

JUNIOR CYCLE CAMPAIGN SUCCESS - TUI RECOMMENDS ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS

Frequently Asked Questions Version 1 (4/9/15) – this document will be expanded to answer more questions in the coming days

SECTION 1: BALLOT AND RECOMMENDATION

Why are you being balloted?

You, as a TUI member with an involvement in Junior Cycle, are being balloted on the acceptability or otherwise of the negotiated document *Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* (including the appendix *Professional Time to Support Implementation*).

You are also being asked if you agree to continue industrial action up to and including strike action as directed by the Executive Committee in the event of the negotiated document not being accepted by members.

The full document has issued to all members in hard copy and can also be downloaded from the TUI website.

What are you being balloted on?

You will receive two ballot papers. The questions you will be asked on the ballot papers are as follows:

Ballot No. 1: Do you accept the negotiated document entitled ‘Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation’ (including the appendix ‘Professional Time to Support Implementation’) as a basis for commencing implementation of the revised Junior Cycle?

Ballot No. 2: In the event that the negotiated document entitled ‘Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation’ (including the appendix ‘Professional Time to Support Implementation’) is not accepted by members, do you agree to continue industrial action up to and including strike action, as directed by the TUI Executive Committee?

What is the TUI Executive Committee recommending?

Ballot No.1: The union’s Executive Committee recommends that you **VOTE “YES”** to accept the negotiated document.

Ballot No.2: The union’s Executive Committee also recommends that you **VOTE “YES”** to agree to continue industrial action up to and including strike action, in the event of the negotiated document not being accepted. Irrespective of your vote on the acceptability or otherwise of the proposals, it is vital that you vote **“YES”** for continuation of industrial action up to and including strike action in the event that the negotiated document is not accepted.

Why is the Executive Committee recommending acceptance of *Junior Cycle Reform – Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation* (including the appendix *Professional Time to Support Implementation*)?

The union believes that these proposals meet and allay the deep concerns expressed by teachers in terms both of assessment of students and the resources - most importantly, time - required by schools and teachers to implement the proposed new Junior Cycle programme.

When will ballot papers issue?

Ballot papers will be posted from TUI Head Office to all workplaces offering Junior Cycle on Wednesday, 9th September 2015.

When must ballot papers be returned by?

Completed ballot papers must be returned, in the envelopes provided, to the union's auditors, Deloitte, by 5.00pm on Wednesday, 23rd September 2015. (*To ensure that completed ballots reach Deloitte by the closing date, they should be posted by Monday, 21st September 2015 at the latest.*)

SECTION 2: WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BY INDUSTRIAL ACTION AND NEGOTIATION?

Will the new Junior Cycle be state certified?

State Certification was abolished by Ministerial decision in October 2012.

As a result of industrial action and negotiations, State Certification has now been restored and the results of State Examinations for Junior Cycle will be provided to students in the normal way each September.

In a separate and distinct exercise, a school report – to be called the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) - will be provided to each student before the Christmas following completion of the Junior Cycle. The JCPA will report on the student's progress over the 3 years of the Junior Cycle. The JCPA is not a state certificate.

Will the new Junior Cycle be externally assessed?

In 2011 the original NCCA *Towards A Framework for Junior Cycle* document proposed that teachers would award 40% of each subject's marks for State Certification.

In October 2012, Minister Quinn proposed that all assessment (written, practical and oral) would be carried out in school by teachers.

Now, the terminal, summative state examinations for Junior Cycle will continue to be externally set, conducted and assessed by the State Examinations Commission State (SEC). An Assessment Task (AT) to be undertaken by students in the classroom, within class time, in third year will also be externally assessed by the SEC. The marks of the terminal examination and the Assessment task will be combined by the SEC to produce the student's grade for the purpose of the State Certificate. There is no school-based or classroom-based assessment for certification purposes. The previously mooted 60% /40% division between external and classroom-based assessment for certification purposes is now gone. Therefore, there will be no link between classroom-based assessment and State Certification.

Will there still be terminal examinations?

In 2012 The Junior Certificate terminal, summative Examinations were abolished by Ministerial decision.

