
Short Course

Climate Action

Creating a Just and Sustainable World

Specification for Junior Cycle

July 2021

Contents

1. Introduction to Junior Cycle	3
2. Rationale	4
3. Aim	6
4. Overview: Course	7
5. Learning outcomes	
Strand 1: Foundations for Climate Action	9
Strand 2: Me and My Community	10
Strand 3: Thinking Globally	11
Strand 4: Making Change	12
6. Links	13
7. Assessment and Reporting	17
8. Assessment Arrangements	20
9. Level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (QQI)	21
10. Acknowledgements	22



I.

Introduction to Junior Cycle

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.

2. Rationale

Climate change is the greatest challenge facing humanity. It is a challenge that touches all aspects of our society and our personal lives - from where and how we live, what career we pursue to how we feel about ourselves and sense of connection and solidarity with other people. Young people are more affected by climate change than previous generations. Young people at the start of the 21st century are transitioning into adult life at a time in human history which coincides with the need for deep system transitions, on an unprecedented scale, across all aspects of societies. Given the scale of the global challenges they are facing, young people deserve transformative and empowering education which is specifically tailored to the context in which they find themselves.

Responding adequately to climate change and reaching this goal of empowerment requires educators and school communities to draw deeply on established knowledge and skills as well as significant new learning. The task for schools and teachers is daunting but exciting. Achieving this will require a sustained collective effort of both the imagination and the intellect. The learning approach to this short course has been developed as a means by which students can be equipped in a practical and emotional way for engagement with climate action and lifelong active global citizenship. The approach brings together influences from different fields of education, and is based on;

- **Holistic learner-centred education**, (including starting from students intertwined feelings and thinking, students' life experiences, students participating in decision-making, and co-creating learning and action)
- **Democratic global citizenship**; (involving critical reflection on global issues, democratic participation and informed and meaningful action) and
- **Place-based education** (building students' sense of belonging and connection to place, nature and community through enjoyable outdoor experiences, group experiences and learning in my local community).

This approach is participatory, active, engaging, empowering, and so it can be very enjoyable and full of meaning, purpose and positive affirmation for students. It connects personal wellbeing to the wellbeing of people and the environment. It is focused on social change, and on the personal and group empowerment that enables people to be part of the democratic and creative processes of social change on many scales. The key characteristics of the learning approach for this short course are provided in a supporting document for teachers called 'Learning for Climate Action', which contains background information and links to materials to support teachers in planning teaching and learning in this short course.

Some of the key considerations which have informed the learning approach of the course, and subsequent design of the four strands of the course include;

- **The need to realise children's rights to meaningful participation** in climate action by creating space or safe inclusive opportunities for students to form and to amplify their voices, express their views, and be heard by relevant audiences, and have influence, as they take action together to ensure that their views are acted on.
- **The potential of outdoor learning and place-based learning** to support young people to step into the places in which they live as active citizens, critically engage with issues that are relevant to their lives and communities and gain benefits of outdoor learning for physical and mental wellbeing, as well as for motivation and commitment to lifelong climate action.
- **The need for co-design and democratisation of learning** through significant opportunities for teachers and students to work as genuine partners and collaborators, through learning outcomes and approaches designed to incorporate co-design or youth-led action so that learning experiences are responsive to the student's interests and needs and real world events.
- **The need for skill development for collective action and experience of decision-making**, by providing substantial time for student-led action, that increases student capacity over time to collaborate with peers on actions they have chosen.
- **The need for learning environments to include space for imagining radical and systemic social change.** The course aims to create space for imagining the deep transformations in social and economic practices required for climate stabilization, and visioning alternative ways of organising society and steps we can take now to get there.

