



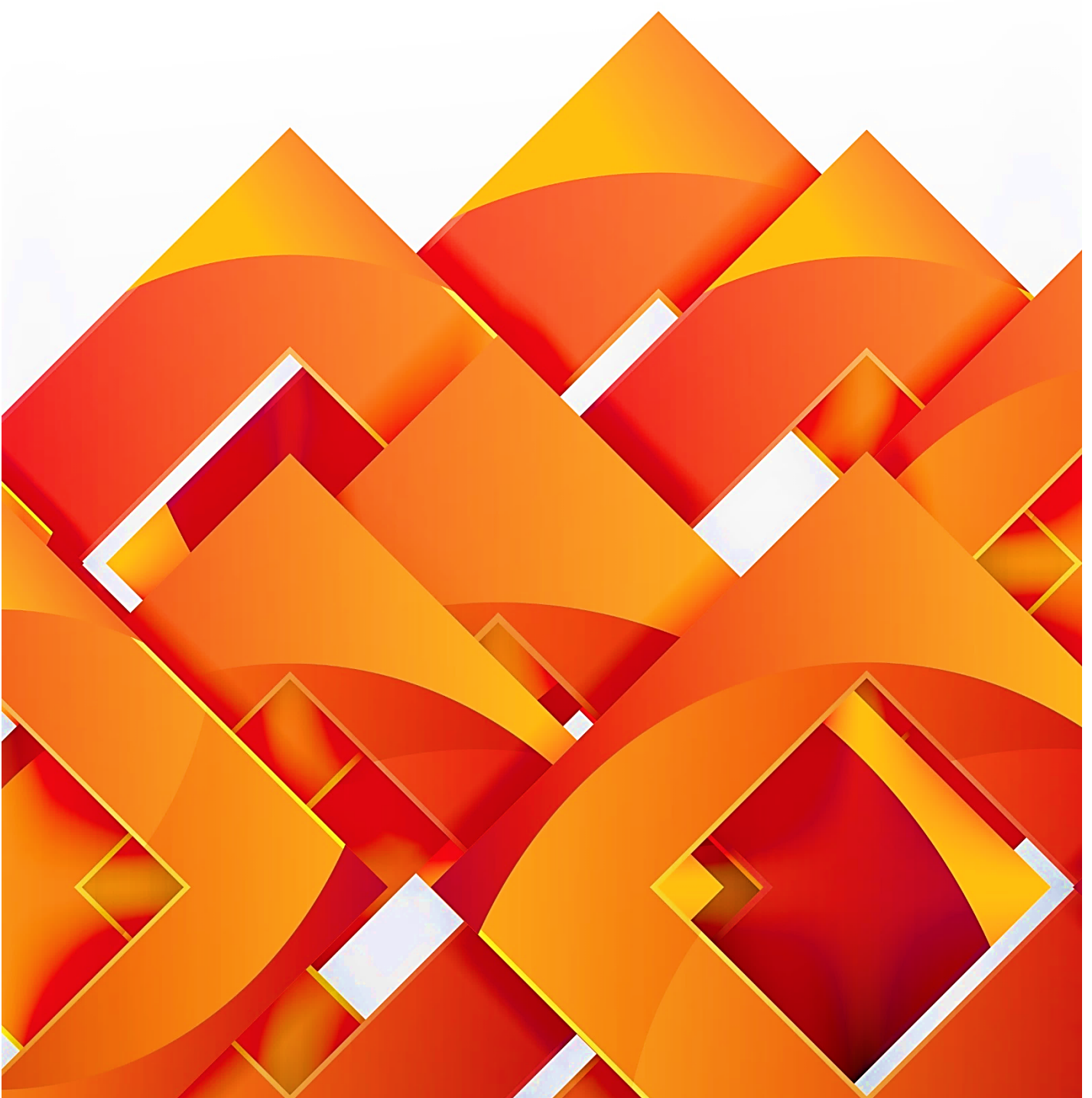
**NCCA**

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

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# Draft Transition Year Programme Statement

for consultation



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## Senior cycle

During senior cycle students develop a stronger sense of their identity, learning with and from their peers, teachers, other adults, and various media. Over time, they consider and make choices which influence what they might do when they finish school and begin their adult lives.

Senior cycle educates the whole person. Students' experiences in senior cycle should contribute to their intellectual, social and personal development and their overall wellbeing.

There are 8 guiding principles in senior cycle:

- wellbeing and relationships
- inclusive education and diversity
- challenge, engagement and creativity
- learning to learn, learning for life
- choice and flexibility
- continuity and transitions
- participation and citizenship
- learning environments and partnerships.

It consists of an optional Transition Year, followed by a two-year course which consists of subjects and modules, embedded key competencies, clearly expressed learning outcomes and a range of approaches to assessment. Building on their learning in junior cycle, senior cycle aims to help every student to become more enriched, engaged and competent. Relationships with teachers are established on a more mature footing and students have opportunities for broad learning and increased specialisation. Learning happens in schools, communities, educational settings and other sites of learning, where students' increasing independence is recognised, as they embrace individual and collective roles in society and the economy.

Senior cycle provides a curriculum which challenges students to aim for the highest level of educational achievement, commensurate with their individual aptitudes and abilities. As students choose different pathways through senior cycle they take more responsibility for their learning and are supported to make informed choices which support them to access to a range of diverse futures.

