Draft short course specification (Level 3)

*As you complete each section in this template, look back at your scoping document for ideas*.

*(Please remember to remove any directions or suggestions intended to help formulate your specification. They are in italics and they can be easily identified. Then return to* [*shortcourse@ncca.ie*](mailto:shortcourse@ncca.ie)*. Don’t forget to remove this one as well.)*

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| **Title of short course** |
| *Each short course will have a title that identifies the focus and content of the course.* |

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| 1. **Introduction to junior cycle** *(This section is common to all short courses so you do not have to change the text.)* |
| Junior cycle education places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all.  The junior cycle allows students to make a greater connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, and relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute directly to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of learners, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity, innovation and enterprise. The learner’s junior cycle programme builds on their learning to date and actively supports their progress in learning and in addition, supports them in developing the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school. |

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| 1. **Rationale** |
| *The material in this section will provide an answer to the question, ‘Why is the learning in this short course important?’. It should address this question from the perspective of the student. So for example, the course developer might consider the ways in which students will see learning in this area as being:*   * *relevant– inside and outside school* * *interesting and challenging* * *connected to prior learning* * *linked to possible future learning* * *useful now and/or in the future* * *enjoyable.* |

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| 1. **Aim** |
| *The short course aims to*  *The aim should be a brief statement that outlines the expected impact of the course on students’ learning.* |

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| 1. **Overview: Course** |
| *(Identify the strands in the short course. Briefly explain why these strands were selected. If they are presented in a particular order, explain why.)*  The strands in this short course are:  **Strand 1:** Name and two/three lines of the strand overview.  **Strand 2**: Name and two/three lines of the strand overview.  **Strand 3:** *as above*  *The guidelines suggest three to four strands is sufficient. The following lines are common to all short course specifications and should be included in yours:*  The learning outcomes in this short course are aligned with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications.  The course has been designed for approximately 100 hours of student engagement. |

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| 1. **Learning outcomes** *(This section is common to all short courses so you do not have to change the wording.)* |
| *Learning outcomes* are statements that describe what knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate having completed this junior cycle short course. The learning outcomes set out in the following tables apply to all students and represent outcomes for students at the end of their period of study (approximately 100 hours). The outcomes are numbered within each strand.  *The numbering is intended to support teacher planning in the first instance and does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.* |

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| **Strand 1: Title** | |
| *Students learn about* | **Learning outcomes**  *Students should be able to* |
| *Title of key topic for this strand.*  *Insert further rows and repeat for each of your key topics.*  *Then do the same for each of your strands.* | *Learning outcomes for a key topic should be entered here using the format 1.1, 1.2, etc. for strand 1. Then 2.1, 2.2 for strand 2 and so on.*  *Learning outcomes are clear statements of what it is expected each student will have achieved as a result of the learning associated with each strand.* |

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| 1. **Links** | | | |
| *(The way in which the short course links to statements of learning, and to the eight key skills of junior cycle is highlighted and explained here.)* | | | |
| 1. **Statements of learning**   These statements describe what students should know, understand, value and be able to do at the end of their time in junior cycle. It is possible for a short course to contribute to the learning described in a number of statements. For the purpose of providing a clear description of the short course, developers should identify the statements of learning (three/four maximum) to which the course relates most immediately and significantly. | | | |
| **Statement** | | **Examples of relevant learning in the course** | |
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| 1. **The eight key skills of junior cycle**   In addition to their specific content and knowledge, the subjects and short courses of junior cycle provide students with opportunities to develop a range of key skills. The junior cycle curriculum focuses on eight key skills: Being literate; Managing myself; Staying well; Managing information and thinking; Being numerate; Being creative; Working with others and Communicating.  Each key skill has a number of elements which clarify the knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to that key skill. The elements are set out in detail in the [Framework for Junior Cycle](https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/framework-for-junior-cycle)*.* While it is desirable that all key skills have a presence in the course, some will be more prominent than others.Identify these by providing examples of where key skills elements, from *Key Skills of Junior Cycle,* appear in the learning activities in which a student might expect to participate. | | | |
| **Key skill** | **Key skill element** | | **Student learning activity**  *Write an example of one or two activities for each key skill element chosen, referring to actual activities students engage in during the course, e.g. Students create a website to display…* |
| Being literate |  | |  |
| Managing myself |  | |  |
| Staying well |  | |  |
| Managing information and thinking |  | |  |
| Being numerate |  | |  |
| Being creative |  | |  |
| Working with others |  | |  |
| Communicating |  | |  |

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| 1. **Assessment and reporting** |
| *(This part of the specification will identify the assessment methods most appropriate to the short course.)*  Essentially, the purpose of assessment and reporting at this stage of education is to support learning. Some learning outcomes lend themselves to once-off assessment, others to assessment on an ongoing basis as students engage in different learning activities.  *Depending on the short course, the kinds of learning activities likely to be involved include assignments, projects, case studies, performances, spoken word/oral work, practical activities, written pieces and tests/tasks of different kinds, depending on the nature of the learning involved.*  *In this section, identify examples of learning activities that support opportunities for formative assessment.*  Classroom-Based Assessments are the occasions when the teacher assesses the students in the specific assessment(s) that are set out in the subject or short course specification. Below is an outline of one **Classroom-Based Assessment** and the **features of quality** that will be used to make judgements about the quality of students’ work for this Classroom-Based Assessment.  **Classroom-Based Assessment**  *Indicate here that when there is more than one teacher of this short course, the teachers gather examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues. Junior cycle short courses will have one Classroom-Based Assessment and the student’s achievement in the Classroom-Based Assessment will be recorded on the student’s Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).*  **Features of Quality**  *There are 4 descriptors of the standard of student work. Indicate here the features associated with each level of descriptor. The 4 descriptors are Exceptional, Above expectations, In line with expectations and Yet to meet expectations.* |

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| 1. **Inclusive assessment** *(This section is common to all short courses so you do not have to change the text.)* |
| Inclusive assessment practices, whether as part of ongoing assessment or the Classroom-Based Assessment, are a key feature of teaching and learning in schools. Accommodations, e.g. the support provided by a special needs assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student’s learning throughout the year.  Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student’s performance in the Classroom-Based Assessment. Accommodations which enable all students to access curriculum and assessment are based on specific needs.  [Comprehensive guidelines for schools](https://ncse.ie/guidelines-for-schools) and an interactive version of the [Inclusive Education Framework](http://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/InclusiveEducationFramework_InteractiveVersion.pdf) provide further information on inclusive practices. |

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| **Appendix: Level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (QQI)**  *(This section is common to all level 3 short courses so you do not have to change the text.)* |
| This short course has been developed in alignment with the level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications. Usually, for Level 3 certification and awards, the knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **NFQ Level** | 3 | | **Knowledge**  *Breadth* | Knowledge broadly moderate in range | | **Knowledge**  *Kind* | Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements | | **Know-how and skill**  *Range* | Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools | | **Know-how and skill**  *Selectivity* | Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems | | **Competence**  *Context* | Act within a limited range of contexts | | **Competence**  *Role* | Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogeneous groups | | **Competence**  *Learning to learn* | Learn to learn within a managed environment | | **Competence**  *Insight* | Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self-understanding and behaviour | |