

Senior Cycle Physical Education

Report on the
Consultation

April
2012

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1. Introduction

It is proposed that curriculum specification for Physical Education in senior cycle will have two elements. Leaving Certificate Physical Education (LCPE) is being developed as a full Leaving Certificate subject. Senior Cycle Physical Education (SCPE) is designed to provide schools with a framework within which they can design a physical education programme for those students who do not choose to take physical education as part of their Leaving Certificate.

The draft LCPE syllabus and the draft framework for SCPE were approved for consultation by Council in January, 2011.

The ensuing consultation process was designed to ensure appropriate and meaningful engagement with different groups and individuals. It consisted of a number of different elements:

- An on-line questionnaire and opportunity for submissions (LCPE and SCPE)
- Focus groups with practicing physical education teachers facilitated by the Physical Education Association of Ireland (LCPE and SCPE)
- Three post primary school visits which included consulting with students, the Principal and physical education teachers (LCPE)
- Focus groups with five groups of third level students; pre-service physical education students, Leisure and Recreation students and Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) students in sport and leisure courses (LCPE)
- Consultation meetings with interested bodies (SCPE and LCPE).

The consultation process began in April and concluded in December, 2011. The online consultation on both LCPE and SCPE was live for the duration of that period. To avoid confusion between the framework and the syllabus, it was decided to consult about SCPE between April and June, 2011 and LCPE from September to December, 2011. SCPE and LCPE are also discussed separately in this report.

1.1 Consultation on Leaving Certificate Physical Education

The consultation on the proposals for LCPE took place between September and December, 2011. The consultation process used a range of approaches as outlined above. The **online consultation** comprised of an online questionnaire, a short feedback form and/or an invitation to make a submission. In total, 34 respondents started the online consultation and 15 completed it. Thirty one of the respondents were teachers, with third level students and others making up the remainder. Respondents were also invited to make submissions using a short template or an open format. No submissions were received in this format. Nineteen submissions were received by email (Appendix 1). In general, the submissions focused on the broader organisational issues while some also contained specific comments and suggestions about the draft syllabus and proposed assessment arrangements.

Fifteen consultation meetings were held with various interest groups and individuals. These ranged in size and the largest group comprised over 100 people. These consultation meetings also included contributions from international sources. In particular, we sought feedback from Dr. David Kirk and Dr. Toni Donovan in the University of Bradford and Stuart Forsyth in the University of Strathclyde. All three are academics in physical education and have done extensive work in the teaching and assessment of physical education. Dr. Kirk has extensive knowledge and experience of physical education both in the UK and Australia. Other organisations held consultation meetings to inform their responses to the consultation.

The Physical Education Association of Ireland (PEAI) consulted with physical education teachers on a regional basis through its existing regional networks. The PEAi Executive attended a planning workshop facilitated by NCCA in September to prepare the consultation meetings to be used in the seven regional consultations organised. Teachers were notified about the consultations by post at their schools and through the PEAi website. In all, over 200 teachers attended these meetings.

The principal, physical education teachers and students in three post primary schools participated in the **school based consultation**. The schools selected had either a programme in senior cycle or a very strong sporting culture and ethos. Two schools were urban mixed schools, one was a boys' voluntary secondary school.

Five **focus groups** were facilitated with groups of third level students. These included pre-service physical education students, leisure and recreation students and post leaving certificate (PLC) students in sport and leisure courses. The focus group format was similar to that used with the second level students in the school based consultations. In all, 70 students were involved.

Meetings were also held with other significant stakeholders (Appendix 2). Other relevant organisations and sporting bodies were specifically targeted and asked to participate in the consultation. Three of these made submissions.

1.2 Consultation on Senior Cycle Physical Education

Consultation on Senior Cycle Physical Education (SCPE) took place in April and May, 2011. Similar to the LCPE consultation, the PEAI consulted with physical education teachers using a workshop approach and once again, teachers were notified about the consultation by post at their schools and through the PEAI website. In all, over 150 teachers participated in these consultation groups. Thirty-seven people responded to the online consultation. They comprised mainly teachers and a small number of students.

A small number of other meetings also fed into the feedback received. They were with groups including the Physical Education Teacher Education network (PETE), Coaching Ireland and the Irish Heart Alliance. The NCCA also made a presentation about the proposals for SCPE at the Association Internationale des Ecoles Superieures d'Education Physique (AIESEP) International conference in Limerick in June. Valuable feedback was received here from Irish and international physical educationalists.

2. Feedback from LCPE consultation

The areas of feedback that emerged from the consultation process were:

- a broad welcome for LCPE
- physical activity areas
- schools' capacity to introduce LCPE
- assessment in LCPE.

2.1 A broad welcome for LCPE

The draft syllabus has been broadly welcomed by the different groups and individuals who participated in the consultation process. Historically, there had been a concern that when and if Physical Education was developed as an examination subject, something of its perceived value as a break, a stress-free experience for students, would be lost. These concerns were largely absent from the consultation feedback. The draft syllabus was seen as contributing to the status of the subject generally, but more specifically to providing a broader learning experience in senior cycle education.