One critical aspect of the design of the course is the recognition that the process of empowerment is self-driven - it relies on the student becoming engaged by doing what they enjoy, starting from their lives and interests. Becoming empowered and involved in social change is also a social activity, in which enjoying connecting and bonding to others are core ingredients. These dimensions of enjoyment and of social connection supports wellbeing and are central in creating an empowering environment where students can deal with their feelings about climate change, develop new skills and new ways of being and thinking, and rise to the challenge of taking part in social change. It is this learning approach that makes the course enjoyable for learners, as they have the opportunity to engage the head, heart and hands in action that expands their sense of confidence and capacity to address challenges and be part of communities that are creating a positive and sustainable future.

3. Aim

This course aims to support learners to develop the knowledge, skills, values and motivation for climate action, and to empower themselves to become life-long participants in social change towards a sustainable and just world for all. The course aims to achieve this by creating space and experiences that support learners to;

- develop personal motivations for climate action,
- explore root causes of climate change and linked global injustices,
- develop a critical consciousness (both emotional and cognitive) of how environmental and social inequalities relate to their lives,
- develop visions of positive futures, and
- become skilled and confident organisers of collective action for social change towards a just and sustainable society.

4. Overview: Course

The strands in this short course are:

- Strand 1 (Unifying strand): Foundations for Climate Action
- Strand 2: Me and My Community
- Strand 3: Thinking Globally
- Strand 4: Making Change

Strand 1 (Unifying strand): Foundations for Climate Action

Through the delivery of the learning outcomes within the Unifying Strand, students gradually acquire a set of competencies. These have been informed by the eight [UNESCO competencies for Sustainability \(UNESCO, 2017\)](#). Students develop an understanding of interdependence and interconnectedness, vision multiple futures, reflect on norms and values, question assumptions to deepen their capacity for critical thinking. Students are supported to explore and reflect on their lives in the context of global inequalities and to express and deal with their feelings about climate change. This strand ultimately brings students to the point where they can produce positive change collectively and apply all the competencies together in an integrated way.

Strand 2: Me and My Community

In this strand students explore their own community and sense of belonging and connecting with nature in a physical place, in part through outdoor learning and engagement with their communities. Students are encouraged to identify and value their existing skills and to feel connected to the environment and other people locally and to explore sustainability principles that apply to their communities.

Strand 3: Thinking Globally

In this strand students think about value systems in different societies, climate science, analysing root causes of climate change and possible solutions. Students create media to communicate climate science with their peers and others and explore climate justice and how it links to other issues of justice.

Strand 4: Making Change

This strand supports students to take the leap from knowledge, skills and attitudes that support empowerment, to take action in small groups for a more sustainable world. Students connect with others and appreciate that they can be part of a wider movement to protect the earth and everyone affected by climate change. Students learn about the actions of others as a source of inspiration and motivation, learn action skills so that they can self-organise, learn about challenges and barriers to climate action and learn practical skills for a sustainable world.

While the learning outcomes associated with each strand are set out separately here, this should not be taken to imply that the strands are to be studied separately or in isolation.

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.

5. Learning outcomes

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 and does not imply any hierarchy of importance across the outcomes themselves.)

Strand 1: Foundations for Climate Action

Learning outcomes

Students learn about

Students should be able to

Complex systems, interdependence, dealing with uncertainty	1.1 Recognise that sustainability issues are interconnected and that my life is a part of complex, interdependent systems
Anticipating possible, probable and desirable futures, risks and consequences, feelings about personal and global futures	1.2. Compare different possible futures, to identify a shared preferable future and some of the decisions to make now to get there
Norms and values	1.3 Assess the values, culture and political ideas that have an influence in my life, my community and wider society
Strategic action, action skills, collective action	1.4 Produce positive change by working together to decide on and take action to address a root cause of a sustainability problem
Facilitation skills, collective decision-making, participation, equality	1.5 Demonstrate skills for working in self-organising groups where members decide as equals on their goal and how to achieve it
Critical thinking, questioning assumptions	1.6 Evaluate sources and data, applying understanding of the nature of science and thinking critically, to form evidence-based opinions about sustainability and global justice issues
Self-awareness, global context	1.7 Appreciate the links between climate change and global inequalities past and present, how these impact on climate action, and my position within these
Self-awareness, feelings, thinking and motivation for social change	1.8 Appreciate the range of feelings I have about climate change, and how my feelings interact with my thinking, and with my motivation to join or help create social change
Solutions, problem-solving	1.9 Apply problem-solving approaches, using the competencies I have developed in this strand

