

## Junior Cycle Business Studies

Guidelines for Classroom-Based Assessment 1 Business in Action for the school year 2020-2021 (2<sup>nd</sup> Year Students)

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# Introduction

Working with others is a key skill in the world of business, but it is recognised that this presents challenges in the current classroom environment due to Covid-19. Teachers are currently exploring ways to facilitate peer collaboration in a safe and practical way, including the use of technology to support groupwork. However, this may not be possible in all schools and for all students. In light of this, in 2020-2021, 2<sup>nd</sup> year students will complete an amended individually-assessed CBA 1 in Business Studies

This document provides:

- Detail of the nature and scope of the amended Classroom-Based Assessment 1 for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students for the school year 2020-2021
- The Features of Quality to be used to decide the level of achievement for the amended CBA1 in 2020-2021
- Guidelines for schools and teachers, and advice for students on completing the amended Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in 2020-2021

These amended guidelines are for the school year 2020-2021. This document should be used in conjunction with the curriculum specification for Junior Cycle Business Studies, which can be accessed at <http://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Business-Studies>.

## Other documentation

A detailed outline of assessment in Junior Cycle can be found in the *Framework for Junior Cycle 2015* which can be accessed at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/framework-for-junior-cycle>. All documentation relating to assessment at junior cycle can be accessed at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>.

# Classroom-Based Assessment 1 2020-2021: General Information

Classroom-Based Assessments are best described as the occasions when the teacher assesses the students using the specific tasks set out in the subject specification. They are included within the time allocated for Business Studies, which is a minimum of 200 hours. The tasks are described and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in the assessment guidelines for the subject

These amended guidelines for Classroom-Based Assessment 1 have been developed for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students for the school year 2020-2021 in light of challenges which may arise in conducting a group-based assessment in 2020-2021 due to Covid19.

The key changes to Classroom-Based Assessment 1 for 2020-2021 include:

- Students are required to complete individual research, analysis and evaluation and to submit an **individual report**
- The timeframe for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment is **three weeks**
- The individual student report is assessed using **amended features of quality**

CBA1	Format	Student preparation
<b>Business in Action</b>	The student produces an <b>individual report</b> based on one of three areas: Enterprise in Action Economics in Action Finance in Action	During a maximum of <b>3 weeks</b> with support/guidance from their class teacher

*Table 1: Classroom-Based Assessment 1 for Business Studies for 2020-2021*

As with all Classroom-Based Assessments, although the assessment is similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of the Classroom-Based Assessments, the teacher's judgement is recorded for Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR), and is used in the school's reporting to parents and students. Students prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessments over a specified period of time in second and third year. The results of homework or other assessments 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 level of achievement in 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 revised assessment guidelines to decide the level of achievement in Classroom-Based Assessment 1. The Features of Quality are the criteria that will be used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the following Descriptors:

**Exceptional** describes a piece of work that reflects all of 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 activity and the work is praised for its consistency. 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. 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 work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances.

Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by the features of quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings.

## The autonomy of the school in preparing students for the Classroom-Based Assessments

These guidelines set out a range of options for Classroom-Based Assessment 1 during the academic year 2020-2021. Students and teachers have a choice of topics for Classroom-Based Assessment 1, Business in Action. There are further possibilities within how the research can be conducted and presented for assessment to allow students to tap into their own interests and motivations.

## How the school supports the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessments

The school supports the completion of the assessments by:

- Ensuring that the Assessment Guidelines for Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in Business Studies 2020-2021 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 as set out in these guidelines
- Reporting the outcomes of Classroom-Based Assessments to students and their parents/guardians as part of the school's reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

## Reasonable support

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. This will assist the teacher when using the Features of Quality to make judgements about the level of achievement of the student's work.

Reasonable support may include:

- Clarifying the requirements of the task
- Providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the research, evaluation and report
- Providing supports for students with special educational needs (SEN) as outlined below.

It is not envisaged that the level of support involved requires teachers to edit draft projects, or to provide model text or answers to be used in the student's evidence of learning.

## Inclusive assessment practices

Special provisions may be put in place for a student with a specific physical or learning difficulty to remove as far as possible the impact of the disability on the student's performance in both Classroom-Based Assessments and the Assessment Task so that he or she can demonstrate his or her level of achievement. The accommodations – for example, the use of Irish Sign Language, 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 school year and are not designed to compensate for a possible lack of achievement arising from a disability.