The educational experience in senior cycle should be inclusive of every student, respond to their learning needs, and celebrate, value, and respect diversity. Students vary in their family and cultural backgrounds, languages, age, ethnic status, beliefs, gender, and sexual identity as well as their needs, interests, aptitudes and prior knowledge, skills, values and dispositions.

Every student's identity should be celebrated, respected, and responded to throughout their time in senior cycle.

Senior cycle provides firm foundations for transition to further, adult and higher education, apprenticeships, traineeships and employment, and meaningful participation in society and adult life. During senior cycle, students have opportunities to grapple with social, environmental, economic, and technological challenges which impact directly and indirectly on their lives and futures. They deepen their understanding of human rights, social justice, equity and diversity and the importance of creating a sustainable future for all. Senior cycle also gives every student opportunities to experience the joy of reaching significant milestones in their personal educational journey. The pathway students choose through their senior cycle and every subject and module students experience should contribute to the realisation of this overall vision for senior cycle.

At a practical level, senior cycle is supported by enhanced professional development; the involvement of teachers, students, parents, school leaders and other stakeholders; resources; research; clear communication; policy coherence; and a shared vision of what senior cycle seeks to achieve for our young people as they prepare to embark on their adult lives. It is brought to life in schools and other educational setting through

- effective curriculum planning, development, organisation and evaluation
- teaching and learning approaches that motivate and interest students, that enable them to progress and improve and to deepen, apply and reflect on their learning and
- a school culture that respects students and promotes a love of learning.

## Key competencies

Senior cycle helps students to become more engaged, enriched and competent, as they further develop their knowledge, skills, values and dispositions in an integrated way.

*Figure 1 The components of key competencies and their desired impact*



*Key competencies*<sup>1</sup> is an umbrella term which refers to the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students develop during senior cycle. Their learning is deeper when they can draw upon, integrate and apply their knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to various tasks, contexts, situations and events.

Students develop key competencies within and across the curriculum during senior cycle. These key competencies build on important learning from early childhood, primary and junior cycle. They support students to grow and develop intellectually, personally, socially, ethically, and physically. They foster and make deep learning possible. Key competencies come to life through the learning experiences and pedagogies teachers choose and through students' responses to them. Students can and should be helped to develop their key competencies no matter what path they follow through senior cycle or what subjects and modules they choose and irrespective of their past or present background, circumstances or experiences.

Student progress and mastery of key competencies in senior cycle is very important, as they prepare to embark on adult life, though these competencies continue to develop and evolve through lifelong learning. The key competencies:

- are linked and blend together.
- are visible and important across the curriculum.
- can help students and teachers to make meaningful connections between and across different areas of learning.
- can improve students' overall learning.

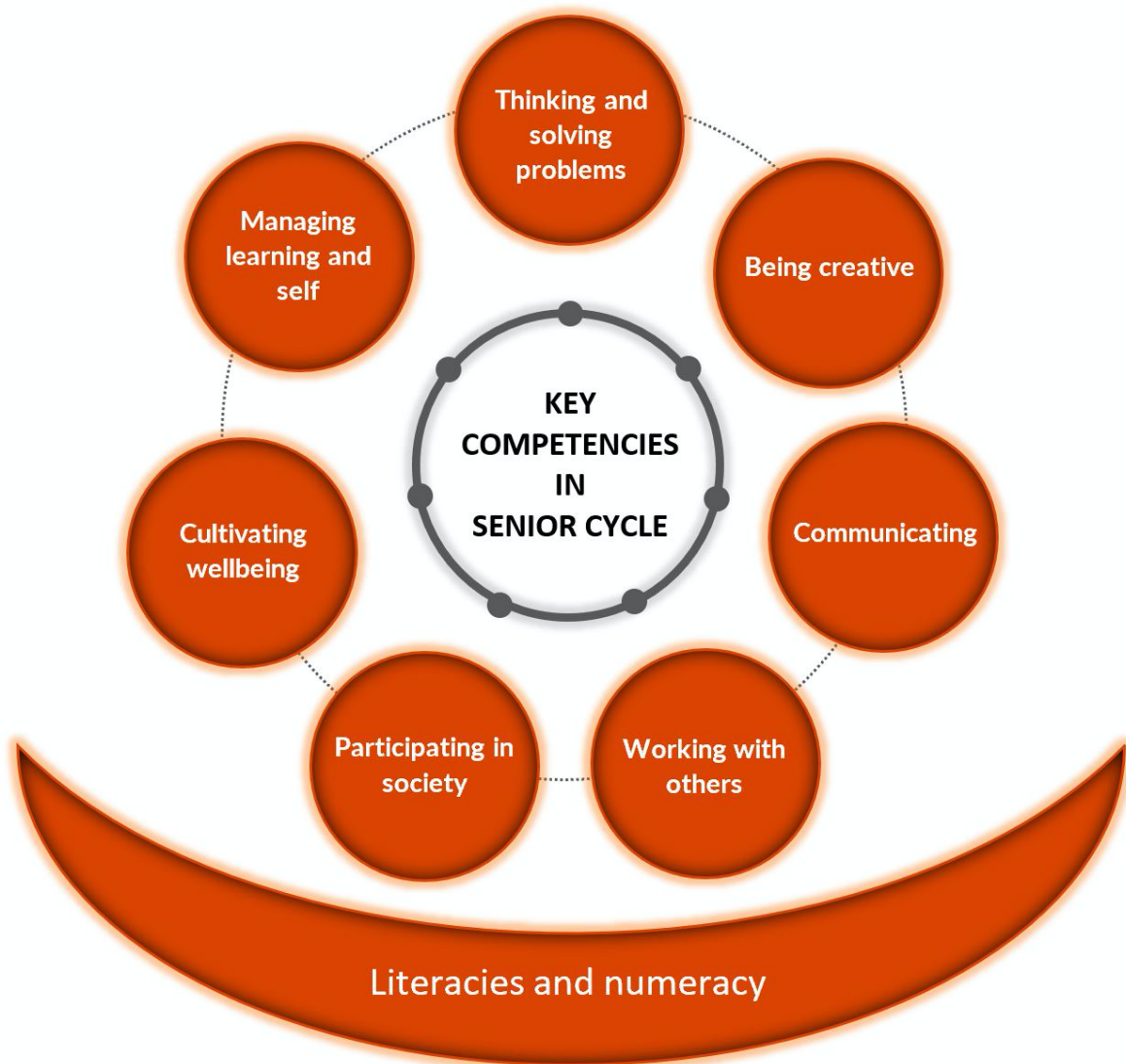
The development of key competencies is supported when:

