

Junior Cycle Chinese Language and Culture short course

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment

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Introduction

This document, Junior Cycle Chinese Language and Culture short course: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment, provides:

- general information on Classroom-Based Assessments
- detail of the nature and scope of the Classroom-Based Assessment described in the specification for the Junior Cycle Chinese Language and Culture short course.
- the Features of Quality used to describe the level of achievement in the Classroom-Based Assessment
- guidelines for schools, teachers and students on completing the Classroom-Based Assessment

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the specification for the Junior Cycle Chinese Language and Culture short course and the NCCA's online assessment support materials for junior cycle.

All documentation can be accessed at www.curriculumonline.ie. An outline of assessment in Junior Cycle can be found in the Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, which can be accessed at <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Framework-for-Junior-Cycle-2015.pdf>.

Classroom-Based Assessments: General Information

Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific task(s) set out in the NCCA short course specification or in the school developed short course specification. The Classroom-Based Assessment and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in these guidelines.

Although the assessment is similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of classroom-based assessment the teacher's judgement is used in the school's reporting to parents and students and may also be recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. Classroom-Based Assessment is not continuous assessment. Students prepare for the tasks over

time, but the results of homework or tests undertaken by the students in the course of their normal classwork do not add up to the award of a descriptor for the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Deciding on the levels of achievement for the Classroom-Based Assessments

There are four level descriptors of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment: *Exceptional*, *Above expectations*, *In line with expectations*, and *Yet to meet expectations*. All work submitted is judged to fit one of these four descriptors.

Teachers use the Features of Quality, set out in these guidelines to decide the level of achievement in each Classroom-Based Assessment. The Features of Quality are the criteria that are shared with the students and used to assess the student work.

Exceptional describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment to a very high standard. While not necessarily perfect, the strengths of the work far outstrip its flaws, which are minor. Suggestions for improvement are easily addressable by the student.

Above expectations describes a piece of work that reflects the Features of Quality for the Classroom Based Assessment very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback from the teacher might point to the necessity to address some aspect of the work in need of further attention or polishing, but on the whole the work is of a high standard.

In line with expectations describes a piece of work that reflects most of the Features of Quality for the Classroom-Based Assessment well. It shows a good understanding of the task in hand and is free from significant error. Feedback might point to areas needing further attention or correction, but the work is generally competent and accurate.

Yet to meet expectations describes a piece of work that falls somewhat short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features of Quality. Perhaps the student has made a good attempt, but the task has not been grasped clearly or is marred by significant lapses. Feedback will draw attention to fundamental shortcomings that need to be addressed.

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher should read the Features of Quality (starting with Yet to meet expectations) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work

being assessed. While it should be noted that none of the descriptors imply faultless achievement, evidence of work for the award of Exceptional should closely match the criteria for that level within the Features of Quality. Where it is not clearly evident which quality descriptor should apply, teachers must come to judgment, based on the evidence from the student's work, to select the descriptor that best matches the student's work overall. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers to select the descriptor that 'on balance' describes the work being assessed.

Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Time for Classroom-Based Assessments

Classroom-Based Assessment is included within the time allocated for short courses, which is approximately 100 hours. It is envisaged that preparation for and completion of this Classroom-Based Assessment take place over approximately 6-8 hours of class time. Whilst the timing of Classroom-Based Assessment in short courses may vary from school to school, Classroom-Based assessment for reporting purposes in the JCPA cannot be conducted in first year. This Classroom-Based Assessment can be completed during second or third year.

The autonomy of the school in preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment

These guidelines set out a range of options for the Classroom-Based Assessment so that it can suit the particular needs and circumstances of students and the school. Students and teachers have a choice of topics and formats when undertaking the Classroom-Based Assessment. Schools have the flexibility to adapt any NCCA short course to suit their particular interests, needs and school context. If adapting the course, schools may also need to adapt the Classroom-Based Assessment, so that it reflects the learning their students undertook. Schools may also develop their own short course(s) and related Classroom-Based Assessment. Guidelines for schools who wish to develop their own short course(s) are available [here](#).

