



Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Junior Cycle Classics

Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 Rationale	5
2. Background	6
2.1 Junior Certificate Classical Studies Syllabus 1993	6
2.1.1 Guidelines for Teachers	7
2.1.2 Assessment	8
2.2 Latin and Classical Studies Review 2004	8
2.3 Junior Certificate Draft Classics Syllabus 2010	9
2.3.1 Syllabus Options	10
2.3.2 Language and Civilisation topics	10
2.3.3 Classical civilisation overview	11
2.3.4 Classical civilisation syllabus, 2010: commentary	12
3. Experiences of Classics in junior cycle	14
3.1 Classics in the Primary School Curriculum	14
3.2 ESRI Research	15
3.3 Implementation of the Classical Studies syllabus	16
3.4 The potential for the use of ICT Resources	20
4. Experiences of Latin at junior cycle	22
4.1 Introduction	22
4.2 Background	22
5. Experiences of Ancient Greek at junior cycle	26
5.1 Introduction	26
5.2 Background	26
6. International curriculum for Classics	30
GCSE Classics (UK)	31
Ontario, Canada	32
The expectations for this course are organised into five interrelated strands:	33

Netherlands	34
7. Classics specification in the new junior cycle	35
8. Brief for the review of Junior Cycle Classics	37
References:	40
Appendix: Student Voice	43

1. Introduction

Classics will be introduced in 2019 as a phase five subject as part of the new junior cycle. The curriculum and assessment specification for the subject will be published a year earlier in the autumn of 2018. This paper provides a background for the development of the specification for Junior Cycle Classics. It begins by presenting a rationale for the inclusion of the subject at junior cycle. A brief overview of the format of the existing Classical Studies, Greek and Latin syllabuses are presented, accompanied by the format of the Junior Certificate examination for these subjects. The paper then comments on the Latin and Classical Studies Review of 2004 and the draft rebalanced syllabus from 2010.

Next, the paper explores the experience of students and teachers in Classics, Greek and Latin classrooms, and presents some outcomes and trends regarding performance and uptake in the Junior Certificate examinations. Finally, the paper considers developments in international curricula, and ends with the brief for the development of the specification.

1.1 Rationale

Western thought and society have developed in diverse directions over the past two millennia but there is only one origin and root for all, and that is the classical world of Ancient Greece and Rome. The extant body of surviving archaeology and literature provides us with a portal through which to investigate, experience and reflect on the trials, tribulations, and revelations of these pinnacles of civilisation.

There are two ways through which a study of Greece and Rome can be initiated. The first is through the classical languages of Ancient Greek and Latin. The other is through classical civilisation in translation. Both open possibilities to engage in a diverse range of fields/disciplines including literature, history, drama, philosophy, society, art, architecture, and mythology. This unique blend and interaction of disciplines attracts a wide range of learners and provides an unusual opportunity to combine and connect disparate beliefs, concepts and theories.

The subject encourages learners to interrogate continuity, progression and development from the different perspectives of the ruled and the rulers within the classroom. It opens vistas on our modern complex society as a result. It also aims to facilitate learners to develop an understanding of the 'human condition' and to question their personal cultural heritage and capital, thus becoming more informed and active as local, national, and global citizens.

2. Background

2.1 Junior Certificate Classical Studies Syllabus 1993

This syllabus was introduced as part of the new *Junior Certificate Programme*. Although ‘packaged’ differently, to explicitly state aims and principles in line with all other Junior Certificate subjects, it was not deemed necessary to change the actual course content from that of the Intermediate Certificate, given that the subject had been introduced in the early 80s and first examined in 1983. It aimed to unveil classical civilisation to students in the most wide-ranging way possible. Special attention was given to the strong connection between the classical languages (Latin and Ancient Greek), and the civilisation course (Classical Studies). It was hoped that, as Classical Studies students would not have to spend as much time honing language acquisition skills as those taking the language subjects, they would have the opportunity to engage with and synthesise multiple aspects of classical civilisation in a deeper fashion. It was envisaged that engagement with the civilisation course might lead students to the languages at a later point in their educational development.

The foundational influence of ancient Greece and Rome on the development of our own society’s systems and culture was acknowledged. It was felt that although some of the thoughts and concepts of the ancient authors were ‘sublime’, they were nonetheless ‘accessible’ (*First Year Guidelines*, NCCA, 1993) to students of all ages. The key was for creative educators to utilise methods and resources to connect and anchor the learning opportunities for the learners.

The three-year programme included a one-year foundational course which aimed to introduce the civilisations to new students. This was followed by a two-year Junior Certificate programme. The course objectives focussed on desired concepts, knowledge, skills and attitudes. The following table details the content that comprises the course. Ten topics were devised and were split evenly between the Greek and Roman worlds.

The World of Ancient Greece	The Roman World
Topic 1: The Wrath of Achilles, based on Homer's <i>Iliad</i> , Books I, VI, XVI, XXII, XXIV.	Topic 6: The Quest of Aeneas, based on Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i> , Books I, II, IV, VI.
Topic 2: Greece and Persia based on relevant readings in <i>The Histories</i> of Herodotus.	Topic 7: The Roman Theatre - Comedy, based on the <i>Swaggering Soldier</i> of Plautus, and to include basic knowledge of the Roman theatre.

Topic 3: The Life and Death of Socrates based on The <i>Apology</i> , <i>Crito</i> and <i>Phaedo</i> of Plato.	Topic 8: The Life and Times of Julius Caesar based on the Plutarch's <i>Life of Caesar</i> .
Topic 4: Mycenae and Troy based on the archaeology and legend of the two centres.	Topic 9: A Roman City based on a study of Pompeii.
Topic 5: The Athenian Acropolis, based on the architecture, religion and history of the period in which the Acropolis was built.	Topic 10: The Roman Army.

Table 1: Summary of Junior Certificate Syllabus

Students were expected to choose a total of five topics from the ten on offer and a minimum of two topics from each civilisation had to be studied.

2.1.1 Guidelines for Teachers

Two comprehensive sets of *Guidelines for Teachers* were produced to accompany this syllabus. One gave guidance to teachers on how to construct the foundation year (1st Year course). Sixteen topics relating to Greece and Rome were listed, and expanded on, offering suggested resources, rationale, and methodologies for teachers to explore. Teachers were encouraged to engage with ten topics, (five Greek and five Roman), with the suggestion that those topics could logically prepare the students for the choices made for the Junior Certificate. Suggested background reading and resources were also listed.

The guiding principles of these documents were constructivist in approach; they stressed the importance of autonomous teachers, free from prescribed secondary sources, employing active teaching and learning methodologies, acknowledging their local context, to deeply engage young students. The guidelines exhorted teachers to have confidence to encourage students to examine complex themes and ideas critically, quoting Bruner from *On Knowing* that “the foundations of any subject may be taught to anybody, at any age, in some form” (NCCA 1993 (a), p.3).