# Classroom-Based Assessment 1 2020-2021: Business in Action

Business in Action gives students an opportunity to actively engage in a practical and authentic learning experience that reflects activities undertaken regularly in the business environment. They will act as consumers, entrepreneurs, managers and decision-makers as they plan and conduct research, analyse data and information, problem-solve and make decisions, and use digital technology where possible to manage information. They will learn about, and make informed decisions about, their own resources and issues of social, cultural and global importance. These are essential skills required for life, work and further education.

Fig. 1 sets out the process for conducting a Classroom-Based Assessment. The aim of this process is to provide guidance for teachers as they support their students completing their Classroom-Based Assessments.

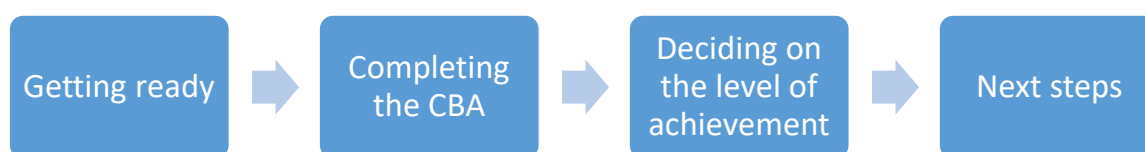


Figure 1 Process for conducting a CBA

## CBA Options for Students

Students may choose any one of the three options set out below for CBA1 Business in Action in consultation with their teacher and will produce **an individual report** to capture their learning from engaging in this CBA. Students may collaborate when analysing and evaluating their research findings, but must produce an individual report.

<b>1. Enterprise in Action</b>	Students are given an opportunity to explore the feasibility of an enterprise idea and develop a marketing mix
<b>2. Economics in Action</b>	Students are given an opportunity to explore an economic trend, development, change or policy that is impacting positively or negatively on the Irish economy and society
<b>3. Finance in Action</b>	Students are given an opportunity to identify and research a financial challenge for a consumer or an organisation (profit or not-for-profit)



### Option 1: Enterprise in Action

Students are given an opportunity to investigate the feasibility of an enterprise idea. They can choose from the following:

- Students can research and develop a marketing mix for a product or service. The product or service can be one they devise or create themselves (which they identify as having a potential market), or one that already exists (which they identify as having the potential to expand its market).
- Students can research and develop a marketing mix for an enterprise event or activity (for-profit or not-for-profit). It can be a once-off event or one that is organised over a longer period of time. It can be undertaken for economic, social or cultural purposes.

#### As part of this option students will:

- Carry out research in order to assess the feasibility of their idea
- Analyse and evaluate their research findings and develop a marketing mix for their product or service, considering how their idea could contribute to the community from an economic, social or environmental perspective
- Support their marketing mix using tabular and/or graphic representations
- Compile a report to present their findings using a written format of their choice

The learning outcomes assessed by Enterprise in Action will depend on the topic chosen by the student, but may include:

Personal Finance	Enterprise	Our Economy
1.2, 1.10	2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.11	3.10

### Option 2: Economics in Action

Students are given an opportunity to explore an economic trend, development, change or policy that is impacting positively or negatively on the Irish economy and society.

#### As part of this option students will:

- Carry out research into their chosen economic issue
- Analyse and evaluate their research findings. Their evaluation should include identifying and assessing the economic, social and environmental benefits and costs for different key stakeholders
- Demonstrate use of relevant economic indicators and graphic representations to support their research findings

- Compile a report to present their findings using a written format of their choice

The learning outcomes assessed by Economics in Action will depend on the topic chosen by the student but may include:

Personal Finance	Enterprise	Our Economy
1.1	2.5	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6

### Option 3: Finance in Action

Students are given an opportunity to identify and research a financial challenge for a consumer or an organisation (profit or not-for-profit).

