of rights. Learners will review their findings in relation to the nine grounds under which discrimination is illegal in Ireland.
values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts	Strand Two facilitates young people to consider their own consumption patterns and the factors influencing their consumption. They are invited to take action to mitigate the human and environmental cost of consuming.
understands the origin and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him	Strand Two asks learners to identify the potential social, environmental, economic and cultural effects of developments in their local area. They examine case studies where action is/was taken against a local development because of perceived negative effects.
has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably	Strand Two facilitates learning about different perspectives on sustainable development and requires learners to engage with relevant initiatives or campaigns so that they can develop their own awareness raising tool and lobby about a sustainable development issue of their choice.

4. Links

In this section, the ways in which the short course links to and addresses the Junior Cycle 24 Statements of Learning Key Skills, Literacy and Numeracy are made explicit.

4. a) Junior Cycle 24 Statements of Learning

In this section, you are asked to identify the 3/4 Statements of Learning to which this course relates to significantly, including a brief description of the learning experiences that illustrate these links.

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Getting Started/Planning template

4. b) Literacy and Numeracy Section

In this section, please give four example of how this short course contributes to the development of literacy and numeracy.

Check out these links for more information about Literacy and Numeracy in the curriculum:

Department of Education and Skills Strategy document, Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and for Life

Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) numeracy and literacy resource

National Behaviour Support Service: publications and resources in support of literacy and numeracy

Junior Cycle School Programme: Literacy and numeracy

b) Literacy and numeracy

In this short course, learners will be engaged in researching and presenting their findings to a range of audiences. They will also be designing posters to highlight key findings. These activities develop reading, writing and oral literacy skills.

In this short course, learners will carry out surveys and use graphs and charts to represent their findings. These activities develop literacy and numeracy skills.

In this short course, learners will be involved in designing interactive ways to make learning vocabulary in L2 interesting and fun. This activity involves problem solving which is one of the skills of numeracy.

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4. c) Key Skills

While it is desirable that all key skills have a presence in the course, some will be more prominent than others. Provide examples of activities that a learner might expect to participate in to develop this key skill.

c) Key skills		
Key Skill	Key skill element	Student learning activity
Being Creative	Exploring options and alternatives	Learners will create a group dance performance based on a selection of movement phrases created by other groups.
Managing information and thinking	Gathering, recording organising and evaluating information and data	Learners will select information about Spanish culture from a range of sources. Learners will use this information in presentations and other written work.
Communicating	Using language	Learners will learn to speak and write Spanish in well constructed sentences. Learners will learn to assess their own and other's work and give feedback to each other.
Managing myself	Knowing myself	Through participation in group work activities including class debates and discussions, learners are encouraged to reflect on and recognise their personal strengths and identify the influences shaping their opinions.
Staying well	Being social and safe.	Learners will learn about the risks involved in using social networking sites and the steps they can take to mitigate these risks for themselves and others.
Working with others	Contribute to making the world a better place	In this short course, learners are involved in making connections with others who are working to make a difference. They will have opportunities to think critically about how they might play a part in making the world a better place.

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Getting Started/Planning template

5. Course Overview

This section provides an overview of the course including how it is organised (strands) and learning outcomes.

The strand outlines what the learner will learn in each section of the course. The strand title is brief and identifies the 'significant content'.

There should be a maximum of four strands and these may be further subdivided into not more than four topics.

The topics are ordered coherently indicating the order in which they are best taught.

Some strands may have a heavier weighting than others in terms of content and/or demands on the learner.

5. Course overview	
Identify the strands in the short course. Briefly explain why these f strands were selected. If they are presented in a particular order, explain why.	
STRAND <i>(Students learn)</i>	LEARNING OUTCOMES <i>(Students should be able to)</i>
Learners learn Sample Strand Personal Finance Topic 1: Money in, money out Topic 2: Making choices Topic 3: Planning ahead	
Sample Strand SPHE – Who am I? Topic 1: How I see myself and others Topic 2: Being an adolescent Topic 3: Self-management	
Sample Strand CSPE – Rights and Responsibilities Topic 1: Human Dignity Topic 2: Human rights instruments Topic 3: Human rights and the law	

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Getting Started/Planning template

Learning Outcomes: Some guidelines

Learning outcomes are clear statements about what is expected each learner will achieve as a result of the learning associated with each strand.

It is not necessary to write a learning outcome for everything you want the learner to learn. But it is necessary to write learning outcomes **that draw a clear picture of the kinds of learning that is envisaged in the short course.**

Writing learning outcomes takes time and careful consideration. Detailed guidance on writing learning outcomes is available **here.**

Remember there is a maximum of four learning outcomes for each topic in each strand.

5. Course overview	
Identify the strands in the short course. Briefly explain why these strands were selected. If they are presented in a particular order, explain why.	
STRAND <i>(Students learn)</i>	LEARNING OUTCOMES <i>(Students should be able to)</i>
CSPE Strand: Human rights activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in a mock European Tribunal hearing simplified cases Discuss the work of group/organisation involved in human rights campaigns
Physical Education Strand: Planning to participate and perform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a resource designed to highlight physical activity opportunities within and beyond the school Organise a community based club to conduct a 'taster session' in the school to promote the activity
Digital Media Literacy Strand: Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critique four websites designed to provide similar information for young people Explain the criteria for preferring one of these websites over another.

