



**NCCA**

An Chomhairle Náisiúnta  
Curraim agus Measúnachta  
National Council for  
Curriculum and Assessment

# Consultation Report on the Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Leaving Certificate Classical Languages: Ancient Greek and Latin

May 2021

For noting

BSC/C:06.05.21:5c

# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>1. Introduction</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| 1.1 Overview  | 3         |
| 1.2 Consultation Process  | 3         |
| 1.3 Survey respondents and demographics   | 4         |
| <b>2. Consultation Findings</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| 2.1 Reflections on current Leaving Certificate Classical Languages arrangements | 6         |
| 2.2 International perspectives on Classical Languages in the curriculum         | 12        |
| 2.3 National curriculum and assessment developments                             | 13        |
| 2.4 Other points for consideration  | 19        |
| <b>3. Conclusion</b>  | <b>21</b> |

---

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Overview

The *Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Leaving Certificate Classical Languages* was made available for national public consultation from 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021. The paper provided an overview of the historical context for Ancient Greek and Latin in the curriculum and the subsequent experience of both languages over succeeding decades before exploring the nature of recent curricular changes in the classics at both junior and senior cycle levels. The paper considered some international perspectives on the nature of curriculum provision for Classical Languages and discussed the ‘framework’ model for the study of modern foreign languages in the Irish curriculum. It concluded with the brief for the review that will guide the Development Group in their deliberations.

The aim of the consultation was to seek the views of the public on considerations which would guide the development of new specifications for Leaving Certificate Ancient Greek and Latin.

## 1.2 Consultation Process

There were three main avenues for consultation feedback: via an online survey, through written submissions and through focus group discussions which were facilitated to support the participation of students.

The online survey grouped questions under the following broad areas for feedback:

- Reflections on the current syllabus for both Ancient Greek and Latin
- Themes in international curriculum and assessment arrangements for Ancient Greek and Latin
- Some recent national developments in curriculum and assessment of relevance to the development process for Ancient Greek and Latin

- Other relevant considerations.

Three focus group sessions, in three different schools, were conducted with a selection of students in 5th and 6th years studying Latin or Greek. A fourth session was held with a selection of students who were studying one or both classical languages in third level institutions. Each session was held virtually due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant that face-to-face focus groups could not be facilitated.

In the course of the focus group sessions, students were asked to consider three overarching questions:

- What aspects of the curriculum and assessment arrangements for Ancient Greek and Latin do they view as positive?
- What aspects of the syllabi and assessment arrangements for Ancient Greek and Latin do they view as negative?
- What changes would they make to the subjects to make them more attractive to students?

A fifth focus group session was held with a selection of students from each of the three schools that participated in the earlier sessions. This group consisted of students who had studied Ancient Greek and Latin at Junior Certificate level but had opted not to pursue the subjects at Leaving Certificate level. The intention was to identify what factors informed students' decisions not to pursue the subjects further after Junior Certificate.

### **1.3 Survey respondents and demographics**

When considering the number of respondents to the survey, it is important to note the context in terms of the numbers of students taking the subjects. The most recent figures to hand relate to the 2019 state examinations, which record that 57 students took Latin at Leaving Certificate level, with 19 students taking Ancient Greek (the 2020 examinations were cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

The table below outlines the demographic breakdown of respondents:

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Post-primary Ancient Greek teacher                  | 2         |
| Post-primary Latin Teacher                          | 6         |
| Post-primary Classical Studies Teacher              | 4         |
| Third level student                                 | 3         |
| Parent/Guardian                                     | 1         |
| Teacher educator                                    | 2         |
| Third level lecturer/researcher                     | 7         |
| Classical Association of Ireland – Teachers (CAI-T) | 1         |
| Other   | 7         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>33</b> |

In addition to the survey responses, a written submission was sent by two students from Maynooth University.

---

## 2. Consultation Findings

Overall, the Background Paper was well received by respondents. The themes and issues explored were considered to be appropriate and to have provided a useful springboard for the consultation that followed and is the subject of this report. This section of the report reflects on the nature of the feedback elicited from respondents and focus group participants.

### 2.1 Reflections on current Leaving Certificate Classical Languages arrangements

Respondents to the survey and focus group members were asked to consider provision for Ancient Greek and Latin in the current curriculum and current assessment arrangements. Respondents highlighted the following strengths which should be considered in the context of the proposed revisions.