The second guidelines booklet (NCCA, 1993 (b)), related to the syllabus for second and third year students. For the topics based around classical texts in translation, those texts were outlined as core reading. This applied to topics 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8. The other topics were compendiums of specific disciplines, and as such no suitable text covering all aspects of the topic was prescribed. Certain text and visual publications, available at the time of writing, were listed as suggested classroom resources.

2.1.2 Assessment

The Junior Certificate syllabus is offered at two levels, Ordinary and Higher. The syllabus framework is common to both levels. The expectation is that all students should work together in a mixed-ability setting. Differentiation is expected to occur at the terminal assessment, with one section of each topic on the paper examined in greater depth. The total marks for the entire paper is four hundred with each individual section worth an equal eighty marks.

As mentioned above each student has to complete five topics from a possible ten. Each topic has a standalone section on the examination paper. Each topic is allotted thirty minutes leading to an overall time allocation of 2½ hours. Each individual assessment topic is subdivided into three sections and these are structured as follows:

Section A

Section A provides six short questions from which the candidate is marked on their best three responses. The question styles are both open and closed. They can require specific information in response or can seek corroborated opinions. A total of twenty-four marks can be earned in this section.

Section B

Section B is differentiated between Ordinary and Higher levels. There is a wide range of possible styles in questioning leading to a total award of thirty-two marks. The styles of questioning include thematic and character style essay questions, imaginative recreations, and application of understanding, skills and attitudes gained from the study of the topics.

Section C

A total of twenty-four marks are available in section C. It normally relies on a primary source stimulus. This could be a visual, a studied text, or an unseen passage. Three questions follow, all of which must be completed by the candidate, with no choice.

2.2 Latin and Classical Studies Review 2004

A review in 2004 looked at the concerns with the subject of Latin which related to (i) declining candidate numbers, (ii) decline in teacher numbers and rise in age profile and (iii) issues within the syllabus, which created real or perceived beliefs that the subject was harder than other comparable subject options.

Regarding Classical Studies, the paper questioned why after twenty years on the post-primary curriculum, the numbers choosing Classical Studies had not grown? It bemoaned the obsolete resources and the time required from teachers to create and source appropriate resources for their students. The shared syllabus structure for ordinary and higher level candidates also elicited queries. It was felt that the lack of differentiation may well be contributing to the extremely high ordinary level failure rate which hovers around 40% annually (as referenced later in this paper).

The report offers multifaceted reasons why the numbers at Junior Certificate Classical Studies have not progressed over the thirty-five years it has been offered.

- *public awareness*; parents and students alike are confused as to what the subject is about
- *perceived difficulty*; those who know what it is about fear that it will be more difficult than other options
- *lack of initial teacher training opportunities*: only one of the major teacher training universities offers timetabled ITE methodology in Classical Studies.
- *horizontal nature of the subject*: students can take up Classical Studies in first year, fourth year, and fifth year. This has led to a number of schools only offering the subject at Leaving Certificate level.
- the lack of differentiation provided for in the syllabus and guidelines.

A lack of awareness of the subject's existence and misconceptions as to the content of the course were mentioned by several of the students consulted for this paper. They felt that there needed to be more awareness of what the subject is all about and that it needs better 'marketing'. A large number of students who chose the subject did so because they had a sibling who had previously taken the subject, were really interested in the 'fantasy stuff', or were attracted to the subject at an Open Day.

2.3 Junior Certificate Draft Classics Syllabus 2010

The aim of this unpublished syllabus (NCCA, 2010) was to bring together the three classical subjects (Classical Studies, Latin and Ancient Greek), at Junior Certificate level, under the auspices of one subject called Classics. The new syllabus also addressed the outdated nature of some of the ten civilisation topics, consolidated their number from ten to eight, and removed the foundation year, combining its purpose with that of the other two years. This created a syllabus three years in length

with an expected teaching time provision of two hundred and forty hours. The objectives of the course were subdivided between concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The major structural change was with flexibility of choice. This draft syllabus envisaged teachers electing to construct their own course from the following options, allowing for combinations of language and civilisation teaching.

2.3.1 Syllabus Options

Option	Requirements
Option 1: Classical Languages	Students take all topics in Sections 1 and 2
Option 2: Latin with Classical Civilisation	Students take all topics in Section 1 and any two sub-sections from Section 3
Option 3: Ancient Greek with Classical Civilisation	Students take all topics in Section 2 and any two sub-sections from Section 3
Option 4: Classical Civilisation	Learners take four sub-sections from Section 3. Two sub-sections must be taken from <i>The Greek World</i> (sub-sections A-D) and two from <i>The Roman World</i> (sub-sections E-H)

Table 2: Draft syllabus, 2010, syllabus options

2.3.2 Language and Civilisation topics

Classical languages		Classical civilisation
Section 1 Latin Language	Section 2: Ancient Greek Language	Section 3: The Greek & Roman Worlds
1.1 Latin expressions in common use	2.1 Words of Ancient Greek origin in English/Irish	A Greek Mythology
1.2 Study of the Latin Language	2.2 Study of the Ancient Greek Language	B Homer's <i>Iliad</i> and the world of the heroes
1.3 Study of unseen prose	2.3 Study of unseen prose.	C Socrates
1.4 Selection of prescribed poetry and prose.	2.4 Selection of prescribed prose.	D The Athens of Pericles
		E The Quest of Aeneas
		F Pompeii

		G Caesar and the Roman Army H Roman Comedy.
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Table 3: Draft syllabus, 2010, Language and civilisation topics

2.3.3 Classical civilisation overview

Section 3 Classical civilisation overview - The Greek and Roman Worlds			
The Greek World sub-sections A – D			
<i>A Greek Mythology</i>	<i>B. Homer's Iliad and the world of the heroes</i>	<i>C. Socrates</i>	<i>D. The Athens of Pericles</i>
A.1 Geography of the Greek World	B.1 Epic Poetry – the Story of the <i>Iliad</i>	C.1 The story of Socrates	D.1 The background of Periclean Athens
A.2 Creation Myths	B.2 Features of Epic Poetry	C.2 The Trial	D.2 Pericles and the Rise of Athens
A.3 Gods of Mount Olympus	B.3 Principal Characters	C.3 Socrates' concept of Philosophy	D.3 The Acropolis
A.4 Famous characters in Greek Mythology	B.4 The role of the gods		D.4 Sculptures of the Parthenon
A.5 The Heroes	B.5 The Heroic Ideal		D.5 Life in Periclean Athens
A.6 The Myths as depicted in the Arts	B.6 Heinrich Schliemann		
The Roman World sub-sections E – H			
<i>E. The Quest of Aeneas</i>	<i>F. Pompeii</i>	<i>G. Caesar and the Roman Army</i>	<i>H. Roman Comedy</i>
E.1 Geography of the Mediterranean lands	F.1 The eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79		H.1 The Greek and Roman theatre