How the school supports the completion of the assessments

The school supports the completion of the assessments by:

- ensuring that the *NCCA Specification and Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment* are provided to teachers
- supporting teachers in recording the level Descriptors awarded to each student
- retaining records and pieces of work, as appropriate, for the purposes of Subject Learning and Assessment Review
- applying the guidelines for Subject Learning and Assessment Review set out in this document
- applying inclusive assessment practices and ensuring accessibility of assessment for all students
- reporting the outcomes of Classroom-Based Assessments to students and their parents/guardians as part of the school's ongoing reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

In gathering evidence for assessment purposes within the Junior Cycle Short Courses, it is important that teachers use approaches which are sustainable and proportionate. As assessment is about empowering teachers to improve outcomes for students, it is important to ensure that too much paperwork and overly complex processes do not get in the way of learning and teaching. Any paperwork needs to support learning rather than becoming an end in itself.

To facilitate providing feedback to students during their engagement with assessment, the process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessments should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process.

Support may include

- clarifying the requirements of the task
- using annotated examples of student work to clarify the meaning and interpretation of the Features of Quality to students
- providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the final project
- providing supports for students with special educational needs (SEN)

Note that only work which is the student's own can be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.

Inclusive assessment practices

Schools facilitate 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 supports 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. These supports 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.

Classroom-Based Assessment in Chinese Language and Culture (short course)

Assessment in Chinese Language and Culture will be classroom-based. There is one Classroom-Based Assessment, which is the culmination of work undertaken in the four strands of the short course. The Classroom-Based Assessment should begin after the work in the four strands has been completed. It is important to note that work completed in year one of Junior Cycle cannot be included for reporting in the JCPA.

Students will complete a language and culture project as their Classroom-Based Assessment.

Students are given an opportunity to choose a topic or issue that is of interest to them and to carry out an exploration on it leading to an oral presentation. The aim of this project is to enable students to demonstrate their cultural knowledge and intercultural awareness, as well as their emerging skills of oral production and interaction in the target language. Other skills which will be demonstrated include basic research skills, organising material, using key phrases and questions to give shape to ideas, as well as creative skills needed to prepare a presentation.

This Classroom-Based Assessment provides opportunities for use of a range of oral presentation styles such as an oral interview, role-play, poster presentation, digital presentation, etc. In addition, the activity offers students opportunities, where appropriate, to collaborate with classmates and others, as they undertake their project and prepare for their presentation.

Students may undertake group projects and presentations. If working in groups, groups should be limited to teams of two or three. Each student's individual role and contribution to the project and

presentation will be the focus of the assessment. Work which cannot be authenticated by the teacher cannot be accepted for assessment in the JCPA.

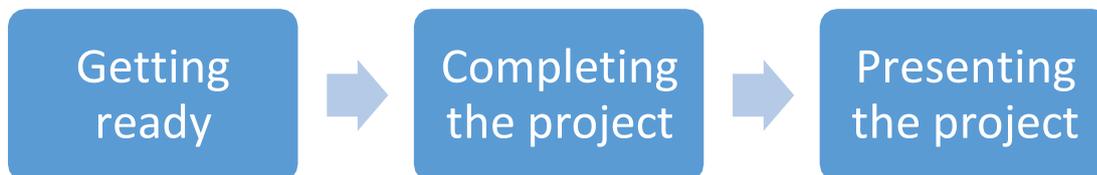
Presentations should last approximately 3 minutes (if individual), or 4 - 5 minutes (in the case of small group presentations). Students can use both Chinese and English/Irish in their oral presentation. A number of words, phrases or sentences in Chinese should be included by each student presenting. Sample sentences which could be useful in this context are set out in the different strands of the sample exponents.

The main learning outcomes to be assessed in this Classroom-Based Assessment are:

Classroom-Based Assessment: Language and Culture Project
Learning Outcomes: 1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.12

Guidelines for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment: Language and Culture project

The steps involved in undertaking the Classroom-Based Assessment are outlined below.



