

# SENIOR CYCLE CAMPAIGN UPDATE

There have been a number of developments in relation to Senior Cycle change, and the ASTI's campaign on this issue.

On September 20, 2023, the Minister for Education Norma Foley TD revised a key pillar of her proposals for Senior Cycle redevelopment when she confirmed that all additional and practical components of Leaving Certificate subjects will continue to be externally assessed.

Related to this decision, the Minister has asked the State Exams Commission (SEC) that further research be commissioned on the potential role and impact of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in teacher-based assessment in particular.

## Curriculum developments

In September, the Minister also announced an accelerated process of redevelopment of Senior Cycle curriculum as follows:

### Tranche 1 subjects

From September 2025, nine new and redeveloped subjects will commence in schools for fifth year students. They are:

- Arabic,
- Classical languages/Greek and Latin,
- Biology,
- Physics,
- Chemistry,
- Business,
- Drama, film and theatre studies, and
- Climate action and sustainable development.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Subject Development Groups have finalised or are in the process of finalising draft specifications for these subjects, which will be submitted to public consultation. The ASTI encourages its members to engage with public consultations via the NCCA website.

### Tranche 2 subjects

From September 2026, seven redeveloped subjects will commence in schools for fifth year students. They are:

- Accounting,
- Construction studies,
- Engineering,
- English,
- Geography,
- Physical education, and
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) link modules.

The NCCA is currently establishing Subject Development Groups to develop background papers for public consultation. The ASTI has been invited to nominate two ASTI representatives per development group. ASTI representatives work to ensure that ASTI policies are brought to the fore at Subject Development Group meetings and during decision-making processes.

## Other developments

A revised SPHE curriculum for Senior Cycle was submitted for public consultation in late 2023. The ASTI made a submission during the consultation period. A report on the consultation will be published in 2024. The public consultation on a revised Transition Year Programme Statement took place last autumn. The ASTI made a submission during the consultation period. It is expected that the revised Programme Statement will be introduced in 2024.

## ASTI campaign – timeline

In March 2022, the Minister for Education announced her proposals for Senior Cycle redevelopment. The ASTI began an internal process of consultation, including:

- consultation with members via the ASTI branch network,
- in October 2022, the ASTI Central Executive Council was addressed by Áine Hyland, Irish educationalist and Emeritus Professor of Education, UCC,
- a number of collaborative activities with the TUI have been organised, including meetings of the ASTI and TUI subject representatives,
- the ASTI and TUI undertook a joint campaign of opposition to the Minister's proposal to move Leaving Cert Paper 1 in English and Irish to the end of fifth year for those entering fifth year in September 2023,
- the ASTI hosted an education conference on curriculum change in March 2023,
- the ASTI adopted a range of policy positions in relation to the Minister's plans as announced in March 2022,
- in February 2023, following a campaign of opposition by the ASTI/TUI regarding the Minister's plan to move Leaving Cert Paper 1 in English and Irish to the end of fifth year from 2024, the Minister announced the deferral of this proposal,
- in April 2023, the ASTI and TUI adopted motions (Annual Convention/Congress) demanding that at least 12 months before any future Leaving Cert syllabi/specifications are implemented, a full range of documentation be made available including the rationale and research-based evidence for the introduction of the syllabus, a detailed syllabus document (embedding depth of treatment and comprehensive syllabus guidelines for teachers), sample exam papers, and sample marking scheme,
- in September 2023, the Minister revised her proposal regarding teacher-based assessment, and
- in November 2023, the ASTI and TUI issued a statement supporting calls from the Irish Secondary Students' Union (ISSU) and the Irish language teachers' association An Gréasán that Leaving Cert oral exams take place prior to the Easter break as normal, to ensure that students' Easter break is not disrupted.

Keep up to date with the ASTI's Senior Cycle campaign, including developments across a range of Leaving Certificate subjects, at [www.asti.ie](http://www.asti.ie)