- students' literacies are well developed, i.e., when they can meaningfully and effectively read, watch, write, speak, listen, and mediate meaning.
- students' numeracy is well developed, i.e., when they can understand numbers, data and symbols meaningfully and interpret and use them effectively.
- students make good use of various tools, including technologies, to support their learning.

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<sup>1</sup> These are sometimes also referred to as capacities, or capabilities.

Figure 2 Overview of Key Competencies in Senior Cycle



As students mature, these key competencies can work together to help students handle and respond to more complex and varied tasks, as appropriate to their needs and abilities. As part of teaching, learning and assessing, they should have many opportunities to make their key competencies visible. The transformative potential of key competencies is most likely to be realised when teachers and students discuss the competencies they are developing and when teachers offer students opportunities to make meaningful connections across their different subjects and modules.

## Continuity, pathways, and progression

Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, introduced in 2009, supports children's learning from birth to six years across the range of early childhood settings. Supporting progression and continuity into primary education, Aistear focuses on the development of transversal skills, where learning and development are described through the four interconnected themes of: Exploring and thinking, Well-being, Identity and belonging, and Communicating.

The Primary Curriculum Framework, published in 2023, encourages primary and special schools' use of a variety of pedagogical practices with assessment central to learning and teaching. The vision for the framework is supported by seven interrelated key competencies designed to enable children to manage and adapt to a range of events, challenges and contexts while also contributing to the child's holistic development. There are also eight overarching principles which convey what is valued in primary and special education. Acknowledging prior learning, self-worth and identity as students progress through their entire education is further embedded in the Transition Year (TY) experience.

Implemented from 2015, the Framework for Junior Cycle introduced a wider range of curriculum components and assessments to facilitate broader learning, improved SEN provision, renewed focus on learning in the area of wellbeing, and a broader form of reporting through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Aspects of the Framework for Junior Cycle, such as the flexibility afforded to schools to have more ownership of the design of the curriculum, an emphasis on formative assessment to support teaching and learning, and encouragement of students into a more participative role in their own learning, are further built upon in TY.

As an optional programme, TY builds a broad and solid foundation for students to progress from junior cycle into the remainder of senior cycle. It develops many aspects of the key competencies of senior cycle and helps students make informed decisions around future choices of subjects and modules. During TY students have opportunities to explore different career options and develop some of the skills needed to access more diverse pathways. TY can raise awareness of further, adult and higher education pathways enabling students to make more informed choices of possible career options.

TY contributes to the development of the students' sense and experience of civic and community responsibilities, empowering them to become more compassionate, active citizens. They learn to appreciate cultural diversity and actively participate in creating a more

sustainable world. With a focus on continuity and progression in TY, students can build upon the foundation provided by early childhood, primary and junior cycle education and use their time in the remainder of senior cycle to develop the key competencies they need to move through life as national and global citizens.

## **Purpose of the TY Programme Statement**

The TY Programme Statement is designed around the developmental and learning needs of the student moving from junior cycle into senior cycle, and as they prepare for their future lives as local and global citizens. Schools have autonomy and flexibility to design their TY programme within the design parameters of this TY Programme Statement. The statement offers guidance to schools on how to develop a TY programme to meet the needs of all their students.

## **Rationale**

Young people in Ireland are living in a rapidly changing world characterised by globalisation and urbanisation, diversifying communities, expanding digital and technological developments, transitions in the world of work and career patterns, and a necessity for global sustainable living. Our curriculum can adapt so that students have opportunities to develop the competencies to flourish in this world and to make positive contributions to it.

TY offers time, space and autonomy to create enjoyable and meaningful educational experiences that support students in senior cycle while facilitating their engagement with a broader range of pathways and possibilities. It equips young people with the supports and experiences to develop a greater capacity to respond to uncertainty, manage complexity, and become agents of positive, ethical change in society.

TY is a one-year optional programme available to all post-primary schools and is offered as part of the senior cycle experience. The programme offers a unique opportunity in senior cycle, insulated from stresses and anxieties that can be associated with the academic treadmill, where schools and communities can collaborate to encourage young people to thrive now and into the future. During TY students can develop more mature relationships with teachers and other adults and become more informed about the purpose of education and their role in society.

