



Date: 18/02/2020

Circular Number: 0016/2020

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Post-Primary Schools, Special Schools and Chief Executives of ETBs

Framework for Junior Cycle – History in Schools from September 2020 onwards

Further to the decision of the Minister for Education and Skills to accord special core status to History within the Framework for Junior Cycle this circular sets out the arrangements for implementation of this decision in schools.

From the commencement of the 2020/2021 academic year all schools will be required to offer History as a subject for students commencing first year of the Junior Cycle and all such students will be required to study the subject. Students will follow the Junior Cycle History specification which requires a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement over the three years of Junior Cycle and which is assessed at a common level.

As a result of this decision students will now be required to study four core subjects for Junior Cycle – English, Irish, Mathematics and History - and up to a maximum of six other subjects, or a lesser number if the student is also studying short courses. The maximum of ten subjects includes subjects studied outside of a school setting.

In the case of students with general learning difficulties/needs in the low mild to high moderate range of ability, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment will be requested to develop a short course in History that will be broadly aligned with Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework. This Level 2 short course will be available for such students entering first year of Junior Cycle in 2021/2022. Students taking this short course should be following a personalised Level 2 Learning Programme (L2LP), alongside other curriculum components where appropriate. For students in this category entering first year of Junior Cycle in 2020/21 the study of History will not be a requirement. Students in the low moderate and severe and profound range of ability will not be required to study History.

A school affected by a shortfall in history teaching resulting from this decision may apply for additional resources as a short term support. This application should be made through the normal curricular concessions process and will be subject to the conditions governing that process.

A comprehensive programme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will be developed by the Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT) service to accommodate teachers teaching the new Junior Cycle History specification for the first time.

Any further required changes to the Framework for Junior Cycle and associated documentation arising from this decision will be dealt with in the context of the circular outlining arrangements for implementation of the Framework for the 2020/21 school year.

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