



Senior Cycle Review: **Frequently Asked Questions**

Q1. How will schools be involved in the review?

Traditionally, schools come strongly into focus at the implementation stage of curriculum development. The approach to this review involves schools at a much earlier stage in the process of educational change. We will begin two consultation cycles on different aspects of senior cycle with a school-based review in a representative sample of 40 schools, before broadening the consultation to a series of national seminars. We will provide schools with research and stimulus material and the necessary supports to facilitate school-wide staff discussions during the consultation cycles.

All material will be made available at ncca.ie/seniorcycle to facilitate optional, wider involvement of other schools in the review.

Q2. Why adopt this approach to the review?

We often describe the work of the NCCA as comprising research, consultation, deliberation and networking. The idea of networking with schools to research, consult and deliberate, reflects a strong awareness in NCCA of the value, merit and importance of working directly in partnership with schools. In the case of senior cycle review, this approach provides:

- Space for us to contextualise research in the individual experiences and contexts of schools
- A way in which school communities can be directly involved in the review in a structured and supported way to generate ideas for the future direction of senior cycle
- An opportunity to generate thinking, ideas and advice that reflects the day-to-day reality of schools and classrooms.

We favour this combined approach, of working directly with schools and through our NCCA structures, as we believe it is vital that the advice which emerges from the review has stakeholder support and is based in the reality of what schools are doing and can do.



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Q3. What themes are explored in each consultation cycle?

The first cycle, from September to mid-October 2018, will focus on *Thinking about the future - The purpose of senior cycle*. We will look at the relationship of the educational experience of students with the lives students are living/will live, with the world of work, with Further/Higher Education, and explore what students will need from a senior cycle in the years to 2030. In this context we will consider the purpose of senior cycle, what aspects and in what ways we can ensure it is fully inclusive in the future, and the place of areas such as wellbeing and citizenship education in a future senior cycle?

The second cycle, November to December 2018, will explore *Pathways and flexibilities in senior cycle*. We will explore the structure of senior cycle, the educational programmes involved, and the pathways available to all students. We will consider if our current structures and programmes are compatible with the purposes of senior cycle emerging from the first consultation cycle.

We will also be reflecting on how to organise the curriculum within these pathways, core subjects or learning experiences (work-based, community learning, citizenship education) that may be central to the experience of senior cycle in the future, and the degree of choice that is or should be afforded to students.

Q4. What supports will be made available to all schools to participate in the review?

NCCA will provide schools with short research reports focused on the existing senior cycle programmes, and stimulus material raising questions for discussion among teachers, parents, and students. All materials and online supports will be made available to all schools to facilitate optional, wider involvement of other schools in the review.



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Q5. What additional supports will be made available to the 40 schools in the Review Group?

In addition to the supports outlined above, each of the 40 schools in the representative sample of schools will receive:

- a small grant to assist in organising the review work in the school
- guidance and support for the school's NCCA liaison person from a designated member of the NCCA project team through phone/email communication
- substitute cover and travel expenses to attend induction meetings, national seminars etc.

Q6. What is the role of the school's liaison person?

This nominee will be the point of contact between the school and the NCCA. The nominee will, in close collaboration with the Principal/ Deputy Principal:

- share/disseminate any materials and literature from NCCA among colleagues in their schools
- facilitate discussions to collect the views, ideas and opinions of the school in relation to each consultation cycle
- provide feedback from the school to the NCCA by providing a written response to the consultation questionnaires used at the end of each consultation cycle.

Q7. How will schools facilitate parental involvement in the review?

It is not expected that schools will need to make any special provisions beyond the normal arrangements for a school's Parents Association/ Council or to facilitate discussions between parents and representatives of parents on the school's management board. Material developed to support parental involvement in the review [can be accessed here](#).



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Q8. How will schools facilitate student involvement in the review?

In recent years, NCCA has worked with schools to develop an approach to *Student Voice* that has enhanced our work in developing advice on curriculum and assessment matters. Student voice material developed to support student involvement in the review [can be accessed here](#).

Q9. How will other stakeholders participate in the review?

Both consultation cycles will begin as a school-based discussion, but will then widen out to a national seminar series involving representatives from schools and other education partners. A summary report of the main findings of each cycle will be produced and published after each national seminar. The findings from both consultation cycles will be used to generate an overview report for NCCA Council which will go for further public consultation. Throughout the review process, the representative structures within the NCCA, Council itself and the Board for Senior Cycle, will also be discussing the areas involved in the consultation cycles and review.