A TY programme should be inclusive of all students; embrace diversity; facilitate a sense of discovery; report more broadly on student learning and development; and value the contribution each student can make to the programme.



The TY Programme Statement is designed to provide schools with a flexible, collaborative approach to planning TY programmes suitable for their context. The local autonomy of schools, working within the parameters of the TY Programme Statement, is fundamental to fostering school-led innovations; promoting equitable access; and offering young people transformative experiences that will ground them throughout senior cycle and into their future lives.

Participation in TY contributes to the continuing personal, social, emotional, intellectual, civic and career readiness of students, giving them space and opportunities to flourish as individuals and as a collective. All students are supported throughout TY to become more adaptable, empathetic, competent and resilient human beings. These aspired qualities for students are in turn modelled by the educators in the school, evident in the nature of the TY programme itself and valued within the local community.

Through a school-designed TY curriculum, all students can avail of opportunities to grow and develop, learning to make wiser, more informed choices.

## **Aims**

A school's TY programme will:

1. Nurture the development of the student as a whole person by building on their previous experiences, through a curriculum designed by the school that is aligned to the TY Programme Statement.
2. Create space and opportunities for meaningful, enjoyable learning experiences through which the key competencies of students can be developed in the classroom and school, in the home and local community and in their roles as national and global citizens.
3. Expand the student's experience and awareness of diverse future pathways and nurture the student's capacity to sustain their growth and development through a process of lifelong learning.
4. Evolve continuously to meet the needs of the student through an evidence-informed reflection and renewal process, involving students, teachers, school leaders, parents, and community partners.

## **Coordination of the TY programme**

Coordination of TY, and the role of the TY Coordinator in particular, are central to how the TY Programme Statement is used to create an effective TY curriculum. It is a designated role that is underpinned and sustained by a close and effective working relationship with the

senior management team and teachers working in TY. The support of, and collaboration with the whole school community, is critical to the successful development and enactment of a school's TY programme.

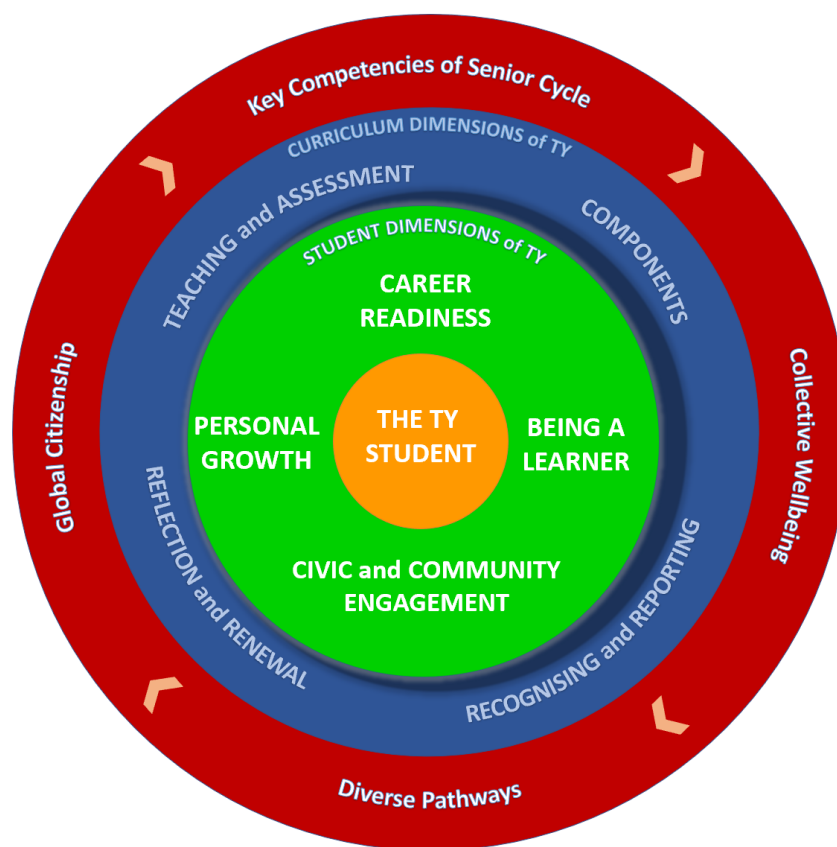
In addition, the coordination of TY works best through a TY Core Team, led by the TY Coordinator, which grows from a school-wide culture of embracing teacher innovations, talents and expertise. The TY Core Team will generally include the TY Programme Coordinator, TY Year Head, if a separate role, a guidance counsellor and an appropriate number of teachers. The TY Core Team collaborates to improve the experiences for students across the entire programme.

## **Developing a TY programme**

The parameters to support schools in developing their TY programme are described through Student Dimensions and Curriculum Dimensions. This section opens by presenting the four Student Dimensions and describes how they are the foundation for the development of a TY programme. The four Curriculum Dimensions provide the scaffolding to realise the ambition of the Student Dimensions.

Figure 3 illustrates the centrality of the TY student and Student Dimensions to the development of a TY programme within senior cycle. An effective TY programme, which will be unique to each school, is one where every aspect of the curriculum serves to develop the student in harmony with the Student Dimensions.

*Figure 3 Overview of TY Programme Statement*



## Student Dimensions

The four Student Dimensions describe the ways students can develop in TY and the experiences that can support this development. The four Student Dimensions are the key foundations upon which TY programmes are designed. The Student Dimensions are described in Table 1.

