



An Chomhairle Náisiúnta Curaclaim agus Measúnachta
National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Physical Education (PE)

Draft Specification for Junior Cycle Short Course

September 2013

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Physical Education (PE)

Introduction to junior cycle

Junior cycle education places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society, and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all.

Junior cycle allows students to make a strong connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, and relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of students, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity and enterprise. The student's junior cycle programme builds on their learning in primary school. It supports their further progress in learning. It helps students to develop the learning skills that can assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

Rationale

Young people in junior cycle are at an important stage in their lives where they are making important lifestyle decisions including whether and/or how they will participate in regular physical activity. Physical education aims to build students' motivation and commitment to physical activity and sport within and beyond school. The emphasis is on providing all students with enjoyable and worthwhile opportunities to participate in and improve their competence and confidence in a range of physical activities.

It is important that students appreciate the importance of physical activity for their health and wellbeing and learn how to build and maintain their health-related fitness. Physical education provides learning opportunities designed to motivate and support learners in being physically active now and throughout their lives. It builds on their learning in physical education in primary school. It encourages students to get involved in both participation and leadership roles, irrespective of their previous experiences of, and ability in physical activity.

Aim

The short course in Physical Education aims to develop skilful and creative participants who are confident and competent to perform in a range of activities. The course aims to build students' appreciation of the importance of health-enhancing and inclusive physical activity and a commitment to it now and in the future.

Links	
Statements of learning (SOL)	
Statement	Examples of related learning in the course
<p>The student is a confident and competent participant in physical activity and is motivated to be physically active.</p> <p><i>SOL12</i></p>	<p>Students become more confident and competent as they learn to participate in a range of challenging and developmentally appropriate physical activities. They set goals and plan to improve their competence, physical fitness and engagement in physical activity.</p>
<p>The student takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others.</p> <p><i>SOL11</i></p>	<p>Students reflect on their own physical activity levels and plan for regular, meaningful engagement in physical activity. Students engage in activities which promote positive relationships and which require cooperation and respect for differing abilities.</p> <p>Students learn to apply safety procedures across the variety of activities. They plan, lead and take part in appropriate warm-up and cool-down activities.</p>
<p>The student creates and presents artistic works and appreciates the process and skills involved.</p> <p><i>SOL4</i></p>	<p>Students create and perform individual and group dance and/or gymnastic performances in accordance with criteria for artistic performance.</p> <p>They refine their performances based on reflection and feedback.</p>

Literacy and numeracy

Physical education contributes to the development of literacy skills through activities where students:

- learn the key words and phrases associated with physical education
- discuss different solutions to tasks in physical education with their peers
- research different topics in physical education and present their findings to their peers
- develop advocacy tools on the benefits of engaging in regular physical activity
- complete a log of their progress towards specific health-enhancing physical activity goals
- select different forms of media and use digital tools to promote an physical activity event.

Physical Education contributes to the development of numeracy skills through activities where students:

- measure and record their performances in PE class
- complete statistical analysis of their own and others' performance and present it graphically
- interpret information presented in graphic form
- identify patterns and trends which occur in different physical activities.

Other key skills

Each key skill has a number of elements which clarify the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to that key skill. The elements and their learning outcomes are set out in detail in [Key Skills of Junior Cycle](#). There are opportunities to support all key skills in this course but some are particularly significant. The examples below identify the key skills and elements that are related to the learning activities of PE. Teachers can also build many of the other elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning.

Key Skill	Key skill element	Student learning activity
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Being Creative	Exploring options and alternatives	Students discuss and agree solutions to problems posed in various physical activities
Communicating	Listening and expressing myself	Students solve problems and negotiate solutions respectfully with fellow students in a range of physical activities
Managing information and thinking	Gathering, recording, organising and evaluating information	Students gather and organise data to provide evidence about their own performance and that of others. They use this information to plan for improvement.
Managing myself	Setting and achieving personal goals	Students devise and undertake plans to achieve personal or group goals. They reflect on their progress and learning and make the necessary adjustments to their goals.
Staying well	Being healthy, physical and active	Students learn to make informed decisions about their participation in physical activity. Students learn strategies to support their regular participation in physical activity.
Working with others	Co-operating	Students engage in a number of peer and group tasks which require co-operation to achieve common and challenging goals.