Now, for the purposes of State certification, terminal, summative examinations, of no longer than two hours duration, will be set, held and marked by the SEC. The examinations will be held in the month of June in third year. The grade awarded and state certified (by the SEC) in a subject will be the product of the mark for the examination and the mark for the SEC marked Assessment Task.

The classroom-based assessment of students' achievements (including the Classroom Based Assessments - CBAs) will complement the terminal SEC-set and marked, state certified examination. However, the classroom based assessment is not state certified.

SECTION 3: TEACHER TIME AND WORKLOAD

Will extra demands be imposed on teachers in terms of time and workload?

Under the NCCA's original *Towards a Framework for Junior Cycle* proposals (2011), and also in the proposals advanced by Minister Quinn in 2012, extra demands would have been imposed on teachers' time and their workload would have increased. There was no provision in those proposals for additional resources (especially time) or enhanced teacher allocation.

Now, there will be no imposition of additional workload or time demands on teachers. On Wednesday, July 8th 2015 the Department of Education and Skills, the TUI and

ASTI signed off an *Appendix to Junior Cycle Reform: Joint Statement on Principles and Implementation*. This Appendix sets out the time and workload implications for teachers and describes how they will be addressed through the provision of additional, dedicated resources.

The appendix on time and workload implications:

- proposes **class periods of a minimum of 40-minutes duration** for all schools from the commencement of the 2017/18 school year.
- states that, **with effect from the school year 2017/18, the class contact time for all full-time teachers with any Junior Cycle classes will be reduced from 33 (40 minute) periods to 32 (40 minute) periods – i.e. a maximum class contact time each week of 21 hours and 20 minutes rather than 22 hours.** (This reduction in class contact time will generate 22 hours of professional time for each full time teacher each year – i.e. one 40 minute timetabled period per week of a 33 week school year.)
- provides for a **pro-rata reduction in class contact time for part-time teachers** from 2017/18. The position, agreed in the negotiations, in relation to the detailed pro-rata application of this professional time provision to teachers on less than full hours is set out in the table below. This relates to Paragraphs 9.5 and 9.6 of the Appendix.

A key provision of the negotiated document is that class periods will be of a minimum duration of 40 minutes. Timetables will have to be structured on this principle, as soon as practicable but, logically, no later than the 2017/18 school year. In the intervening period (2015/16 and 2016/17), it is envisaged that existing structures will be phased out where they include class periods of less than 40 minutes duration. Further to Paragraph 4.2 of the Appendix, the Minister has agreed to consult with stakeholders in the coming months with a view to issuing direction to all schools in relation to this.

The pro-rata allocation of professional time will, of necessity, be in tranches of 40 minutes. The total number of hours assigned to a teacher - which encompasses teaching time and other assigned management and co-ordination duties - is the quantum of hours upon which application of the above schedule in respect of professional time is based.

Professional Time – Pro-rata application

Hours in teacher's contract	Professional time p.a. - Class periods (x 40 min)	Professional Time: Total p.a.
11 hours or less	17	= 11 hours, 20 min
11h 1 min - 11h 29 min	17	= 11 hours, 20 min
11h 30 min - 11h 59 min	18	= 12 hours
12 hours - 12h 29 min	18	= 12 hours
12h 30 min - 12h 59 min	19	= 12 hours, 40 min
13 hours - 13h 29 min	20	= 13 hours, 20 min
13h 30 min - 13h 59 min	21	= 14 hours
14 hours - 14h 29 min	21	= 14 hours
14h 30 min - 14h 59 min	22	= 14 hours, 40 min
15 hours - 15h 29 min	23	= 15 hours, 20 min
15h 30 min - 15h 59 min	24	= 16 hours
16 hours - 16h 29 min	24	= 16 hours
16h 30 min - 16h 59 min	25	= 16 hours, 40 min
17 hours - 17h 59 min	26	= 17 hours, 20 min
18 hours or more	33	= 22 hours

- provides that, **in addition to the 22 hours (or its pro-rata equivalent) of professional time, a further two hours will be provided in respect of each Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting to facilitate the preparation for and co-ordination of that meeting.** One teacher of each Junior Cycle subject will be allocated these two additional hours by school management. To foster capacity building in each subject department, this activity and the associated two hours will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.
- provides that, in addition to the 22 hours professional time and the 2 hours for facilitating preparation and co-ordination of each Review meeting, **the whole-school administration of the Assessment Task (AT) - e.g. its**

transmission to the SEC - will be resourced through the allocation of additional hours and necessary resources to the school's management.