It introduces fairness into the system as it recognises excellence in another area. (Student)

I would be very happy that there would be a considerable interest in it. I don't think we would have any issue slotting it in. (School principal)

This will give students who have a talent and aptitude in physical education an opportunity to capitalise on it. (PEAI consultation)

LCPE promotes the aim and objectives of senior cycle education.

(PEAI consultation)

It was felt that the introduction of LCPE would be an important addition to young peoples' learning and assessment experience in Leaving Certificate, providing them with an opportunity to learn in and to be assessed through the psychomotor domain. The draft syllabus would

appeal not only to students who were exceptionally able at sport but also to those who had an interest in and enthusiasm for sport and physical activity generally. It would facilitate students to learn about physical activity and sport both in terms of themselves as performers but also about the wider influences that impact on their own and others' experience of sport and physical activity.

The applied nature of the learning was commented on favourably, particularly in the student consultations. It was also seen as appealing to students who might want to pursue a range of careers in physical activity and sport.

Good subject for points, more interesting, more practical, more modern. (Student)

LCPE...important for health and wellbeing of the country...great subject...disappointed that I didn't get the chance to do it. (Student)

There was general agreement that the syllabus would promote and develop an understanding about and commitment to lifelong participation in physical activity. Many of the national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) are currently putting in place structures designed to promote participation and to recognise the different skills and abilities that young people develop through their involvement in sport. Many of the ideas in LCPE were seen as building on these developments.

Movement for life is presented well as being non-competitive and non-threatening and something achievable for all. (HSE)

The document reiterates the need to raise awareness in Ireland of the importance of protecting cardiovascular health.

(HSE Health Promotion)

Within the "Related learning" section on page 11, it is very welcome to read the community and society paragraph, where learners will be encouraged to explore physical activity opportunities within and beyond

the school environment. From an LSP perspective, we would be delighted to work more closely with schools in this area and explore how students can become more involved, and in some cases take PE out of the classroom/sports hall.

(Local Sports Partnerships' Response)

The aim of Physical Education in the senior cycle is to develop the learner's ability to become a skilled, self-directed, intelligent and reflective performer in physical activity. This would overlap with the aims of Irish Sports Council, Coaching Ireland and the NGBs; reflected in the development of a framework for the Lifelong Involvement in Sport and Physical Activity. (Coaching Ireland)

There was some concern about students, principals and parents having preconceptions about physical education and whether a lack of parity of esteem would emerge between physical education and other Leaving Certificate subjects. These preconceptions might prevent students from choosing to study LCPE. The importance of providing accurate information about what was envisaged for the subject and for assessment in LCPE was stressed.

How it is going to be sold to students is going to be critical within the schools...it's an academic subject, its 100 points, that's what it isstudents have to be clear about what they are opting for. (Principal)

Finally, the vast majority of second and third level students indicated that they would have chosen to study LCPE if it had been offered to them. The opportunity to study a subject that was of direct personal interest held particular appeal as did the practical and applied nature of the learning.

2.2 Physical activity areas

In the draft syllabus, there are six physical activity areas and students and their teacher are required to select three physical activities, one from three different physical activity areas.

These physical activities provide the basis for students' learning and assessment in LCPE. There were a number of recurring themes in the discussions around this aspect of the syllabus. There were those who supported the proposal that students would select three activities from three physical activity areas as the basis for their learning in LCPE. This, it was felt, would ensure breadth and depth of learning in physical education.

It should be structured for the interests of all students and not just team players...keep the three activities from three different areas.

(Student response)

The selection of physical activities brings into play activities both inside and outside the school. As teachers engaged in the consultation process, they grew in their appreciation of the challenges that would arise were students to be allowed focus on their choice of activity. This would, some argued, present a number of difficulties for the organisation of teaching and learning. For example, when students are learning about performance analysis, they will be required to examine the performance from a number of perspectives. It is difficult to see how a physical education teacher could facilitate this analysis effectively for a wide range of physical activities given that the factors are very different in different activities and their experience might not extend across all the physical activities involved.

There were others who emphasised that the focus of the syllabus should be on learning in the context of physical education while still recognising that students could draw on their learning and experiences in sport and physical activity beyond the context of the school.

The opportunities for students to learn about playing and non-playing roles (e.g. coach, referee) in the context of the three selected physical activities also received favourable comment. Students could then, it was suggested, be encouraged to personalise and apply their learning in the context of playing and non-playing roles.

The need for exemplification of standards of performance in the different physical activities was a recurring theme as teachers in particular were keen to know exactly what would constitute a fair, good and excellent performance in the different physical activities. It was suggested that these standards could be developed from a variety of initiatives currently being progressed by

NGBs both in relation to playing and non-playing roles. In the Scottish system, there is physical education working group whose task it is to generate exemplification of standards applicable in a school context.

However, for others, the way in which these activities would, in reality, be selected was a cause for concern. A number of questions were raised: Would the selection of the three physical activities be unduly limited by the knowledge and skills of the teacher and/or the facilities available? How might the three activities be best selected in an effort to maximise the benefit and appeal to individual students in a class? In a mixed physical education class, would it be difficult to select three activities that would appeal to both sexes equally? To what extent would the activities selected influence students' willingness to study physical education? Was there any likelihood that minor sports would not be considered for inclusion?

