NCCA
An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Strategic Plan **2012–2015**

Contents

01
Introduction

Survival and progress in today's world depends on our ability to innovate. Things change at great speed and advances in technology are affecting everything we do. When writing our strategic plan three years ago, using social media to communicate with teachers and learners would have been unheard of, whereas today it has become an important method of communication. Neither would we have believed that many young people would carry around the 'mini-computer' that is their mobile phone! This changing world is fuelled by innovation and our learners need to be able to innovate and cope with the changes that they face now and over their lifetimes. Innovation features strongly in the plan, starting with our vision, *Leading innovation in education for living, learning and working in a changing world,* and carried through to the strategic goals and outcomes. It is about how the NCCA innovates to respond to the challenges it faces as an organisation in financially challenging times and also about how we lead and encourage innovation in curriculum, assessment and learning in Irish schools and settings which share those challenging times.

The financial challenges that we are currently experiencing are likely to be with us for the foreseeable future; at the same time society is undergoing fundamental shifts in work, technology, learning and how we live. With this in mind the plan has been developed with a view to the need to be creative and realistic when addressing the challenges posed by reduced public funding to the education sector and the need to ensure that learners have the dispositions, knowledge and skills to cope with the world they are living in today and with whatever the future may bring them.

The previous Council commenced the strategic planning process early in 2012 by commissioning a strategic review of the NCCA. This provided the background for the current Council to set the direction of its work and its priorities for the next three years. The current Council was appointed and commenced its work in April 2012 and will continue until March 31, 2015 and this strategic plan sets out the work of the Council for that timeframe.

That strategic review told us that the organisation was working well, and was held in positive regard by stakeholders. But it also told us that we needed to look at the number and terms of reference of our sub-committees. There were too many, some of them were too large and they were left in place for too long. Changes have now been made to the structures with a view to improving efficiency and effectiveness for the NCCA as an organisation and for the organisations that work with us and to making the process of developing curriculum and assessment more responsive and transparent.

While great care has been taken to develop a creative and realistic strategy, any strategy agreed upon must be flexible and allow for change over time. This a live document therefore and may change as developments are progressed, new opportunities to innovate arise or new national policy priorities set. Its implementation is premised on the availability of sufficient resources and significant new areas of work, like the developments at junior cycle will require additional resources.

Key to implementing our strategy is the expertise, dedicated work and commitment of the staff of the NCCA and the members of our boards and development groups. I appreciate their contribution to the work of the Council over the lifetime of the previous plan and I look forward to working with them in implementing this plan and in innovating for an exciting future for all learners in our schools and settings.

Brigid McManus
Chair

02
Context

The Organisation

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment was established in November 1987 as a successor to the Curriculum and Examinations Board and was reconstituted as a statutory body in July 2001.

The brief of the statutory Council as outlined in the Education Act (1998), is to advise the Minister for Education and Science on matters relating to:

…the curriculum for early childhood education, primary and post-primary schools and the assessment procedures employed in schools and examinations on subjects which are part of the curriculum. (41.1 a, b)

The Council is responsible for the development and determination of its advice on matters relating to curriculum and assessment. The Council is a representative structure, the membership of which is determined by the Minister for Education and Skills. It has 25 members, all of whom are appointed for a three-year term. The members represent teachers, school managers, parents, business interests, trade unions, and other educational interests. Other members include representatives of the Department of Education and Skills, the State Examinations Commission, a nominee of the Minister for Education and Skills and of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. The Minister appoints the Chairperson; the current Chairperson is Brigid McManus.

The NCCA has a full-time executive staff, led by its Chief Executive, Dr. Anne Looney. Funding for the NCCA is by way of a grant from the Department of Education and Skills.

The current Council was appointed and commenced its work in April 2012 and will continue until March 31, 2015. This strategic plan sets out the work of the Council for that timeframe.

External environment

The environment in which the NCCA has been operating over the last five years has experienced a period of significant change and unprecedented economic challenges. The NCCA's Strategic Plan 2009–2011 was written as a plan for uncertain times. While some uncertainty remains, very particular challenges have also emerged. The NCCA must now also respond to recent and current developments to advise the Minister on early childhood, primary and post-primary curriculum and assessment which reflects the needs of Irish society, and takes account of the acute challenges faced by that society and by families, young people and children in particular.

