



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna

Junior Cycle Music

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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 are relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality: they 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 junior cycle programme builds on students' learning to date and actively supports their progress; it enables them to develop the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

Rationale

Learning about and through the arts is fundamental to an education that aspires to nurture and support the development of the whole person. Awareness of, involvement in, and appreciation of the arts enables students to encounter a rich world of creativity, imagination and innovation (Arts in Education Charter, 2012). The UN Declaration of Human Rights (Article 27) affirms the rights of everyone to 'participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts'.

Through engaging with music, students are offered opportunities to develop new skills, while drawing on their previous experiences. These previous experiences are often central to our existence as music is everywhere. From the moment we are born we are in a musical world. Music is a natural early connection between infant and caregivers. International research shows that from the very early months of a child's life there is a human propensity to respond and engage with music. With music, students can immerse themselves intellectually, emotionally, physically and kinaesthetically in the learning experience. Music performance and composition are collaborative and interpersonal activities, where social skills are developed through the sharing of ideas, skills, or instruments.

Music can provide an environment for the student where they are safe to explore, experiment and be allowed to take creative risks. The subject can engage students in learning that engages, inspires, challenges, provokes, exhilarates, and liberates. Students are encouraged to collaborate in the formation of ideas and the presentation of these ideas and to critically reflect on their work and the work of others. Through listening to the music of others, and assimilating this into their own ideas, students learn how musical works are created. Through understanding how to evaluate and critique the works of others, students learn to be self-reflective and improve on their own musical creations.

As a creative endeavour, music can facilitate the development of imaginative and exploratory experiences, where individuality and personality are provided with the opportunity to grow and be given a voice. The study of music offers lifelong opportunities to develop the imagination in unique ways, through listening to familiar and unfamiliar works, coming to know and understand sounds internally, creating sound pictures or stories and expressing feelings and emotions in sound.

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Junior Cycle Music

Rationale

Learning music is intrinsically motivating, meaningful and a rewarding activity for young people because it is hands-on; fully engaging the students in activities that relate to and have a connection with the world experienced by them outside the classroom. Music fosters both the specific skills related to the subject, and a range of transferable skills that may apply to other individual and collaborative endeavours. Through movement, sound, symbol and image, engaging with music can transform people's creative ideas into expressive works that communicate feelings, meanings and interpretations to a wider audience.

Music is important as a catalyst for building cultural capital within the individual student and the class collective. Through encountering and engaging with an array of music activities, we can ensure that we continue to develop future citizens that are culturally engaged, culturally aware and culturally connected. Being culturally aware heightens student understanding of both national and international cultural identities. With an increasingly diverse and pluralist population, this understanding of others through a cultural lens will encourage students to develop as responsible and ethical citizens.

Music is a source of understanding history, reflecting the social and cultural context and the era of its creation. Music can portray the cultural identity of a country, the mood of the people or the thoughts of the individuals who live there. Music education brings the young person to an awareness and appreciation of their own unique cultural environment and ethos. In engaging students with the rich background of their native musical traditions as well as other musical genres, music education contributes to the students' knowledge and understanding of others, their times, their cultures and traditions.

Aim

This music specification aims to contribute to the development of artistic awareness and understanding, self-expression, self-esteem, imagination and multicultural sensitivity, and therefore, to the development of the whole person. Students will develop the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to produce and engage with authentic and original music, that is both theirs and the music of others. In doing so, they will develop the music literacy, critical skills and language necessary to engage with today's musical world.

Overview: Links

The tables on the following pages show how music is linked to central features of learning and teaching outlined in the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015*.

Table 1: Links between Junior Cycle Music and the statements of learning

STATEMENTS OF LEARNING

The statement	Examples of relevant learning
SOL 3: The student creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts.	Students will explore the creation, appreciation and interpretation of musical texts in various notated formats, including staff notation, graphic notation, using technological means and other appropriate formats.
SOL 4: The student creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved.	Students will create a range of compositions; capturing and presenting the processes and decisions made through portfolios, manuscripts or other appropriate media.
SOL 8: The student values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between the past and current events and the forces that drive change.	Students use their musical ideas and outputs to reflect life and living in their own community and the broader context; they consider the role and impact of the past in their musical choices.
SOL 16: The student describes, illustrates, interprets, predicts and explains patterns and relationships.	Students understand patterns and relationships in music through exploring tonalities, chords, keys and time signatures in a variety of musical experiences. .
SOL 23: The student brings an idea from conception to realisation.	Students work out a creative concept and decide how to bring it to fruition. This process involves moving through brainstorming, researching, practising, presenting, capturing, evaluating and reflecting.
SOL 24: The student uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner.	Students can use technological and digital media to create collaborative compositions; record and critique group performances and explore the works of composers, while being aware of issues related to copyright and plagiarism.

Key Skills

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. Figure 1 below illustrates the key skills of junior cycle. There are opportunities to support all key skills in this course but some are particularly significant.

