



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Senior Cycle Redevelopment

Schools Information Note

September 2024, Issue 6



Senior Cycle Redevelopment Information and Updates

Introduction

Welcome back. This is the sixth edition in a series of Department of Education Senior Cycle Redevelopment information notes. These notes provide updates to school communities on the roll-out of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment programme. The Department has issued this note to all post-primary schools and requests that it be circulated to students, parents and staff in each school. The information note will also be available online and schools are welcome to provide links from their websites and other digital presences to it.

Main Updates

All Tranche One subjects and modules are now published. Tranche One subjects will be introduced in schools from 2025. Read the specifications for Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Business, Arabic, Latin, Ancient Greek, Climate Action and Sustainable Development, and Drama, Film and Theatre Studies [here](#):

The Transition Year Programme Statement is now available [here](#).

The Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes are now available [here](#)

The Leaving Certificate SPHE specification is now available [here](#).



Tranche One specifications – what to expect

All Tranche One specifications have now been approved and are available on the NCCA website: [Curriculum Online](#)

The format of the Tranche One specifications was informed by extensive research and deliberations with stakeholders.

Some common features include:

- senior cycle key competencies
- additional assessment components
- greater level of scaffolding of learning outcomes.

Senior cycle key competencies

A redeveloped Senior Cycle will focus on our young people's key competencies. NCCA listened to teachers, students, parents and others during the review of senior cycle. Many of them emphasised that who you become during your last years in school and who you are when you leave school matters. They said that your values and dispositions are as important as your knowledge and skills.

This feedback has shaped the redevelopment of the senior cycle curriculum, which focuses on the importance for students on enhancing their key competencies and integrating knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to help students learn, grow and develop as human beings.

Additional assessment components

Each of the specifications incorporates additional assessment components that are not a traditional written examination, which will be worth a minimum of 40% of the available marks and will be externally set and assessed by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

Greater scaffolding of learning outcomes

A greater level of scaffolding of strands of study and learning outcomes is evident across all specifications. This is achieved through a combination of an over-arching narrative, the inclusion of the 'students learn about' column and learning outcomes that clearly state what students will be able to know, do and understand at the end of the course.

An overview of Tranche One revised subjects

Ancient Greek

Ancient Greek was spoken and written in Greece since the late bronze age, and it later migrated with its speakers to other parts of the Mediterranean, ranging from southern Italy to Turkey. The Ancient Greek language had a major influence on the modern foreign languages so much so that even today, it is difficult to form an English sentence without using words that are derived from Greek, and Ancient Greek remains central to the technical terminology of fields such as law, medicine, and the sciences. All of this makes Ancient Greek an important and exciting language to study today.

The Leaving Certificate Ancient Greek specification is presented in two strands which each have two core elements: *Ancient Greek Language* and *Literature in Context*.



The specification is intended for students from all language backgrounds. This includes students who have some previous experience with the language for example, through the Classical Language strand in Junior Cycle Classics and students who have no prior experience with the language.

There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising a research study

An overview of Tranche One revised subjects

Latin

Latin is the ancient language of Latium, the region of the city of Rome.

Leaving Certificate Latin aims to foster proficiency, curiosity and interest in the Latin language and the literature, history and culture of Rome. It invites students to recognise the many ways in which both continue to inform the present and use these insights to help them navigate today's plurilingual and pluricultural world as active and responsible citizens.

The specification is intended for students from all language backgrounds. This includes students who have some previous experience with the language for example, through the Classical Language strand in Junior Cycle Classics and students who have no prior experience with the language.