An overview of the key environmental factors identified through the strategic review and their likely impact on the NCCA are summarised below.

National priorities

In addition to the work NCCA has been progressing in recent times, notably work on early childhood education and senior cycle, additional national priorities in education have been identified for the years ahead – the literacy and numeracy strategy, reform of the junior cycle and addressing the transition from post primary to higher education. The role of the NCCA in the development of the religious education curriculum for Community National Schools has also been flagged.

Supporting these priorities requires ongoing liaison with the Department of Education and Skills and other relevant departments and agencies to ensure strong alignment between NCCA's work in the development of curriculum and assessment advice and identified national priorities.

The current economic environment presents challenges across the public sector

Public finances are under severe strain and this will most likely be the case for the foreseeable future. Expenditure on education and training will be €8,604 million in current expenditure in 2012, which reflects a reduction of €132 million on the 2011 figure. Further reductions will be applied across the sector in 2013.

As a statutory organisation, the NCCA is subject to public sector restrictions. Curtailment of budgets and reductions in the allocations under the Employment Control Framework impact on the resources the NCCA can apply to its activities and limit the flexibility and agility which are defining organisational values. It must also respond to new standards and expectations in governance and additional requirements for accountability and reporting.

On a broader level the restrictions in public sector funding are also making an impact on the provision of education and on the capacity of the system. This brings with it increased overall pressures across the system, pressures on teacher employment, workload, training and overall teaching and education services. Sustaining the momentum of reform is challenging in that context, at all levels of the education system, but that challenge needs to be balanced against the imperative to reform which remains compelling.

The NCCA will need to continue to be creative and realistic when addressing the challenges posed by reduced public funding to the education sector and the implications that will have on the development and introduction of curriculum and assessment changes. Advice on curriculum and assessment reform will need to be accompanied by strategic advice on the means by which schools and other educational settings can engage with the changes proposed.

Ireland's demographics have changed, impacting on the needs of the country

Ireland has experienced significant population growth and diversification of its population over the last decade. This is confirmed by the latest census results. Ireland also has the highest birthrate in the EU and this, combined with high levels of inward migration, has resulted in significant population growth. The NCCA will have to develop curriculum and assessment for this expanding population, which not only has different languages, cultural norms and communication styles, but also has differing expectations of teachers and the education system. A younger population may well prove to be one of Ireland's greatest resources in economic recovery. The pressure to ensure that the next generations are equipped with what are generally referred to as '21st century skills' is one of the factors driving the press for system reform.

Developments in technology are creating opportunities for the NCCA

Developments in technology have created a number of opportunities for the NCCA and how it interacts with stakeholders, including teachers. The NCCA has already developed its website to connect with stakeholders and to engage teachers and practitioners in the development of curriculum and assessment. NCCA's ground-breaking and growing use of social media has been particularly successful in supporting engagement with the education and the wider public.

Building on this experience, the NCCA will also need to consider how technology is changing how young people interact with knowledge and how teachers seek and access professional support. The role of technology in supporting innovation in assessment and reporting is also significant for the work of the Council.

Greater stakeholder expectations

Public debates about every level of Ireland's education system—in particular about standards and quality—have become more widespread, and the issues more contested. The economic crisis and a focus on the performance of the education system in shaping economic and social futures have added additional layers and heat to these debates. Parents, and more of them, are better informed about educational matters than previous generations. Learners are also better informed and expect to be included in deliberations about the direction of changes in the education system. The presence of urgent and diverse voices in the education debate challenges the commitment of the NCCA to consult as widely as possible and its capacity to offer advice that represents a consensus view. In addition, the composition of the Council is likely to come under increasing scrutiny from two sources. First, voices not represented on the Council are increasingly active in pursuing membership, and second, the ability of a group that works on a consensus basis to continue to deliver effective and meaningful change will be carefully monitored by advocates of different approaches.