#### As part of this option students will:

- Carry out research into a chosen financial challenge for an individual or an organisation (for profit or not-for-profit)
- Analyse and evaluate their research findings. The evaluation should describe some causes for the financial challenge, identify the costs on different key stakeholders and classify the positive and negative impacts on income and expenditure
- Support their analysis with tabular and graphic representations and recommend how to best address the financial challenge based on their evaluation of the research findings
- Compile a report to present their findings using a written format of their choice

The learning outcomes assessed by Finance in Action will depend on the topic chosen by the student, but may include:

Personal Finance	Enterprise	Our Economy
1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.8	2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.13	3.1, 3.5

## Getting ready



### Student preparation

Students should have developed some knowledge, understanding and skills across the three strands of study, Personal Finance, Enterprise and Our Economy, in order to undertake their chosen Business in Action project. As part of ongoing teaching, learning and assessment of the learning outcomes for Business Studies, students should have opportunities to develop research and evaluation skills. While the Classroom-Based Assessment is summative, it has a formative value and should be used as a tool to provide feedback to students, parents and teachers on student progress and learning. From the outset, students should be familiar with the Features of Quality used to judge the quality of their work.

### Advice for students

Work for this assessment will be supported by your classroom teacher. Once you and your classroom teacher have agreed on the topic for your Classroom-Based Assessment, you could ask yourself the following kinds of questions as you progress through your CBA:

What methods of research will I use? Are these field or desk research methods?

Why have I chosen these particular research methods?

What is the purpose of the research that I am conducting? What do I hope to find out from my research?

Have I gathered data from a variety of sources? Am I keeping a record of my sources?

Have I checked that the data I have gathered is reliable? How do I know it is reliable? If it is not reliable, can I find other sources of information?

Have I considered different points of view?

What have I found out as a result of my research and how is this relevant to my report? What other information might I need?

What tables or graphics could I use to show my most important research findings?

Does my report clearly present conclusions and/or recommendations based on evidence?

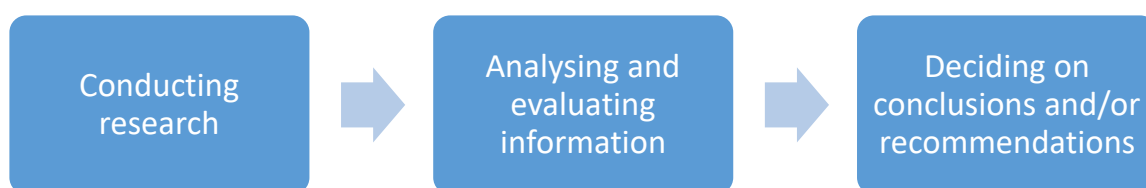
Is my report clearly presented and well-structured? Have I included relevant tables/ graphics in my report?

## Teacher preparation

In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation:

- Junior Cycle Business Studies curriculum specification: <http://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Business-Studies>
- Assessment in junior cycle: <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting>

Business in Action comprises of three areas of activity: **conducting research, analysing and evaluating information and deciding on conclusions and/or recommendations.**



Classroom-Based Assessment 1 **for 2020 to 2021** should be undertaken over **three weeks** within the key dates window set out by the NCCA for Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in 2020-2021 which are set out in the table below:

<b>Window for completion</b>	<b>Monday 2nd November 2020 – Friday 14th May 2021</b>
Latest date for award of provisional descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 19th May 2021
Latest date for completion of Subject Learning and Assessment Review and for award of final descriptors by the teacher	Wednesday 26th May 2021

*Table 2: Key Dates for Classroom-Based Assessment 1 in Business Studies for 2020-2021*

It is recommended that teachers discuss the assessment with colleagues and plan for teaching and learning accordingly. It is important to set the times and dates for carrying out the assessment as early as possible. It is recommended that a date for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review is established at the outset to assist in the planning, implementation and reviewing of the Classroom-Based Assessment. Once the school has decided this date, teachers and students can prepare for the completion of the Business in Action Classroom-Based Assessment. The timing of the process may vary from school to school.

## Completing the Classroom Based Assessment 1: Business in Action



Business in Action for 2<sup>nd</sup> year students in 2020-2021 will be completed within a **three- week period**. In this Classroom-Based Assessment students will engage in three areas of activity, which contribute to the generation of their evidence of learning and achievement:

1. Conducting research
2. Analysing and evaluating information
3. Deciding on conclusions and/or recommendations

The advice included for students on page 11 may be useful to support students in their engagement with the different stages of the CBA, and in compiling their report.