Strand 2: Me and My Community

Learning outcomes

Students learn about

Students should be able to

My place / Belonging

My connection to nature and place

2.1 Explore, through direct experience, an aspect of my local environment and its connection to my wellbeing.

Learner voice and co-design, exploring my outdoor environment

2.2 Design collaboratively, learning experiences including outdoor learning which enhance my wellbeing and my understanding of the interconnections between me and my local environment or community.

Local change in a global world

2.3 Investigate aspects of the history and culture of the communities in a place that I am a part of.

Creating a sustainable community

Self-appreciation

2.4 Appreciate how my existing interests, skills, knowledge, values and creativity can make a difference and contribute to my community and my world.

Values and principles for environmental justice and protecting 'the commons' (the things that we inherit jointly and protect for generations to come, such as the atmosphere, soils, oceans, wildlife).

2.5 Design with others a set of values and principles for a just and sustainable community.

Place-investigation

2.6 Investigate through a visit to one or more places in the locality, how an aspect of my local community could become or is becoming more sustainable.

Community power

Community action

2.7 Review an aspect of the energy and materials use of my school or another organisation that is or has been sustainable and how this came about.

Participation, energy democracy, sustainable energy communities and co-operatives

2.8 Discuss case studies of how communities can participate in and lead decision-making and action to meet local needs in a way that fosters global solidarity.

Strand 3: Thinking Globally

Students learn about

Learning outcomes

Students should be able to

Earth limits

Environmental limits

3.1 Explain the existence of planetary boundaries.

Science of the Earth's climate system

3.2 Create using data and/or creative media, a way to communicate a key earth science concept relevant to sustainability.

Social context of climate change

3.3 Discuss the history of the climate crisis and responses to it at the level of nations and corporations, using data about past emissions, wealth, knowledge and power to act.

Economic systems and their impacts on the climate

3.4 Examine economic ideas contributing to global environmental limits being exceeded; and economic ideas that can be implemented to protect people and the environment.

Climate justice

Leadership of affected communities

3.5 Research how people are reducing and adapting to the effects of climate change, taking inspiration from frontline communities engaged in participatory problem-solving.

Intersection of climate injustice with racism, gender, class and economic inequalities, citizenship, age, generation, working conditions / workers' rights or other factors.

3.6 Explore how climate change impacts on people differently and the meaning of climate justice.

Why the world is unequal – the history and current systems that have made it so, how this context informs struggles today

3.7 Explore how racism and colonialism have influenced demands for climate justice.

Applying a global justice lens

3.8 Discuss how to apply an understanding of climate justice and power inequalities to my personal and group actions.

Critical thinking

Human-centred and nature-centred worldviews

3.9 Explore value systems in different societies past or present, and their impact on how societies relate to nature.

Critical thinking about framing

3.10 Analyse media sources to discuss how climate change is covered and presented, identifying different worldviews that may influence this.

Critical thinking about causes

3.11 Produce a visual root cause analysis of climate change with my peers; thinking critically about the values and systems that play a role in ongoing inaction.

Critical thinking about solutions, exploring efficacy and fairness, disputes over 'false solutions'

3.12 Evaluate a government response to climate change in Ireland and another place, including consideration of the response from a climate justice perspective.

Strand 4: Making Change

Students learn about

Learning outcomes

Students should be able to

Social change

Tactics in organising social change including but not limited to: personal transformation, lobbying, community organising, trade union organizing, popular education, direct action, civil disobedience, boycott, setting up alternatives, creative arts. Social movement history

Approaches used by social movements and by governments; approaches focused on consumption or on political agency; individual and collective approaches

Cycles of social change over generations; intergenerational learning and youth activism

4.1 Identify a wide range of tactics used by groups and social movements to achieve change towards justice and sustainability.

