



To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools, Special Schools and Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

Junior Cycle Resources (Professional Time and Administration Grant)

Circular Letter 0029/2017

1. Junior Cycle Professional Time

This Circular should be read in conjunction with [Circular 15/2017 – Arrangements for the Implementation of the Framework for Junior Cycle](#) with particular reference to school years 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The Framework for Junior Cycle 2015 recognises that teachers need professional time to engage in a range of professional collaborative activities to support the implementation of Junior Cycle. A proportion of this time will involve collaboration with teaching colleagues, to support teaching, learning and assessment.

The time will facilitate teachers engaging, as necessary, with a range of professional and collaborative activities, namely:

1. Whole-school professional activities to support the junior cycle
2. Individual teacher and subject department professional activities, including activities related to formative assessment, feedback, reporting and inputs being compiled for the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)
3. Attendance at Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
4. Preparation for, and overseeing the outcomes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
5. Administration of the Assessment Tasks in classrooms.

2. Arrangements for 2017/18 and 2018/19

From September 2017, in all subject areas, full-time teachers involved in the delivery of Junior Cycle will be entitled to an annual allocation of 22 hours of professional time (40 minutes per week), with a pro-rata entitlement for part-time teachers (as set out in Appendix 2 of Circular 15/2017). This is subject to the full co-operation of a teacher with all elements

of the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015. Schools must ensure that all teachers involved in the delivery of Junior Cycle and cooperating fully with all elements of the Framework for Junior Cycle are allocated professional time.

An allocation of an additional 550 whole-time equivalent posts to schools was initially made available to support the provision of professional time. Following further assessment of the requirements to support the provision of professional time at school level the overall allocation of additional posts has been increased from 550 to 670 posts. Consequently, all schools will shortly receive notification of a revised teacher allocation for Junior Cycle for the 2017/18 school year. .

The overall allocation of posts for professional time is not intended to cover the total amount of hours equating to giving 40 minutes professional time to all full-time teachers (with pro-rata allocations for part-time teachers). School management should allocate their overall provision of teaching hours (including the additional posts allocated for professional time, as set out above) in such a manner as to ensure that all teachers involved in the delivery of Junior Cycle and co-operating fully with all elements of the Framework for Junior Cycle, can avail of professional time.

In line with the 2015 agreement, the professional time entitlement for teachers should be provided in timetables from September 2017. The implementation of this preferred approach is in the interest of protecting overall class contact time for students. However, it is acknowledged that in particular circumstances where the full co-operation of teachers with all elements of the Framework for Junior Cycle was only confirmed following the finalisation of timetables for September 2017, alternative local arrangements for providing the professional time entitlement in the school year 2017/18 may be required on an exceptional basis. The practical options involved in these circumstances will require further discussion with the relevant parties.

3. Administration resources for schools to input JCPA data on PPOD

Students who completed their Junior Cycle in June 2017 will receive a record of their learning achievements on a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) during the school year 2017/18. This JCPA will report student achievement across a range of areas of learning in Junior Cycle, including: Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) in English and short courses; Priority Learning Units (PLUs) where appropriate; and the State certified Final Examinations which are administered by the State Examinations Commission (inclusive of the Assessment Task in English). The JCPA will also enable reporting of a range of other areas of learning.

Recognised post-primary schools will report the descriptor awarded in respect of Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) (in subjects and short courses), as well as achievements in Priority Learning Units (PLUs) (where appropriate), for their students onto the Department's Post Primary Online Database System (PPOD). At a later stage of the process the part-completed JCPA, containing the information recorded on PPOD, as well as the results of the State-certified Final Examinations, will be made available electronically to schools, which will then record details of achievements in the 'Other Areas of Learning' section in respect of

each student. The completed JCPAs will then be supplied by schools to their students and parents/guardians.

As the technology to support data entry and JCPA production is in development and evolving, it is recognised that there is a particular data entry requirement for 2017/18 on schools. In recognition of this, it is proposed to pay a once-off administration grant to schools to support this in 2017. Further details in this matter will be issued shortly.

The data entry process will be refined and streamlined in future years with the intention that data relating to student achievement will be entered only once. The inputting of this information will form an integral part of the role of individual teachers as part of their allocation of professional time in the future.

It should be noted that the once-off administration grant is in addition to the management resource hours set out in Circular 15/2017.

The co-operation of schools in relation to the above matters is acknowledged.

Queries in relation to this matter should be addressed to JuniorCycleResource@education.gov.ie

Curriculum and Assessment Policy Unit

June 2017