

SENIOR CYCLE UPDATE

New and revised Senior Cycle subject specifications commence from next year and by 2029 all subjects will be revised and implemented in schools.

Tranche 1 subjects

Tranche 1 starts at the beginning of the 2025/26 school year, and subjects are: **Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Arabic, Latin, Ancient Greek, Business, Climate Action and Sustainable Development** (Phase 1 schools), and **Drama, Film and Theatre Studies** (Phase 1 schools).

What's happened, what's next...

Revised subject specifications

A number of public consultations on revised draft specifications were undertaken in 2024. Following this, subject development groups worked to refine the specifications. These specifications have been accepted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), and submitted to the Minister for Education, Norma Foley TD, for her consideration and approval.

The ASTI has made representations regarding the development process for Tranche 1 revised subject specifications, and in particular regarding the way the consultation findings fed into the NCCA subject development groups for **Biology, Chemistry** and **Physics** (see the General Secretary's Update on page 4 for more information). The ASTI has expressed serious concern about the failure to provide members of these subject development groups with access to consultation submissions. As subject development group members play a key role in decisions made about new/revised subject specifications, it is vital that they are provided with full information.

At the time of going to print, the ASTI has sought a meeting with the Minister for Education regarding this matter and has asked that the introduction of **Physics, Chemistry** and **Biology** be deferred for one year.

New subject specifications

Consultations on the draft specifications for **Drama, Film and Theatre Studies**, and **Climate Action and Sustainable Development**, were undertaken in 2024. Following this, subject development groups worked to refine the specifications. These specifications have been accepted by the NCCA and submitted to Minister Foley for her consideration and approval. These new subject specifications will be introduced on a phased basis from the 2025/26 school year.

Tranche 2 subjects

Tranche 2 starts at the beginning of the 2026/27 school year, and subjects are: **Accounting, Construction Studies, Engineering, English, Geography, LCVP Modules**, and **Physical Education**.

What's happened, what's next...

A background paper and brief were developed for each Tranche 2 subject and put out for consultation in 2024. These consultations are now closed. The subject development groups for these subjects are working to progress draft subject specifications. Consultations will take place on draft specifications in advance of their introduction in all schools in the 2026/27 school year.

Tranche 3 subjects

Tranche 3 starts at the beginning of the 2027/28 school year. The subjects included in Tranche 3 are: **Agricultural Science, Computer Science, Design and Communication Graphics, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Music**, and **Physics and Chemistry**.

What's happened, what's next...

The NCCA convened subject development groups in early September for the Tranche 3 subject specifications. The ASTI was invited to provide two nominees to sit on each subject development group. These subject development groups will work to develop background papers, briefs, and draft subject specifications.

Assessment – a key issue for the ASTI

A key issue for the ASTI in the redevelopment of Senior Cycle subjects is the decision by the Minister for Education to stipulate that a minimum of 40% of all examination marks will be awarded for the additional assessment component. The ASTI strongly opposes this requirement.

Your participation is essential

Classroom teachers will implement new subject specifications in the coming years. Subject specification consultations are open to submissions from organisations and individuals/the general public. It is vital that ASTI members engage with subject consultations in order that the voice of the classroom teacher can be heard.

Keep up to date with developments at: www.asti.ie/education-and-curriculum/curriculum-and-assessment/

Transition Year

A new programme statement will be published shortly. Over the 2024/25 school year, all schools will have the opportunity to audit their current Transition Year offering and revise it where necessary in line with the programme statement. The Department's inspectorate will support and provide advice to schools in this regard during the 2024/25 school year, with inspectorate engagements being reflective of this.

SPHE

A new SPHE Senior Cycle curriculum has been accepted by the NCCA and submitted to the Minister for consideration and approval. Schools are not expected to implement this curriculum in the 2024/25 year, unless they have the capacity (resources, training, etc.).

For further updates on Senior Cycle redevelopment, including developments regarding additional components, Tranches 4 and 5, and other curricular developments, visit www.asti.ie/education-and-curriculum/curriculum-and-assessment/