

# SENIOR CYCLE REDEVELOPMENT – UPDATE

The Minister for Education recently announced revisions to her proposals for the Leaving Cert.

In September 2023, Minister for Education Norma Foley TD announced a key revision to her proposals for Senior Cycle redevelopment when she confirmed that teacher-based assessment for new additional components will not go ahead. Instead, these new additional components will be externally assessed by the State Exams Commission (SEC).

When the Minister made her original announcement on Senior Cycle redevelopment in March 2022, a standout measure was a proposal to change the final Leaving Cert assessment procedure to include additional and teacher-based assessment components. Following the Minister's March 2022 statement, the ASTI insisted that external assessment must be retained in order to protect the integrity of State exams and the nature of the teacher–student relationship in second-level schools. The ASTI highlighted the fact that the Minister's teacher-based assessment plan did not form part of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Senior Cycle Review Report to the Minister. Consequently, when the Minister announced in September 2023 that new additional components will now be externally assessed by the SEC, especially in the context of the advent of new artificial intelligence tools, the ASTI described this revision as both sensible and inevitable.

## Revised announcement

In her September 2023 announcement, the Minister stated: "I am particularly conscious of the more recent accelerated evolution and growth in generative AI, and I understand there is a need to explore the opportunities afforded by these developments in an educational context, as well as the challenges they might represent. "With that in mind I have asked the SEC that further research would be commissioned on the potential role and impact of generative artificial intelligence in teacher-based assessment in particular. "While this work is ongoing, I have decided to progress additional and practical components that will be externally assessed by the SEC". The Minister's September announcement also included the bringing forward of the implementation date for seven revised Leaving

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Certificate subject specifications. The seven subjects are: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Business, Arabic, Ancient Greek and Latin. Thereafter, revised subject specifications will be introduced on an annual basis.

September 2025 will also see the introduction of two new subjects – Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and Climate Action and Sustainable Development.

## ASTI campaign

### Timeline

In March 2022 the Minister for Education announced her proposals for Senior Cycle redevelopment. The ASTI began an internal process of consultation, including:

- consultation with members via the ASTI branch network,
- in October 2022, the ASTI Central Executive Council was addressed by Áine Hyland, Irish educationalist and Emeritus Professor of Education, UCC,
- a number of collaborative activities with the TUI have been organised, including meetings of the ASTI and TUI subject representatives,
- the ASTI and TUI undertook a joint campaign of opposition to the Minister's proposal to move Leaving Cert Paper 1 in English and Irish to the end of fifth year for those entering fifth year in September 2023,
- the ASTI hosted an education conference on curriculum change in March 2023,
- the ASTI adopted a range of policy positions in relation to the Minister's plans as announced in March 2022 (see panel),
- in February 2023, following a campaign of opposition by the ASTI/TUI regarding the Minister's plan to move Leaving Cert Paper 1 in English and Irish to the end of fifth year from 2024, the Minister announced the deferral of this proposal, and
- in September 2023, the Minister revised her proposal regarding teacher-based assessment.