There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising a research study

Latin language

Understanding Latin texts

Developing language awareness
and analytical skills

Literature in Context

Latin literature

Roman culture explored through Latin texts

An overview of Tranche One revised subjects

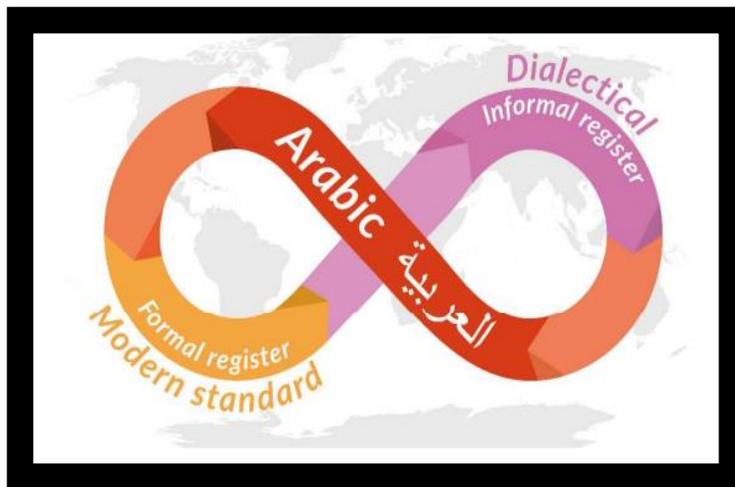
Arabic

Arabic is one of the most widely spoken languages globally. It is a Semitic language and has two forms: Modern Standard Arabic, and Dialectical Arabic.

As Modern Standard Arabic is common to all countries of the Arabic-speaking world, it is used as a medium of mediation between speakers from different dialectical Arabic backgrounds. As such, the target language of the specification will be Modern Standard Arabic.

In Leaving Certificate Arabic, students will be exposed to a range of authentic oral, written, and multi-modal literary and non-literary Arabic texts in a variety of genres and formats. This involves both fiction and non-fiction texts, including, for example, magazine and newspaper articles, announcements, advertisements, infographics, as well as poems, short stories, simple novels, films, TV programmes, documentaries, etc. taking into account real world language use, the interests of the students, and their motivation to learn.

There are three assessment components: a written examination and two additional assessment components comprising an aural and oral examination.



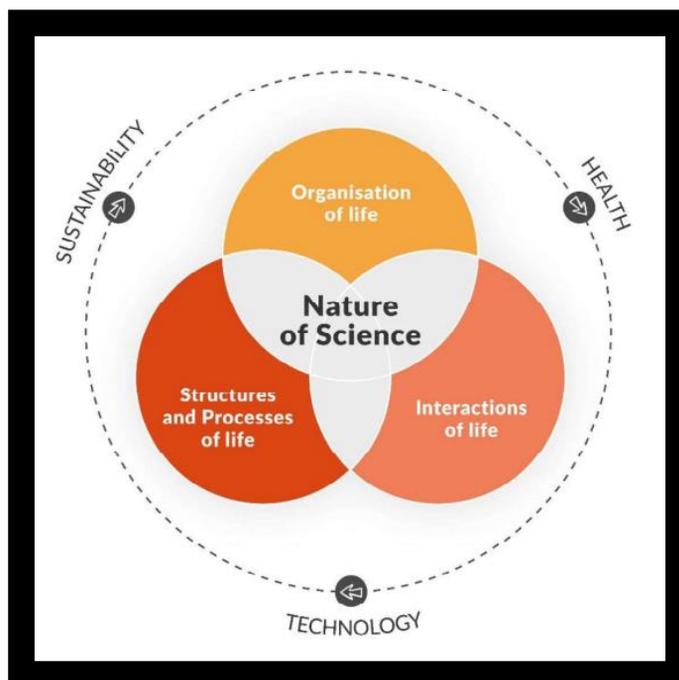
An overview of Tranche One revised subjects

Biology

Biology is defined as the scientific study of life. Nature is remarkable and composed of a wide variety of simple and complex systems. Biology attempts to describe and explain these systems with regards to the organisation of life, its structures and processes and the interactions between living things and their environment. In doing so, biology allows us to understand all of life in the past, present and future. It is consistently one of the most popular subjects chosen at Senior Cycle.

There are four strands: a unifying strand, Nature of Science, and three contextual strands, Organisation of Life, Structures and Processes of Life, and Interactions of Life.

The specification has two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising a **Biology in Practice Investigation**.



