



NCCA

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

Press Release for Senior Cycle Review Advisory Report

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is delighted to publish its *Senior Cycle Review Advisory Report* today following the response from the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD. The Report by the NCCA records and responds to the views of stakeholders gathered during the four-year review about how Senior Cycle could evolve to meet the needs of our young people. It provides strong foundations for the phased redevelopment of Senior Cycle in the coming years. The NCCA will continue to work closely with schools and stakeholders throughout this process, with the objective of making the renewed vision for Senior Cycle, presented in the Advisory Report, a reality.

Minister Foley said: *“I warmly welcome the NCCA’s Advisory Report and thank the members of the Council for their extensive work on Senior Cycle Review in recent years. The plan I have set out today for Senior Cycle reform is informed hugely by the work of this review and this advisory report.”*

The Advisory Report which informed the Minister’s plan announced today, sets out a renewed purpose, vision and guiding principles for a redeveloped Senior Cycle, allowing for flexibility and continued evolution. It provides a solid base from which to shape a dynamic curriculum that genuinely meets the needs of all learners in the ever-changing global education environment.

The Advisory Report identifies key recommendations for change which will be crucial to realising the vision for a redeveloped Senior Cycle. These include:

- Providing more flexible pathways through Senior Cycle for all students.
 - A greater mix of subjects and modules, including technical, creative, and vocational options.
- Broader assessment and reporting arrangements.

Professor Mary O’Sullivan, NCCA Chairperson, commenting on the Advisory Report, said:

“The Senior Cycle Review has highlighted what works and what could be better in our current Senior Cycle. It has made us more aware of the need for greater flexibility, such as that shown across education in responding to the Covid-19 crisis. Students in the Senior Cycle want to make choices which respond to their needs and interests. Building on what works, NCCA’s plan for the

redevelopment of Senior Cycle will embrace the full spectrum of technical, vocational, professional, personal, creative and academic learning. All students matter, their immediate needs matter and the diverse futures they aspire to beyond school matter. This report is so important, as are conditions conducive to the curriculum changes that lie ahead. I encourage everyone to read it in full and to consider the possibilities it holds for our young people as they experience this crucial phase of their education”.

The Advisory Report emerges directly from NCCA's extensive Senior Cycle Review (2016 – 2020), which gathered and distilled the views of teachers, students, school leaders, parents, education partners, researchers and wider civil society about what they would like to conserve from the existing Senior Cycle and what they would like to change. The review process included international research, work with schools, regional seminars and a wide-ranging public consultation. NCCA established links with stakeholders, curriculum developers and education policy experts in Ireland, Wales, Netherlands and the OECD.

Arlene Forster, Chief Executive of NCCA, in marking the publication of this report, emphasised the Council's continued commitment to clear communication and work with schools: *“A letter and bulletin summarising the Advisory Report will be issued to all schools, with links to digital versions of the bulletin and the report itself. Many of the proposals for change came directly from schools and we'll continue to work directly with schools as we develop a Framework for Senior Cycle incrementally. Only schools can breathe life into these changes and ensure that we keep students' needs at the heart of Senior Cycle redevelopment”.*

The newly-appointed Council looks forward to meeting next week and to discussing the Minister's plan as it begins to prepare a programme of work grounded in the Advisory Report and today's announcement by Minister Foley.

Notes to Editors

The Advisory Report and a bulletin summarising the report are available online at

www.ncca.ie/redevelopingsc

Social media:

Twitter: @ncca.ie

Facebook: @nccaireland

Instagram: [ncca_irl](#)

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Contacts

Please direct media queries about the NCCA's *Senior Cycle Review Advisory Report* to Eoghan Ó Neachtain

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Publications and Reports

[Upper Secondary Education in Nine Jurisdictions Overview Report](#) (NCCA, 2018)

[Student, Teacher and Parent perspectives on senior cycle education](#) (ESRI, 2019)

[National Seminar series feedback summary](#) (NCCA, 2019)

[Interim report of review of senior cycle education](#) (NCCA, 2019)

[Senior Cycle Review: Consultation Document](#) (NCCA, 2019)

[Senior Cycle Review: Consultation Report](#) (NCCA, 2019)

[Ireland Senior Cycle Review: An OECD assessment](#) (OECD, 2020)

[Senior Cycle Review Advisory Report](#) (NCCA 2021)