Figure 1: Key skills of junior cycle



Table 2 identifies some of the elements that are related to learning activities in music. Teachers can also build many of the other elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning.

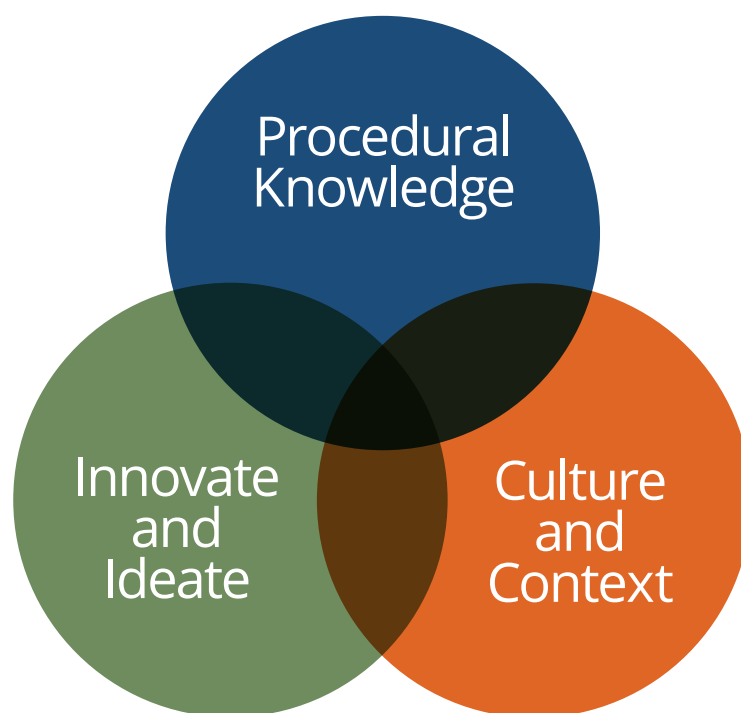
Table 2: Examples of links between Junior Cycle Music and key skills

Key skill	Key skill element	Student learning activity
Being numerate	Seeing patterns, trends and relationships	Students can explore the relationship between different genres/styles and identify similarities and differences through listening and composing activities.
Being literate	Writing for different purposes	Students can create music in response to different stimuli, such as images, texts, abstract ideas/moods/emotions or other melodic forms and fragments.
Managing myself	Being able to reflect on my own learning	Students learn to identify and reflect on personal strengths and weaknesses; consider their choices and decisions; and seek help and be open to feedback in a way that facilitates revision and improvement.
Managing information and thinking	Using digital technology to access, manage and share content	Students can use digital devices to record their individual or group performances, to share this content with each other and develop a portfolio of performance development.
Being creative	Learning creatively	Students will explore innovative approaches to engage with classroom activities; for example through group discussion, movement, visual thinking, peer teaching, creative use of technology and taking risks.
Communicating	Performing and presenting	Students will get opportunities to explore and express emotions through a performance or presentation. They will make decisions about how best to communicate with an audience. Through listening to and observing others communicate, students develop an understanding of how to communicate their ideas through different and appropriate media.
Working with others	Developing good relationships and dealing with conflict	Students will learn to negotiate relationships with peers and teachers during rehearsals and other group activities; they will spend time actively listening to each other and sharing ideas honestly and sensitively; they will learn to respect and incorporate the views/ideas of others.
Staying well	Being confident	Students develop confidence as they contribute to decisions within group music-making activities and collaborative creative endeavours. They develop resilience in the face of difficulties and a sense of satisfaction in the achievement of goals.

Overview: Course

The specification for Junior Cycle Music focuses on giving students the opportunity to develop their musical knowledge, skills and cultural awareness through the practical and cognitive engagement with music. This can be achieved through the three interconnected strands: Procedural knowledge, Innovate and ideate and Culture and context. A student will experience learning in each of these three strands as they progress through their junior cycle.

Figure 2: The strands of Junior Cycle Music



Strand 1: Procedural knowledge

To explore fully their musical imagination, creativity, and potential requires students to develop their music literacy and skills in a range of ways. Students learn music through engaging in, reflecting upon and evaluating their musical experiences. Through this process, students develop a range of musical skills (technical, aural, analytical and notational) that leads to musical understanding. In this strand, students will develop this procedural knowledge so that they can pursue and realise their possible musical selves and their ideas with confidence.

The development of procedural knowledge involves developing a vocabulary in music by learning and using symbols to represent sound, exploring and responding to expressive qualities in music and imagining and creating short musical motifs and soundscapes. It also involves experimenting with elements of music such as pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, style and tonality.

Strand 2: Innovate and ideate

In this strand, students draw on their personal experiences and perspectives to develop, refine, showcase and seek feedback on their musical ideas. They develop an awareness of different sounds and the potential of sound for resourcing and generating ideas, and for communicating feelings.