Course overview

Strand 1 Participation and progression

Strand 2 Physical activity for health and wellbeing

Strand 3 Adventure and teamwork

Strand 4 Creativity and performance

Across all of the strands, the students build their performance in, and commitment to physical activity and their appreciation of its importance for their health and wellbeing.

Strand 1 focuses on building students' understanding of, and competence and confidence in, different physical activities. Students learn about and participate in **three physical activities** chosen from the four outlined below.

Strand 2 builds students' commitment to regular health-enhancing physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Strand 3 develops leadership and cooperation skills through team challenges and adventure activities.

Strand 4 builds students' understanding of artistic and aesthetic movement as they create and perform in a group for an audience.

The learning outcomes in this short course are aligned with the Level Indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications (Appendix 1, page 27).

The course has been designed for at least 100 hours of student engagement.

Expectations for students

With the publication of the specification online, examples of student work will be used to illustrate the expectations for students in the short course. These examples will be related directly to a learning outcome or groups of learning outcomes. They will be annotated, indicating whether the work is in line with, ahead of, or behind expectations for students.

Strand 1 Participation and progression Students choose three activities from the four offered, in addition to undertaking an end of course/ culminating event in one of the chosen activities.	
Students learn about...	Students should be able to...
Athletic Activities	1.1 participate in modified activities designed to build confidence and enhance participation 1.2 participate safely, confidently and competently in running, jumping and throwing events 1.3 lead elements of warm up and cool down designed specifically for the activity being engaged in 1.4 reflect on their performance and that of others, and plan for improvement
Aquatics	1.5 participate confidently, competently and safely in water 1.6 show evidence that they have improved particular aspects of their performance in water 1.7 respond appropriately to 'water based' safety scenarios 1.8 participate in water based activities to promote personal and group fitness
Divided court games	1.9 participate confidently and competently in a divided court game 1.10 adapt the game to increase enjoyment and inclusion 1.11 reflect on their performance to plan for improvement 1.12 respond, individually and as part of a team to different games' scenarios

Invasion games	<p>1.13 participate confidently and competently in an invasion game</p> <p>1.14 lead elements of warm up and cool down designed specifically for the game being played</p> <p>1.15 reflect on their performance to plan for improvement</p> <p>1.16 respond as part of a team to different games scenarios</p>
End of strand/culminating event	<p>1.17 plan an inclusive culminating event in one of the activities they have been learning in this strand</p> <p>1.18 participate in this event adopting a playing and a non-playing role</p> <p>1.19 reflect on their performance, individually and collectively.</p>

Strand 2 Physical activity for health and wellbeing	
Students learn about...	Students should be able to...
Improving their fitness	<p>2.1 examine their physical fitness based on the results of health-related and performance-related fitness tests</p> <p>2.2 set improvement goals related to one or more health-related/performance-related fitness components</p> <p>2.3 undertake a personalised six week sport specific programme designed to improve their health-related fitness</p> <p>2.4 evaluate their commitment to the personal programme, providing evidence of progress made</p>
	<p>2.5 use a range of measurement techniques for assessing and monitoring physical activity levels</p> <p>2.6 reflect on how different activities that they participate in can improve their health now and in the long term</p> <p>2.7 identify physical activity opportunities that young people can undertake to achieve the minimum physical activity recommendations for health</p> <p>2.8 analyse their physical activity levels over time, with the use of technology</p>
Physical activity for all	<p>2.9 demonstrate physical activities which they find enjoyable and motivating, and which enhance health-related fitness</p> <p>2.10 run an enjoyable, inclusive physical activity event for a group within their school/community</p> <p>2.11 reflect on the effectiveness of the event and on their</p>

	individual contribution to its organisation.
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Strand 3 Adventure and teamwork	
Students learn about...	Students should be able to ...
Orienteering	<p>3.1 use map-reading skills to enable them to devise a route</p> <p>3.2 adopt a number of orienteering strategies to improve timed performance</p> <p>3.3 assess their fitness capacity to undertake orienteering events</p> <p>3.4 complete a variety of orienteering events safely and confidently</p>
Team challenges	<p>3.5 contribute to group activities that require co-operation and problem solving skills in achieving a common goal</p> <p>3.6 adopt an effective strategy when undertaking a challenge</p> <p>3.7 undertake various roles within a team</p> <p>3.8 reflect on personal contribution and team effectiveness</p>
The final challenge	<p>3.9 overcome a series of challenging team activities within a culminating event</p> <p>3.10 observe the country or other relevant code within a particular environment</p> <p>3.11 reflect on their own and their team's effectiveness in completing the event.</p>