The value of the study of Latin in **developing a deeper awareness and appreciation of the underpinning of other languages**, including English and Irish as well as modern foreign languages, was a prominent theme. It was observed that the study of Latin

*'enables the pupil to deal with complex grammatical ideas and structures and to develop critical linguistic skills which can be applied elsewhere in their studies, interests and life'*  
(Latin teacher).

It was further noted that:

*'through the study of Latin, a pupil discovers how many English words have their roots in Latin' and*

that 'as a complex inflected language it helps to develop analytical skills generally and a greater attention to detail'

(Latin teacher).

An awareness of the historical significance of the language was emphasised as important to retain in redeveloped subject arrangements. Second and third level students alike consulted in focus groups acknowledged the strong formative value of the study of the languages for studying modern foreign languages, and also English and Irish. Some students also noted how the study of the languages informed and enabled their study of such subjects as mathematics and science, where the ability to recognise patterns is also important.

**Exposure to classical literature** was also highlighted by respondents as a strength of both syllabi. In Latin, it was noted, '*a pupil comes face to face with real Latin from 2000 years ago, unadopted in the case of the set text, e.g., Virgil or Cicero or Livy*' (Latin teacher). Another teacher noted that the selection of texts in the syllabus '*represents the Golden Age of Latin literature.*' In the case of Ancient Greek, a respondent praised the syllabus for introducing students to 'the range, inherent value and historical significance of literature in the Greek language.' A teacher noted that, in Latin, '*the opportunity to study one book of the Aeneid in some detail always seemed to me to be a real privilege*' with others commenting favourably on the high level of engagement with literature offered by the syllabi. Students spoke enthusiastically about their experience of literature and demonstrated a real appreciation of the value of studying ancient texts. Many students cited their study of a text as one of the favourite aspects of their study. It was interesting to observe students having a real sense of appreciation, even awe, that texts written so long ago remain relevant in the modern world. Students have an awareness that the themes, issues, values and aspects of the human condition explored in such texts provide an enduring focus of interrogation and valuable way of thinking about the world they live in.

Opportunities to engage in analysis and translation of texts were also noted positively, as were the unique character of the study of the classical world and its impact and influence on learners. A third level student observed:

*'Through the study of ancient texts an unfamiliar world opens up that needs to be understood, because it is so different from ours in many ways. And this is exactly the benefit. It requires empathy and imagination and challenges the reader to examine [their] own life. The texts discuss topics that are very relevant, because they are a part of our lives, like love, heroism, rivalry, politics, sciences, beauty, but from a very different angle in an unfamiliar context.'*

Similarly, other student feedback pointed to how classical languages differ from other languages in offering access to a historically important and influential cultural context: while they are no longer spoken, they remain highly relevant for this different but no less vital purpose.

**The wide breadth and varied content** of the syllabi was noted as a strength by many respondents. As well as developing proficiency in the mechanics and grammar of an ancient language, students explore literature, history, art, architecture and philosophical ideas, thus encountering the ancient world in a holistic, integrated way. It was observed that the current Latin syllabus *'offers a rigorous and demanding programme of study in the language, literature and history of ancient Rome'* (Latin teacher). Other responses indicated enthusiasm about students of both Greek and Latin encountering *'not only plays and poetry but also history and philosophy'* (Greek teacher). The exposure to literature and these wider aspects of ancient society simultaneously with language learning was deemed particularly valuable. As a respondent put



it, *'the interaction of the language and core strands strongly supports the aim of students understanding language as an integral aspect of society.'* The contrast with other jurisdictions where the study of history is not part of the course for ancient languages, such as the UK, was the subject of comment. Student feedback from the various focus groups commended the broad and diverse nature of the subjects and considered that the inter-disciplinary nature of the subjects complemented and informed their study of other subjects on the curriculum.

Equally, some trends were evident in more critical perspectives on the current arrangements, which should also be considered in the development process. **The lack of change** over several decades was highlighted. It was noted that *'in order to keep teachers' subject knowledge fresh and pedagogies innovative, the syllabus must offer regular scope for change.'* Another respondent said that *'the emphasis on aspects such as scansion and composition shows the age of the current syllabi.'*

**The narrow range of the prescribed texts** was raised, which excludes many important authors. It was suggested that the history aspect of the course was overly time-consuming, and that this factor, combined with the inclusion of art and architecture as separate topics, inevitably reduced the scope for studying texts. While the breadth of the course was often noted as a strength, it also drew negative commentary, with some criticism of the inclusion of substantial history, art and architecture components on the grounds that other languages do not feature such elements and that the study of Latin in the UK, for example, does not entail the study of history as well.