E.2 The story of Virgil's <i>Aeneid</i>	F.2 The archaeology of Pompeii	G.1 Geography of the Roman World in the Late Republic	H.2 Putting on a Play
E.3 Epic poetry	F.3 The plan of Pompeii	G.2 The early career of Caesar	H.3 The structure of a Plautus comedy
E.4 Fate and the gods in the world of the <i>Aeneid</i>	F.4 The Forum	G.3 The First Triumvirate	H.4 The Play
E.5 Virgil's as a poet	F.5 The layout of a typical Roman <i>domus</i>	G.4 The later career of Caesar	H.5 Humour in Plautus
	F.6 Life in Pompeii	G.5 The life of the legionary soldier.	H.6 Stock characters and situations
		G.6 The Roman Army in action: a case study	H.7 Theatre then and now

Table 4: Draft syllabus, 2010: Classical civilisation overview

2.3.4 Classical civilisation syllabus, 2010: commentary

This draft syllabus aimed to combine the civilisation structure from the original foundation course with the second and third year course. It built on the general positive disposition of the students and teachers who have been and are engaged with the subject. For these reasons, no major structural changes were made to the civilisation section. However, this has retained a weighted focus on content being covered. For any new course, considerable time will need to be spent linking the stated skills, attitudes and concepts of the course work so that the new specification will be specifically aligned to the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*. This will include the need for explicit integration of the eight key skills and the appropriate statements of learning. There is no doubt that the considerable work invested in the 2010 syllabus revision will provide a worthy starting point for the development group to begin their work on the new specification.

Section Summary

This section began with an overview of the current syllabus. It outlined the foundation year course which is used to give students contextual background to the classical world. It then described the current Junior Certificate two-year programme.

The concern about the complexity of some disciplines, for the age cohort, is addressed and the overall purpose and objectives of the syllabus analysed. The continued static nature of student numbers in Classics is also discussed. This was a concern in 2004 and has not altered markedly in the ensuing years.

Autonomy in the selection of appropriate resources by the classroom teacher was afforded by the designers of the Junior Certificate syllabus. A lack of availability of suitable resources and a rigid content-focused terminal assessment are some factors which may have undermined this objective.

The chapter proceeds with an overview of the 2004 review of the classical subjects. This review attempted to establish why the subjects had not grown in numbers since the introduction of the Junior Certificate syllabus. Some possible factors affecting the situation are listed.

This section concludes with a short synopsis of the unpublished 2010 specification for Classics. Its considerable work is lauded and it is expected that the document can form a substantial starting point for the work of the development group on a new junior cycle specification.

3. Experiences of Classics in junior cycle

Before considering the design of a new Classics specification for junior cycle, it is important to view the broader curriculum continuum, and Classical Studies' position in it, as well as exploring the experiences of students and teachers. This chapter will outline the current level of classical civilisation engagement within the Primary Curriculum. Next, the paper considers relevant research and evaluation reports including an ESRI report, the relevant SEC Chief Examiner's Reports, and looks at the implications of these for the development of a new Classics specification. Throughout this analysis, reference will be made to the views of teachers and students gleaned from other research into their experiences of the Junior Certificate Classical Studies course.

3.1 Classics in the Primary School Curriculum

In the early primary years, teachers have the autonomy to introduce different mythological stories to their students. They do not have to focus on mythology from the Classical World, though anecdotally the custom and practice in primary schools is that teachers do.

Relevant Classics areas of study appear in the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education History Guidelines for Primary teachers, (DES, 1999). The focus of the course is not just on the transfer of knowledge but also on skills and attitudes. In third and fourth class, the Greeks and the Romans fall under the Early People and Ancient Societies section. The emphasis on this engagement is on the experience of ordinary people's everyday lives.

The skills that are focussed on include the following:

- working with evidence
- working with different perspectives
- an understanding of chronology
- explaining continuity and progression. (DES, 1999)

Even if the students transferring to junior cycle have not specifically dealt with the history of Greece and/or Rome they will have applied suitable skills and techniques to similar civilisations and will have developed knowledge and attitudes that will be applicable to their studies in the post-primary system. The development group should consider this prior experience of students and allow it to inform deliberations on the new specification.

3.2 ESRI Research

In early 2002, as part of the review of junior cycle, the NCCA commissioned the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) to conduct a longitudinal study of students' experiences of transfer from primary to post-primary education. The research followed a group of over 900 students in their first three years of post-primary schooling. Classical Studies was not explicitly listed as one of the subjects on which the longitudinal sample was surveyed. For the purposes of this document we can at best take indicators from the other social science subjects that were included.

In the report on first years' experience (*Smyth, Darmody, McCoy, 2004*), the evidence suggests that the students encounter repetition with what they have already studied in primary school. In general, they tend to prefer subjects which articulate a clear link between school learning and future use. The flip side of this is that the research suggests that they struggle motivationally where the subject matter is more abstract and not explicitly aligned with their current individual and future interests.

The report on second year (*Smyth, Darmody, Dunne, McCoy, 2006*) focuses largely on the disengagement of a majority of students. An absence of meaning and practical application of content learned is suggested as one factor leading to this. The research suggests that over-reliance on traditional teaching methods such as textbooks and teacher talk, and lacking passion in one's subject area, contributes to students disengaging from a subject. The students in general rate the role of the teacher in engaging them very highly. Active learning, things being explained well, and material related to their own lives in a practical way are suggested methods which seem to engage young adolescent learners.

In the report on third year, *Gearing Up For the Exam*, (*Smyth, Darmody, Dunne, McCoy, 2007*) there is a marked dissonance between the idealistic stated aim to focus on the learning process and the focus on preparing for the terminal assessment. Structured examination practice dominates class time for many students. This research is important to consider when devising the Classics specification. The motivation of students to select Classics as a subject, then persevere and succeed at it while developing skills, concepts and attitudes relating to their personal learning should strongly inform the work of the development group.

3.3 Implementation of the Classical Studies syllabus

The views of teachers, students, and other experts are critical to understanding how the Classical Studies course is experienced in the classroom. The views of students come from those that are part of the NCCA *Student Voice* initiative (further details of this initiative can be found in Appendix 1).

As an introduction to this section, Tables 5 and 6 present the numbers of students taking Junior Certificate Classical Studies at Ordinary Level and Higher Level from 2007 to 2012 and details the grade spread for these students.

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2007	91	9.9	14.3	15.4	39.6	19.8	29.7	7.7	3.3	40.7
2008	83	3.6	16.9	24.1	44.6	30.1	15.7	7.2	2.4	25.3
2009	97	1.0	9.3	20.6	30.9	29.9	19.6	16.5	3.1	39.2
2010	93	2.2	7.5	19.4	29.0	33.3	14.0	23.7	0.0	37.6
2011	79	1.3	13.9	24.1	39.2	38.0	19.0	1.3	2.5	22.8
2012	72	1.4	15.3	30.6	47.2	26.4	15.3	11.1	0.0	26.4

Table 5: Grade outcomes Classical Studies Junior Certificate (Ordinary Level) 2007-2012

As is evident from these grades, the EFNG level for Ordinary Level Classical Studies students is very high. This has very real impact on uptake by students, teachers and schools. In stark comparison, at Higher Level the opposite is the case (See Table 6 below). These figures strongly suggest that the students are engaged with the higher-level courses, and are confident of being successful in the subject.