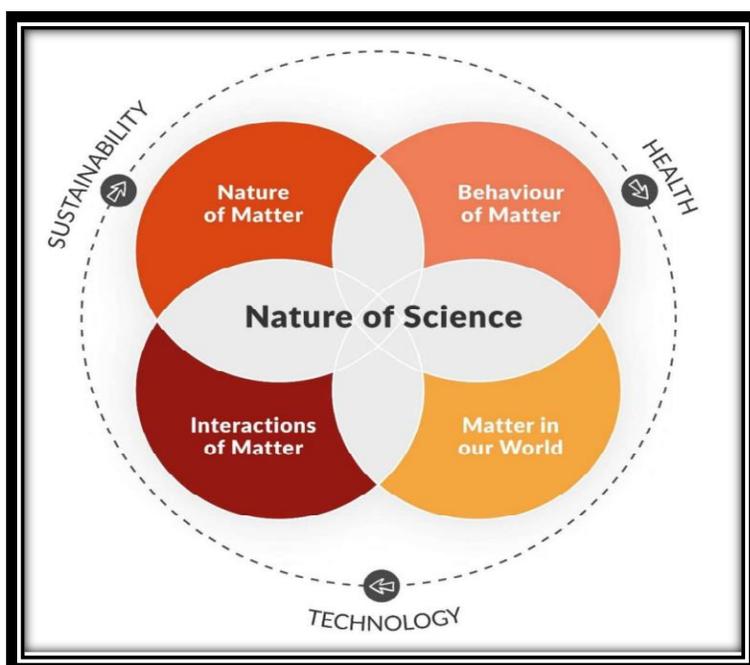
An overview of Tranche One revised subjects

Chemistry

Chemistry is everywhere in our natural world. Studying chemistry involves understanding how the invisible world of atoms and molecules makes up the visible world we see around us. As an area of scientific study, it explains how all matter in the universe behaves and interacts by developing an understanding of how atoms and molecules behave and interact.

The specification has five interrelated strands: The Nature of Science, which is the unifying strand, and four contextual strands - The Nature of Matter, Behaviour of Matter, Interactions of Matter, and Matter in Our World. The design of the strands reflects the aims of Leaving Certificate Chemistry.

The specification has two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising of a **Chemistry in Practice Investigation**.



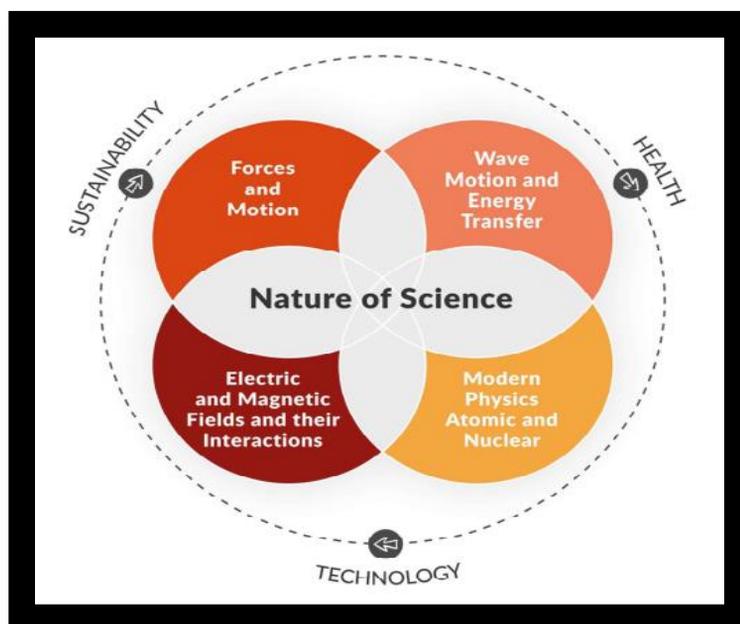
An overview of Tranche One revised subjects

Physics

Physics attempts to develop a unified description of how matter and energy behave and interact with each other. The Universe is composed of a wide variety of simple and complex systems and physics attempts to describe these systems in terms of all embracing fundamental concepts. In its search for basic laws and general principles, physics encompasses the study of the universe from the smallest subatomic particles to the largest galaxies. It involves asking fundamental questions and trying to answer them by observing, measuring, experimenting and developing models to explain the physical world. Physics is progressive, new data may answer some questions but raise others and this makes physics exciting and interesting.

There are five strands; a unifying strand, The Nature of Science, and four contextual strands, Forces and Motion, Waves and Energy transfer, Electricity and Magnetism, and Modern Physics

There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising a **Physics In Practice Investigation**.