It was further suggested that not enough time was available for the literary appreciation and contextualising of texts, and for using texts as a means of critically exploring aspects of contemporary culture, as well as the world represented in the texts. Some respondents advocated for the study of the language and its texts as a prism through which the modern world could be viewed, others for allowing a wider choice of texts and trusting teachers' professional judgement to make choices about text selection. A feature of student feedback across all aspects of the course, including literature, history, art and architecture, was that

they would welcome an increased emphasis on analysis and critical enquiry to balance what might be termed 'rote learning' features of the course.

**The perceived difficulty level of the courses** was noted, with some commentary pointing to the high level of language competence which students are expected to attain, deemed '*quite unfair and in many cases unrealistic*' compared to the level expected in the study of modern foreign languages. It was noted by a Latin teacher that '*only the very top and brightest students can expect to grasp the complexities and subtleties of grammar and syntax*' needed to tackle the writings of important authors. Greater integration of the study of language with other parts of the relevant course, such as history, art and architecture, was proposed in much feedback, not least by students, as a way of making the subjects more coherent and accessible.

**Comments about assessment arrangements and the examination paper echo reflections on the nature of the syllabi.** For instance, those respondents who did not favour excessive treatment of such non-language components as art and architecture in the syllabi pointed to the inclusion of these sections in the examination paper, noting that the enormous time spent on such sections in the classroom is not reflected in the allocation of marks in the paper. One third level researcher/lecturer was critical of what was termed as the '*pointless insertion of sections on history, literary history and art at the end of the exam paper*' and indicated the need for improved integration of the languages with their cultural context. This point is echoed by another third level researcher who queried if too much is asked of students and noted that in other jurisdictions, students are awarded two qualifications for demonstrating competence in both a language and in history.

**The level of difficulty in questions** was also the subject of comment. It was suggested that, while the high marks and high uptake of Higher Level in Latin might be indicative of the commitment of students and teachers, it also raised the question of whether the syllabi are attainable only for those students who can achieve high grades. This perspective is evident in the observation of a respondent who suggested that '*higher grades in the aspects that can be learned by rote suggest some issues with emphasis on reproducing rather than understanding.*' Similar concerns were expressed about the prose compositions being frequently at a level

beyond what might be expected of Leaving Certificate students, while it was also observed that the exam allowed students to present translations which they have memorised without much understanding of the Latin/Greek texts.

**The lack of differentiation** was identified as a concern with the syllabi and examinations. It was noted that students studying the subjects at Ordinary level effectively have to cover the same content as students at Higher level, resulting in very few students taking the Ordinary Level paper. One response highlighted that *'the lack of differentiation and scaffolding is outdated and problematic. The lack of significant difference between Higher and Ordinary Level is especially stark and unwarranted'* (CAI-T). It is noted, however, that the numbers of students taking the subjects at Ordinary Level are, by any standards, markedly small.

Adjustments to the examination paper, over the past fifty years have been minimal and technical in nature. In Latin, set texts were reduced from two to one in 1968 and a comprehension passage was introduced as an alternative to compulsory prose composition in 1989. In 2009, the number of unseen passages to be translated by candidates in Latin and Ancient Greek was reduced from three to two. The 1989 and 2009 amendments were noted positively in responses, with the approach to unseen translations also praised by some respondents in terms of the appropriate pitch and scaffolding provided to students.

However, concern was expressed about whether the heavy **emphasis on translation** in the examinations adequately recognised and affirmed the skills and abilities acquired by students in the course of their study. It was suggested to explore a more diverse range of question formats and make greater use of visual stimuli to support student engagement with questions (CAI-T).

On the other hand, student feedback highlighted **the absence of an oral or aural component** as a positive feature of examination arrangements. Current students also saw the single paper as a welcome aspect of assessment arrangements. Among respondents in all categories, there is a strong feeling that oral components are not appropriate in the assessment of the classical languages, both because they are no longer 'living' languages and because many of the texts

students encounter are in literary forms of Latin and Ancient Greek that are far removed from the spoken languages.

## **2.2 International perspectives on Classical Languages in the curriculum**

The background paper sets out some international perspectives on provision for Classical Languages in the curriculum. It draws attention to various themes that are evident in curricular provision for Classical Languages in various jurisdictions. These include:

- Opportunities to study classical literature
- The acquisition of key language competencies, including reading, writing and oral communication
- Skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable students to understand the cultures of the Ancient Greeks and Romans
- The promotion of intercultural education, allowing students to compare the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome with each other, and with their own culture
- Enabling students to understand the impact of the Classical world on the modern world
- Increased autonomy and flexibility in teaching and learning.

