

Guide to CBAs for Parents 2022

Conor Maxwell

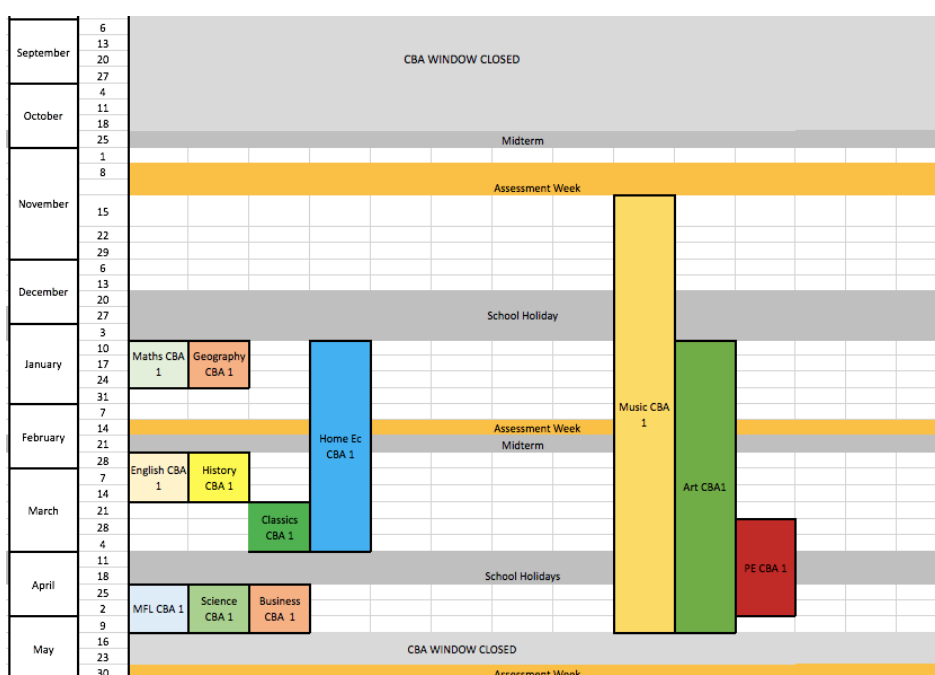
Junior Cycle brought around many changes within the classroom. The *Framework for Junior Cycle (2015)* outlines these key educational changes that the Department of Education and Skills put in place for students in the first three years of their post-primary education. Junior Cycle allows for new ways of learning and for a broader range of skills to be properly assessed. One of the most notable changes was the introduction of Classroom-Based Assessments and Assessment Tasks for each subject studied by students.

- **What is a CBA? How does it work?**

Each student will undertake a number of Classroom-Based Assessments, facilitated by their teacher, throughout their Junior Cycle. There are 2 CBAs to be completed per subject (1 in second year and 1 in third year), & 1 CBA to be completed per short course (in third year). All CBAs are specified at common level.

These Classroom-Based Assessments provide students with opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills in a way which would not be possible in a formal examination. The assessments associated with CBAs cover a range of activities including oral tasks, written work of different types, practical or designing and making tasks, artistic performances, scientific experiments, projects or other suitable tasks depending on the subject in question.

They take place during normal class time during a designated CBA window. Schools have freedom to schedule them anytime within this window. Care will be given to ensure that there are not too many CBAs taking place at any one time. A schedule will be drawn up within the school and shared. The vast majority of CBAs will be completed over a three-week period, with the exception of the likes of PE, Home Economics, Music & Art which are longer. An example of a CBA calendar can be seen below:



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- **Examples of CBAs**

The assessments associated with the CBA will be tied to the skills and knowledge linked with the subject or short course being studied. For example, the first CBA that students complete in Science is an Extended Experimental Investigation (EEI). The task, as outlined by the NCCA is: *“students will, over a three-week period; formulate a scientific hypothesis, plan and conduct an experimental investigation to test their hypotheses, generate and analyse primary data, and reflect on the process, with support/ guidance by the teacher.”*

Another example is the second CBA completed by Maths students in third year. This is a Statistical Investigation and the task is defined as: *“students will, over a three-week period; follow the Statistical enquiry cycle. **Statistical enquiry cycle:** formulate a question; plan and collect unbiased, representative data; organise and manage the data; explore and analyse the data using appropriate displays and numerical summaries and answer the original question giving reasons based on the analysis section. “*

Both of these tasks will be familiar to students from what they will have been covering in class and so will be an opportunity for them to showcase their skills and explore an area of particular interest to them. This will be the case for all CBAs in all subjects.