Policy-making and the general public are paying greater attention to evidence and research

Decision-makers nationally and locally now have access to research evidence from around the world. All want to be as sure as possible that the decisions and investments made, particularly when resources are scarce, will deliver the returns expected for the groups that need them most. This challenge is further complicated by the long-term nature of educational impact.

Over the past decade, the NCCA has included research and evidence in the formulation of its curriculum and assessment advice and has also worked to ensure that the findings of research conducted and commissioned in the course of its work are made widely available and as accessible as possible. The NCCA has also gathered evidence of the impact of changes through its review of the Primary School Curriculum and the evaluation of Project Maths.

Building on this experience, the NCCA will need to continue its commitment to generating, using and sharing evidence.

The well-being of children and young people

The pace of technological advances, the impact of the economic crisis and general concerns for the physical and mental health of children and young people have all contributed to a certain degree of public anxiety about the quality of the lives of children. Their education should ensure that they have the dispositions, knowledge and skills to cope with success and failure, to build healthy habits of body and mind, and to form and sustain relationships.

Much of the NCCA's work has implications for the lives of children and young people. Balancing the pressures for more tangible and measurable outcomes of schooling against those aspects of education that are harder to measure but of greater long-term value for the individual and for society continues to be a challenge.

Internal environment

Knowledge and expertise

The NCCA is considered to be a flexible and agile organisation that has responded well to the challenges of reduced resources over the lifetime of the last strategic plan. Close to 50% of the 26 staff are contracted or seconded to the organisation. This creates flexibility and allows new specialist skills to be brought to achieving the strategic goals in a way that has the maximum impact on innovating in education in Ireland. The downside of this is that in the context of a moratorium on recruitment, that flexibility can become a liability. Staff mobility can lead to gaps and lengthy delays in filling them.

Work done in preparing the NCCA's workforce development plan for the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform revealed that the staff is older than average by comparison with the rest of the civil service, 81% of staff are over 40, compared to the civil service average of 70%. By way of compensation, the staff is also more highly qualified. 85% of staff is qualified at NFQ Level 8 or above and 75% of the technical staff have Level 9 or 10 qualifications. Over the period of this strategic plan, several staff will be preparing for retirement, and work will be needed to protect corporate memory and skill sets.

The organisation is also facing challenges associated with Public Service Agreement 2010–2014 and the Employment Control Framework and no doubt will experience new challenges over the lifetime of the strategy. The organisation supports its staff through performance management and continuous professional development.

Composition and structures

The Council has already responded to an issue flagged in the strategic review concerning the number and composition of committees. Only eight committees were re-convened at the beginning of the term of appointment of the Council and sixty were not, following a decision to convene only those committees which had immediate curriculum and assessment work to address, and to review the composition of committees and other structures to ensure they were fit-for-purpose. As the strategic plan is finalised, the arrangements for the new structures are in place comprising Council, Boards for Early Childhood and Primary, Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle and development groups.

Location

As a cost saving measure, the NCCA will surrender its lease on its HQ building at 24 Merrion Square in 2013. Discussions with the OPW on alternative premises for both Dublin and Portlaoise are underway. While plans for the move have already been initiated, it is likely that the move will cause some disruption to work schedules. It will also absorb staff time.

Corporate governance

The NCCA complies with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and has developed a Corporate Governance Framework to provide guidance for the Council and its executive. A Risk Register to identify, assess and manage potential risks has been developed and will be maintained. The Council's Audit Committee oversees the risk analysis and internal audit plans.

03
Planning for 2012–2015

Vision

Leading innovation in education for living, learning and working in a changing world

Mission

The Mission of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment is to:

- advise the Minister for Education and Skills on curriculum and assessment from early childhood to the end of second level

- engage with learners, teachers, practitioners, parents and others to support innovation in schools and other educational settings

- undertake, use and share research as a basis for advice and debate on education.