Overall, there was agreement that the new courses should attend to these themes in their design. There was strong agreement, as indicated earlier in this report, that the study of texts should be integral to the design of the new courses. There was also strong agreement about the importance of opportunities for students to develop skills and knowledge to enable them to understand the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome. It was also generally accepted that the study of the languages should provide opportunities for students to think about the impact of the classical world on the contemporary world.

In relation to the acquisition of key competencies, it was considered appropriate that students acquire competency in reading, but reservations were expressed about the need to develop significant competency in writing, speaking and listening, since Latin and Ancient Greek are no longer living languages which are used for day-to-day communication. The value of the languages for cultural and intercultural learning was generally agreed on. In relation to increased autonomy and flexibility in teaching and learning, it was acknowledged that these features would be supported by the use of learning outcomes in the development of the new specifications, in common with all other newly developed senior cycle specifications.

## 2.3 National curriculum and assessment developments

The consultation invited respondents to comment on how aspects of recent developments in the curriculum at national level might be considered in the design of new courses for Ancient Greek and Latin.

**The implementation of the Junior Cycle Classics specification** was considered in this context. This course will be examined for the first time at the end of the 2021/22 academic year. In this course, there are three strands of study, one of which is a core strand that all students take. This strand examines the themes of *Myth and Daily Life* in Ancient Greece and/or Rome. Students then choose from two strands. One is a language strand, where students study either Ancient Greek or Latin. The other is a 'classical studies' strand in which students study Greek and Roman sources in translation. It is intended that 100 hours of classroom time be devoted to each strand. Therefore, it should be noted that the study of a language is not a compulsory component of the new Junior Cycle Classics course; neither is it possible under these new arrangements for students to study both Ancient Greek and Latin at junior cycle level. It is further noted that where students do opt to take a language, the 100 hours allocated differs from the 200-hour allocation that was accorded to the study of the language when it was a full subject under the Junior Certificate.

Respondents to the consultation noted the need for new Leaving Certificate courses to be accessible for students of Junior Cycle Classics. It was noted by one respondent that the junior cycle specification provides a useful model for the integration of culture and language that is desirable at leaving certificate level. It was further noted that the pitch of the new courses should take cognisance of the junior cycle course, and that there should be alignment or links between the learning outcomes and areas of study of the courses. It was noted that the integration of a classical language with wider themes in the Junior Cycle Classics specification was a valuable model for the Leaving Certificate specification to adapt, with a teacher commenting that *'students' understanding of the languages as an aspect of a broader topic makes [the language] far less alien and unattainable while enhancing learning experience and interaction with the subject.'*

It was suggested that the *'structures laid out in Junior Cycle Classics should be assumed'* and that *'the new Leaving Certificate Greek and Latin courses could then meaningfully build on this strand 3 foundation'* (CAI-T). The Junior Cycle specification's dual focus of reading narratives/exploring representations and analysing structures, patterns and ideologies could be reflected in new Leaving Certificate Latin and Greek courses while *'the reflective learning encouraged by CBA2 (the Language Portfolio) should be retained as a skill and honed throughout senior cycle'* (CAI-T).

The notion of **connection and alignment** between junior and senior cycle experiences was raised in the consultation. There was support for the idea of making the courses accessible at an *ab initio* level to students who cannot or do not choose the language strand at junior cycle level. It was suggested by a teacher that such a move *'would entice more students to take the subjects'* and that *'anything which brings the study of Latin to a wider range of pupils at whatever level is a good thing.'* A third level teacher noted that *'this would be a very good idea... At third level, students often come to the languages at post-graduate level, with three/four years of Classics acting as a gateway to the languages. A similar opportunity in senior cycle could potentially increase uptake in the languages.'* A teacher stated that *'this is an essential and inevitable decision. If the new courses are pitched in such a way that the language strand of Junior Cycle Classics is a prerequisite, the uptake will be very small, and it is very hard to see how these*

*subjects can be taught in a larger number of schools and put on a firmer footing within the curriculum.'*

Some concerns were also expressed about making the new courses available on an *ab initio* basis, without students requiring a foundation in a language at junior cycle level. In an argument against *ab initio* teaching to increase student uptake, it was suggested that '*balanced, fair and achievable Leaving Certificate syllabi will increase numbers*' (CAI-T). A Latin teacher opined that in considering what level or pitch would be ultimately framed, '*it would be a loss for the Classical languages in Ireland if Leaving Certificate Latin or Ancient Greek students were not able to access, understand and enjoy unadopted passages of Latin or Greek literature*'. Another teacher, who accepted the merits of increasing accessibility that *ab initio* status could offer, warned that '*the study should remain robust and challenging and not be reduced 'ad absurdum*".