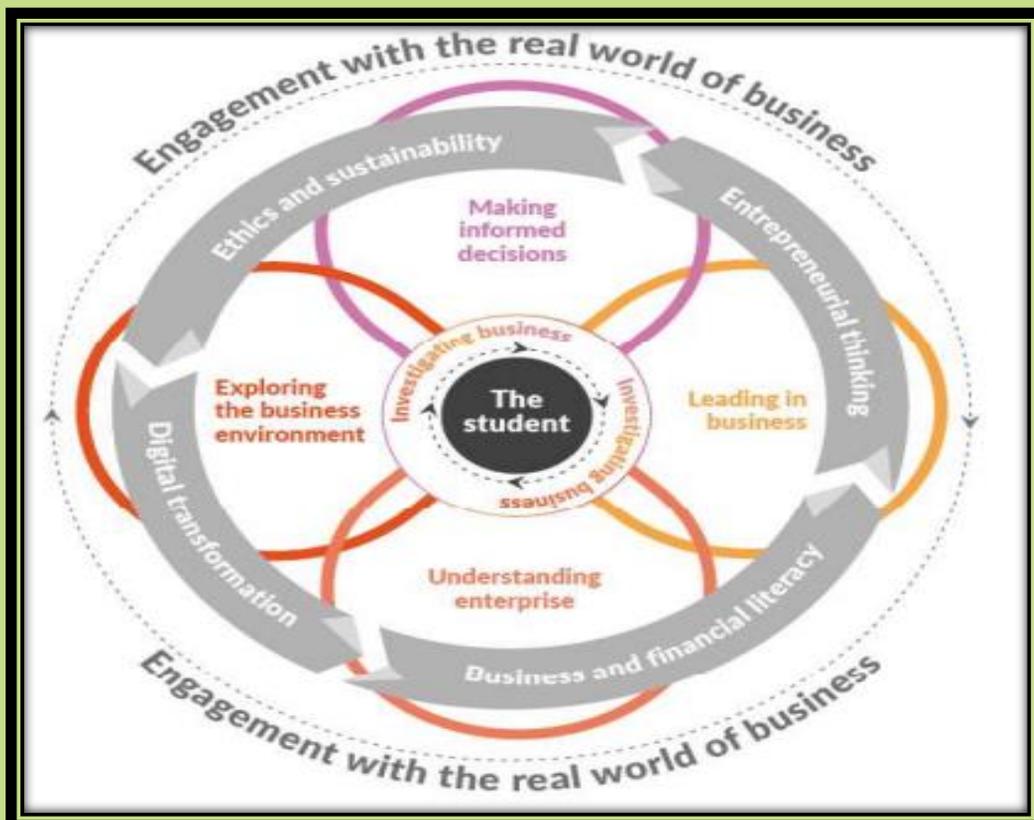


An overview of Tranche One revised subjects

Business

Leaving Certificate Business develops the students' awareness of the significance of business for the Irish and international economy and helps to foster an understanding of how the world of business works. Students learn how business is relevant to their own lives, develop financial and business literacy, appreciate business in the world around them and how business is shaped by those who work, lead, and manage within the business environment.

There are two assessment components: a written examination and an Additional Assessment Component comprising (AAC) comprising of the **Business Alive Investigative Study**.



An overview of new subjects

Climate Action and Sustainable Development, and Drama, Film and Theatre Studies will be rolled out to a small network of schools, called Phase One Schools, in 2025. The introduction of these exciting subjects provides greater choice for students to better reflect their range of interests and support the development of a wider range of talents and skills.

Climate Action and Sustainable Development

Climate Action and Sustainable Development allows students to learn about and experience meaningful action. They will develop knowledge of climate science, of the damage and loss caused by climate change, and of climate mitigation and adaptation. Students will examine their role as global citizens, exploring systems governing decision making, the drivers of global poverty and environmental injustice.

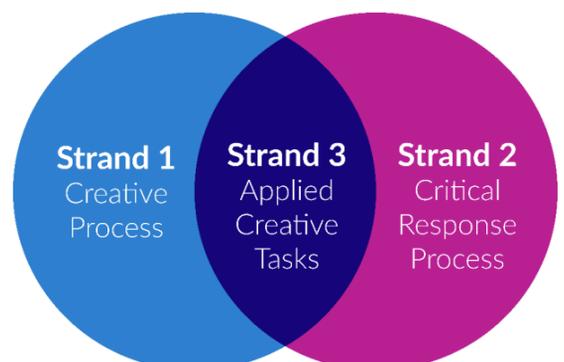
There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component comprising an Action Project.