Strategic goals

1. Curriculum and assessment development

To develop innovative curriculum and assessment for engagement, progression, quality, inclusion and continuity across sectors

2. Engagement and networks for innovation

To work with schools, teachers, practitioners and learners to build capacity for change and to inform curriculum and assessment development and implementation

3. Knowledge and research

To generate, use and share knowledge and research to support the development of curriculum and assessment advice and practice in schools and other educational settings

4. Strategic relationships

To build on existing strategic relationships and develop new ones to support and connect curriculum and assessment development and implementation

5. Profile and communications

To communicate, present and share the work and achievements of the NCCA to improve the profile of the organisation and engagement with its work

6. Organisational effectiveness and governance

To develop the NCCA governance and organisation structures, processes, skills and competences to innovate in the achievement of the vision.
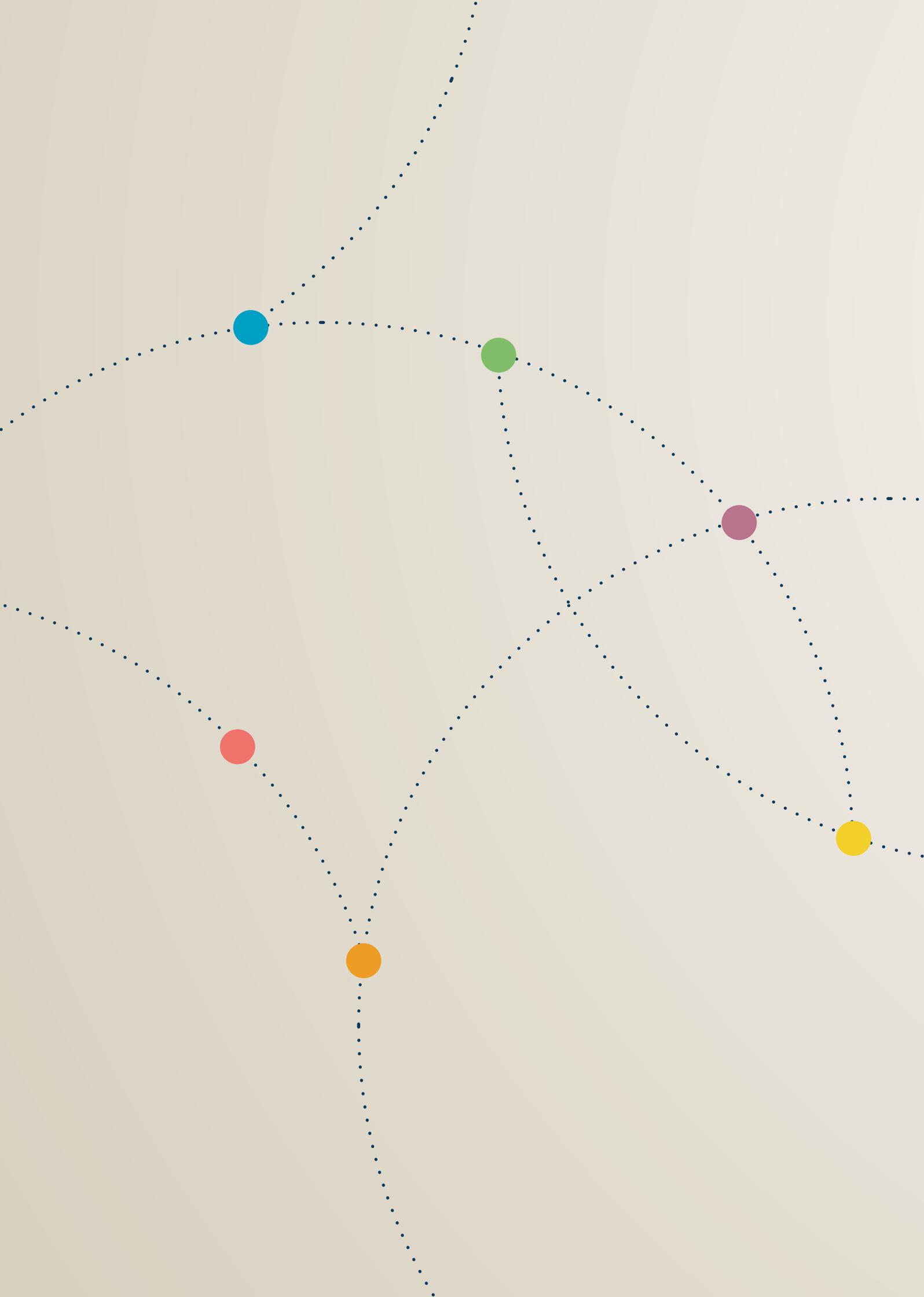
04

Achieving the Strategic Goals

1.0

Curriculum and assessment development

To develop innovative curriculum and assessment for engagement, progression, quality, inclusion and continuity across sectors.

