



NCCA

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

Junior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes

Early enactment review

Tender Specification

Submission deadline: 14 January 2022

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Background information.....	3
3. Requirements and specifications of the early enactment review.....	4
4. Relevant persons the proposal is dependent on	6
5. Data Management	7
6. Indicative timeline and milestones.....	8
7. Outputs.....	8
8. Scoring criteria	9
9. Pricing.....	9
10. Tax clearance.....	10
11. Submission.....	10
12. Working with the NCCA.....	11
13. Information and query handling	11
14. Contract.....	11
15. Publication of research conducted for the NCCA.....	11
16. Supplementary information	12

1. Introduction

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) advises the Minister for Education on curriculum and assessment for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools. Full details of the organisation and its remit can be found on www.ncca.ie. NCCA is currently seeking proposals from suitably qualified and experienced individual/s, to undertake a review of the early enactment of the Junior Cycle Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LP) and Junior Cycle Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP) on behalf of the NCCA in the form of a mixed methods study. Further information on the Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes can be found on <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Home/>.

2. Background information

In line with the Framework for Junior Cycle (DE, 2015), new specifications for all junior cycle subjects were introduced on a phased basis from 2014 to 2019. In September 2014, as part of the introduction of the Framework, Level 2 Learning Programmes were introduced at junior cycle for the first time with the first cohort of students taking L2LPs in 2015. Level 1 Learning Programmes were introduced later in 2017 with the first cohort of students taking L1LPs in 2018.

Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LP) target the very specific group of students with general learning disabilities in the range of lower functioning moderate to severe and profound categories. Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LP) target the very specific group of students with general learning disabilities in the higher functioning moderate and low functioning mild categories.

One full cycle of the L1LP has now been experienced and three cohorts of students have engaged with L2LP at junior cycle. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, revised arrangements for the assessment and reporting of Level 1 Learning Programmes (L1LPs) and Level 2 Learning Programmes (L2LPs) for the cohort of students 2018 – 2021 (students in 3rd Year in 2020/2021) were implemented in June 2021.

NCCA has conducted a number of early enactment reviews of junior cycle subject specifications. These interim reviews were conducted after a subject specification was experienced across the three-year span of its Junior Cycle. This review of junior cycle subject specifications, which are broadly aligned to Level 3 on the NFQ, is guided by a general *Brief for Monitoring and Review of Junior Cycle Subjects* that can be accessed [here](#). The results of each review are published in report form and presented to the NCCA Board for Junior Cycle for consideration.

3. Requirements and specifications of the early enactment review

SCHOOL SAMPLE

The schools which will form part of the sample will include:

- Those supporting students following the Level 2 Learning Programme in mainstream classes in mainstream schools
- Those supporting students following the Level 2 Learning Programme in special classes in mainstream schools
- Those supporting students following the Level 1 Learning Programme and Level 2 Learning Programme in special schools.

METHODOLOGY AND OUTPUT

The purpose of the review is to capture feedback from teachers, students, parents and stakeholders on the early enactment of the Level 1 Learning Programme and the Level 2 Learning Programme.

The successful proposal will be required to demonstrate its approach to conducting the mixed methods study that will gather data from teachers, students, parents and stakeholders through:

- focus groups with teachers across a range of schools and settings
- student voice workshops with students across a range of cohorts
- parent voice workshops with parents across a range of cohorts

- online surveys
- written submissions from stakeholders and others
- reports from stakeholders such as Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) support service, the Department of Education Inspectorate and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE) who are involved in supporting implementation of the Learning Programmes. (for more please see supplementary information: **Suggested Feedback Reports**)

This research will place significant emphasis on experiences and attitudes towards transitions - transitions from primary to post-primary and from junior to senior cycle.