Strand 4 Creativity and performance	
Students learn about...	Students should be able to ...
Exploring styles and themes	<p>4.1 demonstrate a variety of dance styles/ gymnastic themes</p> <p>4.2 use a variety of speeds, levels, directions and body actions to create a sequence of movement or a dance</p> <p>4.3 use a range of choreographic techniques</p> <p>4.4 lead a sequence of movement for their class on their own or with others</p>
Creating a performance	<p>4.5 research a style of dance/ gymnastic theme to create their own performance</p> <p>4.6 create a dance/gymnastic sequence which shows an understanding of different choreographic techniques</p> <p>4.7 select appropriate music, percussion, lighting and/or other props to enhance their performance</p> <p>4.8 refine different aspects of the performance using different strategies</p>
Reflecting on performance	<p>4.9 maintain a record of the process of creating the performance</p> <p>4.10 reflect on key factors which contributed to the success/experience of the performance</p> <p>4.11 critique a video recording of their performance at least twice during its development</p>
Performing	<p>4.12 refine their performance using feedback based on agreed features of quality</p> <p>4.13 adopt various roles in the performance</p> <p>4.14 perform the dance/gymnastics performance to an</p>

	<p>audience</p> <p>4.15 reflect on their experience of creating and performing, in light of the feedback they received.</p>
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Assessment and certification

Assessment and PE

This short course supports a wide variety of approaches to assessment. Some learning outcomes lend themselves to once-off assessment, others to assessment on an on-going basis as students engage in different activities such as practices, games making, performing, creating, problem solving, fitness testing, self and peer assessment. These activities provide opportunities for students with their teachers to reflect on their learning, to set clear goals and targets based on the features of quality of particular pieces of work. They plan the next steps in their learning, based on the feedback they receive. Ongoing assessment can support the student in their learning journey and in preparing for the assessment related to the certification of the short course.

Students collect evidence of these different assessment tasks and reflections in a portfolio. It is envisaged that students will provide evidence of their learning in a variety of ways including digital media, audio recording and written pieces.

Assessment for certification

Assessment for certification will be school based. There are two assessment tasks involved: a Performance Task and a Personal Physical Activity Profile.

The tasks will be weighted as follows

Performance Task 50%	Personal Physical Activity Profile 50%
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Performance Task (50%)

The performance task aims to gather evidence of students' learning in Strands 1, 3 or 4. These three strands focus on students' performance in physical activities. Students and their teachers will choose **one** of the three assessment tasks outlined in the following

table.

Strand	Description of performance tasks
Strand 1 Participation and progression	Students are assessed on two of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ participation and performance in a culminating event in a playing <u>and</u> non-playing role ▪ response to water-based safety scenarios ▪ performance in two swimming strokes ▪ response to different games scenarios ▪ ability to adapt an activity to increase enjoyment and inclusion
Strand 3 Adventure and teamwork	Students are assessed on one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ performance in an orienteering event. The student chooses the level of difficulty of the event in which they wish to participate. ▪ participation and performance in three team challenges.
Strand 4 Creativity and performance	Students produce a digital record of their gymnastic/dance performance. The video should include an earlier recording of the work in progress and the final performance showing how they have improved their performance based on feedback received.
Personal Physical Activity Profile (50%)	

The personal physical activity profile focuses on students' learning in Strand 2. In this strand, students learn about and build their commitment to regular health-enhancing physical activity. All students must complete this assessment task.

Strand	Description of assessment task
Strand 2 Physical activity for health and wellbeing	Students will generate a personal physical activity profile which includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a health-related physical fitness profile based on their use of a range of measurement techniques ▪ a six-week physical activity programme designed to meet personal improvement goals ▪ a physical activity profile of themselves including the activities they enjoy doing and where they can do them

Rationale for assessment tasks

These two assessment tasks are designed to collect evidence of students' learning progress in relation to the twin aims of the course. The first aim is to develop skilful and creative participants who are confident and competent to perform in a range of activities. The performance task encourages students to strive for overall improvement in the selected physical activity and to provide evidence of that improvement in their response to the assessment task.