We will deliver on this goal through the following planned outcomes:

1.1

New approaches to assessment and changed reporting systems are being introduced in schools and other settings.

To achieve this we will

develop an online tool to support primary schools in creating a report card to report children's progress to parents.	by **2014**
gather feedback on the reporting needs of particular groups of learners and the needs of parents to inform the development of the online tool.	by **2014**
update online resources for reporting.	by **2014**
work with partners and pre-school settings to support the process of documenting children's development relevant to primary schools.	by **2014**
introduce new assessment specifications for Junior Cycle English and eight short courses.	by **2014**
develop an online junior cycle Assessment Toolkit for teachers and schools.	by **2014**
develop a new system for reporting to parents of junior cycle students.	ongoing

1.2

Practice is established for generating and judging samples of students' work as illustrations of expectations for learners in curriculum and assessment specifications.

To achieve this we will

use learning outcomes as the basis for categorising samples of children's work in English and Gaeilge to illustrate progression in reading, writing and oral language from junior infants to second class.

by **2014**

generate examples of student work to illustrate expectations for learners for the new Junior Cycle English, Business Studies, Gaeilge and Science specifications in association with the DES, SEC and school networks.

2014 ongoing

1.3

Post-primary schools are using the new *Framework for Junior Cycle* as a basis for planning and introducing change in their junior cycle.

To achieve this we will

publish a *Framework for Junior Cycle* and supporting documentation.

2012 ongoing

establish subject development groups that have clear remits and timelines and ensure that they are well supported in their work.

2012 ongoing

develop new online curriculum specifications for Junior Cycle English, Business Studies, Gaeilge and Science and eight short courses.

by **2013/14**

publish, test and refine an online Toolkit for Level 2 Learning Programmes.

by **2013**

establish a junior cycle website providing schools with information and support for junior cycle development.

by **2012**

1.4

Aistear is increasingly used in the early childhood sector.

To achieve this we will

expand the online *Aistear* Toolkit and include resources on quality interactions, learning through play, documenting and sharing evidence of learning, oral language and literacy, mathematics and planning.

ongoing

1.5

A new language curriculum for English and Gaeilge is developed for primary school children from junior infants to second class and development of the language curriculum for children from third to sixth classes is underway.

To achieve this we will

audit objectives for English, Gaeilge and Drama in the 1999 Curriculum and for *Aistear* (2009).

by **2012**

develop a specification for the primary language curriculum from junior infants to second class, consistent with the specification for Junior Cycle, English and Gaeilge.

by **2012**

develop a language toolkit for the primary language curriculum.

by **2014**

1.0

Curriculum and assessment development

To develop innovative curriculum and assessment for engagement, progression, quality, inclusion and continuity across sectors.

1.6

Elements of the primary curriculum are revised to reflect developments in knowledge and research and greater consistency with *Aistear* and with junior cycle developments.

To achieve this we will

develop an overview of the primary curriculum developments.

by 2013

begin the development of learning outcomes for the mathematics curriculum, for children in junior infants to second class.

by **2014**

begin the development of resources to support curriculum integration and higher-order-thinking in maths and science.

by **2014**

1.7

Curriculum and assessment reform at senior cycle continues with the completion of new curriculum and assessment specifications.

To achieve this we will

complete curriculum specifications and assessment proposals for the three Leaving Certificate science subjects – biology, chemistry and physics. — by **2013**

complete curriculum specifications and assessment proposals for physical education. — by **2013**

complete the curriculum specifications and assessment proposals for the languages: French, German, Italian, Spanish. — by **2014**

review Leaving Certificate Gaeilge following the introduction of the new oral assessment arrangements in 2012. — by **2014**

support and assess a broader range of generic competences and skills in curriculum and assessment developments at senior cycle. — by **2014**

prepare a schedule for the development of Leaving Certificate subjects that will provide continuity and progression from the new arrangements for junior cycle. — by **2013**

work with the State Examinations Commission to research the options for the grading system used for Leaving Certificate subjects. — by **2012**

work with the State Examinations Commission to develop proposals to address any problematic predictability identified in the Leaving Certificate examinations. — by **2013**

1.8

Curriculum specifications for mathematics have been completed and their introduction is being evaluated as part of Project Maths.