Students should have the main say, so, about which activities are selected...If that's the case, one activity should be a team sport, the other an individual sport. (Student)

It seems only fair that students who invest time and money in after school sports should get the opportunity to benefit for that. (Student)

The importance of the negotiated curriculum was also stressed in support of students' meaningful engagement in LCPE.

A number of different consultation groups suggested that the proposed groupings of physical activities might not ensure the necessary breadth and depth of experience in physical education. There was a preference for activities to be further grouped within the physical activity areas, e.g. in games, different games would be further sub-divided into invasion, divided court and striking and fielding games.

Other contributors suggested that the current configuration of physical activity areas could potentially have long term negative repercussions for those activities that are currently less favoured in physical education but which are of interest to some students, e.g. individual activities and artistic/aesthetic activities. This could in turn result in physical education being

more likely to be studied by those who are currently well served by current practices in physical education, i.e. those students who have an interest in games.

Finally, it was recommended by one group that some thought should be given to preventing the same three activities being selected by a school year in year out. This would work against students having any real say in what activities might be the focus in a given year.

2.3 Schools' capacity to introduce LCPE

Amidst the broad welcome for the introduction of LCPE as a subject option in the Leaving Certificate, there was concern about introducing another option into an already crowded space. There was concern that its introduction would have implications for minority, optional subjects which are already under pressure to attract viable numbers for their inclusion on the timetable. The need for a double period for PE would also present a further timetabling challenge.

Seventeen options currently available now...you may experience resistance from Principals because PE teachers are the 'go to' people to sort out the log jams on the timetable...if that changes, that reduces their flexibility. (School Principal)

One principal recommended that a preferential pupil teacher ratio of 24:1 should apply for LCPE. He also suggested that different schools would encounter different challenges with the introduction of LCPE. He recommended that it would be worthwhile for a representative group of principals to tease out solutions for the different challenges that might arise in this regard.

Some concern was expressed about the demands that the dual provision, for the non-examination framework and the syllabus, would make in terms of the availability of teachers, additional teacher workload and demands on facilities.

.... A base line profile should be prepared to set out minimum requirements to deliver each of the activity areas in the framework and syllabus.a lack of resources may force schools to only offer 'one or the other' preventing real student choice. The unions consider all

schools, irrespective of size, should be supported in offering both the syllabus and framework option to each year group with students selecting which one to pursue...Effective measures must be put in place to protect against limitations in schools' capacity to offer both curriculum options and an appropriate mix and range of activity areas in each. In this regard, the unions consider weighted resources (e.g. additional teaching hours and financial support) will be essential for some schools.

(Joint Submission from the Teacher Unions)

As PE is likely to be a subject that many students may be interested in taking to Leaving Cert, it would be a shame if some were unable to do so because their schools did not have the staff or the facilities to offer this. There is an equity issue here and we wonder if the Department has considered encouraging schools to share resources and specialist teachers between schools in close proximity.

(HSE West)

Some schools were confident that they could offer both, while others felt that the provision of one could negatively impact on the other. It was suggested that the non-examination framework might be the one more likely to lose out in the event of limited resources.

2.4 Units 1 and 2

The LCPE syllabus is presented as two units of study. Unit 1, *Toward Optimum Performance*, focuses on the complex interrelationship between performance in physical activity and the range of factors that shape that performance. Unit 2, *Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity* aims to develop learners as literate and critical participants in physical activity and sport as they examine the many factors that influence performance and participation. While the consultation feedback did not focus to any significant extent on what was proposed in Units 1 and 2, some revisions were suggested.

In Unit 1, *Towards Optimum Performance*, it was proposed that the unit might be re-configured using the following topic headings:

- Physical Aspects
- Psychological Aspects
- Technical and Tactical Analysis
- Artistic/Aesthetic Considerations

It was suggested that given to the possibility of some elements being required areas of study as they were seen as being central to learning in physical education, e.g. biomechanics and psychological aspects of physical activity.

In Unit 2, *Contemporary Issues in Physical Activity*, learning outcomes which address the following should be considered for inclusion:

- Importance of nutrition in a healthy lifestyle
- The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Ireland, 'Get Ireland Active'
- Opportunities for learners to connect with the Local Sports Partnerships
- The growing influence of the cyber world of apps and their relevance to the promotion of and engagement in physical activity and sport
- Drugs in sport and anti-doping rules combined under 'Illegal Ergogenic Aids'

It was also suggested that problem-based learning approaches currently being used to support learning about performance, coaching and officiating in different sports and physical activities should be considered in order to exploit their potential to support students' learning about the complexities and interdependent nature of problems in physical activity and sport.

2.5 Assessment in LCPE

Assessment in LCPE is designed to assess learning in physical education and the learner's ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical aspects to improving participation and performance in physical activity and sport. The 'process' nature of the second component assessment has two elements: firstly, it allows learners to demonstrate their ability

to plan to improve their personal performance and secondly, to demonstrate their best performance over a number of occasions. For these reasons and following extensive comparison with the situation in other countries, the syllabus went to consultation with the proposal that physical education teachers would be involved in assessing the work of their own students on the practical, second component assessment.