STEPS

Getting ready

- As an individual, or in small groups of two or three, students decide on a topic that is of genuine interest to them, related to one or more of the strands they have studied.
- If working in small groups, students make an action plan ensuring that each group member plays a significant and meaningful role in creating and presenting the project.

Completing the project

- Students research the topic, find and organise information, collate visual aids, and gather useful phrases, sentences and words which can be integrated into the project and presentation.
- In monitoring this part of the work, the teacher can provide students with feedback and students can also provide peer feedback in support of learning as they undertake their projects.

Presenting the project

- Students decide how to present their projects. They can use a combination of written, digital, visual or audio aids. The format can be
 - a. a presentation, speaking with or without notes, using a choice of media and/or props.
 - b. an interview, where either the teacher interviews the student/s on the topic or the student responds to questions from another student.
 - c. a role-play, where students take on the persona of specific characters and interact in pairs, to explain a specific situation or setting.

Other formats can also be agreed in advance with the teacher. In agreeing a format for the presentation, it is important that group presentations make equal demands on all students involved.

- Students present their projects to a suitable audience.

Classroom-Based Assessment: Advice for students

Students should remember:

- Choose a topic that is of genuine interest to you as this will make your project work and presentation more interesting and engaging.
- Use your creativity in presenting your project.
- The preparation part of the Classroom-Based Assessment will be monitored by the teacher. Work which cannot be authenticated by your teacher will not be accepted for assessment purposes.
- While you may work in a small group to undertake your project, each student's individual role and contribution to Classroom-Based Assessment is the focus of assessment.

Features of Quality: Chinese Language and Culture project

Exceptional

The student's presentation contains excellent material and is very well researched
It demonstrates excellent spoken production of the language at this level
It shows highly developed intercultural awareness and understanding of Chinese culture
There is excellent engagement with the audience which is sustained throughout

Above expectations

The student's presentation contains very good material and is well researched
It demonstrates a good ability to communicate in Chinese at this level
It shows a very good awareness of Chinese culture
There is effective engagement with the audience

In line with expectations

The student's presentation contains some good material based on good research
It demonstrates a basic ability to communicate in Chinese at this level
It shows a good awareness of Chinese culture
There is some degree of engagement with the audience

Yet to meet expectations

The student's presentation contains insufficient evidence of research
It demonstrates a very limited ability to communicate in Chinese at this level
It shows a very limited awareness of Chinese culture
Engagement with the audience is haphazard or lacking completely

These Features of Quality will be applied to authentic examples of student work. Arising from this process

- adjustments may be made to the Features of Quality
- amended Features of Quality, where necessary, will be published in the assessment guidelines and
- annotated examples of student work will be published on www.curriculumonline.ie

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle short courses will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. Teachers gather examples of student work and compare their judgements with other colleagues. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

Sample CBAs by students will be gathered for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. In preparation for the meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of students' work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting. Any audio or audio-visual recording device, such as a tablet, mobile phone, laptop or video camera, available in the school can be used for this purpose. School rather than personal devices should be used. The recording should take place with cognisance of child protection guidelines and in line with the school's acceptable use and data protection policies. (This only applies to situations where students will be recorded)

When there is a single teacher of a short course in a school, where feasible, the teacher will participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting with another school. The potential of ICT to support such meetings will be explored.

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they had made of their student's work, based on the outcomes of the meeting, and where necessary makes the appropriate adjustments to the level of achievement awarded to the work. The descriptors awarded are used in reporting progress and achievement to parents and students as part of the school's reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Further details on managing and participating in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings can be accessed at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings>.

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in supporting learning. Students will be informed of the Descriptor they have been awarded once the review meeting has taken place and its outcomes have been processed. However, effective feedback goes beyond the naming of the descriptor awarded. Feedback on the strengths of the student's work, and on areas for improvement can be used to support their future learning. **Further information on the use of formative feedback can be found at www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning.**