### **1. Conducting research**

A priority for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment is the development of student research skills. Once the teacher and students have decided which Business in Action option they wish to undertake, students will define their idea and brainstorm key words, phrases and information which will help them in formulating their plans for the research they will conduct.

Students will be required to gather data and information from different sources in their research. In conducting their research, students should be guided by what is practical and safe at the time in line with public health advice.

A student can undertake some field (primary) research and/or some desk (secondary) research, for example:

- Interview (in person or online/ via telephone)
- Survey (which can be conducted online or in person)
- Field visit (which can be conducted virtually where possible)
- Online research
- Newspapers, magazines and other sources of information

Where the CBA is conducted using the support of digital technologies, this should be in line with schools' child protection, acceptable use and GDPR policies.

It is important that each student records the sources of all the information gathered in order to assess its quality, and to ensure that the sources used can be referenced in their report. They should be encouraged to search effectively, evaluate and synthesise material and to consider the reliability of their sources.

## 2. Analysing and evaluating information

Each student should examine the information he/she has gathered in order to appraise the research findings. Students may find it useful to consider the following questions in exploring their research and should also analyse and evaluate the reliability of their sources

<b>Enterprise in action</b>	<p>The student will evaluate their research in order to assess the feasibility of their enterprise idea and develop a marketing mix. Some questions they could address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is there a market for this enterprise? Should I modify my idea based on my research findings?</li> <li>▪ What costs are involved in to developing this enterprise?</li> <li>▪ How could the enterprise benefit the community from an economic, social <b>or</b> environmental perspective ?</li> <li>▪ What graphs, tables or statistics would support the analysis?</li> </ul>
<b>Economics in action</b>	<p>The student will evaluate their research in order to assess the benefits and costs of their economic issue. Some questions they could address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the economic benefits and costs for different stakeholders?</li> <li>▪ What are the social benefits and costs for different stakeholders?</li> <li>▪ What are the environmental benefits and costs for different stakeholders?</li> <li>▪ What graphs, statistics or economic indicators would support the analysis?</li> </ul>
<b>Finance in action</b>	<p>The student will evaluate their research in order to assess the financial position of a consumer or organisation. Some questions they could address include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How is income or revenue impacted as a result of the financial challenge?</li> <li>▪ How is expenditure impacted as a result of the financial challenge?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is this a short-term, medium-term or long-term challenge?</li> <li>▪ What graphs, statistics or tables would support the analysis?</li> </ul>
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### 3. Deciding on conclusions and/or recommendations

Having completed and evaluated their research, students will reflect on their findings. This will support students in presenting sound evidence-based judgements which address the challenges posed.

<b>Enterprise in action</b>	Each student will prepare a report which will recommend how the elements of the marketing mix will be applied. Students will support their report with tabular and/or graphic representations.
<b>Economics in action</b>	Each student will prepare a report outlining an economic policy change that might improve the resulting outcomes. Students will support their report with tabular and/or graphic representations.
<b>Finance in action</b>	Each student will prepare a report outlining a possible solution to address the financial challenge in order to improve the financial position of the individual or organisation. Students will support their report with tabular and/or graphic representations.

Although the work on the CBA is monitored by the teacher, the analysis and compilation of the report is the student's own work. To complete the Classroom-Based Assessment, each student must submit evidence of their work in the form of a report which can be presented in a range of written formats.

#### Evidence of learning

The report should provide the following information:

- An introduction to the report outlining the option chosen by the student
- Evidence of student research with references/ sources of information
- Insights into how the student has considered the reliability of their sources and their research findings
- An analysis and evaluation of the research findings with tabular and/or graphic representations
- Conclusions and/or recommendations made on the basis of the analysis and evaluation

Regardless of the chosen format, the report should present all the research and findings comprehensively. All evidence submitted will be used to judge the student's level of achievement against the relevant Features of Quality set out on pp. 16-17.

The report should include support materials such as graphic representations and/or tables and may include financial accounts, surveys, interview questions, images, photographs and/or infographics where appropriate. The student may also choose to include prototypes or artefacts depending on their choice of CBA.