Table 1 Student Dimensions

Student Dimension	Description
Personal Growth	Students develop socially and emotionally over the course of the year in areas that include health and wellbeing, autonomy, identity, empathy and leadership.
Being a Learner	Building on the junior cycle experience, students begin to develop as senior cycle students, embracing opportunities and strategies for learning that work best for the student now and into the future.

<b>Civic and Community Engagement</b>	Shaped by their personal values, students make a positive difference in their schools, communities and society. They learn to act on their responsibilities and exercise their rights as local, national and global citizens in ethical and sustainable ways.
<b>Career Readiness</b>	Students can explore future pathways in a guided and coordinated manner, gaining first-hand workplace experience, and developing practical skills and career-related knowledge.

Each of the four Student Dimensions contains a set of developmental indicators and related student experiences.

**Developmental indicators** are intended to guide the student and the school. These indicators set out the parameters for the development and learning of the student during TY.

**Student experiences** are intended to provide a variety of possible opportunities and contexts to support student learning and development consistent with realising the developmental indicators.

The four Student Dimensions are designed to interlock in such a way that together they intersect with all seven key competencies of senior cycle.

### Student Dimension: *Personal Growth*

Students develop socially and emotionally over the course of the year in areas that include health and wellbeing, autonomy, identity, empathy, and leadership.

#### Developmental indicators

- becoming more assured and confident about themselves as a person
- setting and reviewing goals for personal development and achievement
- having greater capacity to negotiate ethical dilemmas and reflect on personal values
- knowing how to make more informed decisions
- persevering longer with tasks, especially when challenging
- coming to see challenges as further opportunities for growth
- adapting better to groups and new social environments
- taking greater care of the health and wellbeing of themselves and others
- interacting with more empathy both in person and online
- increasingly taking ownership of their own behaviours and decisions
- showing more initiative and leadership in school, at home and in the community.

### **Student experiences**

- collaborative projects, competitions, activities over the year to achieve collective goals
- individual tasks and projects, involving digital and non-digital skills to enable self-expression
- guided creation of a portfolio that captures their personal growth
- education and guidance in personal and emotional development and social awareness
- activities and education on lifelong physical and emotional health
- opportunities for guided reflection and review of personal goals
- formal and informal opportunities to speak and present in class, in public, in interviews
- recognition of personal growth and personal challenges in all aspects of school life during the year.

### **Student Dimension: *Being a Learner***

Building on the junior cycle experience, students begin developing as senior cycle students, embracing opportunities and strategies for learning that work best for the student now and into the future.

### **Developmental indicators**

- being more motivated to learn and seeing education as worthwhile and enjoyable
- setting learning goals and reviewing them regularly
- becoming more skilled with digital technologies, both as a user and a creator
- having a greater appreciation of lifelong learning
- being more willing to learn from mistakes and expand their comfort zone
- beginning to acquire knowledge and skills relevant to senior cycle
- seeing the importance of feedback and placing more value on it
- increasing their capacity for independent and self-regulated learning
- being more open to the use of effective strategies for learning
- broadening their range of communication and presentation skills
- expressing their own ideas more clearly while engaging with other people's ideas.

### **Student experiences**

- core subjects and taster subjects through lessons designed to encourage the development of senior cycle key competencies
- a variety of pedagogies consistent with realising the aims of the programme statement and supporting developmental indicators for all students
- meaningful learning opportunities in the classroom that incorporate student input
- opportunities to build on student learning in the transition from junior to senior cycle

- assessment of their learning and development through a variety of forms (peer, self, formative and summative)
- recognition of a sense of achievement across all areas of the curriculum
- guided creation of a portfolio that captures them, and their progress, as a learner
- a range of manageable projects, competitions, activities over the year that are challenging as an individual and as part of a team.

### **Student Dimension: *Civic and Community Engagement***

Shaped by their personal values, students make a positive difference in their schools, communities and society. They learn to act on their responsibilities and exercise their rights as local, national and global citizens in ethical and sustainable ways.

#### **Developmental indicators**

- showing more initiative in their schools, communities, and society
- setting and reviewing goals for being an active citizen
- working more co-operatively with others and in teams
- sustaining more caring and respectful relationships with people, place and nature
- having a greater appreciation and respect for dignity and diversity
- deepening their sense of empathy, identity and belonging
- recognising and engaging with complexity and uncertainty
- wanting to contribute to a more just world and living more sustainably
- becoming more involved with creative and cultural activities
- understanding better the interconnections of local, national and global communities
- playing a more active role, acquiring practical knowledge and interpersonal skills.

#### **Student experiences**

- working with local or national organisations and businesses over the year
- community or social placement during the year
- education on sustainable development, including sustained meaningful action for a more sustainable world
- sharing of knowledge and skills within the school community and among community stakeholders
- guided creation of a portfolio that captures their civic and community engagement
- projects, competitions, activities in the classroom, in school, at home, in local communities and in society
- meaningful involvement with shaping school culture
- learning opportunities around empathy, diversity and inclusion.

## Student Dimension: *Career Readiness*

Students can explore future pathways in a guided and coordinated manner, gaining first-hand workplace experience, and developing practical skills and career-related knowledge.