The successful party will be required to produce a final report summarising the key findings from the study. The report will provide clear feedback on areas within the Learning Programmes that require further consideration, clarification and/or support. It will also serve to inform and support the discussions around ongoing development work for students following Level 1 and Level 2 at junior cycle.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This early enactment review seeks to explore, evaluate and analyse the following:

1.	The criteria and process schools use to identify students whose needs would be better served by the Level 1 Learning Programme and Level 2 Learning Programme
2.	How well the Guidelines for Teachers, get to the heart of the learning aspired to within the Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes and more broadly within the Framework for Junior Cycle
3.	The assessment elements within the Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes, as experienced by students and teachers

4.	The ways teachers are exercising their professional judgement to mediate the Learning Programmes in their schools and classrooms
5.	Perspectives and experiences on the transition from junior cycle to senior cycle for this cohort of students.

PROPOSED SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

In particular, the following areas are of interest to NCCA:

- The appropriateness of the Priority Learning Units (PLUs) for these cohorts of students
- Perspectives on the transition from junior to senior cycle for these cohorts of students
- Learning outcomes within the PLUs
- Planning and task design for teaching, learning and assessment
- Gathering evidence for assessment, Classroom-Based Assessments (CBA) and deciding the level of achievement
- Reporting on student achievement.

The list of data sources will be developed in consultation with NCCA before the review begins. Information will come from publicly available official national sources (for more please see supplementary information: **Suggested Data Sources**).

4. Relevant persons the proposal is dependent on

Where a proposal is submitted on behalf of an organisation, an institute, a consortium of individuals, etc, all persons involved under the proposal will need to be named. Similarly, where any proposal enlists the support of any third party, they too will need to be named under the proposal. All relevant persons need to declare any potential conflict of interest that may exist to NCCA.

The scoring criteria will look at the relevant experience, expertise and competence of applicants to conduct the review, submitted proposals will be required to submit Curriculum Vitae for all persons involved.

5. Data Management

DATA PROTECTION

For the purpose of the early enactment review of L1LP and L2LP, the NCCA will be the data controller and the successful party will be the data processor. The successful party shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Data Protection Laws. Further to this, the successful party will:

- only process that Personal Data within the scope of this study.
- ensure that it has in place appropriate technical and organisational measures, reviewed and approved by the NCCA, to protect against unauthorised or unlawful processing of Personal Data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, Personal Data, appropriate to the harm that might result from the unauthorised or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage and the nature of the data to be protected, having regard to the state of technological development and the cost of implementing any measures (those measures may include, where appropriate, pseudonymising and encrypting Personal Data, ensuring confidentiality, integrity, availability and resilience of its systems and services, ensuring that availability of and access to Personal Data can be restored in a timely manner after an incident, and regularly assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of the technical and organisational measures adopted by it).
- ensure that all personnel who have access to and/or process Personal Data are obliged to keep the Personal Data confidential.
- not transfer any Personal Data outside of the European Economic Area unless the prior written consent of the NCCA is sought.
- promptly notify the NCCA if it receives a Data Subject Access Request to have access to any Personal Data or any other complaint, correspondence, notice, request any order of the Court or request of any regulatory or government body relating to the NCCA's obligations under the Data Protection Laws and provide full co-operation and assistance to the NCCA in relation to any such complaint, order or request (including, without limitation, by allowing Data Subjects to have access to their data).

OPEN DATA

NCCA, as a public body operating under the Open Data and Public Service Information Directive (2021), is required to publish publicly funded research. This will be discussed further when issuing the contract to the successful party.

6. Indicative timeline and milestones

Issue tender: 6 December 2021

- Final date for clarifications: 8 January 2022 at 12pm
- Responses submission deadline: 14 January 2022 at 5pm
- Evaluation: Week commencing 17 January 2022
- Expected awarding date: Week commencing 17 January 2022
- Presentation and draft report: To be agreed with the successful bidder
- Research paper final draft due: 26 April at 5pm
- Expected final sign off: 13 May 2022

Researchers may be asked to present their findings to the NCCA or to a nominated subcommittees on agreed dates as part of the research contract.

7. Outputs

The report will be provided in English using plain, clear and accessible language and in will be in MS Word format.

8. Scoring criteria

Applications will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria.