## Deciding on the level of achievement: Business in Action



### Features of Quality

Key Features of Quality in support of student and teacher judgement for Business in Action are described here. The Features of Quality are the criteria used to assess each student’s work as best fitting the Descriptors.

Features of Quality: Business in Action	
<p><b>Exceptional</b> A piece of work that reflects these features 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The report demonstrates the use of highly effective research methods to collect data and gather information from a wide range of sources</li> <li>▪ The analysis and evaluation of the research findings is of excellent quality, demonstrating a consideration of different points of view, and the reliability of sources of information</li> <li>▪ The report presents insightful conclusions or solutions based on a sound, evidence-based judgement of all the information available</li> <li>▪ The presentation of the report is of an excellent standard and the structure very clearly communicates the findings</li> </ul>



<p><b>Above expectations</b> A piece of work that reflects these features very well. The student shows a clear understanding of how to complete each area of the task. Feedback 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The report demonstrates the use of effective research methods to collect data and gather information from a range of sources</li> <li>▪ The analysis and evaluation of the research findings is of very good quality, demonstrating some consideration of other points of view, and the reliability of sources of information.</li> <li>▪ The report presents clear conclusions based on an evidence-based judgement of the information available</li> <li>▪ The presentation of the report is of a very high standard and the structure clearly communicates the findings</li> </ul>
<p><b>In line with expectations</b> A piece of work that reflects most of these Features 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The report demonstrates the use of acceptable research methods to collect data and gather information from a range of sources.</li> <li>▪ The analysis and evaluation of the research findings is sufficient, although there is limited consideration of other points of view and the reliability of sources of information.</li> <li>▪ The report presents some conclusions and is linked to an evidence-based judgement of the information available</li> <li>▪ The presentation of the report is of a good standard and the structure communicates the findings.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Yet to meet expectations</b> A piece of work that falls somewhat short of the demands of the Classroom-Based Assessment and its associated Features. 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 errors that need to be addressed.</p>	<p><b>Yet to meet expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The report demonstrates the use of ineffective research methods to collect data with limited sources of information</li> <li>▪ The analysis and evaluation of the research findings is poor, demonstrating little consideration of other points of view or the reliability of the sources of information</li> <li>▪ The report presents conclusions, though the evidence on which it is based is flawed in places or it is not linked to an evidence base</li> <li>▪ The presentation of the report is unclear, and the structure does not communicate the findings.</li> </ul>

## Next steps



### **Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting**

Shared understanding of standards within junior cycle will arise through professional discussion in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings, where staff bring their own 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.

Samples of Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Business in Action by students will be gathered/recorded for discussion at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings. In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review 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. Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review are available in Appendix A in this document and online at <https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings>.

The key date to establish at the outset is the date to be set aside for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review. In setting the date the school should be guided by the Key Dates for Classroom-Based Assessments provided by the NCCA. Once the school has decided on this date the teachers and students can plan for the completion of the CBA.

### **Using feedback**

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in using Business in Action to support learning. Students will be informed of the Descriptor they have been awarded once the SLAR 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 feedback can be found at <http://juniorcycle.ie/Assessment>.

### **Querying descriptors awarded**

Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for Business in Action, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

## Recording and reporting results from Classroom-Based Assessments

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 ongoing reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Where it arises that a student does not submit any work for their Classroom-Based Assessment, a descriptor cannot be awarded, as there is no work to discuss against the Features of Quality. In such cases, 'Not reported' should be selected when inputting results for the JCPA. Further information in relation to reporting Classroom-Based Assessment descriptors for the JCPA is available from the DES at the following link: <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services>Returns/Post-Primary-Online-Database-P-POD-Project/>

## Appendix A: Support for teacher judgement: Subject Learning and Assessment Review

Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings enable teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgments of student work against common, externally-set Features of Quality. Greater understanding of standards and expectations will develop over time as teachers come together in professional discussion to reflect on the quality of their own students' work, informed by the subject specification, assessment guidelines and other support material including annotated examples of students' work provided by the NCCA.

### Overview

The review process is centred on teachers discussing student work at structured meetings. It will play an important role in helping teachers to develop an understanding of standards and expectations by enabling them to reflect on the evidence of students' work and to share the learning and teaching strategies supporting that work.