To achieve this we will

complete curriculum specifications for Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate mathematics. — by **2013**

complete curriculum specifications for Leaving Certificate applied mathematics. — by **2014**

conduct any review or development work arising from the evaluation of Project Maths. — ongoing

2.0

Engagement and networks for innovation

To work with schools, teachers, practitioners and learners to build capacity for change and to inform curriculum and assessment development and implementation.

We will deliver on this goal through the following planned outcomes:

2.1

NCCA school networks are generating ideas and material to support their own capacity and that of other schools in curriculum and assessment development and in supporting change.

To achieve this we will

support a number of school and early childhood setting networks to gather examples of how *Aistear* can be used to support children's learning and development.	by **2014**
work with existing and new NCCA networks to gather feedback on elements of the primary language curriculum specification.	by **2014**
establish and support a junior cycle network of schools involved in innovating and developing, consulting on change, and disseminating examples of practice.	ongoing
establish an online network for all post-primary schools as a point of reference and information for junior cycle development.	by **2013**
continue the work of the Project Maths school network in generating examples of learning and teaching in mathematics. Expand this work in the area of Foundation level mathematics.	by **2015**

2.2

NCCA is supporting the work of partner networks engaged in curriculum and assessment development and supporting teaching and learning.

To achieve this we will

continue our work with the *Aistear* Tutors and the education centres to engage infant teachers in reflection on and introduction of the principles and methodologies of *Aistear* in primary classrooms.

by **2014**

continue our work with Early Childhood Ireland and initiate work with other organisations to support practitioners in working with *Aistear.*

by **2014**

work with partner networks to gather samples of children's work at different levels of progression in language development in primary school.

by **2014**

work with partner networks to develop resources for the Primary Language Toolkit.

by **2014**

support the development and activity of partner networks established by other organisations to inform about and plan for junior cycle change.

ongoing

2.3

Structures and supports are in place to ensure that the voice and experience of learners are included in NCCA deliberations.

To achieve this we will

support network schools to develop consultation processes with their students.

by **2013**

explore ways to involve learners in curriculum development and assessment deliberations in a way that is meaningful to them.

by **2013**

develop a social media forum led by students for students on curriculum and assessment developments.

by **2013**

3.0

Knowledge and research

To generate, use and share knowledge and research to support the development of curriculum and assessment advice and practice in schools and other educational settings.

We will deliver on this goal through the following planned outcomes:

3.1

Curriculum and assessment developments are informed by evidence and research.

To achieve this we will

publish interim and final reports on research by NFER on Project Maths.	in **2012** and **2014**
conduct a comparative analysis of the revised curriculum specifications for Leaving Certificate Mathematics with the corresponding curriculum in selected countries.	by **2013**
use data from TIMSS to generate an overview of international mathematics policy and curricula for children 3–12 years.	by **2013**
undertake a review of research on mathematics in early childhood and primary education (3–8 years).	by **2013**
undertake reviews of research on oral language and literacy for children aged 9–12.	by **2014**
complete research into the impact of changes to the Leaving Certificate Oral Irish Examination introduced in 2012.	by **2013**
support ESRI *Leaving School in Ireland* research into young people's post-school transitions and experiences.	by **2013**
undertake a review of international policy and practice in supporting the pre-school/primary transfer.	by **2013**
undertake an audit of Irish practice in sharing information between pre-schools and primary schools about children's learning and development.	by **2013**
complete a review of the stages in children's education (3–12 years), outlining the defining features of each stage and identifying how learning and development differ in the first and subsequent stages.	by **2013**
establish and implement an evaluation strand for the junior cycle developments.	by **2013**
ensure that overarching boards and development groups have access to evidence from research and from school and setting networks.	ongoing

3.2

Teachers, practitioners, parents, learners and others are accessing research findings and examples of practice from schools and settings.