4.2 Compare different approaches to climate action, identifying what motivates and inspires me to challenge and change systems that are unsustainable or unjust, and what helps me to maintain this motivation over time.

4.3 Apply local knowledge in taking climate action that I have gathered with my peers by connecting with others in my community.

Challenges and opportunities

Using evidence to identify a focus for change.

Empowerment, barriers and obstacles to participation

4.4 Research a powerful company or economic sector that is blocking or seeking to delay climate action, why it is doing so, and how this might be challenged.

4.5 Investigate what empowers people and what disempowers people in communities that I am a part of, to identify how more people might engage in collective climate action.

Action skills

Facilitation skills how to ensure others can participate

Skills and techniques for equal, inclusive and empowering decision-making

Collective, youth-led action, creativity, meaningful action, solidarity

Research and advocacy

Oral communication, speaking confidently

4.6 Demonstrate facilitation of a meeting, decision or discussion in a small group of my peers.

4.7 Compare, through practice, voting and consensus as different ways of making decisions in groups, and explore the role of participatory democracy in climate action.

4.8 Design and conduct a creative action as a group which addresses a root cause of climate change or a linked local-to-global sustainability issue.

4.9 Formulate a view on how to improve a local or national response to the climate crisis and communicate this to a decision-maker in my school, community or government.

4.10 Justify, using oral communication for a selected audience, my opinion about a possible or proposed climate change solution that I have researched.

Practical sustainability

Learning by doing; developing a physical skill through direct hands-on experience

4.11 Demonstrate a new practical sustainability skill, chosen from a range of skills identified in discussion with my peers, that I can use to contribute to a sustainable future.

6. Links

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 several statements.

Statement

Examples of relevant learning in the course

SOL 10

Has the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably

As this short course is about learning for climate action, all the learning outcomes are relevant to SOL 10, in particular the competencies of the unifying strand.

Student's work on their group actions, and their chosen practical sustainability skills, will display their achievement of this Statement of Learning.

SOL 7

Values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts

As this short course is about learning for climate action, all the learning outcomes are relevant to SOL 7, in particular the competencies of the unifying strand.

The learning in 'Thinking Globally' is particularly relevant to understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Students learn about how government and politics works by evaluating government and intergovernmental responses to climate change. Student's work on their group actions, community action plans and visioning will display their achievement of this Statement of Learning.

SOL 8

Values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change

The learning in 'Me and My Community' is particularly relevant to understanding how my local community has changed over time. Outcomes in 'Making Change' support students to learn how people act together to bring about change. The outcome emphasising reflection on norms and values is relevant to awareness of inheriting values, beliefs and traditions.

SOL 11

Takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others

Numerous outcomes across the strands involve students learning through reflection and through thinking about their emotions, in this way supporting them to deal with wellbeing issues that arise from climate change.

Collaborative design of outdoor learning activities with their teacher, involves students carrying out risk assessment for the outdoor activity. Students also have the opportunity to learn outdoors and to consider how outdoor environments can support their wellbeing.

The outcome 1.2 in the unifying strand is informed by the UNESCO competencies for sustainability, specifically the anticipatory competency. This includes thinking about risks and consequences.

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.