There was significant support **for the inclusion of a pre-submitted or second assessment component** in any new examination arrangements for the new specifications. It was noted that this was a feature of recently developed senior cycle courses such as Politics and Society, Economics and Classical Studies. Many students noted that such a feature was present in other subjects that they are taking for Leaving Certificate and that the experience was generally positive. These students, representing a majority view, cited the advantages of having less pressure in a terminal examination while also having the opportunity to secure a good grade in a part of the overall assessment in advance of the terminal paper. Some others liked the idea that the single examination was the only assessment mode that they needed to perform well in.

While there were some suggestions around students reading aloud a passage in Ancient Greek or Latin, or suitable poems in the languages, the overall thrust of feedback elicited in the consultation was that oral components were not appropriate. A language portfolio similar to that which junior cycle students are required to maintain was suggested. Its proposed merits were that '*it would both create continuity between the junior cycle and senior cycle offerings and prevent, to some extent, the excessive privileging of those who are strong in*

*traditional assessment formats'* (teacher). Similarly, another respondent suggested that an appropriate assessment component would be *'a substantial portfolio of work accumulated over two years, including work based on engagement with original texts, literature, cultural and historical background. This takes pressure off the final examination, where the focus can be more on language skills'* (teacher).

Another trend in suggestions for the second assessment component was that students complete a project or specialised study on an aspect of the course that is currently assessed in the terminal examination. This proposal was popular among second level students. It was suggested that a research project could focus on an aspect of history, art or architecture. This would have the added advantage of allowing more time in the terminal examination to test language proficiency. Student respondents also observed that such a model might allow students to choose themes in history, art, architecture or philosophy, for example, in which they had a genuine interest and which they would therefore be more motivated to explore and engage with in a productive way.

This suggestion might be explored in the context of the feedback from some students on their experience of studying history in the context of a classical language course. This feedback suggests that the history component often revolves around rote learning or recall, with very little scope for critical interrogation of historical events, actors and circumstances. It is suggested that more meaningful engagement with the language or literary context of historical themes could be facilitated through a project or special research study.

The background paper acknowledged **the framework approach to the development of Modern Foreign Languages** in the curriculum, whereby the designation of strands and learning outcomes in each language specification is very closely aligned. This is the case for the Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese specifications, while the Mandarin Chinese specification adapts the same learning outcomes to fit the specific challenges which this language poses to learners. Learning outcomes in the specifications are organised in two strands, one dealing with 'Communicative language competence' and the other with 'Plurilingual and pluricultural competence.'



Respondents to the consultation were invited to offer views on whether, and to what extent, the new Ancient Greek and Latin specifications might align with these structures. There were different views in this regard. One view is summed up in the following quotation from a teacher, who responded:

*'The clarity offered by a framework approach to align Latin and Ancient Greek would be welcomed. While both offerings seem well aligned at junior cycle level, expectations diverge at senior cycle level... Greater clarity and greater alignment with other languages could potentially increase uptake and present the languages as more attainable for students whose schools might not traditionally push the classical languages to the same extent as modern languages.'*

The idea that alignment with a framework would confirm the status of Classical Languages as on a par with other languages is one that appeals to some respondents, with one teacher suggesting that such an approach would make the subjects 'competitive alternatives' to modern languages (Classical Studies teacher). A third level lecturer observed that:

*'Ancient Greek and Latin were living languages and there is no reason why they should be treated differently. If students develop an awareness on the communicative powers of Latin and Greek on many levels and are encouraged to make connections with their experience in learning modern languages, that can only be a good thing.'*

A different perspective was offered by other respondents. One respondent questioned the validity of comparing classical languages with modern foreign languages, pointing out that Latin and Ancient Greek are not living, spoken languages and that *'to align Ancient Languages with modern ones is to miss the point of the study of these languages'* (Latin teacher). It is evident that some of the concern about the framework approach relates to the designation of the language competence strand in these specifications as 'communicative', which respondents consider to be inappropriate for Classical Languages. The following quotation from a third level lecturer/researcher is an appropriate summation of the general thrust of the feedback on this issue:

*'The course structure and learning outcomes for the classical languages should show a relationship to the new language specifications but it should be taken into account that Latin and Ancient Greek are heritage languages rather than living languages. This implies that cultural/historical/heritage/literature aspects need to receive serious emphasis and communicative aspects such as listening and speaking, which are central to the new framework based modern language specifications, need to be backgrounded.'*

## 2.4 Other points for consideration

The consultation process allowed respondents to draw attention to other matters or concerns raised by the background paper. This section of the report draws attention to such matters, particularly with reference to what might support the successful implementation of the new specifications.