Therefore, the whole-school administration of the AT may not and will not be added to the workload of the classroom teacher or to the duties of a post of responsibility holder (e.g. examinations secretary)

- **identifies some key elements of usage of the 22 hours professional time (or its pro-rata equivalent) and , in this regard, specifies the quantum of time that will be required for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings that will be attended by subject teachers (see above).** These meetings are to support the structured Classroom-Based Assessments that students will undertake (one per subject in second year and one per subject in third year). Each meeting will take approximately two hours. For example, a teacher of two subjects to both second year and third year students will attend four review meetings, amounting to eight hours of (the 22 hours of) professional time.
- states that, in addition to facilitating professional collaboration, **teachers may also use professional time (within the 22 hours or its pro-rata equivalent) for individual planning, feedback or reporting activities relating to Junior Cycle.**
- recognises that, in advance of the general introduction of 22 timetabled professional hours in 2017/18 and the attendant reduction in maximum class contact time to 21 hours, 20 minutes per week, **professional time must be made available to teachers of English, Science and Business** and therefore
- **provides teachers of English with professional time in 2015/16 (10 hours) and 2016/17 (14 hours) and Science and Business teachers with professional time (8 hours) in 2016/17.** This professional time will be generated and funded by the allocation of additional paid substitution hours to schools in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years in order to phase in the timetable changes for English, Science and Business teachers. It should be noted that there is no connection between these additional paid substitution hours and the Supervision and Substitution (S&S) scheme and that the S&S scheme may not be used to generate professional hours.

- stipulates that, in accordance with Circular Letter 20/2014, a further 6 hours (over and above the 22 professional hours and the 2 hours for facilitating review meetings) is provided to facilitate whole-school professional activities to support the Junior Cycle during the phased period to June 2022. School management will facilitate this time provision through school closure. It is important to note that while the 6 hours provided under CL 20/2014 will be available only during the phasing-in period (i.e. to June 2022), the 22 hours of professional time and the 21 hours 20 minutes maximum for class contact and the other provisions set out above will be a continuing, integral element of a teacher's timetable.

SECTION 4: ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

What is a Classroom Based Assessment (CBA)?

Students will undertake two Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) per subject – one in second year and one in third year. A range/menu of CBAs for each subject will be set annually by the NCCA in consultation with the State Examinations Commission. The teacher will select the appropriate CBA for their students. Examples include projects, oral tasks, practical work, investigations etc. CBAs will be undertaken in a defined period of time within class contact time to a national table and will be reported on to parents using standard descriptors (i.e. not marks or grades). These will replace current assessments events in schools such as in-house exams.

What is a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR)?

All teachers of each subject in a school will engage in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meeting after each CBA. At this meeting, teachers will share and discuss students' work, and standards will be discussed.

A teacher will have one SLAR meeting for every subject and for every year group. For example, a teacher with two subjects for one year group will have two SLARs, while a teacher with two subjects for two year groups will have four SLARs. These meetings will take approximately two hours each, to be taken from the teacher's professional time.

One teacher will be given two additional hours to facilitate the preparation for and coordination of each SLAR.

What is an Assessment Task (AT)?

Following the second CBA (ie in third year), there will be a formal written Assessment Task (AT). This will be manageable and relatively short. It will be undertaken within class contact time and supervised by the teacher. It will not be marked or commented upon by the teacher and will be submitted to the SEC to be marked along with the terminal exam in each subject. Examples of ATs will include written demonstration of the knowledge and skills learned in the CBA, identification of learning points, identification of areas of improvement etc.