There was mixed reaction to the assessment proposals. For some, the proposals were considered to be fair and balanced as they were seen as providing all students with the possibility of experiencing success and not just those who excelled at performance. Many of the students consulted saw the assessment arrangements as giving a fair chance to those who might struggle academically but who could excel in the practical assessments. The possibility of students being assessed in non-playing roles, i.e. official or coach/choreographer, was also well received. It was also suggested that assessment in LCPE would impact positively on teaching and learning and result in an emphasis on applied learning.

Students should not meet the assessment task the first time they are required to do it. The learning experiences should all the time be building towards the assessment tasks. The involvement of the teacher in planning for teaching and learning and overseeing the assessment process is central to this idea.

(Kirk and Donovan, University of Bradford)

The current proposals were also seen as being fairer to those students who might not have had the same opportunities to pursue sporting excellence outside of physical education.

However, there was a widespread expectation that the practical assessment in LCPE would be designed to recognise the talent and excellence that some students had achieved in their chosen activity either within or beyond the school. There was disappointment that the assessment in LCPE would focus primarily on students' learning in physical education as it applied to the three physical activities being studied by the students.

LCPE has the potential to change the entire experience of Leaving Certificate but could also restrict students that have certain sporting skills with the subject. (Student)

*LCPE is designed for those who excel in traditional sports and games in Ireland rather than individual sports such as karate and swimming.
(Student)*

In the meetings and in the online questionnaire, there were teachers who were concerned about assessing their own students for a variety of reasons. A small number made reference to the ASTI position on teachers being involved in the assessment of their own students. For others, the concern was that teachers might come under pressure about grading from students, parents and others, given the high stakes nature of the Leaving Certificate examination. The close relationship that often exists between students and their PE teacher, as a result of their involvement in extra-curricular activities, might also make it difficult to maintain a sufficiently objective stance in the assessment process.

The nature of our job means that we develop a close working relationship with our students through teaching and also through coaching. With the best will in the world our assessment would have to be influenced by this. (Teacher)

There was widespread support from teachers and students for a 50/50 split on the weighting of the practical and written assessment components. Within that, however, there were suggestions that the personal performance project (PPP) should attract 30% and the assessment of performance, 20%, the reverse of what is proposed. Given that students cannot choose beyond the three activities for their performance assessment, it was argued that this would be a fairer arrangement.

There is a balance between the practical and the written exam and this is very welcome as it takes account of differing learning styles and multiple intelligences in the student population.

(HSE West)

The opportunity to have 50% before sitting the written paper is great.

(Student)

Another recurring theme was that the professional development in support of the assessment and moderation processes would have a positive impact on teaching and learning in physical education. This has been a feature of consultation feedback on the experience of change in Scottish physical education.

The use of ICT in the design of the assessment proposals was welcomed although there was some concern that teachers might not have the technical skills required to support it, Students, however, were very enthusiastic about these proposals.

The consultation drew attention to a variety of approaches to moderation used in other countries. It was suggested that these should be examined in detail to look at how they might inform the moderation of the second assessment component here.

2.6 Second component assessment

Personal performance project (PPP)

In the personal performance project the student chooses one of the three physical activities and the role they wish to focus on, i.e. performer, coach or official/referee. They then engage in a process of analysing their performance from a number of perspectives, identify elements they wish to improve, plan for improvement, implement the plan and reflect on the outcomes – an action research cycle. They are marked on the basis of the process of engagement and not on incremental improvement.

There was a welcome for the possibility of assessment in the different roles, and for the second component assessment over time which teachers saw as giving the student the best possibility of doing well. There were others who saw it as being problematic in that it would require a lot of time and might take too much from 'class time'.

We will need clarification about the assessment of different roles...that the emphasis is on process rather than on incremental improvement.

(PEAI consultation)

However the main recommendation that emerged on the PPP was that it should be possible for students who are elite performers to undertake the PPP in that activity. This would allow students to draw on the knowledge and expertise that they may have about that activity in completing their PPP.

In support of this view, the case was made that the steps involved in planning to improve performance are similar in all activities and that it would not be necessary for the physical education teacher to be an expert in every activity. This arrangement, however, would have to be carefully considered, given the concerns expressed by one student group that those students with the cultural capital necessary to achieve excellence beyond the school setting would not be further advantaged by the assessment arrangements proposed for the subject.

In the consultations with international colleagues, we learned that in Scotland, they have chosen to drop the investigation task because of the different levels of support being given to students by teachers. In Queensland, they include a similar assessment component.

On balance however, in the Irish context, the PPP was seen as having the potential to encourage self-directed and lifelong learning in the event of students being able to choose to complete it in an activity of their choice.

In addition to this recommendation, there were calls for much greater detail about the electronic storyboard that would provide the organising template for students' evidence of engagement with the PPP. The need to generate exemplification of performance standards to support students in the analysis of their performance in the storyboards was called for. Continuing professional development would also be required to up-skill teachers in supporting students with their PPP, particularly in the area of ICT.

Finally, the importance of moderation in controlling and checking consistency of standards across schools was emphasised. Inspection can also play an important part in assuring the

quality of the PPP in individual schools. There was some concern that this could be challenging given the differences in facilities and opportunities that different schools can offer.