One point that emerged from the consultation that was considered critical in the overall context of the subjects was that of **teacher supply, or the availability of qualified teachers**. It was noted that designing new courses would only serve to make the subjects more sustainable if enough trained teachers were available to schools. One respondent commented that *'training teachers of Latin and Ancient Greek is a matter of life and death. There is no point in developing new specifications if there are no teachers to teach them'*. Another comment pointed to the urgency of *'expanding provision of teacher training for Classics in Ireland. If the subject is to grow (which it must if it is to survive), this needs to become a priority.'* Both second level and third level teachers voiced these concerns.

On a related topic, it was observed that the new specifications provided a crucial opportunity to **widen the appeal of the subjects across a broader range of school types** and ensure their viability in the future. One respondent noted that *'without broader access it is hard to see a future for the classical languages in the Irish curriculum.'* A third level teacher noted that *'the number of students sitting these qualifications speak for themselves. Urgent action is required.'*

The idea of enhancing the appeal and relevance for students was also raised in terms of the **values and dispositions** that respondents said they would like to see developed in students who will study the new courses. These included *'an appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity'* and a capacity *'to appreciate the value of using their linguistic repertoire to better understand the cultural and social dimensions of the societies and cultures in which the target language was spoken'* (third level lecturer). The accommodation of these ideals might be considered in a rationale for the subjects.

Other points raised that may relate to the rationale included the need to inculcate in students *'an awareness of how languages, in general, work and relate to each other'* (teacher). It was notable that student responses, at both second level and third level, indicated a strong awareness of how the study of the languages enriched and enhanced students' appreciation of other languages, including not just modern foreign languages but also English and Irish. A Classical Studies teacher reflected on how the study of the languages allows students to *'increase their awareness of the influences of Greek and Roman language, grammar, vocabulary, and civilisation'* in the shaping of the modern world.

Finally, teachers and students (from both second and third level) stressed the importance of students deriving enjoyment from studying and learning ancient languages. A respondent noted the importance of students *'enjoying a language learning experience that will intrinsically motivate them to continue learning languages in the future'* (teacher), while another spoke of the need for students to be *'inspired with a love and interest'* (Latin teacher) in Latin and Ancient Greek. It was noted that articulating a rationale for each specification was important to allow students and teachers to appreciate the distinctive importance of each language, and why they should be studied; and to emphasise the need to promote and preserve them into the future. Where students in focus groups took the subjects at Junior Certificate level but opted not to study them at Leaving Certificate level, it was noted that some expressed regret at missing out on a cultural, intellectual and aesthetic experience which they clearly valued. Generally, considerations about third level course requirements and career options dictated subject selection at Leaving Certificate level.

---

## 3. Conclusion

Overall, the consultation generated much useful and thoughtful feedback from various perspectives. It was especially heartening to witness the articulate and at times passionate contributions from students in focus groups, who gave of their free time to take part in the consultation. Their unique perspective as students who have experienced, or are currently experiencing, the existing curriculum and assessment arrangements adds an important dimension to deliberations about the future shape of the subjects. Gratitude is extended to them and to their teachers and school leaders who kindly facilitated the conversations despite the difficulties inherent in organising such events due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

NCCA is also grateful to third level members of the development group who arranged for their students to have a voice in the process, and to all who gave of their time to complete the online survey. While the numbers of respondents may objectively appear to be small, the context wherein the subjects are currently placed should be considered; equally, the quantity of the response is counterbalanced by the quality of the observations made and it is interesting to see some diversity in the opinions expressed.

This report has attempted to present the range of views and perspectives on the issue raised in the consultation process. The thoughtful and considered opinions and suggestions offered indicate the extent to which these subjects are valued and regarded by participants in the consultation process. It is hoped that this report will provide direction and guidance to the development group charged with progressing work on the new specifications for Leaving Certificate Ancient Greek and Latin.