Drama, Film and Theatre Studies

Leaving Certificate Drama, Film and Theatre Studies extends the range of practical, arts based subjects on the senior cycle curriculum, encouraging and promoting a well-rounded education. Leaving Certificate Drama, Film and Theatre Studies provides opportunities for personal, aesthetic, collaborative and culturally enriching experiences.

There are two assessment components: a written examination and an additional assessment component (AAC) comprising a Drama, Film and Theatre Studies Creativity in Practice Project.



Reminder: Sample Assessment Materials Timelines for Tranche 1

Autumn 2024

Guidelines to support the AACs will be available to schools. These will be utilised by Oide in their SCR Professional Learning programmes

April 2025

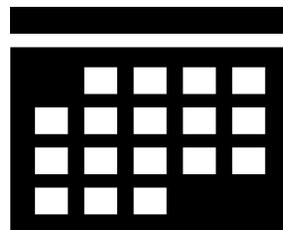
Four sample examination papers - two Higher Level and two Ordinary Level - for each subject in Tranche 1 will issue to schools. This is a total of 36 sample papers across the nine subjects– 72 papers in total when Irish Versions are included.

September 2025

Specifications in new and revised subjects introduced in schools. A sample brief for the AAC in each subject will in schools at the same time.

January 2026

A live brief for AACs for all subjects will be issued.



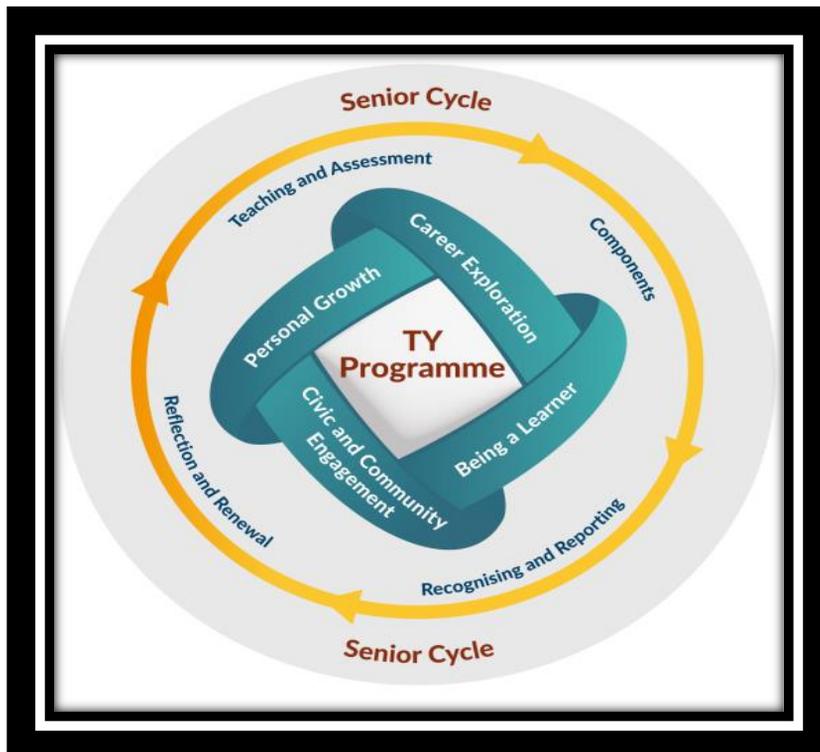
Transition Year Programme Statement

The Transition Year Programme Statement has been approved by the Minister and the Department of Education.

Over the 2024/25 school year, all schools will have the opportunity to audit their current Transition Year programme and revise it where necessary in line with the Programme Statement.

The Department's Inspectorate will support and provide advice to schools in this regard during the 2024/25 school year with Inspectorate engagements being reflective of this.

Read the statement [here](#).



Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes

The initial curriculum areas and modules for the Senior Cycle Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes are now available.

From school year 2024/25, schools can make the programmes available to all students who have completed the relevant Junior Cycle programmes.

NCCA, in collaboration with the SEC, will work closely with schools to develop personalised learning programmes for students, as well on practical arrangements for the introduction of the programmes relating to timetabling, assessment and validation.

Professional learning to support the introduction of the programmes will be provided by Oide.

The participation of students in the SCL1LP and SCL2LP should be recorded by schools in their annual returns.