Assessment of performance

The assessment of performance was an important focus in all of the consultations. In the first instance, there was an expectation among teachers and students that the practical assessment in physical education would allow the student to be assessed in their area of excellence. There was a sense among some teachers and students that effort, commitment and practice put in outside the school setting should be recognised.

The time students and indeed teachers spend outside school practicing and training with their clubs/teams is when they develop most of their skills. In other subjects, students are not penalised for this, i.e. music.

(Teacher)

The draft assessment proposals confine the assessment of performance to the three activities studied in physical education.

Secondly, many teachers had not expected that they would be directly involved in the second component assessment. It is proposed in LCPE that the physical education teacher would assess the student's performance in one of three activities on a number of occasions in order to give the student the best possible chance to excel and/or to be accommodated in the event of injury or poor form. There were a variety of reactions to these proposals

We welcome the continuous nature of the performance assessment...takes pressure off.

The importance of moderation to ensure fairness and standards being similar needs to be stressed.

There will be a need to define assessment criteria really clearly.

What about the possibility of rotating teachers between schools for monitoring purposes similar to language oral exams?

These proposals will seriously increase the demands on the PE teacher.

We will need exemplification of performance standards.

Grading and consistency in grading is important...there is a need for detailed assessment briefs/rubrics.

The assessment of performance should be about assessing the student's performance in an authentic way....not just closed skills.... using a series of modified authentic practices designed to capture a picture of the complete performance.

(All comments from teachers involved in the PEAI consultation)

The PEAI submission suggested that the assessment of performance should focus on the following:

- The use of a range of skills to participate effectively within performance conditions
- The performer's ability to have an influence on the performance of others
- The ability of the performer to make decisions that demonstrate an understanding of the rules, tactics and strategies of the activity

Similar to the assessment of the PPP, some teachers were unhappy about being involved in the assessment of their own students' performance for grading purposes. For some, there was concern about assessing students who were elite performers. Others felt that the assessment proposals would place an unreasonable burden on physical education teachers given that they happen over a period of time.

As with other aspects of the syllabus, there was unanimous agreement that teachers would require substantial professional development to build the skills and confidence to carry out the assessment of performance fairly. This kind of professional learning has been found to be enormously beneficial for physical education teachers in Scotland.

Across most consultation events there was a strong expectation that students' excellence in a wide range of physical activities would now be recognised formally as part of their LCPE examination. When teachers began to discuss the complexities of providing for such an approach, it became apparent to them that such provision was not feasible for many reasons including the following; how could the teachers be expected to have the knowledge and understanding to assess an ever growing number of activities? How would the teacher set up the assessment conditions in an out of school setting with other young people not involved in the assessment process? How could these assessments be carried out when students participate in these activities in the evenings and at week-ends? What would happen if the student was injured or ill? The problems are complex and numerous.

The complexities that the assessment of performance would pose without the involvement of the physical education teacher in the assessment of performance process emerged during these discussions. It became clear to participants that it would be virtually impossible to progress plans for LCPE without teacher involvement in the assessment process. Without exception, when given the opportunity to unpack the issues, there was an acceptance of the need to proceed in the proposed direction, but with more emphasis on the need for greater clarity and detail around the second component assessment and extensive CPD to support teachers in their assessment role.

3. Feedback from the SCPE consultation

The areas of feedback that emerged from the consultations about SCPE were:

- a broad welcome for SCPE
- making provision for SCPE
- models based approach in SCPE
- proposals for next steps

3.1 A broad welcome for SCPE

The SCPE framework was positively received by teachers, students, groups and individuals interested in physical education in senior cycle. It was agreed that the framework would provide a flexible, adaptable structure for planning in physical education in a variety of schools. It would raise the profile of physical education in senior cycle by providing a planning tool for the development of a meaningful programme which could build on the good practice already in place in some schools. Teachers felt that the diversity of interests and levels of motivation present in any given senior cycle physical education class could be accommodated by the framework.

The framework was seen as building on Junior Cycle physical education and yet, it was different and should appeal to senior cycle students and encourage them to be physically active.

SCPE will enhance the profile of physical education in senior cycle, building, as it does, on what many teachers are already doing in senior cycle PE.

The framework offers a different approach while building on junior cycle physical education.

The framework will support students' improved engagement in PE as it offers age appropriate learning experiences.

(PEAI)

Everyone will have a say...it won't just be soccer

*PE will be building towards something...an event, a performance,
a qualification.*

The teacher will be working with students rather than against them

Should be better levels of involvement/motivation,,,,,not boring

It is looking at PE in different ways

*Like the playing and non-playing roles...learn other skills other than what
we usually do in PE*

Research/contemporary issues will appeal to some students.

(Students)

From the point of view of the Health Promoting Schools concept, the document was seen to reflect the values of striving for a healthy lifestyle at all stages of life through becoming committed to regular physical activity during school years. The framework proposals were seen as inclusive and respected the interests and abilities of different students.

*The framework will contribute to lifelong learning as students are
required to take responsibility for their learning.*

*The framework meets the needs of a wider group of students and not
just the sporty types.*

*The links to physical activity in the community which the framework
supports and encourages are welcome.*

(PEAI consultation)

It was suggested that students would have greater ownership of their learning in SCPE because the activities would be selected in consultation with them and would include activities that students also consider to be enjoyable and worthwhile. The ways in which activities are selected in SCPE should, it was recommended, be constantly monitored to ensure that no particular group is continually disadvantaged.