To achieve this we will

publish research findings in easily accessible formats.

ongoing

extend the suite of resources which highlight key messages from the language reports published in May 2012 to inform the new primary language curriculum.

ongoing

develop new resources which share key messages on early childhood education from the language reports published in 2012 and the mathematics reports published in 2013.

ongoing

research findings, knowledge and examples of practice gained through the NCCA junior cycle network are being shared by individual schools and by other networks.

ongoing

3.3

NCCA is contributing to and supporting the increased focus on the use of evidence in policy-making and evaluation generally, and in schools and other educational settings.

To achieve this we will

further develop relationships with other organisations to widely share research and practitioner evidence.

ongoing

ensure that all NCCA groups have access to relevant research and practitioner evidence.

ongoing

3.4

Research findings and new knowledge are shared and interrogated by NCCA staff as an integral part of their work.

To achieve this we will

provide opportunities for NCCA staff to discuss relevant research and evidence from school and setting networks, with particular emphasis on cross-sectoral connections.

ongoing

use the new cloud computing space to share and collaborate.

ongoing

invite researchers and external experts to present and discuss relevant areas of research and expertise with NCCA staff.

ongoing

provide opportunities for staff to write and present conference papers on findings from research and work with schools and other settings.

ongoing
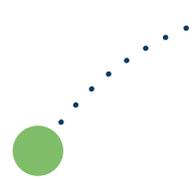
4.0

Strategic relationships

To build on existing strategic relationships and develop new ones to support and connect curriculum and assessment development and implementation.

We will deliver on this goal through the following planned outcomes:

4.1

Collaborative relationships with a number of organisations are improving the understanding and quality of curriculum and assessment developments and implementation.

To achieve this we will

ensure that members of Council, overarching boards and development groups are supported in communicating to their organisations.

ongoing

work with the DES on implementation planning and strategy related to the junior cycle developments.

ongoing

establish a standing committee with the Higher Education Authority to improve the experience of transition from second-level to higher education.

2012 and ongoing

work with the State Examinations Commission to develop the best approaches to new assessment arrangements.

ongoing

work with the Teaching Council on the implications of curriculum and assessment change for teachers' qualifications, training and professional development.

by **2013**

work with the Early Years Education Policy Unit to support the early childhood sector in using *Aistear* to improve practice and outcomes for children.

ongoing

work with teacher support organisations to support teachers' planning and implementation of new curriculum and assessment developments.

ongoing

4.2

Staff and students in early childhood courses and initial teacher education are well-informed about our work, and in turn, have opportunities to contribute to that work.

To achieve this we will

engage with staff in initial teacher education and continuing teacher professional development, and those involved in providing courses in early childhood education, on curriculum and assessment developments and invite feedback on key developments.

ongoing

contribute to the development of a further education curriculum module in collaboration with relevant organisations, to support practitioners' work with *Aistear*.

by **2014**

4.3

Curriculum and assessment developments north and south of the border have been supported by collaboration between NCCA and CCEA.

To achieve this we will

engage with CCEA on its re-establishment to identify areas of common interest on engagement.

by **2013**

5.0

Profile and communications

To communicate, present and share the work and achievements of the NCCA to improve the profile of the organisation and engagement with its work.

We will deliver on this goal through the following planned outcomes:

5.1

Arising from an effective media strategy, key messages on reforms are widely shared and NCCA responses and contributions are informed and timely.

To achieve this we will

....

employ a range of media to ensure key messages are communicated to schools and the general public.

ongoing

....

use social media to convey key messages and to engage teachers, practitioners, learners and others.

ongoing

....

establish and implement effective communications for junior cycle, for primary language developments and for *Aistear.*

2012 and ongoing

....

5.2

A new form of online curriculum and assessment specification has been introduced for primary and post-primary developments.

To achieve this we will

....

develop new curriculum specifications for the primary language curriculum, for Junior Cycle English, Business Studies, Gaeilge and Science and for eight of short courses.

by **2013**

....

5.3

NCCA websites are consolidated and improved in response to customer-feedback, statistics on web usage and developments in online and social media.