You can read the Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programme Statement, initial curriculum areas and modules [here](#).

SPHE at Senior Cycle

The Minister has approved an updated SPHE curriculum for Senior Cycle. The specification is designed as a mandatory component to support 60 hours of teaching and learning over two years, reflecting the importance of SPHE for young people at this stage in their post-primary education.

It is recognised that while all schools must provide RSE at Senior Cycle currently, many schools do not provide SPHE and this means significant preparatory work is needed to support schools in introducing the specification.

Schools have until September 2027 to introduce the specification for students entering fifth year, with the exception of students following the Leaving Certificate Applied (see below). This provides continuity with the Junior Cycle SPHE specification for the first post-Transition Year cohort of students to have completed the Junior Cycle specification. The timeline will be subject to the necessary preparatory work in relation to provision of teacher education and resources, and consideration of other practical issues including timetabling.

Students following the Leaving Certificate Applied

The new specification will replace Social Education modules I and II of the Leaving Certificate Applied. It is planned that this change will apply for all LCA students entering 5th year in 2025.

Further information, including changes to the assessment and the allocation of credits, will issue in due course.

Supports for teachers and school leaders



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Senior Cycle Redevelopment

Oide Professional Learning Experiences (PLEs) 2024/2025

School Leaders



Face-to-Face PLEs

Essential skills & knowledge

Collaboratives

Peer engagement



Webinars

Ongoing support



Resources

Supporting implementation

School leaders will be notified of registration details for events in advance

Whole-School

This year's whole-school day will have a focus on Senior Cycle Redevelopment (SCR)

Elements of this PLE

include

- SCR Rationale
- Major Aspects of SCR
 - Pathways and Flexibility
 - Curriculum Components
 - Assessment, Reporting and Transitions
- Continuity and Progression
- Key Competencies of Senior Cycle



Schools have been provided with their relevant closure date for the 2024/2025 school year

Subject PLEs

Subject school closure days will run throughout the year. Schools register all teachers to attend

The following Tranche 1 subject PLEs will have a focus on their new senior cycle specifications



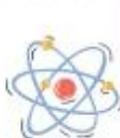
Business



Biology



Chemistry



Physics

The following PLEs will be offered separately to the school closure model and will impact participating schools only



Drama Film and Theatre Studies



Climate Action and Sustainable Development



Ancient Greek & Latin

TY - L1/L2LP - SPHE

As part of Senior Cycle Redevelopment new programme statements/specifications are published in the following areas

- Transition Year
- Senior Cycle Learning Programmes: L1/L2
- Senior Cycle SPHE

Supports include



Face-to-face PLEs



Webinars



Collaboratives

Resources to support implementation



School leaders will be notified of registration details for events in advance

oide.ie

Senior Cycle Redevelopment Outreach

ISSU Skills Academy for Future Leaders

Members of the Senior Cycle Redevelopment Team in the Department of Education facilitated a workshop as part of the ISSU Skills Academy for Future Leaders in Liberty Hall in July. They heard directly from students on their views of Senior Cycle and talked about the redevelopment programme – thank you to those who took part.



Reminder: Schedule of subject and module tranches published

New and revised subject specifications, incorporating the revised assessment arrangements will be rolled out in tranches on an annual basis. By 2029, all subjects will be revised. This means that all those entering fifth year as a Leaving Certificate established student in 2029 will be following revised curricula and assessment arrangements in all subjects.

Tranche 1
starts 2025

Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Arabic, Latin, Ancient Greek, Business, Climate Action and Sustainable Development, Drama, Film and Theatre Studies

Tranche 2
starts 2026

Accounting, Construction Studies, Engineering, English, Geography, LCVP Modules, Physical Education

Tranche 3
starts 2027

Agricultural Science, Computer Science, Design and Communication Graphics, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Music, Physics and Chemistry

Tranche 4
starts 2028

Art, Economics, French, Gaeilge, German, Italian, Politics and Society, Spanish, Technology.

Tranche 5
starts 2029

Applied Mathematics, Classical Studies, Japanese, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Portuguese, Religious Education, Russian.

Further information on Senior Cycle Redevelopment
can be found at [gov.ie/seniorcycle](https://www.gov.ie/seniorcycle)

Queries in relation to this information note can be
directed to: scr_info@education.gov.ie



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