Key skill	Key skill element	Student learning activity
Being literate	Expressing ideas clearly and accurately	Research and moving debate to build students' confidence in speaking about their opinions about climate change. Students present and justify, using oral communication, an informed and thought-out opinion about climate action based on critical thinking and evidence from research.
Managing myself	Knowing Myself	Students reflect on and discuss emotional responses to a video clip about climate change, as a way of opening up discussion and analysis of how people deal with emotions about climate change. Students create a 'Skills Bank' for their class, recording all the skills they have and how these skills might help them to help build a more sustainable world / contribute towards an action project. Students have a group discussion to reflect on the values that have influence in my life, my school, my community.
	Making considered decisions	Students consider possible options and plan to carry out a group action related to climate change. Students learn to make considered decisions about their personal safety outdoors, by carrying out a risk and benefit analysis for a proposed outdoor activity that they would like to do as a group.
Staying well	Being Confident	Students map feelings and emotions that they may have in relation to climate change and Climate Action Students create a piece of art/media or give a presentation to communicate their opinions and beliefs about climate change.
	Being Healthy and Physically Active	Students co-design and facilitate an outdoor learning activity. Students have opportunities to experience and reflect on the natural world as a source of wellbeing, interconnectedness and interdependence with the living (plants and animals) and non-living environment (soil, water, air) Students choose and learn a practical skills to support a healthy and sustainable life and community involvement e.g. growing food, repairing a bike or device, protecting an ecosystem.

Managing information and thinking	Thinking creatively and critically	Students carry out a 'fact-checking' activity to question ideas and assumptions that they and their classmates may have about climate change.
	Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information and data	Students gather and organise information about the communities where they live or go to school through a field trips, interviews, artefacts photographs, maps or other sources, wellbeing and ways people lived in my community in the past and present. Students investigate barriers and obstacles to participation, through place-based investigation (e.g. meetings, interviews, survey) to understand the audience for their actions. e.g. Students carry out a survey in their community to assess barriers to action on climate change, and present and communicate results.
Being numerate	Developing a positive disposition towards investigating, reasoning and problem-solving	Students carry out an audit to assess the energy use of their school in order to propose an energy demand reduction plan.
	Gathering, interpreting and representing data	
Being creative	Seeing patterns, trends and relationships	Seeing patterns, trends and relationships Students examine graphs showing CO2 emissions from a sector e.g. transport/agriculture over a period of time.
	Imagining	Students take part in a visioning activity to imagine possible sustainable futures and how they could play a positive role in creating such a future.
	Implementing ideas and taking action	Students evaluate various ideas and actions as part of planning and conducting a collective climate action.
Working with others	Learning creatively	Students co-design creative learning experiences for them and their peers. Students decide on and carry out a creative action in a small group which addresses a root cause of climate change or a linked local-to-global sustainability issue.
	Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict Co-operating Respecting difference	Students take turns to facilitate group meetings and activities based on respect and equality. Students research and share with their class how various communities around the world are adapting to climate change considering that they may have different cultural and societal norms/values.
	Contributing to making the world a better place Learning with others	Students plan and carry out a group action related to climate change which will involve working together to research, design, plan and carry out the action.

Communicating

Listening and
expressing myself

Students take part in a class discussion about climate change and the impact they think it may have in the coming years.
Students debate using a role play, to take perspectives of different groups in a mock United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change negotiations, communicating using both persuasive language and data.

Discussing and
debating

Using Numbers and
Data

Students take part in a debate or discussion proposing different climate mitigation strategies for a particular situation with evidence to support their argument/choice.
Students conduct a meeting, visit or conversation with people of different generations in their local area, to gather local knowledge for climate action.

7. Assessment and Reporting

The most important form of assessment which will take place in the short course is Assessment for Learning (AfL) practices which will take place as an integral part of activities in each lesson as well as via home learning activities. Both will allow the teacher to give regular comment only, verbal formative feedback on learning within the context of the positive relationship developed between teacher and student.

Students will know they have succeeded by the evidence that they have self-organised and carried out action that contributes to a more just and sustainable world. Students will organise and carry out significant action in each of the three years of the short course. Skills for collaboration and action should be developed incrementally.