The second aim is to build students' appreciation of the importance of health-enhancing and inclusive physical activity and a commitment to it now and in the future. In the personal physical activity profile, students compile their own health-related fitness

profile. They develop a personal physical activity plan that is realistic and enjoyable and includes activities that will help them become and stay physically fit. By completing this assessment, students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that support them in making informed choices about physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The main learning outcomes to be assessed

The assessment tasks draw on learning outcomes from across the course as well as literacy, numeracy and other key skills. These learning outcomes are particularly significant:

Strand 1	Strand 2	Strand 3	Strand 4
Participation and performance	Physical activity for health and wellbeing	Adventure and teamwork	Creativity and performance
11, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14

Assessment tasks completed as a group

Some of the assessment tasks used for certification are completed with a partner or in a group, for example the gymnastics/dance performance. Working with others is central to learning in PE and it also adds significantly to students' enjoyment of physical activity. Where students work in a group on an assessment task, the grade awarded for the group task is the grade that each member of the group receives.

Features of quality

Features of quality related to student work in the performance task and personal physical activity profile are set out below. In general terms, these can be used by students and by teachers to support their discussions about and judgements of work generated in response to the assessment task. More specifically, the features of quality

are the criteria that will be used by teachers, in the process of marking and at moderation meetings, to assess and discuss the student's work on the assessment tasks.

Performance Task

Strand 1 Participation and progression

Achieved with Distinction (90-100%)¹

The main features of the performance include an excellent range of skills and techniques executed competently and consistently in response to a variety of scenarios. The performance demonstrates the student's capacity to respond very effectively to a variety of scenarios. Very effective and communicative team working is demonstrated.

Achieved with Higher Merit (75-89%)

The main features of the performance include a very good range of skills and techniques executed competently and consistently in response to a variety of scenarios. The performance demonstrates the student's capacity to respond very effectively to a variety of scenarios. Effective and communicative team working is demonstrated.

Achieved with Merit (55-74%)

The main features of the performance include a good range of skills and techniques executed competently and consistently in response to a variety of scenarios. The performance demonstrates the student's capacity to respond effectively to a variety of

¹ In setting out the Features of Quality, percentage ranges are indicated for each of the grades. These would be used if a marks-based assessment process were being adopted in the assessment of short courses. An alternative is to use a criterion-referenced approach where the descriptions alone are used and the grade rather than a mark is awarded. Feedback on the merits of these two approaches will be sought during the forthcoming consultation.

scenarios. Effective and communicative team working is demonstrated.

Achieved (40-54%)

The main features of the performance include a limited range of skills and techniques executed with a some level of competence and consistency in response to a small number of activity scenarios. Communication with other team members features occasionally.

Not achieved (0-39%)

The performance has little or no evidence of skill and/or techniques or an ability to respond to scenarios arising in the activity. There is little or no attempt to communicate with other team members.

Performance Task
Strand 3 Adventure and teamwork

Achieved with Distinction (90-100%)

Advanced map reading skills are used to a very high standard to devise orienteering routes and to complete a challenging orienteering event very successfully and safely. Team challenges requiring advanced levels of co-operation and problem solving skills are very successfully completed. The performance in both events includes a very high level of adherence to the safety precautions required by the activity. Very effective and communicative team working is demonstrated.

Achieved with Higher Merit (75-89%)

Advanced map reading skills are used to a high standard to devise orienteering routes and to complete a challenging orienteering event successfully and safely. Team challenges requiring advanced levels of co-operation and problem solving skills are successfully completed. The performance in both events includes a high level of adherence to the safety precautions required by the activity. Effective and communicative team working is demonstrated.

Achieved with Merit (55-74%)

Map reading skills are used to a good standard to devise orienteering routes and to complete a challenging orienteering event successfully and safely. Team challenges requiring high levels of co-operation and problem solving skills are successfully completed. The performance in both events includes a good level of adherence to the safety precautions required by the activity. Effective and communicative team working is demonstrated.