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2007	577	19.9	32.6	26.2	78.7	14.0	5.9	1.2	0.2	7.3
2008	530	19.1	28.1	24.9	72.1	20.0	5.1	2.6	0.2	7.9
2009	521	20.0	33.0	23.6	76.6	16.7	4.2	2.3	0.2	6.7
2010	471	20.2	33.8	24.0	77.9	11.7	6.8	3.0	0.6	10.4

2011	530	21.7	30.2	24.7	76.6	16.6	5.3	1.5	0.0	6.8
2012	484	19.2	32.9	27.1	79.1	13.6	4.8	1.7	0.8	7.2

Table 6: Grade outcomes Classical Studies Junior Certificate (Higher Level) 2007-2012

Table 7 presents the numbers that sat the Junior Certificate examination from 2013 to 2016 at Higher and Ordinary levels.

Year	Higher Level	Ordinary Level
2013	629	89
2014	525	76
2015	512	92
2016	516	56

Table 7: Junior Certificate Classical Studies candidate numbers 2013 - 2016

But what lies behind these statistics? How is classical studies experienced in the classroom? The views of students and information from the three most recent SEC Chief Examiner Reports (2000, 2003 and 2012) are presented here to consider current experiences in planning for the new specification.

This paper will look at the views of the Chief Examiner topic by topic, then examine the recommendations and conclusions included in the reports, and discuss what these might mean for the development of the new specification. Alongside the commentary from the Chief Examiners' reports, the views of students are included.

Topic 1, Wrath of Achilles, is the most popular topic and is usually taken by between 85% and 90% of the students. Examiners noted a high level of engagement with this topic, and an excellent familiarity with the text.

Topic 2, Greece and Persia, is the least popular of the topics, and even when attempted it is with mixed results.

Topic 3, The Life and Death of Socrates, is a popular topic, and examiners regularly noted the manner in which teachers bring this topic alive, as it seems to capture the imagination of the vast majority of the students who take it.

Topic 4, Mycenae and Troy, has declined in popularity over the last 15 years. It is interesting to note that even though not required, those students who drew sketches to support answers achieved higher marks. The report of 2012 recommends that this practice be encouraged as

when unable to explain in words, a labelled sketch will suffice even when not suggested in the question (SEC, 2012).

Topic 5, The Athenian Acropolis, is a very popular option with students. With this topic, a small number of candidates seem to find the architectural and artistic terminology problematic. As with Topic 4, the inclusion of sketches to articulate what is difficult to describe by text was favourable to the students.

Topic 6, The Quest of Aeneas, is a very popular topic, and is answered by over 75% of students. The report comments that it is notable that students really engage with this topic. According to the report, this is surprising for Ordinary Level students, given the high literacy levels required to read *The Aeneid*.

One possible reason for the success of this topic may be the attraction of the story for students of all intelligences and skills (SEC, 2012).

Topic 7, Roman Theatre: The Swaggering Soldier, is a popular topic. Again, of note in the report is the comment that the popularity of this topic has to do with the actual story line and the element of comedy (although of another era) which can catch the imagination.

Topic 8, The Life and Times of Julius Caesar, has seen a decrease in uptake over the last 15 years in the numbers answering this question. There are consistent references in the reports to a lack of historical knowledge and historical events and students struggling with correct terminology.

Topic 9, A Roman City – Pompeii, is one of the more popular topics with approximately 85% of students answering this topic. Comments from the reports mention that this is well answered and that the use of sketches here supported and enhanced responses. Some candidates do struggle with technical terms and the names of areas of a Roman house. This is supported in conversations with students who find the terminology and the vocabulary difficult to write about, the detail on the workings of the Roman house complicated and difficult to grasp. Some students made the point that we were training the students to be ‘ancient construction workers’.

Topic 10, The Roman Army, is a popular topic and is attempted by 50% of students. It is noted in the reports that this topic captures the interest of a significant number of candidates. Again, there are struggles with terminology experienced by some students.

Recommendations and Conclusions:

Ordinary Level:

These three SEC reports highlight common concerns when discussing how the course and the terminal examination is accessed for ordinary level students. As has already been noted, both Sections (a) and (c) are common to higher and ordinary levels, each topic being differentiated only in the marking scheme. According to the reports, the problem seems to be twofold: firstly, many students have not made the necessary preparation for the examination due to lack of work, motivation or interest; this results in difficulty addressing the factual questions in Section (a). Secondly, the level of comprehension required to answer Section (c) appears too challenging for some candidates.

In short, the common element of this paper, which comprises 66%, proved problematic for a number of candidates (SEC, 2000).

In 2003, the Chief Examiner's Report highlighted the same issue with grades and concerns with failure rates and went so far as to say that the

number of candidates scoring a grade E or less has been consistently very high on this paper. This is a very disturbing situation (SEC, 2003).

The 2003 and 2012 reports proposed that it may be timely to debate whether a different type of paper is needed and that the area of greatest concern is part (c) where the original source material may pose a difficulty of comprehension and reading for some candidates.

it does raise the question whether this high percentage of commonality is discouraging even more candidates from studying Classical Studies, particularly at Ordinary Level (SEC, 2012).

The 2012 report concluded that the length and challenge of the prescribed reading material requires rebalancing and that the candidates who might sit the examination at ordinary level would benefit from a commensurate review of the structure of the examination paper. But this observation comes with a caveat, in relation to the epic topics, as many students clearly enjoy the stories despite the challenges involved in their study and the report proposes that the element of narrative and the way teachers bring the stories to life is the reason for this.

This observation is confirmed in conversations with students who agreed that they find the stories and the drama an attractive element of the course. They stated that plays and stories were good as they are still enjoyable today. They commented that they liked the way that the epics described war as this showed 'people still fighting wars in the same way we do today'. They were unanimous in seeking for more plays, dramas and comedy to be included in the new specification. This ties in with the examination feedback and is a key point for the development process.

Higher Level:

There are far less concerns with the students who sit the higher level paper.

Generally,

examiners noted that the students seemed to enjoy the challenge of the paper and demonstrated enthusiasm and interest in the topics. The examiners feel that this mirrors the enjoyment the students get from their studies in the classroom (SEC, 2000).

It is important to note that this interest in the subject is displayed by candidates in general and not only those who score highest in this terminal examination.

A remarkable feature noted by examiners is that this enjoyment appeared to spread across the full range of topics although different topics demand different skill sets (SEC, 2012).

From topics such as *The Life and Death of Socrates* to *The Athenian Acropolis* to *The Roman Army*, examiners noted the manner in which ‘candidates imagination had been fired by the teaching and learning process’ (SEC, 2012).

In 2003, it was interesting to note a comment where

candidates are also encouraged not to ‘compartmentalise’ the mythology they have read in the first year of Classical Studies. This knowledge can be applied to a number of topics and can enrich the candidates’ experience (SEC, 2003).