- In First Year, it is likely to be most appropriate for the action to be heavily scaffolded by teacher inputs and explicit teaching of skills, with the teacher modelling how to make decisions together as a group.
- In Second Year, students build on this experience by devising and carrying out a youth-led action, based on their own ideas, ideally in a small group of no more than 5 students. The process of researching, developing and carrying out each action should take place over the course of a significant portion of the school year.
- New action groups can be formed in Third Year allowing students to collaborate with a new set of fellow students each year. Teachers may opt to recommend a shorter or smaller scale of action project in 3rd year than was undertaken in 2nd year (perhaps giving students time to complete a 5–6-week action project finishing in December or January). Finishing a shorter 3rd year action in December or January may help to avoid adding pressure to students later in 3rd year: rather than students still working on youth-led action in the final term. The end of 3rd year may be a suitable time to allow students time to enjoy using outdoor practical skills students have learned, to reflect on strengths and weaknesses of the actions already undertaken and what they have learned about themselves by working groups, and importantly to spend time celebrating students' new skills, learning and achievements during the three years.

Student portfolio

Students can create a portfolio to track their learning each year. This can be in the form of a creative visual scrapbook, a digital folder with typed or voice memos, a website or blog, or other formats as chosen by the student. Within this folder students can save pieces of work and also keep regular journal entries reflecting on their learning. Students could be given time in class to add to their journal entry to self-assess their own learning through reflection. Students will be encouraged to engage in peer assessment to expand their skills, attitudes and knowledge about learning for climate action while encouraging others simultaneously. This can be used as a bank of work when selecting pieces of work that students would like feedback on from their teacher.

Students will submit piece(s) of work to show their incremental development of action skills and their growing sustainability knowledge and values being put into action during the year. The teacher will give ongoing feedback through normal classroom AfL practices.

Teachers will also give written feedback on several pieces of significant work during each year, particularly on pieces of work identified by the student as significant for their learning or group action. The timing of this written feedback is not prescribed by the design of the short course and can be timed to suit the workflow of the student or the group, or the assessment schedule in the school. Pieces of work that teachers give written feedback should not be seen solely as assessment activities - they should be an integral part of the learning in the course, with students using the feedback to improve the work for purposes of advancing their learning and/or the impact of their change-making actions.

The specific nature of pieces of work that students present for feedback may vary and depending on the group and what actions they are taking together. Examples of pieces of work that a teacher might give feedback on;

- Students self-assess their knowledge and submit a piece of writing, visual or audio along with a personal reflection in response to one key lesson which appealed to them over the preceding term.
- Students submit a piece of work of their own choosing to demonstrate initial steps in an action having been attempted, a revised action plan developed as a group along with a short personal reflection.
- Students select a piece of work which best demonstrates the positive impact of their action project and their development of key skills for action, and a reflection on what they have learned about themselves, about others and about sustainability by doing their action project.

This written feedback from teachers can be timed so as not to take place at the same time as end of year assessments in other subjects, to ease pressure on teachers and students, and facilitate time for in-person dialogue about improvement.

This brief written formative feedback on the pieces of work (e.g., a note in an action scrapbook or digital comments on a shared editable document) which will give the student a clear understanding of what they can do to make progress in achieving the learning outcomes.

The feedback process is designed to make assessment manageable for students and teachers and to allow for reporting without risking an over-focus on the action outcomes rather than the process, which is more important for learning. The process seeks to avoid over-assessment that might detract from the purpose of this short course; to ensure student wellbeing while supporting learners to find their personal motivations, passion and develop skills for collective climate action.

Classroom Based Assessment

This will involve students themselves selecting one key piece of work that they have previously completed, or a new piece of work (most likely from their second year action project) which they would like to be assessed on.

This piece of work will then be used to help students respond to a short questionnaire, shared in advance by the teacher. The questionnaire can be designed to support the student to meet criteria outlined in the features of quality. Students could choose to respond to the questions orally (interview or recording) or in writing, depending on what will allow them to best show their learning. Their on-going reflection entries can be used to support this process.

Part of the flexible, agentic design of the course is that the CBA can be carried out at any time in the 2nd year or 3rd year of the course.