When will the terminal examinations take place?

The original NCCA proposals (2011) provided for end of year examinations in Third Year. With the exception of English, Irish and Maths exams (which were to continue to take place in June) these examinations were to take place in May while schools were open.

Now it is confirmed that the terminal examinations in all subjects for third years will continue to be run by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in the month of June.

Is there a maximum number of subjects that a student can take for state certification?

In 2011, the original NCCA proposals reduced the maximum number of subjects for state certification to 8.

Now, students will take a maximum of 10 subjects for State Certification and, in addition, a new area called “Well-being” to incorporate PE, SPHE (RSE) and CSPE. (There will be State Assessment of CSPE until and including the June 2018 examinations).

Therefore, the concern that so-called “minority subjects” would not be offered for certification purposes has been addressed.

Can schools offer short courses?

Schools may but are not obliged to offer short courses. These will be assessed through CBA. Therefore the student’s achievement in a Short Course will reported to parents in a school report, and included in the composite Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Short Courses will not be State Certified.

They will comprise 100 hours of learning, and a student may take a maximum of four short courses.

Is there a risk that short courses could, in some cases, displace the full subject?

No.

A concern of teachers arising from earlier proposals was that the introduction of a Short Course in a subject could in some cases displace the full subject.

Now, it is confirmed that short courses will not undermine, displace or replace existing subjects. If necessary, the DES will issue a circular directing schools on this matter and advising them to limit the number of (short) courses that they offer.

Will teachers of English have adequate time to prepare for the new CBA?

Teachers of English had significant concerns about the prescribed modality for the oral assessment (the first CBA – originally scheduled to be completed by 2nd year students in Spring 2016) and also about the lack of time to prepare students for this CBA.

Now, for the first cohort of students (those who were in first year in 2014/15 and who are progressing to second year for the 2015/16 school year) there will be an option for teachers of English to have those students complete their Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) in Spring 2016 or to defer it to the beginning of their third year (2016/17). There will be a menu/choice of assessments rather than the prescribed modality for the oral. The NCCA will specify a wider range of assessment options that will enable teachers of English to ensure that the first CBA is manageable and appropriate to the learning needs of students.

Other concerns of teachers of English are addressed by increased continuing professional development (CPD) and the provision of 10 hours of professional time in 2015/16 (when the revised English specification is being taught in first and second year) and 14 hours in 2016/17 (when English is being taught in all three years). A commitment has also been secured that “the views of teachers of English and their representatives will inform the design of the CPD and other supports that will be put in place.”

Will reporting requirements add to bureaucratic workload?

The unions were concerned that the original 2011 proposals and/or Minister Quinn’s proposals would lead to increased bureaucratic workload, particularly in terms of reporting requirements.

In order to guard against increased and excessive bureaucratic reporting workload, the NCCA will be requested to develop standard reporting templates, appropriate to the second level curriculum context, for use in first and second year. It is envisaged

that these templates will be user-friendly, that they will be concise and not require extensive discursive description and that their design will facilitate easy completion by teachers and efficient compilation at school level. The NCCA will engage with unions and other stakeholders in the development of the templates. It is envisaged that the new reporting requirements will not require significant additional time for teachers and that the provision of professional time to teachers within their timetables will ensure that all reporting requirements can be implemented successfully.

In practical subjects, how will artefacts/performances be assessed?

In the case of a small number of subjects (Art, Music, Home Economics and the Technology subjects) the second Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) will involve the creation of an artefact or a performance. The formative assessment related to the production of these artefacts and performances will be reported upon to the student and parent/guardian by the school, as for all other second CBAs.

However, as the finished artefacts/performances are currently marked by the State Examinations Commission, the artefact or performance (for example, the piece of art or project work created by the student) will continue to be marked by the SEC, together with the related written evidence as appropriate.

Who will ensure that the agreement is implemented as set out in the negotiated document?

Implementation of this agreement will be monitored by an implementation committee consisting of representatives of the signatories to the agreement (The signatories are the Presidents and General Secretaries of TUI and ASTI and the Minister for Education and Skills).