This is interesting as the structure of the course does separate the first-year course from the second and third-year course, something which the revised syllabus of 2010 sought to address. In conversations with students, they found this separation puzzling. Several students commented that they liked the first-year material on ‘the fantasy stuff, the creatures, the legends and the minotaur’, and that they were even frustrated that this content seldom comes up in the exam.

In addition, the report of 2012 commends the proficient sketches that were observed by examiners. For those students who struggle to explain things in words, the use of sketches supplemented and enhanced their responses. This is something that should be addressed with the new specification.

3.4 The potential for the use of ICT Resources

Classical Studies has, since its inception, been a subject which has not traditionally utilised text books. Primary sources in translation are used when possible, and recommended written and visual sources have filled gaps. This resource structure has been problematic in the past especially where suggested or recommended reading resources have gone out of print. The numbers taking the subject do not

always make commissioning of suitable texts, or the maintenance of existing ones, economically viable. The active subject association, (*Classical Association of Ireland - Teachers*), have filled this void for many years by privately publishing texts for the language and civilisation courses. The availability of free vetted digital resources at this time could herald an alternative structure for recommending resources.

Section Summary

This chapter has located the place of Classics in the educational continuum of young people in Ireland. In the Primary Curriculum students are exposed to a considerable introduction to life in the Classical World with a focus on mythology and everyday life.

Time is taken to consider the seminal work by the ESRI on student experience in their first three years of post-primary education. The research suggests that students experience disengagement and an overemphasis on exam preparation presently. The new specification will need to be cognisant of these concerns about the student learning experience and utilise the Statements of Learning and Key Skills to maximize the student learning experience.

The experience of students and teachers as detailed in Chief Examiner Reports is clear in offering guidance to the work of the development group. These reports highlight the topics that students engage with, and those areas that prove challenging for students. Of note is the difficulty faced with some terminology, the challenges faced by some students in successfully navigating the examination paper and the disconnect between what is studied in first year and the syllabus for second and third years. On a positive note, and again to be borne in mind by the development group, is the commentary on how students' imaginations are fired by stories and epics and how the use of sketches, although not requested in the examination, is enabling students to enhance their responses.

4. Experiences of Latin at junior cycle

4.1 Introduction

Classics will be introduced in 2019 as a phase five subject as part of the new junior cycle. The curriculum and assessment specification for the subject will be published in autumn 2018. This chapter outlines the development of Latin over the years and presents some statistics from the Chief Examiners' Reports.

4.2 Background

a. Latin from 1921

The classical languages were an integral part of the curriculum since the foundation of the Irish State. In the early days of the State most second-level schools operated under the management of the religious orders. These religious orders were anxious to maintain Latin in the schools as it was a basic part of training for the priesthood. Latin or Greek were a requirement for matriculation to gain entry to universities in Ireland up to the 1970s.

A brief look at the statistics for pupils sitting Latin in the Intermediate Certificate for 1936 shows that 2,928 boys sat the subject. In the context of the time this number was very high as only 3,474 boys sat English. Only 23% of girls sat the same examination (*Report of the Department of Education 1935-36*). In the mid-thirties, when Irish became a compulsory subject, concern was expressed by the Catholic Headmasters Association that emphasis on Irish could push Latin out of the school curriculum of boys' secondary schools. In 1936, the Association objected in a lengthy public statement, anxious that secondary school programmes in Latin provided the necessary groundwork in an essential subject for seminarians (*The Irish Times, 18 May 1936*). The severity of the Church's opposition was such that curriculum changes over the next thirty years upheld the pre-eminence of Latin (O' Donoghue, 1998).

However, as a result of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Latin was replaced in the liturgy by English/Irish and thus Latin was no longer obligatory for seminarians. Over a period of 30 years or so Latin lost its pre-eminent position in the curriculum and this loss of status gradually meant that Catholic secondary schools began to drop Latin as a school subject.

b. 1978 syllabus

In general terms, the Latin syllabus has not changed much over the years. According to the Rules & Programme for Secondary Schools 1973 'The aim of the course is to enable students (i) to read and understand Latin and (ii) to acquire a worthwhile knowledge of Roman history and civilization.' These effectively were the aims for a long period of time regardless of minor changes to the curriculum after 1968 when questions on civilisation were included in the Intermediate Certificate Examination in addition to history questions. The *New Syllabus 1978*, as it was called, only had one major difference from its predecessor; an unseen passage was given with comprehension questions (mostly in Latin) based on the passage. This was a new departure in the Latin examination which has continued up to the present. As can be seen in Table 8 below, the number of pupils sitting Latin in the Intermediate Certificate Examination fell from 12,159 in 1969 to 3,108 in 1983, a drop of 74%.

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1969	8218	3941	12159
1972	8916	5446	14362
1975	7143	4438	11581
1978	4100	1493	5593
1980	3436	1028	4464
1983	2546	562	3108

Table 8: Intermediate Certificate Latin numbers 1969-1983

c. Junior Certificate 1989

As can be seen in Table 9 below, the introduction of the Junior Certificate in 1989 did not stop the decrease in numbers taking Latin. The Junior Certificate, unlike the Intermediate Certificate was examined at two levels, Higher and Ordinary. The history and civilisation questions were common at both levels but the other questions were differentiated and were examined accordingly. The questions at both levels followed the format and allocation of marks as in the revised Intermediate syllabus in 1987.

Year	Higher	Ordinary	Total
1992	793	60	853
1993	809	82	891
1994	762	77	839
1995	745	55	800
1996	643	61	704
1997	661	59	720
1998	536	61	597
1999	554	68	622

Table 9: Junior Certificate Latin 1992-1999

In 1995 the Junior Certificate paper was revised and the new order of questions was:

- Set text and questions: 80 marks (20%)
- Unseen: 80 (20%)
- Comprehension: 80 (20%)
- Composition or unseen: 80 (20%)
- History: 40 (10%)
- Civilisation: 40 (10%).

A noteworthy point in relation to the syllabus in the last 20 years is the approval of a defined Latin vocabulary list since 2004. The Chief Examiner's Report in 2004 bemoaned the poor attempt at unseen translation by many pupils and stated

It is hoped that the use of the recently published Defined Vocabulary List as a basis for learning vocabulary will bring about an improvement in this situation... The use of the Defined Vocabulary List should ameliorate the acquisition of Latin vocabulary and will clarify what is expected by examiners (SEC, 2004).

The provision of a defined vocabulary list gave an assurance to pupils that any Latin words used outside that list would be glossed and, once this was known, they had nothing to fear in terms of translating 'unseens' or in Latin composition.

The number of pupils taking Latin at the Junior Certificate is declining rapidly. In 2000, a total of 614 pupils sat Latin in the Junior Certificate; by 2016 that number had further declined to 269 (See Table 10). In this century, there has been a decline of 56%. Over a period of 80 years from 1936 to 2016 the percentage of pupils taking Latin in the Intermediate/Junior Certificate has dropped from 84% to 0.45%. It is not surprising that an NCCA report in 2004 stated that

Action for Latin is even more urgent as the very survival of the subject could be said, without exaggeration, to be at stake. Numbers continue to fall to the point where a future without Latin has become a possibility..... The position of Latin in post-primary schools is a precarious one. Numbers have been falling for many years and have now come close to crisis – some 450 at Junior Certificate and about 120 at Leaving Certificate. Latin is taught almost exclusively in one type of school viz. voluntary secondary and, in particular, in fee-paying schools within that sector. This means that the whole vocational sector, and almost all community and comprehensive schools, are without Latin (NCCA, 2004).