SCPE would provide variety and interest for students particularly because students have a greater say in the activities that will be included. (PEAI)

There were teachers who were concerned that some students may not 'buy in' to some of the learning experiences envisaged in the framework, particularly those who had a narrow view about what physical education was about. Negotiating which activity might be the class activity could be challenging with these students.

The way in which SCPE is designed to encourage links between what happens in physical education class, extra-curricular activities, Local Sports Partnerships and sport and recreation groups in the community was very positively received. These links would support students' decision making on being physically active now and on finishing second level education.

SCPE was seen as providing a holistic approach to physical education whereby learners are encouraged to examine their own and others' performance and participation in physical activity, to take responsibility for their own activity levels, and to critique the factors that support and obstruct participation in physical activity now and in the future.

The opportunities for students to learn about the theoretical aspects that underpin the importance of physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle were welcomed. It was recommended that Irish research, such as, *Girls' Physical Activity Providers' Guide: national overview of best practices, challenges and recommendations on physical activity initiatives for girls* (PEPAYS, Limerick Sports Partnership and HSE West 2009) should be considered by teachers as they implement the framework. In particular, the importance of consulting young women and young men about their choice of activity should be taken on board.

3.2 Introducing SCPE in senior cycle

In submissions received from the Health Promotion sector and others, the importance of monitoring both provision for and implementation of SCPE was stressed. There was concern about the current poor provision of physical education in senior cycle. It was suggested that lack of facilities and shortages of staff were often a problem and this would need to be addressed if every student in senior cycle was to be given the opportunity to experience physical education. Creative solutions ought to be considered, including sharing facilities and teaching staff between schools in close proximity.

The importance of allocating adequate time, preferably a double period, should be seen as a minimum requirement.

The allocation of adequate time for SCPE was seen as being the most significant challenge. The support of school management for physical education was seen to be the first step in addressing this issue. It was also argued that only fully qualified physical education teachers should be timetabled for SCPE as only they would have the professional knowledge to implement it effectively.

3.3 Models based approach in SCPE

There was a welcome for the breadth and depth that the inclusion of the six teaching and learning models brought to the framework. Each of the models includes a specific rationale, aim, objectives, teaching and learning approaches and assessment arrangements. In the consultation draft of SCPE, the models were referred to as teaching and learning models. In recent professional development courses in support of models based practice, the models have been referred to as curriculum and instructional models. This has led to significant confusion. As a result, it has been recommended that the models be referred to as curriculum and instructional models in SCPE. In addition, a table should be inserted in the document which outlines the characteristics of each of the models and the particular approaches to instruction required when using this model, if applicable. One group also proposed that students' learning in, through and about artistic and aesthetic movement should be included either in the context of one of the existing models or in a model with this particular focus. It was also proposed that the *Health Related Physical Fitness* model be called *Health Related Physical Activity*.

It was pointed out that in the literature about models' based practices, the unique characteristics of a model are referred to as the 'non-negotiables'. These non-negotiables are viewed as central to providing learners with an authentic and worthwhile experience of a particular model. For example, in Sport Education, students should experience the physical activity in seasons, be affiliated to a team, experience formal competition and a culminating event, engage in record keeping, and festivity. In the interests of ensuring a high level of fidelity in using a model, it was proposed that the SCPE framework should include an outline of the non-negotiables in the overview of each of the models.

This was concern that some teachers would not buy into SCPE because of lack of familiarity with the models based approach. Teachers were keen to attend professional development opportunities which would be of a sufficient duration to provide them with the knowledge and skills to use the different models in an effective way in their particular setting. This should, it was suggested, include opportunities to work in communities of practice where they could discuss their experiences with other teachers. It should be remembered that many physical education teachers are the sole practitioners in their school and therefore welcome opportunities to engage with their physical education colleagues. It was also argued that only qualified physical education teachers would have the necessary knowledge and skills to teach SCPE.

3.4 Motivating students in SCPE

Given the very different levels of motivation amongst senior cycle students towards physical activity, one group stressed the importance of teachers developing skills that might help them to motivate less enthusiastic students to become active and to stay active. The use of peer mentoring approaches was also recommended in this context. This group also proposed that education about diet and nutrition as part of a healthy balanced lifestyle should have a central place and that students should also be able to understand and critique the mixed messages that they are being targeted with about exercise, diet and nutrition.

3.5 Portfolio assessment

The proposed use of portfolio assessment received a range of responses. There were those who welcomed the use of the portfolio as a means of encouraging students to gather evidence of their learning in SCPE. Students would be responsible for the portfolio and this was welcomed. Teachers asked for examples of what a good portfolio might look like and an assessment rubric in support of students' self-directed learning.

Others had concerns about the use of portfolio assessment. In one submission, it was argued that the idea of a portfolio was overstated and that

in the context of study which does not lead to a formal qualification, it is unnecessary to outline such explicit portfolio requirements.

(Joint Submission from the Teacher Unions)

There was a concern that compiling the portfolio would have a detrimental impact on teaching and learning time and would represent an increased workload for teachers.