### Developmental indicators

- being more informed on the link between education and career opportunities
- identifying and reviewing career-related goals more regularly
- increasing their awareness of personal strengths, interests, values, and aptitudes
- having a greater capacity to research and critically reflect upon career pathways
- acquiring more vocational, organisational and communication skills
- learning how to generate ideas and turn ideas into action
- improving their workplace behaviours through first-hand experience
- having more awareness of the world of work and enterprise.

### Student experiences

- work placements during the year
- guided reflective tasks on their experiences and placements in TY
- how subjects and modules on the senior cycle curriculum could link to future pathways
- career guidance and classroom support on future pathways
- guided creation of a portfolio that captures their reflections on their career readiness
- a variety of learning opportunities, including projects and competitions, that improve practical, vocational skills
- access to Further Education Training and Higher Education tasters, open days, events or learning environments
- guest speakers from a diversity of backgrounds and careers
- short, certified courses or micro-credentials
- opportunities for assessing aptitudes and abilities.

It is suggested that schools could use the information above to scope out the student experiences that offer the best opportunities for their students to develop in line with the developmental indicators. The lists of student experiences are not intended to be exhaustive but to offer guidance to schools in their planning and in laying the foundations for their TY programme.

## Curriculum Dimensions

The four Curriculum Dimensions provide the design parameters to assist schools in developing, evaluating, and renewing their TY programme. The effectiveness of a TY programme can be greatly enhanced through schools adopting an integrated approach to the

enactment of the four Curriculum Dimensions. The TY Programme Statement supports schools in doing this by encouraging and promoting:

- a coordinated approach to planning for teaching and learning
- the consistent and authentic use of the student portfolio
- a whole-school system of reporting in TY
- consistent programme renewal using an evidence-informed review and evaluation process.

Table 2 Curriculum Dimensions

Curriculum Dimension	Description
<b>Components</b>	A combination of core learning, subject sampling, TY specific modules and other components provides a balanced and broad set of experiences which encompasses the Student Dimensions.
<b>Teaching and Assessment</b>	Appropriate and effective pedagogies, alongside ongoing assessment, support students to progress in their learning while also enabling the renewal of classroom practice.
<b>Recognising and Reporting</b>	The means by which student learning and achievement in all areas of the TY programme are affirmed and celebrated. Reporting in TY provides a broad picture across all the Student Dimensions.
<b>Reflection and Renewal</b>	Reviewing, evaluating and updating the TY programme, in a continuous and inclusive manner, enables schools to evolve the TY programme most suited to the developmental and learning needs of their students.

Schools have autonomy to design a programme for TY that is uniquely suited to the school's culture, identity and context, while striving to work in imaginative and creative ways with the school community to achieve the aims and enable all students to develop across all four Student Dimensions.



## Curriculum Dimension: *Components*

A combination of core learning, subject sampling, TY specific modules and other components provides a balanced and broad set of experiences which encompasses the Student Dimensions.

Components are the means by which most of the student experiences, described in the previous section, are translated into the school's TY curriculum.

Table 3 provides guidance on design parameters for a school's TY programme and indicates where the range of components may provide opportunities for development and learning across all four Student Dimensions. A school's programme may evolve as students identify their own opportunities for growth during the year. Equally important for the successful evolution of the programme is a culture that supports and fosters teacher-led curricular innovations within TY. In this way schools can build additional capacity, offering students a wider range of components, while also supporting and promoting internal professional learning, creativity and collaboration.

All components should support students progressing across the developmental indicators. It is important that TY is distinguished as a standalone programme within senior cycle and it should not be misused as a way to directly teach senior cycle subjects and modules over three years rather than the intended two years of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year.

Where senior cycle subjects or modules are taught, teachers can collectively use their professional autonomy to decide on the most stimulating and innovative ways to present the knowledge while supporting student progression across the developmental indicators.

Table 3: Accommodation of components in a TY curriculum

Student Dimension	Components	Guidance for accommodation of components
Being a Learner	<b>Core</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maths</li> <li>• English</li> <li>• Irish</li> <li>• Physical Education (aligned to the aims of the Senior Cycle PE Framework)</li> <li>• SPHE</li> </ul>	The core components are mandatory to all TY Programmes. The time allocation for each core component should not exceed 2 hours per week.
	<b>Elective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampling of subjects and skills</li> <li>• Additional components that may need to be included in the school's curriculum</li> </ul>	The time allocation for elective components, in total, is the equivalent of 3 to 4 hours per week, depending on school context.
	<b>Guided reflective practice</b> Portfolio development, diary, self-assessment, student planning	Minimum of one class per week.
Personal Growth	<b>TY specific modules</b>	Students gain experiences from an array of modules. The organisation of the modules into semesters, or modules across the entire year is decided at school level.
	<b>Additional growth experiences</b> Guest speakers, Government supported developmental awards, induction, competitions, life-skills courses, school-wide events (plays, musicals, market days, etc), themed days or significant learning days.	The organisation of Additional growth experiences provided by the school need to be notified to students, teachers and parents as soon as feasible. Students who wish to participate in other learning experiences could also be accommodated within the context of their continued commitment to the school's TY programme.