The report also states that

With the decline in the numbers taking Latin, there has been a concomitant decline in the numbers of graduates coming out of the universities with a degree in Latin. Quite a few existing teachers of Latin are in the older age bracket and at the moment it is hard to see how they can be replaced when their time comes to retire (NCCA, 2004).

Year	Higher	ABC	Ordinary	ABC
2009	401	78.3 %	22	63.6%
2010	414	71%	25	32%
2011	410	76.8%	26	19.2%
2012	383	87.9%	15	73.3%
2013	351	84.3%	16	50.1%
2014	303	79.6%	12	66.7%
2015	272	72.5%	13	61.6%
2016	255	83.9%	14	64.3

Table 10: Uptake of Latin at Junior Certificate 2009 – 2016

5. Experiences of Ancient Greek at junior cycle

5.1 Introduction

Classics will be introduced in 2019 as a phase five subject as part of the new junior cycle. The curriculum and assessment specification for the subject will be published in autumn 2018. The new subject will combine the study of Ancient Greek, Latin and Classical Studies, which up to now were separate subjects. This chapter outlines the development of Ancient Greek over the years and presents some statistics from the Chief Examiners' Reports.

5.2 Background

a. Intermediate Certificate Syllabus, 1973

The aim of the Intermediate Certificate course was to enable students (i) to read and understand Greek and (ii) to acquire a worthwhile knowledge of Greek history and civilization. Reading of classical authors in modern translations was recommended.

The syllabus stated that students should get frequent practice in oral and written translation into the vernacular, with emphasis upon accurate and idiomatic translation, whether oral or written. The course included training in easy oral and written composition with a view to securing an accurate knowledge of grammar and of idiom. In addition, the outlines of Greek history and civilisation formed part of the course from the beginning.

The examination consisted of the following sections:

- (i) Five sentences for translation into Greek.
- (ii) Four grammar questions (with meanings) - declension of nouns and adjectives, comparison of adjectives and adverbs; conjugation of: *λυω, τιμαω, ποιεω, δηλωω, ιστημι, τιθημι, δεικνυμι, ειμι, ειμι, ιεμι, φημι, οιδα, λυω, τιμαω, ποιεω, δηλωω, ιστημι, τιθημι, δεικνυμι, ειμι, ειμι, ιεμι, φημι, οιδα* and the principal parts of the more usual irregular verbs.
- (iii) Two questions set in the period of Greek history from the Ionian Revolt to the death of Pericles. Candidates were required to answer one question from this section. Two questions were set on Greek civilization (gods and heroes; social and political life). Candidates were required to answer one question from this section.

- (iv) Two passages were set for translation into the vernacular from the prose sections of *Greek Through Reading*. Nos. 49-97 (inclusive), with appropriate subsidiary questions on background and content.
- (v) Two passages were set for translation into the vernacular from Xenophon's *Anabasis*

or

one passage for translation into the vernacular from the *Anabasis* and questions on the subject matter and setting of the *Alcestis* or *Iphigenia in Tauris* read in a good translation (e.g. that of Philip Vellacott in the Penguin Classics). Special consideration was given to idiomatic rendering of the passages. Vocabulary aid was given where necessary.

b. Junior Certificate Syllabus, 1989

The introduction of the Junior Certificate brought a number of changes to the Intermediate Certificate syllabus.

- there were now two levels, Higher and Ordinary
- Xenophon and Euripides were no longer studied
- the number of prescribed passages from Reading Greek was reduced from 49 to 31 for higher level and to 19 for ordinary level
- a reading comprehension was introduced
- the grammar question was discontinued
- the composition was retained
- there was a clear distinction in the level of knowledge required at each level
- the history and civilisation questions were common at both levels
- the format of the examination paper also changed.

In 2004, Latin introduced a *Defined Vocabulary List*. This was also discussed for Greek, but as yet has not been developed and introduced.

c. NCCA Board of Studies

In 2007, the NCCA set up a Board of Studies to review the Junior Certificate Classics subjects. This Board agreed on merging the subjects of Ancient Greek, Latin and Classical Studies into one new subject called Classics. The draft syllabus contains a module of Greek, a module of Latin and two modules of Classical Studies and is detailed fully in Chapter 2, section 3.

The draft syllabus highlights the importance of maintaining the classical languages and the need to address the sharp decline in uptake.

Reading the languages (even in adapted form) puts the learner in touch with the ideas, customs, history and peoples of Greece and Rome. A knowledge of the languages can also help to improve literacy levels in English, make the study of modern languages more meaningful and can provide insights into how language works (NCCA, 2010).

This draft syllabus can inform the work of the development group for the revised junior cycle specification to be introduced in 2019.

The numbers of students sitting Greek in the Junior Certificate examination are detailed in the table below.

Year	Higher	Ordinary
2007	26	0
2008	29	2
2009	25	4
2010	24	0
2011	18	0
2012	34	1
2013	27	0
2014	35	0
2015	32	0
2016	39	0

Table 11: Junior Certificate numbers for Greek students up to 2016

Of note here is the relative stability of the numbers sitting the Greek examination, and the two most recent SEC Chief Examiner reports (2004, 2009) stress and celebrate the consistently high standard of student performance in these examinations. On average about 90% of students are achieving a C grade and higher. The EFNG grade is very low, and is even at 0% for certain years.

In these reports, the teachers and students were commended for the high standard of preparation and answering.

Summary of Chapters 4 and 5

These chapters trace the history of the subjects, Latin and Ancient Greek, over the last 80 years. This travel through time has shown the steady decrease in the number of students taking Latin and Ancient Greek as an examination subject at junior cycle. The chapters detail the reasons for this decline, which can be attributed to changes in matriculation requirements and the increase in students taking European modern languages among other factors.

The recent SEC Chief Examiners reports show that the students who are sitting these subjects for their Junior Certificate examination are doing well, as evidenced by the high numbers of ABC grades, and the reports commend the teachers and the students for their hard work in preparing for the examination.

The chapter references the unpublished 2010 specification for Classics. This document can form a substantial starting point for the work of the development group.

6. International curriculum for Classics

The United Kingdom, Commonwealth nations and many Western European countries mirror Ireland in that the Classical languages lost the status of core subjects in secondary education from the 1960s onwards, which led to two main developments:

- introduction of non-language courses (Classical Studies, Classical Civilisation, Ancient History) in order to make or keep the cultures and history of Greece and Rome available to a wide(r) range of students; and
- revision of Latin and Ancient Greek courses in order to increase their relevance and appeal for modern learners and preserve the teaching of these languages.