Students will innovate and ideate through composing/arranging and performing music for specific purposes, experimenting with music to communicate ideas derived from a variety of stimuli, and collaborating with others to develop and extend musical ideas. Students will make interpretative musical decisions by demonstrating an integrated understanding of music elements and by using technology to innovate and share ideas.

Strand 3: Culture and context

The understanding of music in context and its cultural positioning helps to shape our ability to create, participate and appraise the music we engage with. In this strand, students will investigate the contextual and cultural environments that impact on purpose and intent in music.

This includes developing an understanding and a knowledge of music in past and present contexts; considering musical works as social commentaries on cultures and peoples; investigating music associated with particular times, places, social groups and feelings and sharing and discussing examples of music experienced at home, at school and in the wider community.

While the learning outcomes are set out under strand headings, this should not be taken to imply that the strands are to be studied in isolation. The students' engagement and learning are optimised by a fully integrated experience across the three strands.

To give further emphasis to the integrated nature of learning, the outcomes for each strand are grouped by reference to three elements:

- Creating and exploring
- Participating and music-making
- Appraising and responding.

Creating and exploring

Across the strands the learning outcomes in this element focus on developing students' understanding of how music is created. They will explore how melody is constructed and how sounds are layered to create texture and harmony. They will listen to, read, and interpret music as they develop understandings of composers' and arrangers' intentions and cultural protocols. Students will search for and discover themes and ideas for creating music through experimentation, improvisation and by exploring music elements, concepts and techniques. They will use the experience of others, both local and in the wider context to inform their own creative decisions.

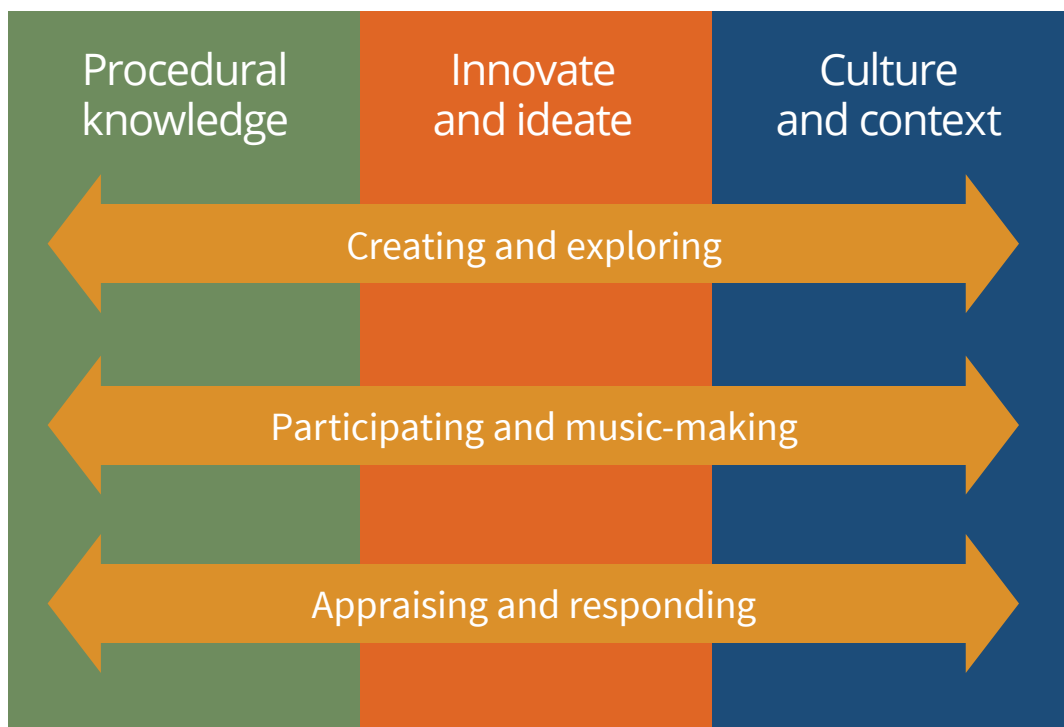
Participating and music-making

In this element, students will participate in activities that communicate their own creative ideas and the interpretation of the ideas of others. Students will develop fluency and technical control as they rehearse and present individually and with others. They will use performance as a method of demonstrating their understanding of musical elements and instrumental/vocal techniques. As students rehearse, revise, and refine music to perform for and with others, they learn about making informed musical decisions and judgements.

Appraising and responding

This element focuses on students developing their skills of analysis, comparison and evaluation of pieces of music. This element allows for discriminatory aural skills to be developed, as students learn to reproduce melodies, rhythms, accompaniments and harmonies and develop and demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of musical elements, contexts and language. Appraisal allows the students to express their feelings about music, and through this communication, to use appropriate terminology to justify opinions and inform later musical decisions. Appraising skills are also used when students refine and improve their own performances and creations, when they adapt their own ideas and when they respond to and critique other students' work.