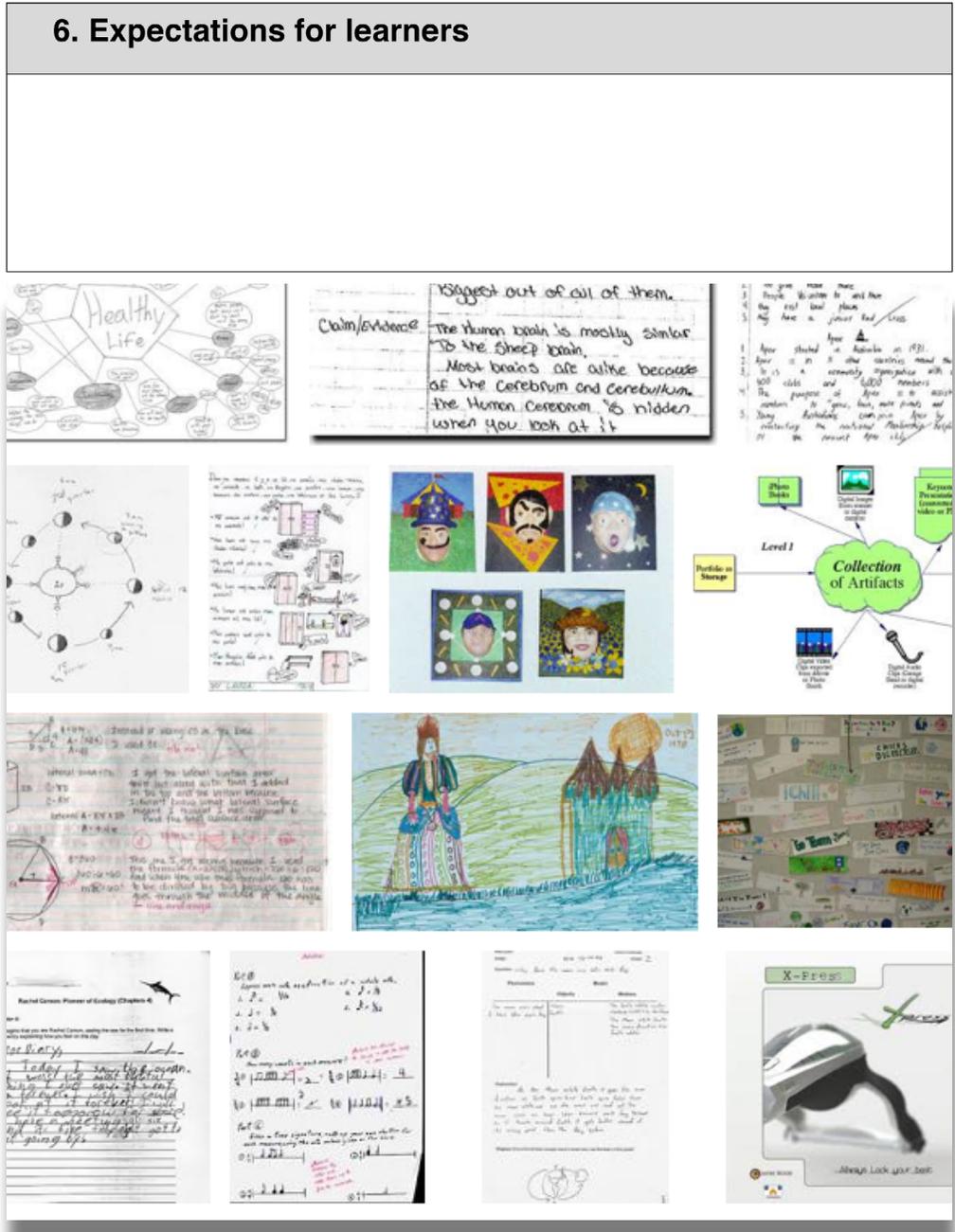
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6. Expectations for learners

6. Expectations for learners

Examples of learner work will be used to illustrate the expectations for learners in the short course. These examples will be related directly to a learning outcome or group of learning outcomes. They will be annotated, indicating whether the work is in line with, ahead of, or below expectations for learners.



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Getting Started/Planning template

7. Assessment and qualifications



7. Assessment and Certification

Assessment in Short Courses

The assessment approaches selected should

- relate directly to the aim and learning outcomes of the short course
- reflect what a student is able to say, write, make and/or do as a result of their learning in the short course
- provide evidence of learning for formative assessment purposes, i.e. to provide considered feedback to the learner about how they can improve their work
- generate evidence of learning for making and sharing judgements about the learning with a wider audience (summative assessment)

Supporting document on further guidance on assessment. It is important the assessment approaches selected have a positive effect on learners' learning and level of engagement.

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7. Assessment and Certification

Junior Cycle Certification

For the purposes of certification, the assessment of short courses will:

- be carried out by the school
- be subject to a process of moderation in the school
- be based on work undertaken by learners in second and/or third year in school
- include work showing the learner's application to and progress in learning as well as exhibiting the the achievement of the student.

7. Assessment and qualifications



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8. Resources

In this section, you are asked to provide examples of resources for teaching and learning for the short course.

It is important to consider how these resources

- support learners' learning in each of the strands
- enable all learners to experience success
- appeal to learners with special needs, i.e. those who have physical/medical and or specific learning difficulties
- cater for learners with different learning styles
- require learners to develop their digital media skills

Remember! Where possible use resources that are either freely able or inexpensive.

8. Resources