The objectives of the review process are to achieve

- greater consistency of teachers' judgement
- better feedback to students
- greater alignment of judgements with expected standards

and to assure parents and others that students are receiving appropriate recognition of their achievements in line with standards and expectations.

The time for review meetings will be provided for in the school calendar from the allocated 22 hours of professional time for each full-time teacher each year. One teacher of each subject will be allocated two additional hours by school management to prepare for and coordinate each review meeting. This role will normally be rotated among the relevant teachers.

Each meeting will

- be subject-specific
- be approximately two hours long
- take place at a time as near as possible to the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment
- involve the review of student work related to a specific Classroom-Based Assessment.

Where there is a single teacher of a subject in a school, the teacher can be facilitated to participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another school. In the case of an Irish-medium school, the single teacher of a subject can participate in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting in another Irish-medium school.

### **Facilitator's guide**

Teachers will fulfil the role of facilitator during Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings on a rotational basis. The facilitator will model effective questioning during the discussion of the samples of student work focusing on how well students' work matches the Features of Quality. During review meetings, where it is not clearly evident which descriptor should apply, the group should look for the evidence in the student's work that matches all or nearly all of the Features of Quality associated with a particular descriptor. This 'best fit' approach allows teachers at the review meeting to select the descriptor that 'on-balance' best matches the work being assessed. The facilitator will submit a short report (see Appendix B) of the review meeting to the school principal.

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

### **Before the meeting**

Once students have completed their Classroom-Based Assessment, the teacher will carry out a provisional assessment of the students' work based on the Features of Quality. These provisional assessments may be modified in light of the discussions that take place at the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting.

The teacher will make a note of the descriptor allocated to each student and any other point they may wish or find useful to refer to during and after the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting. This note will be for the teacher's own use.

In preparation for the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, each teacher will identify one sample of student's work for each descriptor, where feasible, and will have these available for discussion at the meeting.

### **During the meeting**

The facilitator leads the meeting and keeps the record of the decisions made in a template, which is used to generate the report of the meeting (see Appendix B). It is recommended that the meeting should generally follow this sequence:

- The facilitator explains that the purpose of the meeting is to support consistency of judgement about students' work and to develop a common understanding about the quality of student learning. The value of the meeting in providing feedback to students on how they might improve their work should also be highlighted.
- The facilitator asks one member of staff to introduce a sample of work they have assessed as Yet to reach expectations.
- Following a short introduction by the teacher, the facilitator leads a general discussion on the extent to which the student's work matches the relevant Features of Quality. If the meeting affirms the judgement, this is noted in the meeting record by the facilitator.
- The facilitator should look to establish consensus during the discussion of examples but the emphasis should be on developing teachers' professional knowledge and skills rather than on seeking unanimous agreement over every Feature of Quality in every example.
- The emphasis in affirming judgements during the review meetings should always be on a 'best fit' approach which allows teachers to agree the descriptor that 'on-balance' is most appropriate for the work being assessed.
- While reasonable time should be allowed for discussion, the facilitator should use his/her professional judgement to decide when it would be appropriate to proceed to the next sample.
- If possible, there should be discussion of at least two samples for each descriptor and the facilitator should ensure that each teacher has at least one of their samples discussed during the meeting.
- The process is repeated, in turn, with samples assessed as In line with expectations, Above expectations and Exceptional being discussed and shared in the group. At the end of the meeting, the facilitator briefly summarises the key points from the discussion.
- It is important that each teacher notes the implications of the decisions made during the meeting for the rest of the student work they have already assessed, particularly in the case of descriptors where their judgement did not align with the view of the majority of teachers at the meeting.

**After the meeting**

After the meeting, each teacher considers the assessment of their students' work based on the outcomes of the meeting and, where it is considered necessary, makes the appropriate adjustments to their provisional assessments. Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting, the facilitator submits their report from the meeting focusing on the outcomes of the discussion of student work at the meeting and submits it to the school principal.

## Appendix B: Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meeting: Facilitator's Report

<b>Subject:</b>		<b>Date/time:</b>
<b>Attendance</b>		
<b>Key decisions taken</b>		
<b>Points of note for future review meetings</b>		
<b>Any further comment?</b>		
<p>Facilitator</p> <p>Date</p>		