Criteria	Marks
Relevant experience, expertise and competence of applicants to conduct the review	400
Demonstrated an understanding of, and responded to, the requirements of the tender specification	250
Overall quality of the proposal	150
Price	200
Total	1000

9. Pricing

Proposals must provide a full breakdown of all respective costs associated with the approach. All costs must be quoted in Euro currency denominations (€), exclusive of VAT in the first instance and net of any discounts which the tenderer is offering. The applicable rate of VAT and any other taxes or duties which would be incurred should be itemised separately.

The breakdown of the total cost should provide information such as the number of days, daily rates being charged in respect of each individual to be involved in the project etc.

The budget (inclusive of all expenses, additional costs, taxes or duties incurred) should not exceed €20,000.

NCCA is not bound to accept the lowest tender. It reserves the right to reject in whole or in part any or all tenders received. NCCA will not be liable in respect of any costs incurred in the preparation of tenders.

10. Tax clearance

Prior to the award of any contract the successful applicant shall be required to produce a Tax Clearance Certificate from the Irish Revenue Commissioners. Alternatively, the applicant may supply the certificate and registration numbers, as they appear on the Tax Clearance Certificate, to facilitate online verification of their tax status by the NCCA. Please note the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997 provides for a withholding tax (PSWT) to be deducted from payments made by certain bodies in respect of professional services. This tax, which is at a rate of 20%, will be deducted from payments made to the Tenderer in respect of services undertaken. This tax is refundable, on application, to the Revenue Commissioners in the local tax district of the successful Tenderer

11. Submission

A project proposal and plan should be submitted by 5pm on 14th January 2022 and should include:

- a description of the proposed approach to address the methodology and outputs, key research questions, and the proposed scope of the research to include how all relevant stakeholders will be consulted with; sample of schools from L1LP and L2LP contexts.
- clear objectives, actions, outputs and timeframes for delivery
- an outline of potential risks and challenges and how these will be addressed

- a description of the applicant's experience and competence to deliver this research and report
- pricing schedule.

12. Working with the NCCA

While all research work conducted for the NCCA falls under the responsibility of the Chief Executive, a designated contact person will be appointed on the award of the contract. This contact person will provide the researcher(s) with all relevant information in support of the work.

13. Information and query handling

Every effort has been made to ensure that this document contains all the necessary information for tender applications. However, in the interests of equity, requests for additional information, clarification on the content of this document and all other queries of substance should be submitted through the etender system by 12 pm on 8th January 2022.

14. Contract

A contract for the work will be awarded to the successful applicant following the evaluation of the tenders.

15. Publication of research conducted for the NCCA

The final product of the study is the property of the NCCA. However, the publication of funded research, whether in journals, book chapters or conference presentations is encouraged. In such cases the Council asks that it be notified, that its funding of the study be

acknowledged in the publication or presentation and that no such dissemination by the researchers be undertaken until 6 months after the submission of the final report. This is to allow for the implications of the research to be considered by Council in its role on advising the Minister for Education

16. Supplementary information

SUGGESTED DATA SOURCES

The following is an initial list of suggested data sources for this research activity:

- Level 1 Learning Programmes Guidelines for Teachers
- Level 2 Learning Programmes Guidelines for Teachers
- Level 1 Learning Programmes: Background Paper
- Report on the consultation of the Background Paper for Level 1 Learning Programmes

SUGGESTED FEEDBACK REPORTS

Written feedback reports should be sought from those supporting implementation of Junior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes

- Department of Education Inspectorate (DE Inspectorate)
- Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT)
- National Council for Special Education (NCSE)
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE)
- Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland
- Teachers' Union of Ireland

COMMITMENT TO THE INDICATIVE TIMELINE AND MILESTONES

NCCA respects the right of the bidder to participate in other work. A condition of the awarding of this tender is a commitment by the successful party to work towards the indicative timeline and milestones set out in this specification.

RELEVANT NCCA DOCUMENTS

- [NCCA Research Strategy 2019-2021](#)
- [NCCA Data Protection Policy](#)