Figure 3 : The integrated nature of strands and elements



Junior Cycle Music has been designed for a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement across the three years of junior cycle. The Classroom-Based Assessments will be set at a common level and there will be a common level externally-assessed final assessment.

The music specification has been designed to assist teachers in planning meaningful and stimulating learning experiences for students that enable them to develop their knowledge, skills, understanding and values, as well as helping them develop their self-awareness as learners. Teachers can plan to focus on the development of key skills through student-centred activities, recognising that any one activity does not always enable students to develop the full range of skills. Opportunities for more detailed and comprehensive activities can be included when students have developed the confidence and capacity to apply key skills in increasingly complex scenarios.

This specification aims to maintain a balance between the depth and breadth of the study of the subject. This affords a certain amount of flexibility and freedom for teachers to facilitate learning in a way that reflects students' own choices, their curiosity and their creative spirit. Achieving learning outcomes should be planned in a way that is active, stimulating and reflective of students' real-life experiences and expectations.

The music environment is a dynamic one, and as such involves the whole student, incorporating their personal outlook, their previous musical experiences and presenting them with new and exciting challenges. As students gain experience through their creating, participating and appraising of work across the three distinct strands, they will be developing their critical skills and allowing their musical selves emerge.

Progression from primary to senior cycle

PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Within the Primary School Curriculum, music is viewed as part of a broader arts education curriculum along with art and drama. At primary level, the music course comprises three strand units:

- Performing
- Composing
- Listening and responding.

Musical activities are suggested within each strand unit that enable the child to develop an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the interrelated elements of music, and to grow in musical understanding. The aims of the primary music curriculum aspire to:

- enable the child to appreciate music critically
- develop their openness to a range of genres
- develop their capacity and ability to express ideas, feelings and experience through music
- experience the excitement of actively engaging in musical creativity
- foster higher-order skills through the acquisition of musical skills, knowledge, concepts and values.

These ambitions and aims are very much aligned with the rationale of Junior Cycle Music and addressed within the teaching and learning activities that will occur through the learning outcomes in this specification.

SENIOR CYCLE

All the knowledge and skills that students develop during their time in junior cycle link strongly with the syllabus for music at senior cycle. Gaining a critical understanding of how music is created, how it is experienced and how it impacts on cultures and contexts are all important skills for students as they move into senior cycle. Through engaging with performing activities and creative endeavours, students are learning to express themselves using musical language and non-verbal means of communication; elements that are central components of the Leaving Certificate syllabus.

Junior Cycle Music exposes students to classroom activities that encourage collaboration, creativity, innovation and communication, all of which feature as part of the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). In the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme, students are offered a selection of modules to choose from that include: types of music, world music, music in the community, music of Ireland, music industry and music and the media. In their assessments of these modules, students have opportunities to participate in a music-making activity; make presentations on topics and themes in a format of their choosing; prepare reports and interviews and compile music suitable for advertisements and media usage. In each of these modules and assessments, students use skills that they develop through junior cycle, namely appraising, developing ideas, making contextual references, and reflection and evaluation.

Expectations for Students

Expectations for students is an umbrella term that links learning outcomes with annotated examples of student work in the subject or short course specification. When teachers, students or parents looking at the online specification scroll through the learning outcomes, a link will sometimes be available to examples of work associated with a specific learning outcome or with a group of learning outcomes. The examples of student work will have been selected to illustrate expectations and will have been annotated by teachers. The examples will include work that is:

- Exceptional
- Above expectations
- In line with expectations.

The purpose of the examples of student work is to show the extent to which the learning outcomes are being realised in actual cases.

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that describe what knowledge, understanding, skills and values students should be able to demonstrate having studied music in junior cycle. The learning outcomes set out in the following tables apply to all students. As set out here they represent outcomes for students at the end of their three years of study. The specification stresses that the learning outcomes are for three years and therefore the learning outcomes focused on at a point in time will not have been 'completed' but will continue to support the students' learning in music up to the end of junior cycle.

To support the exploration of the learning outcomes by teachers, parents and students, a glossary of the action verbs used in the specification is included in Appendix A. 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, nor does it suggest an order to which the learning outcomes should be developed in class. Junior Cycle Music is offered at a common level. The examples of student work linked to learning outcomes will offer commentary and insights that support differentiation and inclusive classroom practices.