Civic And Community Engagement	<p><b>Our own community</b> Local out-reach activities, community placement, social enterprise activities, education in cultural diversity</p>	<p>These components draw from TY specific modules, work and community placements and additional experiences.</p>
	<p><b>Our global community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education for Sustainable Development</li> <li>• A meaningful student-led personal or collaborative action related to sustainable living</li> </ul>	<p>These components can draw from planning time in the guided reflective practice class and/or a TY specific module related to education for sustainable development.</p>
Career Readiness	<p><b>Work and Community Placement</b></p>	<p>An appropriate and feasible balance of work-based and community-based placements. A time allocation amounting to the equivalent of 2-4 weeks of the programme is suggested.</p>
	<p><b>Career guidance and learning through placements</b></p>	<p>One class per week or classes timed to target key career-related events during the year.</p>
	<p><b>Additional career-related experiences</b> Guest speakers, Further Education and Training / Higher Education tasters, information days, Government supported developmental awards, certified short courses</p>	<p>Additional career-related experiences need to be planned and notified in advance of the school year where feasible, requiring a flexible and adaptable approach to the rollout of the programme.</p>

## Curriculum Dimension: *Teaching and Assessment*

Appropriate and effective pedagogies, alongside ongoing assessment, support students to progress in their learning while also enabling the renewal of classroom practice.

The TY Programme Statement promotes and encourages high quality teaching and assessment practices that are aligned to the developmental indicators in each of the four Student Dimensions. In particular, the developmental indicators of Being a Learner and the associated key competencies of senior cycle, can be modelled and demonstrated by the teachers throughout TY. The Teaching and Assessment dimension unifies student experiences across the TY components.

As mentioned in the previous section, it is important that TY is distinguished as a standalone programme while at the same time acknowledging progression and continuity in terms of development and learning from junior cycle and into the remainder of senior cycle.

### **Collective and classroom practices**

TY affords teachers the opportunity to be innovative in devising and delivering high quality broad-based teaching, learning and assessment opportunities. This includes opportunities for inclusive practices, for which guidance will be made available. Collective professional practice across TY, coupled with a whole-school TY assessment system, such as a credit-based system, are therefore essential aspects of an effective TY programme. TY provides opportunities to create environments that stimulate a collaborative learning culture both inside and outside of the classroom.

The overarching assessment of students' learning and development in TY can be achieved through:

- a TY student portfolio (see Curriculum Dimension: Recognising and Reporting)
- an agreed whole-school TY assessment system

### **Collective Practices**

Teaching and Assessment across the entire TY programme are characterised by:

- identifying and setting high expectations for students
- whole-school practices that meet the needs of the students and value student inputs and contributions in the classroom

- opportunities for planning, preparation and implementation of teaching and assessment approaches
- increased opportunities for student involvement, enjoyment and agency in their own learning
- the provision of experiences that are challenging and engaging and stimulate creative critical thinking both inside and outside the classroom
- sharing of expertise and experience with colleagues in a professional environment, within the school and where feasible with other schools
- gathering and sharing evidence of learning to inform the other Curriculum Dimensions, particularly Recognising and Reporting
- consistent evaluation of collective practice across the year of the programme, informed by feedback and reflection.

### **Classroom Practices**

Teaching and Assessment in the classroom are characterised by:

- appropriate student-centred approaches which are aligned with learning intentions and develop all four Student Dimensions
- planning of learning opportunities to support each student and address their educational needs
- preparation of appropriate resources and use of digital technologies
- opportunities for students to work on extended tasks, such as projects, investigations, and competitions to promote ownership of learning and develop rigour in their approaches
- genuine and meaningful collaboration between students both within and across TY components. This collaboration, where feasible, can be achieved through team tasks and team projects enhancing group cohesion.
- creating and sharing of success criteria with students to enable peer and self-assessment and the use of active methodologies to align with the success criteria
- opportunities for students to experience success within and across curriculum components
- the use of a variety of modes of assessment, for both summative and formative purposes
- effective and timely feedback from the teacher designed to improve learning and development
- opportunities for the student to give and use feedback effectively.

## Curriculum Dimension: *Recognising and Reporting*

The means by which student learning and achievement in all areas of the TY programme are affirmed and celebrated. Reporting in TY provides a broad picture across all the Student Dimensions.

### **Recognising**

The development of the student across all four Student Dimensions is the core objective of any TY programme. When students genuinely engage with their TY programme, it is important to recognise and report on their development and learning; successes and challenges; and expansion of their own comfort zones.

Recognition across the year, from daily classroom interactions to engagement with the broader school community, will itself nurture a deeper sense of belonging and achievement. As the year progresses, student motivation can be enhanced through genuine recognition of their work and achievements.

An end-of-year TY celebration event could be an opportunity for students to publicly demonstrate their development and learning as young people. Teachers, parents and school community partners can come together to collectively acknowledge the successes and achievements of the entire TY group. It also affords the school the opportunity to reward students with some meaningful and tangible record of their participation in TY that is informed by the variety of assessment and reporting throughout the year.

### **Reporting**

There are three elements to reporting in TY:

- the student's TY portfolio
- school reporting
- student reflection.

Reporting is managed and coordinated by the TY coordinator, with support from the senior management team, TY Core Team and each of the teachers in the TY programme. Guidance will be available to support reporting and reflection in schools, including templates for how schools could report in TY.

## **The student's TY portfolio**

An individual student portfolio, digital and/or physical, can be a powerful tool for capturing the uniqueness of the student experience in TY. The purpose of a portfolio is to give students the opportunity to apply reflective and critical thinking to their experiences across the four Student Dimensions. In this way, they can evaluate their own experiences and generate a more personalised profile of themselves as a learner. Students can showcase their year of learning and achievements, and review their developmental goals from the start, middle and end of the year.