Achieved (40-54%)

Map reading skills are used to a fair standard to devise orienteering routes and to complete a basic orienteering event with some success. Team challenges requiring levels of co-operation and problem solving skills are completed with some success. The performance in both events includes acceptable adherence to the safety precautions required by the activity. Communication with other team members features occasionally.

Not achieved (0-39%)

There is little or no evidence of the use of map reading skills to participate in a basic orienteering event. There is little or no evidence of an ability to participate in simple team challenges requiring basic co-operation and problem solving skills. There is little or no awareness of the safety precautions required by the activity. There is little or no attempt to communicate with other team members.

Performance Task

Strand 4 Creativity and performance

Achieved with Distinction (90-100%)

The performance demonstrates an excellent interpretation of the style/theme on which the performance is based. The performance is exceptionally skilful. There is an exceptional level of creativity incorporating different speeds, levels and change of directions. Props, lights, sound and costume are used very effectively where appropriate. Excellent communicative group working is demonstrated.

Achieved with Higher Merit (75-89%)

The performance demonstrates a very good interpretation of the style/theme on which the performance is based. The performance is very skilful. There is a very good level of creativity incorporating different speeds, levels and change of directions. Props, lights, sound and costume are used very effectively where appropriate. Very effective and communicative group working is demonstrated.

Achieved with Merit (55-74%)

The performance demonstrates a good interpretation of the style/theme on which the performance is based. The performance is skilful. There is a good level of creativity incorporating different speeds, levels and change of directions. Props, lights, sound and costume are used effectively where appropriate. Effective and communicative group working is demonstrated.

Achieved (40-54%)

The performance demonstrates some effort to interpret the style/theme on which the performance is based. The performance includes some skilful elements. There is some attempt to incorporate one or more of the following: different speeds, levels and change of directions. Some effort has been made to include at least one of the following: props, lights, sound and costume. Connections with group members are limited.

Not achieved (0-30%)

The performance is incomplete. There is little or no attempt to communicate with other group members.

Personal Physical Activity Profile
Strand 2 Physical activity for health and wellbeing

Achieved with Distinction (90-100 %)

The personal physical activity profile includes a very comprehensive profile of all aspects of the student's health-related physical fitness including comparisons to norms for their age and sex. A six-week programme which addresses a wide range of realistic personal goals in a

realistic and enjoyable way has been developed. A range of effective strategies to address challenges in programme participation have been included.

Achieved with Higher Merit (75-89%)

The personal physical activity profile includes a comprehensive profile of all aspects of the student's health-related physical fitness including comparisons to norms for their age and sex. A six-week programme which addresses a range of realistic personal goals in a realistic and enjoyable way has been developed. A range of effective strategies to address challenges in programme participation have been included.

Achieved with Merit (55-74%)

The personal physical activity profile includes a profile of all aspects of the student's health-related physical fitness including comparisons to norms for their age and sex. A six-week programme which addresses a range of personal goals in a realistic and/or enjoyable way has been developed. A range of strategies to address challenges in programme participation have been included.

Achieved (40-54%)

The personal physical activity profile includes a profile of some aspects of the student's health-related physical fitness including at least one comparison to norms for their age and sex. A six-week programme which addresses one/two personal goals has been developed. At least one strategy to address challenges in programme participation have been included.

Not achieved (0-39%)

The personal physical activity profile has not been compiled. The six-week programme is incomplete.

Resources

This part of the specification will identify resources that will support teaching and learning in the short course.

Appendix 1: Level Indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications

This short course has been developed in alignment with the Level Indicators for Level 3 of the National Framework of Qualifications. Usually, for Level 3 certification and awards, the knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.

NFQ Level	3
Knowledge <i>Breadth</i>	Knowledge moderately broad in range
Knowledge <i>Kind</i>	Mainly concrete in reference and with some comprehension of relationship between knowledge elements
Know-how and skill <i>Range</i>	Demonstrate a limited range of practical and cognitive skills and tools
Know-how and skill <i>Selectivity</i>	Select from a limited range of varied procedures and apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems
Competence <i>Context</i>	Act within a limited range of contexts
Competence <i>Role</i>	Act under direction with limited autonomy; function within familiar, homogeneous groups
Competence <i>Learning to Learn</i>	Learn to learn within a managed environment.
Competence <i>Insight</i>	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self- understanding and behavior.