CBA tasks for all subjects and short courses will be outlined to students in a very similar way to the ones above. Should you want to get an overview of the tasks for yourself, this can be done by following the link here: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/>, selecting a desired subject and viewing the document entitled “ specification”.

- **Examples of Student Work**

Students will have freedom, within reason, to approach the CBA in a way of their choosing in terms of the content of the CBA and the way it is presented. To give you an idea of how each product produced by students for their CBA can differ, I attach examples of Maths and Science CBAs completed by my own students. You will see that even though each student was following the exact same task, the content within the work produced, and the way in which it was presented was completely different for each student. Some were hand-written, some were presented in a PPT, others were typed up. The sky is the limit.

Full examples of CBAs completed by my own students can be seen here: https://dcsetss-my.sharepoint.com/:f:/g/personal/cmaxwell_sandymountparketss_ie/ErcpJGf2BTxEoIJEr0qi-wlBdRzDR2qkdq_z-cncBM2oNQ?e=8g4g1A

Examples for other subjects can be found here: <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/>, by selecting an appropriate subject and clicking ‘Examples of Student Work’.

- **Grading of CBAs**

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CBAs are assessed at common level for all subjects and short courses. The grades of these CBAs will appear on a student's Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) along with their final examination grades. An example of a JCPA can be seen below.

JUNIOR CYCLE PROFILE OF ACHIEVEMENT **2019**

Oliver Cheasty DOB: 06 July 2002

STATE CERTIFIED FINAL EXAMINATIONS		Classroom-Based Assessments - Subjects	
Examination number: 61506			
Business Studies (O)	Merit	ENGLISH	
Irish (O)	E	Oral Communications	Above Expectations
Mathematics (O)	D	Collection of Texts	In Line with Expectations
History (O)	B	BUSINESS STUDIES	
Geography (H)	D	Business in Action	In Line with Expectations
Technical Graphics (O)	B	Presentation	Above Expectations
Metalwork (H)	D	SCIENCE	
Technology (H)	D	Extended Experimental Investigation	In Line with Expectations
C.S.P.E. (C)	D	Science in Society Investigation	Above Expectations
		Classroom-Based Assessments - Short Courses	
		Coding, Graphics, Robotics, Maths Sciences, etc	Above Expectations
		Chinese Language and Culture	In Line with Expectations
		SPHE (Social, Personal, Health Education)	Above Expectations

Other Areas of Learning ⓘ

Principal	Year Head	Roll Number:
Tom Hardy <i>Tom Hardy</i>	Tom Hardy <i>Tom Hardy</i>	10018X Hogwarts Hill View, Blackwater, Kilmeagui, Co Cavan D11 3999

This JCPA recognises and records achievements in Junior Cycle.

There are a number of descriptors associated with the grading of CBAs. They are:

- Exceptional
- Above Expectations
- In Line with Expectations
- Yet to Meet Expectations
- Not Reported (This is where a student has not submitted any CBA for assessment)

One of these descriptors will be provisionally awarded to a student for each CBA completed. This will be done by the student's teacher. Each CBA will be assessed using designated 'Features of Quality' provided by the NCCA. These Features of Quality support student and teacher judgement of the CBAs and are unique for each CBA completed. For example, for the

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Extended Experimental Investigation (EEI) completed in Science, the Features of Quality used for assessment can be seen below:

Features of Quality - EEI

Key Features of Quality in support of student and teacher judgement for the Extended Experimental Investigation are described here. The Features of Quality are the criteria used to assess the student work as best fitting one of the four Descriptors.