Others suggested that students might not take the portfolio seriously if there were no plans to recognise it in a meaningful way, given all of the other assessment pressures in senior cycle. Coaching Ireland are currently working with FETAC on an initiative whereby young peoples' learning and engagement in performance, coaching and officiating in sports settings beyond the school might be formally recognised in the FETAC award scheme. It was suggested that such developments could have much to offer young people who might choose to make an extra effort to complete the requirements necessary for these FETAC awards. The message was clear that without meaningful recognition, it could be difficult to take the commitment to a physical education portfolio very far.

3.6 Supporting implementation

There were many requests for extensive exemplification including web based resources and videos of models based teaching practice to be made available on the NCCA ACTION website and through the PEAI website. This online resource should, it was suggested, include opportunities for teachers to share their own experiences of using the models through a blog or

a wiki - a website whose users can add, modify, or delete their content via a web browser. Teachers were also keen to learn about using ICT effectively to support students' learning in SCPE.

In some ways, the reception the draft SCPE framework has received is an example of practice outstripping policy. Already the proposals in SCPE have found traction in the system. In pre-service education, students are learning about the different curriculum and instructional models in physical education and are being encouraged to include them in their 'teaching practices'. The Physical Education Association of Ireland (PEAI) in conjunction with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) have organised professional development opportunities where teachers can learn more about SCPE and the curriculum and instructional models, and share their experiences of using them in senior cycle physical education.

4. Related areas

4.1 Adapted physical education

One consultation meeting focused exclusively on the needs and interests of young people with adapted physical activity requirements in senior cycle education. Both LCPE and SCPE were seen as providing a wide variety of ways in which young people with adapted physical activity needs could participate in Physical Education. At all times, it was stressed that the emphasis should be on 'ability' not 'disability'. It was argued that young people with a disability would want to participate as fully as possible and should not be confined to non-playing roles. A number of suggestions were made, including the idea that all young people should be aware of positive examples of participation and performance by people with disabilities in sport and physical activity.

4.2 Health and safety

The submission from the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) outlined the opportunities that physical education in senior cycle provides to develop skills of health and safety management in learners.

Many young people will pursue careers where physical activities will be a core part of their work. Students should therefore understand key health and safety terminology and the value of managing risk both in personal and economical terms. They should also be aware of health and safety legislation and why it is in place.

(Health and Safety Authority)

The Authority proposed that achieving a healthy balance between work and life is critical to health and well-being and physical activity is central to achieving this balance. They recommended that the balance could be highlighted by including the term 'work life' alongside references to 'lifestyle' where it occurs in the documents. The Authority also proposed learning outcomes for including these aspects along with proposals for incorporating useful health and safety resources in both LCPE and SCPE.

4.3 Transition Units

The draft syllabus and framework were seen as presenting opportunities for the development of related Transition Units for use in Transition Year, e.g. Sports Science, Movement Analysis Skills and Sports Leadership. Students' learning in these kinds of Transition Units could place the learner in a stronger position to engage more fully in both SCPE and LCPE while also engaging them in positive physical activity in Transition Year.

5. Progressing the findings of the consultation

The consultation process has raised a number of issues with respect to both draft documents. All of the suggestions have been noted and will contribute to discussion on framing the final versions of the syllabus and framework.

This section of the report addresses the main issues to be considered so progress can be made on the basis of the consultation. They are:

- the physical activity areas in LCPE
- the second component assessment arrangements LCPE
- the six models in SCPE
- recognising student engagement in SCPE

5.1 The physical activity areas in LCPE

Two approaches to the re-configuration of the physical activity areas are suggested in the consultation. The first is that the physical activities might be grouped as shown in the diagram below.

Physical Activity Areas	Activity Groupings
Games	Invasion - rugby, hurling, soccer Divided court - tennis, volleyball Striking and fielding - rounders, cricket
Aquatics	Swimming strokes including entries and turns Life saving / survival swimming
Athletics	Running - sprints, middle and long distance Jumping - long, high and triple Throwing - javelin, shot, discus

Rather than selecting one discrete activity, e.g. rugby in the *Games* category, students would be required to select a sub category such as *Invasion games*. Teaching and learning could then include any game(s) in that sub-category and students could draw on their learning experiences in that game to complete their assessment. This would allow students to focus on the generic principles, tactics and skills in that sub-category while also learning about the unique characteristics of some games.

The second option arose from a concern that the current proposal about the selection of physical activities is likely to result in some activities being chosen frequently while others would be marginalised and neglected. In an effort to address this issue, physical activities could be categorised in the following way

Individual sports	Badminton, Tennis ,
Team sports	Invasion games Divided court games Striking and fielding games
Performance games	Swimming, Orienteering, Athletics
Artistic/aesthetic	Aerobics, Dance, Gymnastics

Students would then be required to select one activity from each category. This change would have a number of outcomes. Firstly, it would ensure breadth in the learning experiences in physical education. Secondly, it would ensure the inclusion of artistic/aesthetic activities in the curriculum, thereby broadening the scope of learning in physical education.

It was suggested during the consultation that the range of activities included in the different areas, particularly in Adventure Activities, ought to be revisited to include a more realistic set of activities that would be manageable in the physical education class. The physical education course committee will revisit these issues as part of its work in completing LCPE.