To achieve this we will

....

evaluate the quality of NCCA's web-based communications using customer feedback, statistics on use of the NCCA websites, and developments in online and social media.

ongoing

....

develop and consolidate our websites to meet NCCA's current and future needs, and the needs of the education and wider community.

ongoing

....

5.4

The work of the NCCA on curriculum and assessment and on practice in schools is shared with national and international audiences.

To achieve this we will

....

have an NCCA presence at relevant national and international events and showcase the NCCA's work in a strategic manner at conferences and seminars.

ongoing

....

participate in and contribute to the European network on key competences, KeyCoNet.

2013–14

....

6.0

Organisational effectiveness and governance

To develop the NCCA governance and organisation structures, processes, skills and competences to innovate in the achievement of the vision.

We will deliver on this goal through the following planned outcomes:

6.1

Organisation structures and processes are supporting innovative curriculum and assessment development and collaborative work practices.

To achieve this we will

review committee and working group structures to improve alignment with the work.	by **2012**
build collaboration across teams and other structures to improve continuity across sectors and improve workflow.	by **2013**
liaise closely with the OPW in establishing locations for NCCA offices in the Dublin and midlands regions and in fitting out of these offices to ensure good fit with organisational goals.	by **2013**
complete the move to new offices with the minimum of disruption on work.	by **2013**
complete the move to cloud computing.	by **2013**

6.2

NCCA staff has developed the knowledge and competences required to develop innovative curriculum and assessment advice and to support its introduction in schools.

To achieve this we will

continue to provide professional development related to competences identified in the performance management process.	ongoing
encourage and support staff to develop their knowledge and competences through higher education studies and research.	ongoing

6.3

There is a strong performance culture across the organisation.

To achieve this we will

implement the revised Civil Service Performance Management and Development system.   by **2012**

prepare workforce plan to support Public Service Reform and inform NCCA HR strategy.   by **2013**

6.4

There is a robust financial management and reporting system in place with a strong emphasis on value for money.

To achieve this we will

maintain relevant accounting standards to a high standard in line with government guidelines.   ongoing

provide all necessary documentation for internal and external audit.   ongoing

6.5

The governance requirements of state bodies are fully complied with.

To achieve this we will

support the work of the audit committee and develop and implement a programme of work for internal audit.   ongoing

meet all necessary reporting requirements of the Departments of Education and Skills and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.   ongoing

adhere to public procurement guidelines.   ongoing

maintain and update the risk register.   **2012** and ongoing

6.6

Customer service standards are developed and improved.

To achieve this we will

the customer service charter is reviewed and updated and service delivery is improved.   by **2013**
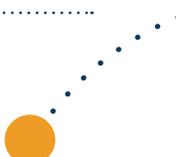
6.7

The NCCA has complied with all relevant public sector agreements and development plans.

To achieve this we will

meet all targets outlined in the Public Service Agreement 2010–2014 (Croke Park).   by **2014**

adhere to our employment control framework.   ongoing

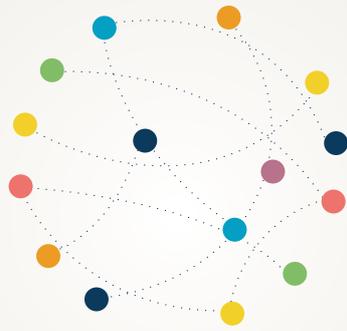# 05
Monitoring & Reporting

This strategic plan sets out the strategic goals, outcomes and targets that will direct the work of the NCCA over the period of the Council 2012–2015. Ongoing progress will be monitored and reported through general updates to the Council, through published annual reports and through an annual output statement.

The preparation and implementation of an annual business plan and the implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) are central to guiding and monitoring progress at organisational and individual level.

Progress reports and presentations on the various areas of work will be presented to Council over the course of the strategy. An Annual Report detailing progress made in implementing the strategy will be published each year.

Agreement on a Memo of Understanding with the Department of Education and Skills will provide a framework for reporting to the Department and improve clarity with regards to roles and responsibilities.

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General conducts audits of receipts and expenditure and of procedures and practices. The outcomes of these audits are published in the C and AG's Annual Report.

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