Whereas in the past 50 years the norm was a steady decline of student numbers in the language courses with retention of satisfactory numbers in the non-language courses, recent years have seen:

- declining numbers in the non-language courses, calling for curriculum review to increase their currency and make them competitive with other subjects (including new subjects);

and simultaneously

- a modest revival of the Classical languages in pre-secondary and extra-curricular settings, mostly due to a re-appreciation of their value for the acquisition of literacy skills and other generic skills.¹

The following paragraphs consider Classics specifications for the junior years of secondary level in three countries: the United Kingdom (the OCR GCSE's and Cambridge International GCSE's), Canada (Grades 9-10 of the Ontario Curriculum in Classical Studies), and the Netherlands (Onderbouw Griekse/Latijnse Taal en Cultuur). None of these specifications allow for exact, like-for-like comparison, but each has features or resources that might be considered in developing the new junior cycle specification in Classics.

¹ See, for example, the success of projects such as Classics in the Parks (<http://irisproject.org.uk/index.php/the-iris-project/projects/latin-in-the-parks>), Minimus (<http://www.minimus-etc.co.uk/>) or Classics for All (<http://classicsforall.org.uk/>).

GCSE Classics (UK)

In the United Kingdom, the OCR (Oxford, Cambridge, Republic of South Africa) consortium has, within the new GCSE (9-1) framework, developed new courses in four different subjects, each with their own specification and central examinations: Classical Studies, Ancient History, Latin and Classical Greek. The Latin and Classical Greek specifications were introduced in 2016; Classical Studies and Ancient History will be taught from 2017 (OCR, 2016 (a), (b)). All specifications have been significantly revised compared to their predecessors and they offer much of interest in their teaching content. The units of the two non-language courses are:

Classical Civilisation	
<p>Part 1. Thematic study – select one from:</p> <p><i>Route 1: Myth and Religion</i></p> <p>the gods; the universal hero (Heracles); religion and the city (temples); myth and the city (foundation stories); festivals; myth and the symbols of power; death and burial; journeying to the underworld</p> <p><i>Route 2: Women in the Ancient World</i></p> <p>women of legend; young women; women in the home; ‘improper’ women; women and religion; women and power; warrior women; women to be feared</p>	<p>Part 2. Literature and Culture – select one from:</p> <p>1. <i>The Homeric World</i></p> <p>culture: key sites; life in the Mycenaean age; decorative arts; tombs, graves and burial</p> <p>literature: literary techniques and composition; themes; the character of Odysseus; the portrayal of key characters</p> <p>2. Roman City Life</p> <p>culture: Roman housing; the Roman home and family; society; leisure and entertainment</p> <p>literature: satire and fiction; Pliny and his letters; experiencing Roman city life; relationships and Roman society</p> <p>3. War and Warfare</p> <p>culture: Sparta at war in the 5th century; Athens at war in the 5th century; the Roman military in the Imperial period’ the Romans at war</p> <p>literature: Homer; Tyrtaeus; Horace’ Virgil</p>

Ancient History	
<p>Component 1: Greece and Persia</p> <p>Period study – compulsory: The Persian Empire, 559-465 BC</p> <p>Depth study – select one from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From Tyranny to Democracy, 546-483 BC ▪ Athens in the Age of Pericles, 462-429 BC ▪ Alexander the Great, 356-323 BC 	<p>Component 2: Rome</p> <p>Period study – compulsory: The Foundations of Rome: From Kingship to Republic, 753-616 BC</p> <p>Depth study – select one from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hannibal and the 2nd Punic War, 218-201 BC ▪ Cleopatra, Rome and Egypt, 69-30 BC ▪ Britannia, From Conquest to Province, AD 43-84

The specifications are very well resourced: OCR has secured the rights to all prescribed texts, which have been made available free of charge online,² and all components are supported by textbooks, with further resources made available on the publisher’s website. The latter also applies to the Latin and Classical Greek specifications, which in addition to a compulsory language component include set prose and texts changing every two years, and prescribed ancient source material covering two themes of civilisation and culture (OCR, 2015 (a), (b)). The specifications reflect current trends in their increased attention for critical, analytical and reflective skills, linguistic skills which are applicable to learners’ studies of English and other modern languages, and the study of literature as a window into the life (values, culture and society) of the ancient world.

Ontario, Canada

In Canada, the new Classical Studies specification (2016) of the Ontario Curriculum has been formulated within an educational vision and skills parameters that are not unlike those of the Framework for Junior Cycle (MOE, 2016, pp. 3-18). The specification comprises courses in Latin and Ancient Greek that students may take in any grade of secondary school (Grades 9-12). Progression is indicated by levels 1-3, with a Grade 12 (final year) course in Classical Civilization serving as an

² For example, OCR GCSE (9–1) Classical Civilisation, Prescribed Literary Sources: Myth and Religion [J199/11], <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/405823-j199-11-prescribed-literary-sources-for-myth-and-religion.pdf> (39 pp.). All Classical Civilisation materials, including prescribed sources, sample assessment materials, planning guides, and (non subject specific) skills guides, can be accessed through <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-classical-civilisation-j199-from-2017/>.

alternative progression option from Latin or ancient Greek Level 2 (rather than as an independent subject started at Level 1).

The expectations in all levels of Classical Language courses are framed in terms of competencies to be acquired in four key strands: oral communication, reading, writing, intercultural understanding. The syllabus states that it is imperative that teachers of ancient Greek or Latin plan instructional activities that integrate expectations across the strands to highlight the interconnectedness of language and culture in the development of literacy skills.

Regarding the Grade 12 Classical Civilisation course, this is designed to

‘introduce students to the extraordinary achievements and enduring legacy of the ancient Greeks and Romans. This course will allow students to develop understanding of the classical world and to gain insight into the vast and profound influence of the classical world on the modern world’ (MOE, 2016, p. 23).

The expectations for this course are organised into five interrelated strands:

- Critical Thinking and Literacy Skills
- Mythology and Literature
- History and Geography
- Philosophy and Religion
- Material Culture

Again, the specification states that it is imperative that teachers of this course plan instructional activities that blend expectations from several strands to provide students with enriched and meaningful learning experiences that emphasise making connections between the classical world, the world around them, and their own experiences (MOE, 2016, p. 25).

Assessment for the language course and the Classical Civilisation course is school-based and can, within reason, take whichever form (based on the teacher’s professional judgement) is suitable to establish whether students meet the content standards and performance standards set in the specification. Seventy percent of the final result at a level is to be based on continuous assessment, thirty percent on a final evaluation.

Netherlands

In the strand of the Dutch secondary system which prepares for university entry, the curriculum is divided into a three-year junior cycle ('onderbouw') and a three-year senior cycle ('bovenbouw'). Although some guidance is provided to teachers through the Stichting Leerplanontwikkeling (SLO) there are, remarkably, no 'hard' objectives and learning outcomes for the junior cycle (Adema and van der Plaat, 2017). There is therefore much room for the professional judgement of teachers in planning learning activities, and setting assessment parameters in such a way that their students are prepared for the senior cycle, which is in part assessed with a central examination.