5.2 Clarifying the second component assessment

The consultation feedback was unequivocal about students having the opportunity to complete their Personal Performance Project (PPP) in an activity of their choice.

The PPP requires the student to complete an action research project in their choice of roles i.e. performer, coach/choreographer, or official/referee. The consultation highlighted the need to specify the precise elements of this action research process, the outcomes expected, and to provide examples of completed projects.

In relation to the assessment of performance, examples of performances need to be made available so that the standard of performance that is envisaged is made clear.

The teacher's role in the assessment of the second component assessment needs further consideration and clarification. For the reasons outlined in the report, teachers have a number of concerns about their role in the second component assessment. Schools and teachers will require detailed guidance about how they are expected to organise the assessment process so that a consistent approach to standard is achieved in LCPE. This guidance should be accompanied by examples of the different standards in the PPP and for performance. In addition, further attention needs to be given to whether the results from the schools would need some further process of monitoring and moderation to ensure consistency of standards across schools and fairness to students.

5.3 Revisiting the six models in SCPE

During the consultation, as teachers became more familiar with the models used in the framework, it became clear that some of the terminology needed to be reconsidered. The options appear to be either the term *models based practice* or *curriculum and instructional models*.

Each model has a number of unique features which are referred to as non-negotiables. It was recommended that the introduction to each model should make these explicit and that the

learning outcomes should reflect the different kinds of learning experiences that are central to a particular model. For example, in Sport Education, students should be able to:

- develop sport specific techniques and fitness
- share planning and administration of sporting experience
- provide responsible leadership
- work effectively with their team/group in pursuit of a common goal.

5.4 Recognising students' learning in SCPE

The importance of assessment in SCPE was recognised in the consultation. Further consideration needs to be given to ways in which student engagement with and completion of the portfolio might be rewarded in a meaningful way.

5.5 Supporting the introduction of LCPE and SCPE

The provision of adequate support for the effective implementation of SCPE and LCPE was a very significant concern to many of those consulted. Both sets of proposals represent substantial changes in practice for physical education teachers. The needs of individual teachers will of course vary and throughout the consultation the need for a varied approach to CPD which would allow teachers to focus on their particular needs and interests was emphasised. The need for training in ICT and portfolio work was a common theme across the consultation

The possibilities of *blended approaches* should be fully explored including the use of online seminars where teachers could share good practice. *Wikis* have been used successfully in the Kerry Physical Education Community of Practice and it was suggested that these have much to offer by way of allowing teachers to share practice ideas and resources.

In conclusion, while there are a number of concerns, this consultation has highlighted an energy and enthusiasm for developments in physical education in senior cycle. The next steps include the reconvening of the course committee for physical education to review the findings of this consultation process. Both documents will be revised in light of the revisions and editions agreed with the course committee. It is envisaged that this work will start immediately and should be completed before the end of the year.

Appendix 1: Written submissions

- Ann Mc Ateer, HSE West
- Ann Walsh, HSE Senior Health Promotion Officer (Schools)
- Chris Bowe
- Ciara Buckley, Volleyball Development Officer
- Claire Walshe,
- Deborah Tannehill, Physical education and Sports Science Department, University of Limerick
- Garret Coyle, (PE teacher and students)
- Health and Safety Authority
- Health Promotion Department - HSE West
- Marie Clonan (PE teacher) and students, Margaret Aylward Community College
- Meath VEC Physical Education teachers
- Michael Crowley, Local Sports Partnerships
- Michelle Dillion, Physical Education and Sports Science Department, University of Limerick
- Physical Education Teacher Education Ireland (PETE)
- Physical Education Association of Ireland
- Sarah Belton, Sport and Exercise Science, Dublin City University
- Yvonne Gilsean, HSE Health Promotion Officer, Dublin North East
- Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland and Teachers Union of Ireland, joint submission.

Appendix 2: Consultation meetings

Consultations meetings were held with the following individuals and groups

Aisling Drea, Sports Inclusion Development Officer, Cork Sports Partnership

Professor David Kirk, Alexander Chair in Physical Education & Sport, Faculty of Education, Dr.

Declan O' Leary, Head of Coaching Services, Coaching Ireland

Julia Walsh, Past Director of Sports Studies and Physical Education, University College Cork

National Heart Alliance

Dr. Toni O'Donovan, Senior Lecturer, School of Physical Education and Sports Science, Sport & Tourism, University of Bedfordshire

Physical Education Association of Ireland Regional Meetings

Stuart Forsyth, Senior Lecturer in Physical Education, University of Strathclyde

Dr. Susan Crawford, Sports Studies and Physical Education Department, UCC

Students from

Ballincollig Community School, Cork

Coláiste Choilm, Ballincollig, Cork

Presentation College, Mardyke, Cork

St. Patrick's, Dillion's Cross, Cork

Glanmire Community College

1st and 2nd yr. Leisure and Recreation students, Cork Institute of Technology

2nd and 4th year Physical Education and Sports Studies students, University College, Cork

1st and 2nd year Sport and Recreation students, Sport and Recreation PLC, Coláiste Stiofáin Náoife, Cork

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