Time, leadership and resources need to be directed towards this form of self-reporting and critical reflection. The integration of the portfolio into teaching and assessment practice, and the inclusion of a reflective practice component, are intended to support students in the creation of their portfolio. The developmental indicators of each of the four Student Dimensions can be used to inform reflection within the portfolio.

Some of the essential elements of a TY portfolio include:

- goal setting and ongoing review of goals
- a chronological review of student experiences and education over the year
- overall progress across each of the four Student Dimensions: Personal Growth, Being a Learner, Civic and Community Engagement, and Career Readiness
- critical reflections on key learning and achievement.

## **School reporting**

A broad form of reporting that is aligned to the developmental indicators is necessary in order to recognise the development of the student across all four Student Dimensions. Some form of school-wide coordinated system is required to assess each curriculum component taken by the student.

The school's report should take account of:

- student development across each of the four Student Dimensions, using the developmental indicators as criteria
- assessment of the curriculum components taken by the student, as described in Table 3
- accredited, and non-accredited, micro-credentials from recognised bodies.

Recognition by the school of the progress and development of the student could also be presented to each student at a TY end-of-year celebration.

### **Student reflection**

The TY portfolio and the school report are further enhanced by a student reflection towards the end of the programme. This is the opportunity for students to speak to their experiences and is based on their critical reflections on key learning and achievements in their portfolio. The school can decide the most appropriate form for their students, such as an end-of-year interview or a short presentation by the student to their peers. The student reflection, while being a form of assessment, can also be a significant learning experience for the student. It affords the school the opportunity to assess how students have developed across all four Student Dimensions and gives immediate feedback on how their TY programme could be improved.

The TY reporting mechanism is supported and affirmed throughout the year by ongoing communication with the home through parent-teacher meetings, term reports, TY bulletins and informal communication between home and school.

### **Curriculum Dimension: *Reflection and Renewal***

Reviewing, evaluating and updating the TY programme, in a continuous and inclusive manner, enables schools to evolve the TY programme most suited to the developmental and learning needs of their students.

Embedding reflective practice across all Student and Curriculum Dimensions is a cornerstone of building an effective TY programme in schools. A review undertaken by the TY Core Team and supported by school management, could evaluate all four Curriculum Dimensions in order to affirm and improve, where possible, the school's TY programme. This is most effective when informed by evidence across the Curriculum Dimensions but it is important to consider the manageability of gathering authentic and inclusive evidence.

### **Review and Evaluation**

Reviews of the programme itself can be done in a variety of ways such as verbal feedback, online surveys or school community focus groups. This feedback can be supplemented by



evidence from other occasions or from forms of assessment, such as the student reflection or TY portfolios, where the student input can be immediate and relevant. The data gathered from these reviews and other occasions could then be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme in meeting the developmental indicators across all four Student Dimensions.

Schools need to consider the following broad questions when evaluating their TY programme:

- How is the school's TY programme fulfilling the aspirations of the rationale?
- How can the aims be better achieved?
- How is the TY programme supporting development across all four Student Dimensions and how could it be improved?

Each of the four Curriculum Dimensions need to be individually evaluated. Sample reflection tools for each Curriculum Dimension will be developed in collaboration with schools, considering for example:

- Reflecting back - the evaluation needs to consider what worked well and what did not work well in each Curriculum Dimension
- Reflecting forward - the evaluation needs to plan how to build on successes and learn from shortcomings in each Curriculum Dimension.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the programme is carried out in contexts unique to each school and factors impinging upon all schools come from areas such as school location and size, costs, access to Further Education and Training and Higher Education experiences and local community needs. The process of reflection and renewal could also benefit from a school culture of professional learning, internal and external to the school, coupled with sharing of expertise and resources through relevant national bodies.

The Board of Management are a key stakeholder, particularly in the reflection and renewal process, and the support of the Board of Management is essential for developing an effective TY programme.

## **Encouraging participation and engagement**

Participation in TY can be encouraged and promoted by sharing an overview of the school's TY programme with the school community. Sharing this information with students in junior cycle, and TY itself, may help raise awareness of the composition and benefits of participating

in the programme. Appropriate dissemination of the information to parents could also be useful in terms of sustaining their engagement with the programme. In addition, a clear and accessible description of the programme could also provide a focus for ongoing reflection and renewal of the programme, and an additional scaffold upon which teachers can plan for teaching, assessment and learning.

## Glossary

This glossary is intended to clarify, for the reader, concepts and terms used in this TY Programme Statement.

**Student Dimensions** describe the ways in which students can develop in Transition Year (TY) and the experiences that can support this development. The Student Dimensions set out the parameters for the development of the student and are the key foundations upon which TY programmes are designed.

**Developmental indicators** are statements within the Student Dimensions which are intended to illustrate how the student progresses and develops through their participation in TY.

**Student experiences** emanate from the Developmental Indicators and provide the opportunities and contexts for the student to learn and develop.

**Curriculum Dimensions** guide schools in how best to steer the design and progression of their TY programme. They provide the design parameters to assist schools in developing, evaluating and renewing their TY programme.

**Key competencies** is an overarching term for the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions students have opportunities to develop through interaction with various types of knowledge.

**An effective TY programme:** For the purposes of this document an effective TY programme, which will be unique to each school, is one where every aspect of the curriculum serves to develop the student in harmony with the Student Dimensions.