Strand one: Procedural knowledge

ELEMENT: Creating and exploring

Students should be able to:

- 1.1 compose and perform or play back short musical phrases and support these phrases by creating rhythmic/melodic/harmonic ostinati to accompany them
- 1.2 create and present a short piece, using instruments and/or other sounds in response to a stimulus¹
- 1.3 design a harmonic or rhythmic accompaniment, record this accompaniment and improvise over this recording
- 1.4 indicate chords that are suitable to provide harmonic support to a single melody line

ELEMENT: Participating and music-making

Students should be able to:

- 1.5 read, interpret and play from symbolic representations of sounds
- 1.6 listen to and transcribe rhythmic phrases of up to four bars and melodic phrases of up to two bars
- 1.7 perform music at sight through playing, singing or clapping melodic and rhythmic phrases
- 1.8 rehearse and perform pieces of music that use common structural devices and textures
- 1.9 demonstrate an understanding of a range of metres and pulses through the use of body percussion or other means of movement

ELEMENT: Appraising and responding

Students should be able to:

- 1.10 discuss the characteristics and defining features of contrasting styles of music represented in the local school or community
- 1.11 illustrate the structure of a piece of music through a physical or visual representation
- 1.12 indicate where chord changes occur in extracts from a selection of songs
- 1.13 compare different interpretations or arrangements of a piece of Irish traditional or folk music, paying attention to musical elements and other influences
- 1.14 compare pieces of music that are similar in period and style by different composers from different countries

¹ Stimulus could be for example an existing piece of music, a visual, a graphic, a work of art, an object, a texture or a word.

Strand two: Innovate and ideate

ELEMENT: Creating and exploring

Students should be able to:

- 2.1 experiment and improvise with making different types of sounds on a sound source and notate a brief piece that incorporates the sounds by devising symbolic representations for these sounds
- 2.2 create a musical statement (such as a rap or an advertising jingle) about a topical issue or current event and share with others the statement's purpose and development
- 2.3 adapt excerpts/motifs/themes from an existing piece of music by changing its feel, style, or underlying harmony

ELEMENT: Participating and music-making

Students should be able to:

- 2.4 rehearse and present a song or brief instrumental piece; identify and discuss the performance skills and techniques that were necessary to interpret the music effectively
- 2.5 prepare and rehearse a musical work for an ensemble focusing on co-operation and listening for balance and intonation; refine the interpretation by considering elements such as clarity, fluency, musical effect and style
- 2.6 design a rhythmic or melodic ostinato and add layers of sound over the pattern as it repeats, varying the texture to create a mood piece to accompany a film clip or sequence of images
- 2.7 create and present some musical ideas using instruments and/or found sounds to illustrate moods or feelings expressed in a poem, story or newspaper article

ELEMENT: Appraising and responding

Students should be able to:

- 2.8 analyse the chordal structure of excerpts from a range of songs and compile a list of songs with similar chord structures and progressions
- 2.9 distinguish between the sonorities, ranges and timbres of selections of instruments and voices; identify how these sounds are produced and propose their strengths and limitations in performance
- 2.10 develop a set of criteria for evaluating a live or recorded performance; use these criteria to complete an in-depth review of a performance
- 2.11 evaluate the impact that technology is having on how we access music; propose ways that their music, and that of their fellow students, can be shared to reach a global audience

Strand three: Culture and context

ELEMENT: Creating and exploring

Students should be able to:

- 3.1 collaborate with fellow students and peers to produce a playlist and a set of recordings to accompany a local historical event or community celebration
- 3.2 examine and interpret the impact of music on the depiction of characters, their relationships and their emotions, as explored in instrumental music of different genres
- 3.3 make a study of a particular contemporary or historical musical style; analyse its structures and use of musical devices, and describe the influence of other styles on it

ELEMENT: Participating and music-making

Students should be able to:

- 3.4 compose and perform an original jingle or brief piece of music for use in a new advertisement for a product, and record the composition
- 3.5 devise and perform examples of incidental music that could be used in a variety of contexts or environments

ELEMENT: Appraising and responding

Students should be able to:

- 3.6 associate/match music excerpts to a variety of texts (words, film, language) and justify the reasons as to why this piece of music was chosen to match the text
- 3.7 compare compositions by two or more Irish composers or songwriters; use listening, background reading, and scores (where appropriate) to explain and describe differences and similarities in the compositions
- 3.8 select a particular advertisement and analyse the role music plays in supporting the message and promoting the product
- 3.9 investigate the influence of processing effects (e.g. distortion, reverb, compression) on the recording process; select some recordings and evaluate the use and effectiveness of such effects within them
- 3.10 discuss the principles of music property rights and explain how this can impact on the sharing and publishing of music
- 3.11 explore the time allocated to Irish artists and performers on a variety of local or national Irish media and present these findings to their class

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment in education involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and can be used in a variety of ways, such as to record and report achievement, to determine appropriate routes for learners to take through a differentiated curriculum, or to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given learner. While different techniques may be employed for formative, diagnostic and summative purposes, the focus of the assessment and reporting is on the improvement of student learning. To do this it must fully reflect the aim of the curriculum.

The junior cycle places a strong emphasis on assessment as part of the learning process. This requires a more varied approach to assessment in ensuring that the assessment method or methods chosen are fit for purpose, timely and relevant to the students. Assessment in Junior Cycle Music will optimise the opportunity for students to become reflective and active participants in their learning and for teachers to support this. This rests upon the provision for learners of opportunities to negotiate success criteria against which the quality of their work can be judged by peer, self, and teacher assessment; and upon the quality of the focused feedback they get in support of their learning.