Although the relevant documentation is difficult to access (because it is largely written in Dutch),³ the Netherlands offers an interesting model because, in the area of the Classics subjects, it has followed a path that is very different from the anglophone countries. Since the Netherlands has a significant number of schools in the German 'altsprachliches Gymnasium' tradition, where the teaching of Latin and Greek was considered central to the identity of the schools, it was relatively late to introduce a Classical Studies course. Because this course never really succeeded in broadening access to classical studies and at the same time, a surge in the popularity of the Gymnasium schools made a significant reconsideration of Classical language teaching a priority, the Classical Studies course was discontinued in 2014 and its content incorporated in the language specifications, which were re-labelled Latin Language and Culture and Greek Language and Culture. Testimony to the continued importance of the languages within these specifications is the proliferation of textbooks for lower secondary Greek and Latin language teaching, including five Latin textbooks and four Greek textbooks published since 2014, each with their own methodology and (digital) resources.⁴

³ For some documentation in English see <http://international.slo.nl/>.

⁴ For a list see <http://klassieketalen.slo.nl/>; also <http://downloads.slo.nl/Repository/klassieke-talen-vakspecifieke-trendanalyse-2015.pdf>.

7. Classics specification in the new junior cycle

While some may have distinct characteristics, arising from the area of learning involved, all junior cycle specifications, for subjects and short courses, will have a number of features in common. They will:

- be outcomes based
- reflect a continuum of learning with a focus on learner progression
- set out clear expectations for learning
- provide examples of those expectations
- include a focus on all eight key skills
- strive for clarity in language and for consistency in terminology.

To improve the connection with learning and teaching in primary school, these features are shared with the Primary Curriculum. The specification for each junior cycle subject and short course will include:

1	Introduction to junior cycle	This will be common to all specifications and will summarise the main features of the <i>Framework for Junior Cycle</i>
2	Rationale	This will describe the nature and purpose of the subject as well as the general demands and capacities that it will place on, and require of, students. The text will, as appropriate, aim to draw attention to challenges and any access issues associated with study of the subject for students with specific needs or disabilities.
3	Aim	A concise aim for the subject will be presented

4	Links with Statements of learning Key skills	How the subject is linked to central features of learning and teaching at junior cycle will be highlighted and explained.
5	Overview Strands Learning outcomes	An overview of the subject will illustrate how it is organised and will set out the learning involved in strands and learning outcomes.
6	Expectations for students	These will be linked with groups of learning outcomes and will relate to examples of student work. The examples will be annotated, explaining whether the work is in line with, ahead of, or behind expectations for students.
7	Assessment and reporting	This section refers to both formative and summative assessment. It outlines the assessment component/s through which students will present evidence of learning on an ongoing basis, and for the purposes of recording achievement for the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) ⁵ This description of assessment is supplemented by separate assessment guidelines for use in second and third years.

⁵ The JCPA is the new award for all junior cycle students. It will replace the current award, the Junior Certificate.

8. Brief for the review of Junior Cycle Classics

The review of Junior Cycle Classics will lead to the production of a specification in line with the template above.

The specification will be at a common level. It will be designed to be taught and assessed in a minimum of 200 hours and structured or organised around strands and learning outcomes.

The specification will be developed in alignment with the statements of learning, including that the student:

- creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts
- appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives
- values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change
- values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts
- communicates effectively using a variety of means in a range of contexts in L1
- brings an idea from conception to realisation
- has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision making.

The key skills of junior cycle will be embedded in the learning outcomes of the specification, as appropriate.

It will be completed for autumn 2018.

The development of the new specification will take account of current research and developments in the field of classics education, emerging understandings of the content and nature of education in classics, and the need for alignment with the ongoing development of the numeracy and literacy strategy.

The development of the new specification will address continuity and progression. It will consider whether classics should be taught from a broader, general base in first year with a particular focus on consolidating learning from primary school and on the development of students' understanding of the cross-curricular links, skills and attitudes that classics can form when combined with learning in other subjects.

More specifically, the development of the new specification will address

- the purposes of Junior Cycle Classics, making them transparent and evident to students, teachers and parents in the specification
- how practical, inquiry-based teaching and learning will be promoted
- how the course will be organised with regard to the merging of the subjects, Latin, Ancient Greek and Classical Studies into a single subject called Classics
- continuity and progression: how to connect with and build on related learning at primary level as well as provide a platform for the study of Classics in senior cycle
- the use of journals or portfolios to track development in language skills
- developing students' ability to evaluate and interpret original sources and decode material and physical evidence
- how to consider the issues of breadth, content and assessment of the various components
- how the specification, in its presentation and language register, can be strongly student-centred, having a clear focus on what the students can do to develop and demonstrate their skills, capabilities and achievements
- how the specification can develop students' creativity, innovation, and collaborative skills
- how the specification can raise student awareness of the historical, personal and social contexts that people lived in and how this influenced the art, architecture and writings of the time
- how the specification can develop students' attitudes towards understanding how the language, literature and visual culture were used as a means for expression and communication of important information about society and community
- how the specification will enable students to make links between how these past civilisations inform and influence the culture and languages of the modern world

- how understanding the culture and traditions of others will foster the development of responsible and ethical citizens in our students
- the ongoing assessment of student learning as well as the Classroom-Based Assessment and final examination
- the importance of valuing the records of the classical past and encourage students to be disposed to preserving and transmitting it to future generations
- integrating the first-year foundation course into the overall structure of the specification.

The work of the Classics development group will be based, in the first instance, on this brief. In the course of its work and discussions, elaborations of some of these points and additional points may be added to the brief.

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Appendix 1: Student Voice

It is recognised that students have a right to a say in their education through Article 12 of *the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child* and in the *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, National Policy Framework for Children and Young People*. Currently, the NCCA is collaborating with the School of Education, Trinity College Dublin and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) on a research project to establish how best to include the voices and insights of students from the very beginning of developing a specification for the junior cycle.

The Student Voice initiative involves eliciting the perspectives of students in a number of post-primary schools on developments in curriculum and assessment. The purpose of the project is to consult students as experts on their own experience of learning and to access student insights on proposed changes to Classical Studies as part of the new junior cycle. In relation to Classical Studies, student input is being sought from the very beginning of the development process, starting with this background paper.

The consultation involved meeting with groups of students in a number of schools. The groups comprised students who

- had completed Junior Certificate Classical Studies, Latin and Ancient Greek
- are studying these subjects at junior certificate level in this school year
- had taken these subjects up for the first time in senior cycle
- had studied a Classics subject in first year and subsequently dropped the subject in second year.

The consultation process adopted the same approach across the three schools and sessions were attended at all times by members of the research team.

The discussions with and ideas presented by the students were extremely rich and varied and will help to inform the specification for Junior Cycle Classical Studies. It is planned that NCCA will return to these schools and students as the specification is developed in order to get further feedback and to develop this process of integrating curricular co-construction through Student Voice as part of future consultations.