The criteria for deciding level of achievement in the CBA will be outlined in the Features of Quality for the short course. Students can use previous pieces of work for their CBA. Students will be marked as individuals, based on their individual contribution to the group action, and their personal reflections on what they learned through the group action. Assessment guidelines for the short course will be published with the specification.

Option: Where desirable, the assessment process could include feedback from students in other schools with an interest in climate action and / or local experts who can offer detailed insights into specific student actions which relate to their area of expertise.

Reporting to parents at parent's evenings will be based on how their child's submissions of work and participation in the short course reflects the Junior Cycle wellbeing indicators and reflects the progress in achieving the learning outcomes of the course. The grade descriptor arrived at through the CBA process will also be reported to parents and will appear on students' Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

NCCA's Assessment Toolkit also includes substantial resource material for use in ongoing classroom assessment of this Junior Cycle short course, as well as providing a detailed account of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process.

Features of Quality

There are four descriptors of the standard of student work. Indicate here the features associated with each level of descriptor. The four descriptors are Exceptional, Above expectations, In line with expectations and Yet to meet expectations. The features of quality support student and teacher judgement of the Classroom-Based Assessments and are the criteria that will be used by teachers to assess the student work. The features of quality are available in Assessment Guidelines for this short course.

8. Assessment Arrangements

Assessment practices, whether as part of ongoing assessment or the Classroom-Based Assessment, are a key feature of teaching and learning in schools. Assessment arrangements for students, 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, appropriate assessment arrangements 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. Such accommodations which enable all students to access curriculum and assessment are based on specific needs.

[Comprehensive guidelines for schools](#) and an interactive version of the [Inclusive Education Framework](#) provide further information on supportive assessment practices.

9. Level indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (QQI)

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

10. Acknowledgements

This short course has been developed in accordance with the NCCA template and guidelines.

The authors of this specification are Kate Minnock, Jerrieann Sullivan and Hedda Dick. The development process for this specification took place between May 2020 to May 2021 and was carried out by Kate Minnock, Jerrieann Sullivan, Hedda Dick, Sian Cowman and Nancy Serrano.

Many people provided input and expertise in the development process for the specification. The development team gratefully acknowledges the time, effort and important contribution made by;

- 24 youth participants in a Youth Advisory Group who participated in a series of meetings in 2020-2021 to provide input and feedback on the short course design;
- Helen Gallagher (Moville Community College, Co. Donegal), Martin Healy (Coláiste Chraobh Abhann. Co. Wicklow), Ciara Bolger (Temple Carrig School, Co. Wicklow), Doreen Killington (Castleisland Community College, Co. Kerry), Shauna Keyes (Blakestown Community School, Dublin), Shane Curtin (Colaiste Ide agus Iosef, Abbeyfeale), Paula McNamara (Cork Educate Together Secondary School, Cork), Kay Quinn (Schull Community College), Aoife Gordon (Tyndall College Carlow), Sinead Moore, Aisling Miller and all 22 of the post-primary teachers from across Ireland who participated in a Teacher Advisory Group to guide the development process, taking part in meetings in summer 2020 and February 2021 to provide input and feedback on learning outcomes and design of assessment;
- Senan Gardiner (Sustainability Education researcher, Department of Education, University of Vechta, Germany), Dr Fergal Finnegan (School of Education, Maynooth University), Deirdre Hogan, Valerie Lewis and all 10 experts who participated in the meetings of the Expert Advisory Group and provided input on the pedagogical approach and feedback on the specification.
- The three Supporting Organisations who provided written input to help guide the development process; The Irish Second Level Students' Union, Fridays for Future Ireland and the Students' Climate Action Network.

Special thanks also to the teachers and experts who contributed additional feedback, advice and recommendations via email, phone and digital comments to support and inform the development process.

The course is being piloted by 15 schools in 2021-2022. Feedback from teachers and students in these school communities will be used in revising and updating the specification where necessary in summer 2022.

The development team would also like to acknowledge the detailed and invaluable feedback provided by the NCCA staff that helped to guide the process and drafting of the specification.