Providing focused feedback to students on their learning is a critical component of high-quality assessment and a key factor in building students' capacity to manage their own learning and their motivation to stick with a complex task or problem. Assessment is most effective when it moves beyond marks and grades, and reporting focuses not just on how the student has done in the past but on the next steps for further learning. This approach will ensure that assessment takes place as close as possible to the point of learning. Final assessment still has a role to play, but is only one element of a broader approach to assessment.

Essentially, the purpose of assessment and reporting at this stage of education is to support learning. Parents/guardians should be given a comprehensive picture of student learning. Linking classroom assessment and other assessment with a new system of reporting that culminates in the awarding of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will offer parents/guardians a clear and broad picture of their child's learning journey over the three years of junior cycle. To support this, teachers and schools have access to an Assessment Toolkit. Along with the guide to the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process, the toolkit includes learning, teaching and assessment support material, including:

- formative assessment
- planning for and designing assessment
- ongoing assessments for classroom use
- judging student work – looking at expectations for students and features of quality
- reporting to parents and students
- thinking about assessment: ideas, research and reflections
- an assessment glossary.

The contents of the toolkit include the range of assessment supports, advice and guidelines that enable schools and teachers to engage with the new assessment system and reporting arrangements in an informed way, with confidence and clarity.

Assessment for the JCPA

The assessment of music for the purposes of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will comprise two Classroom-Based Assessments: Composition portfolio and a Programme note; a practical examination and a written examination. All assessments will be at a common level. The State Examinations Commission (SEC) will assess the practical examination (held towards the end of third year) and the written examination in June of third year.

Rationale for the Classroom-Based Assessments in music

The two Classroom-Based Assessments for Junior Cycle Music are distinct markers in the student's learning journey, while still being an integral part of ongoing assessment and routine classroom practice. In this way they are similar to the formative assessment that occurs in the ebb and flow of classroom interaction that occurs every day in class. However, in the case of the Classroom-Based Assessments, the teacher's judgement is recorded for the purpose of subject learning and assessment review, and for the purpose of reporting to parents and students.

Junior Cycle Music will have two Classroom-Based Assessments. The Classroom-Based Assessments will relate to the students' work during the second and third years of junior cycle education.

Over the three years of junior cycle, students will be provided with the opportunity to stimulate their creativity, explore the expression and communication of their ideas, and develop an understanding of how music can teach us so much about cultures and societies. The Classroom-Based Assessments link to these priorities for learning and teaching in music. The Classroom-Based Assessments will provide an opportunity and vehicle for students to:

- collaborate with others on creative endeavours
- research information using an appropriate variety of methods
- express themselves in a non-verbal context
- communicate effectively and with confidence
- develop an understanding of the relationship between music and societies
- reflect on their progress and their musical choices.

Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Composition portfolio

This Classroom-Based Assessment offers students an opportunity to celebrate their achievements as creators of music artefacts, by compiling a collection of their musical ideas and creative expressions in a variety of genres and styles over time.

Through this process, students will develop their musical voice and their identity. When composing music for their chosen audience, students will learn how to bring an idea from concept to realisation.

The development of creative expression in music is a central element of this course, as outlined in the rationale. It is important to instil in students a creative disposition where they are free to experiment, allowed to take risks, encouraged to explore new and challenging opportunities and reflect on the creative process.

In the majority of cases, the work in the students' collections will arise from the ebb and flow of classroom practice. The collections of student compositions promote student engagement when students:

- identify and choose the stimulus for the creative work
- choose the format(s) in which to create the piece of music
- develop their ideas through engagement with other aspects of the music course.

Two pieces from the portfolio of compositions will be selected by the student for assessment purposes.

The focus of this assessment activity will be on the creation of a set of musical compositions which might include the following options:

- responding to an auditory or visual stimulus
- arranging an existing piece of music
- answering phrases(s) to an existing phrase
- adding music to text
- responding to a story or text
- creating an advertisement jingle
- devising a piece of electro-acoustic music
- music for a school event
- music as a response to a personal experience.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but serves to suggest that the collection should be a varied one. The options included above can overlap; there is no restriction on the choices that students can make.

The compositions can be in any recognised musical style/genre and can be written for instrument or voice and as a solo or group performance. It can be presented in written, digital, visual or audio form, or any other format that is deemed suitable by the student and appropriate for capturing the essence of their ideas.

Underlying and informing this Classroom-Based Assessment is a focus on the developmental and progressive nature of exploring creative ideas, and on students developing an understanding of the creative process. This is best supported by ongoing student practice in this artistic pursuit. To this end, students are encouraged to include drafts, redrafts, and other workings in relation to the compositions, although this work will not be assigned a descriptor.

A student reflection must be included with each of the two compositions chosen for assessment purposes. This is intended to give students the opportunity to set out a brief statement on the purpose or intention for the creative idea, and asks the students to indicate what they have learnt from the process and what they might do differently on a subsequent occasion.

Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Programme note

For this Classroom-Based Assessment, the student will prepare a programme note to inform an audience on the content of their upcoming performance which itself will comprise the practical examination.

The formative assessment related to the production of this note will be reported upon to the student and parent/guardian by the school as for all other second Classroom-Based Assessments. However, as detailed below, the performance which makes up the practical examination will be graded by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

This programme note is intended to illuminate the content of the upcoming performance in an interesting and relevant way. While this illumination is important for the audience, it also enriches the performance by the student, as knowing about the stories of compositions impacts on the performance of these pieces.

The provision of some background information on the composers or songwriters can provide important insights into their intentions, and an understanding of the wider context of the music to be performed. Providing the listener with signposts as to what to listen out for and giving them some interesting anecdotes about the composer or the piece, enlightens and informs their experience.

The programme note could include:

- a brief introduction to the composers/songwriters
- a description about the historical context of the pieces and the circumstances surrounding the composition
- one interesting musical point in each piece for the audience to listen out for
- famous exponents of a tune or an instrument
- the student's role in a group performance.

The structure of the programme note will be influenced by many factors, and students are offered flexibility in allowing for different degrees of emphasis to be focused on different musical elements and features.

Features of quality

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 will be available in the separate Assessment Guidelines for Music. All students will complete both Classroom-Based Assessments.

CBA	Completion of the assessment	SLAR² meeting
Composition portfolio	Towards the end of second year	One review meeting
Programme note	Term two of third year	One review meeting

Assessing the Classroom-Based Assessments

More detailed material on assessment in Junior Cycle Music, setting out details of the practical arrangements related to assessment of the Classroom-Based Assessments, will be available in separate assessment guidelines. This will include, for example, the suggested content and formats for student work and support in using 'on-balance' judgement in relation to the features of quality. The NCCA's Assessment Toolkit also includes substantial resource material for use in ongoing classroom assessment of Junior Cycle Music, as well as providing a detailed account of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review process.

Final examination

The final examination will consist of a practical examination and a written examination. The practical examination will be allocated 30% of the marks available. The written examination will be allocated 70% of the marks available.

Practical examination

The practical examination will take place in third year. Students will perform three musical songs/pieces. Solo and group performing may be freely mixed. The songs/pieces may also be presented on a variety of instruments or through a combination of voice and instruments. Technical control, fluency and musicality will be assessed. The standard required will reflect what can be attained in three years of class-based tuition.

Students will also take an unprepared test. They will choose from aural memory (rhythmic or melodic), sight-reading (instrumental/vocal/rhythmic) or improvisation. Aural memory and sight-reading tests will be four bars long. In the case of improvisation, students will be required to improvise for at least four bars.

The practical examination will be allocated 30% of the marks available and will be marked by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

Written examination

There will be one examination paper at a common level. This paper will be set and marked by the SEC and will be allocated 70% of the marks for the final assessment. The examination will be of one and a half hour's duration and will take place at the end of third year. During this assessment, students will be required to engage with, demonstrate comprehension of, and provide written responses to stimulus material.

In any one year, the learning outcomes to be assessed will constitute a sample of the relevant outcomes from the tables of learning outcomes.

Inclusive assessment practices

This specification allows for inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. 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 Classroom-Based Assessments. The 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.

Appendix A: Glossary of action verbs

This glossary is designed to clarify the learning outcomes. Each action verb is described in terms of what the learner should be able to do once they have achieved the learning outcome. This glossary will be aligned with the command words used in the assessment.

Action verbs	Students should be able to
Adapt	make something suitable for new condition, use or purpose
Analyse	study or examine something in detail; break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure; identify parts and relationships, and to interpret information to reach conclusions
Apply	select and use information and/or knowledge and understanding to explain a given situation or real circumstances
Appraise	evaluate, judge or consider a piece of work
Associate	to connect or bring into relation; to fit together and cause to correspond
Brief description/ explanation	give a short statement of only the main points
Argue	challenge or debate an issue or idea with the purpose of persuading or committing someone else to a particular stance or action
Classify	group things based on common characteristics
Comment	give an opinion based on a given statement or the result of a calculation
Compare	give an account of the similarities or differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both/all of them throughout
Compose	write or create a work of art, especially music or poetry
Create	to bring something into existence; to cause something to happen as a result of one's actions
Critique	state, giving reasons, the positive and negative aspects of, for example, an idea, artefact or artistic process
Define	give the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept
Demonstrate	prove or make clear by reasoning or evidence, illustrating with examples or practical application
Describe	tell or depict in written or spoken words; to represent or delineate by a picture or other figure
Design	do or plan something with a specific purpose in mind
Develop	bring to a later or more advanced stage; to elaborate or work out in detail
Devise	plan, elaborate or invent something from existing principles or ideas

