

What is the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

The JCPA is a new kind of award. It will replace the Junior Certificate from 2017. The JCPA will be awarded by the school to the student for the first time in late 2017. The school will be able to print out the JCPA for each student. It will report on student achievement across a broad range of areas of learning in junior cycle. The JCPA, alongside other reporting arrangements in junior cycle, will offer parents/guardians a clear, broad picture of their child's learning journey over the three years of junior cycle.

What is the rationale behind the awarding of the JCPA?

The JCPA will capture student achievements in a number of assessment elements undertaken over the three years of junior cycle, including the grades in the state-certified final examinations at the end of the three years.

It will also provide an opportunity for schools to comment on student achievement, participation or progress in other areas of learning that may have been included in the school's junior cycle programme. Schools may also include broader aspects of reporting in this section or areas such as personal and social development and learning dispositions.

Students may engage in other learning activities set out in a school's programme for junior cycle. These can include social, cultural, pastoral, scientific, entrepreneurial and other activities that can support the 24 statements of learning and the 8 key skills. In this way student engagement, progress and achievement in a wide range of other learning experiences outside of the school's junior cycle programme may be acknowledged in a student's JCPA. Other areas included can be areas such as participation in a school musical, membership of the student council or membership of a school's sports team.

This kind of reporting gives every student the chance to have his/her particular strengths and engagement in areas of school life other than the traditional academic areas recognised and affirmed.

What information on student achievement will already have been reported on to students/parents in advance of students receiving the JCPA?

The school will have already reported to students and parents on the achievement of students in the Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in subjects.

In addition, the SEC will already have reported to students/parents on students' provisional grades in the state-certified final examinations early in the term following that examination.

How will the JCPA differ from the old Junior Certificate?

The JCPA will be compiled by the school, adhering to a nationally determined format. It will recognise student achievement, not solely through the state-certified final examinations, but also through a range of other assessment modes and areas of learning.

What will appear on the JCPA

The JCPA will report on achievement across all areas of learning as applicable including:

- The student's achievements in the state-certified final examinations (inclusive of the Assessment Task)
- The student's achievements in the Classroom-Based Assessments in subjects and short courses, where relevant
- The student's achievement in other areas of learning

Can students appeal the results and assessment descriptors on the JCPA?

The arrangements that apply to other classroom based assessments and in-house examinations should apply in relation to the CBAs.

What kind of learning is reported in the other areas of learning section?

In the 'other areas of learning' section the school has flexibility to report on other learning experiences and events that the student has participated in outside of the school's junior cycle programme:

- Student engagement with co-curricular or extra-curricular activities offered by the school such as engaging in a science fair, participation in the school's sporting activities or debating.
- Specific learning opportunities that do not form part of subjects, for example: leadership training; activities relating to guidance; membership of school clubs or societies; membership of their school's student council.
- In this section of the JCPA, the school may also include reference to student engagement in learning experiences that form part of the formal timetabled curriculum but that are not reported on in other sections of the JCPA, for example: engagement with a school's own religious education programme; engagement with elements of the Physical Education (PE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum and (CSPE).
- The school may also include broader aspects of reporting in this section, or areas such as attendance, personal and social development and learning dispositions.

In summary, schools will have considerable flexibility in deciding what information they wish to include on this section of the JCPA.

How will data relating to students' "Other Areas of Learning" be gathered and stored?

Schools have considerable flexibility in deciding the procedures through which information on 'other areas of learning' may be gathered for inclusion in this section of the JCPA. The following are some suggestions that a school could consider – they are intended only as examples and it is for management and teachers to determine what will work best in the context of their school:

- During a single tutor class or in a single SPHE lesson: teachers could lead students in a reflective exercise on their learning experiences over the course of junior cycle. Arising from this, students would provide a list of those experiences they would have recorded in their JCPA.
- Students might be given examples to guide them as to the types of information that may be included.
- As a homework task for students: Reflecting on learning achievements might be set for homework. Students could be encouraged to discuss with their parents/guardians the set of experiences to be recorded on the JCPA.

The learning outcomes identified by students will have to be collected from them and stored locally for entry on to the JCPA at a later date.

How many references to different types of learning should a school include on the JCPA under Other Areas of Learning?

It is recommended that a school includes between three and five references to 'Other Areas of Learning' in this section for each student.

Are there data protection issues for consideration by schools?

It is required by data protection law that before schools commence processing of any personal data a school must first bring a privacy notice on how the student's personal data will be processed to the attention of parents/guardians.