JuniorCYCLE
for teachers

	Exceptional	Above Expectations	In Line with Expectations	Yet to Meet Expectations
Investigating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms a testable hypothesis or prediction with justification • Describes considerations related to reliability and fairness • Outlines appropriate safety considerations, and describes the method used to accurately collect and record good quality, reliable data in a manner that could be easily repeated. • Uses an innovative approach that truly enhances the work • Records a sufficient amount of good quality data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms a testable hypothesis or prediction with justification • Identifies the variable to be measured and the variable to be changed • Outlines appropriate safety considerations, and describes the method and equipment used to collect and record data • Records a sufficient amount of good quality data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With limited guidance, forms a testable hypothesis/prediction • Describes a safe method used to collect data – some of the steps are understandable but lack some detail • Records raw/primary data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a given investigation question • Is directed in using equipment to collect and record data • Data collection method described is not repeatable
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents data in the most appropriate way using relevant scientific terminology and informative representations; calculations, if any, are performed to a high degree of accuracy • Describes the relationships between the variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays data neatly and accurately, using relevant scientific terminology and informative representations; calculations, if any, are performed to a high degree of accuracy • Describes the relationships between the variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays data on simple tables, charts or graphs, allowing for some errors in scaling or plotting • States a relationship between the variables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays data on incomplete tables, charts or graphs, allowing for significant errors in scaling or plotting
Knowledge & Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a justified conclusion supported by the data; identifies and explains any anomalous data • Uses relevant science knowledge to assess and describe whether the hypothesis has/has not been supported • Describes in detail the strengths and weaknesses of their own investigations, including appropriate improvements and or refinements, or explains fully why no further improvements could reasonably be achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws a conclusion consistent with the data and comments on whether the conclusion supports the hypothesis • Identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the investigation and suggests appropriate improvements, or explains why the procedures were of sufficient quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws a conclusion based on data collected, identifies some features of the investigation that could be improved and suggests improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on the investigation without making a conclusion/refinement to the investigation.

When using the Features of Quality to assess the level of student achievement in a CBA, teachers use 'on-balance' judgement. The teacher reads the Features of Quality (starting with *Yet to Meet Expectations*) until they reach a descriptor that best describes the work being assessed. It is not a requirement that all features of a grade descriptor are met for that descriptor to be awarded. However, if not all features are met, then the entirety of the piece of work must, 'on balance', be of a sufficient standard to be awarded that descriptor.

Following the awarding of provisional descriptors, teachers within subject departments will engage in a Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR). This SLAR enables teachers to collaboratively reach consistency in their judgements of student work against the Features of Quality. The main objectives of this review process are to achieve:

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

Following this SLAR, subject teachers may need to revisit the provisional grades awarded and make some changes based on the discussions had. Only the final grade descriptor will be given to students and this will then appear on their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

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- **Assessment Tasks**

Following completion of the second CBA in individual subjects, students complete a written Assessment Task to be submitted to the State Examinations Commission for marking as part of the state-certified examination for that subject. It will be allocated 10% of the marks used to determine the grade awarded by the State Examinations Commission. The Assessment Task is directly related to the nature and focus of the second Classroom-Based Assessment. The purpose of the Assessment Task is for students to undertake a focused reflection on their individual CBA.

The Assessment Task again takes place during class time. The mark awarded for the Assessment Task will be aggregated by the SEC with the mark awarded for the final examination (which takes place in June) to determine the overall grade for the state-certified final examination in each subject. There is no Assessment Task to be completed in short courses.

- **Changes for academic year 2021/22**

Students experienced disrupted periods of learning in 2020 and in 2021 because of school closures introduced to curtail the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the best efforts of teachers and schools to mitigate the effects of disrupted schooling, the learning experience of students varied. In this context, for the cohort of students who are currently in third year, the following assessment arrangements for Classroom-Based Assessments and related Assessment Tasks apply:

- A minimum of **one CBA** in each subject and short course must be completed.
- School management, following consultation with relevant teachers (and where feasible, discussion with students), have autonomy to decide whether to complete one **or** two CBAs in each subject. Grade Descriptors for completed CBAs will appear on the JCPA.
- There will be some exceptions to the choices made by schools:
 - o to ensure assessment of oral communications skills, students must complete *CBA 2: Communicative Task* in Irish and *CBA 1: Oral Communication* in Modern Foreign Languages.
 - o as they are linked in each case with the final examination in the subject, students studying Visual Art, Home Economics, Music, Applied Technology, Engineering, Graphics and Wood Technology must complete CBA 2.
- There is **no requirement** to complete Assessment Tasks for this academic year. Instead the final grade to appear on the JCPA will be based on the final examination only.