Action verbs	Students should be able to
Discuss	offer a considered, balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses; opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence
Distinguish	make the differences between two or more concepts or items clear
Evaluate (information)	collect and examine information to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a conclusion in an inquiry or investigation; identify the limitations of information in conclusions; make judgments about ideas, solutions or methods
Evaluate (ethical judgement)	collect and examine evidence to make judgments and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgments about ideas, solutions or methods
Examine	consider an argument, concept or object in a way that uncovers its assumptions, interrelationships or construction
Experiment	to try and test, in order to discover something new or to prove something
Explain	give a detailed account including reasons or causes
Explore	systematically look into something closely; to scrutinise or probe
Find	'find': a general term that may variously be interpreted as calculate, measure, determine, etc.
Group	identify objects according to characteristics
Identify	recognise patterns, facts, or details; provide an answer from a number of possibilities; recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature
Illustrate	use drawings or examples to describe something
Improvise	create and perform music spontaneously or without prior preparation; to produce or make something from whatever is available
Indicate	to point out or point to; to direct attention to
Infer	use the results of an investigation based on a premise; read beyond what has been literally expressed
Investigate	analyse, observe, study, or make a detailed and systematic examination, in order to establish facts or information and reach new conclusions
Interpret	use knowledge and understanding to recognise trends and draw conclusions from given information
Justify	give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion
List	provide a number of points, with no elaboration
Outline	give the main points; restrict to essentials
Present	to bring, offer or give in a formal way; to bring before or introduce to a public forum
Propose	offer or suggest for consideration, acceptance or action

Action verbs	Students should be able to
Provide evidence	provide data, work and documentation that support inferences or conclusions
Recognise	identify facts, characteristics or concepts that are critical (relevant/appropriate) to the understanding of a situation, event, process or phenomenon
Refine	to improve by inserting finer distinctions or musical elements
Rehearse	practise a play, piece of music, or other work for later public performance
Suggest	propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer
Synthesise	combine different ideas in order to create new understanding
Transcribe	put thoughts, speech, data, into written or printed form; write out what is heard into characters or sentences
Use	apply knowledge, skills or rules to put them into practice
Verify	give evidence to support the truth of a statement

Appendix B: Glossary of music terms

This glossary has been added to explain the meaning of music terms as they appear in this specification to help with understanding when reading.

Term	Interpretation
Appraise	To assess the value or the quality of something.
Body percussion	Sounds made using parts of the body (e.g. foot stamping, thigh slapping).
Chord	Two or more notes sounding simultaneously.
Chord progression	A series of chords sounding one after another.
Compression	A processing effect used in mixing or recording to control and reduce the dynamic range of the music.
Culture/cultural protocols	The ideas, customs, practices, values and social behaviours of a particular people or society.
Distortion	Change in the form of an electrical signal or sound wave during processing; alter the sound of amplified electric music instruments and most commonly associated with the electric guitar.
Elements of music	The key ingredients of music (pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, timbre, texture, style and tonality).
Found sounds	Sounds created from everyday objects (e.g. sticks, stones, furniture).
Genre	A broad category of music or musical forms (e.g. rock, jazz, country).
Graphic notation	Notation in which sound or music is represented by shapes or lines or images.
Ideate	Form an idea; conceive or imagine.
Improvisation	Spontaneous musical creation, often based on an existing melodic or harmonic fragment.
Incidental music	Music used in a film, play, computer game, shopping centre or other media as a background or to create or enhance a particular atmosphere.
Jingle	A short slogan, verse or tune to be easily remembered, especially for use in advertising.
Metre	The grouping of beats usually in groups of twos, threes and fours.
Mood piece	A piece of music that suggests or indicates a particular feeling or state of mind or specific atmosphere.
Motif	A dominant or recurring idea in a piece of music.
Ostinato	A repeated accompaniment pattern that can be rhythmic or melodic and that is maintained continually throughout a piece of music.

Term	Interpretation
Processing effects	A series of mechanical or technological operations on a recording process that modifies the original sound inputted.
Reverb	A processing effect where the sound produced by an amplified musical instrument is made to reverberate; an echo effect used to recreate the natural effects of room reverberation.
Sonority	The quality of sound or timbre of a particular sound source.
Sound source	The means by which a sound is produced (e.g. on an instrument, by using the voice, an environmental object, an electronic device).
Stimulus	Something that inspires the students to create a musical idea; a stimulus can for example come from a personal experience, an existing piece of music, a visual or graphic, a work of art, an object or a word.
Structural devices	Devices used in composing and creating pieces of music (e.g. motif, phrase, sequence, canon, imitation, theme and variation).
Style	The manner in which music is organised in relation to particular conventions; it often relates to a particular historical period, genre, performer or composer.
Texture	The 'density' of sound in a piece of music; this can range from thin (single line of melody) to thick (several layers of melodies, harmonies or timbres).
Timbre	The specific tone or sound quality of an instrument or voice, or a collection of instruments and voices.

