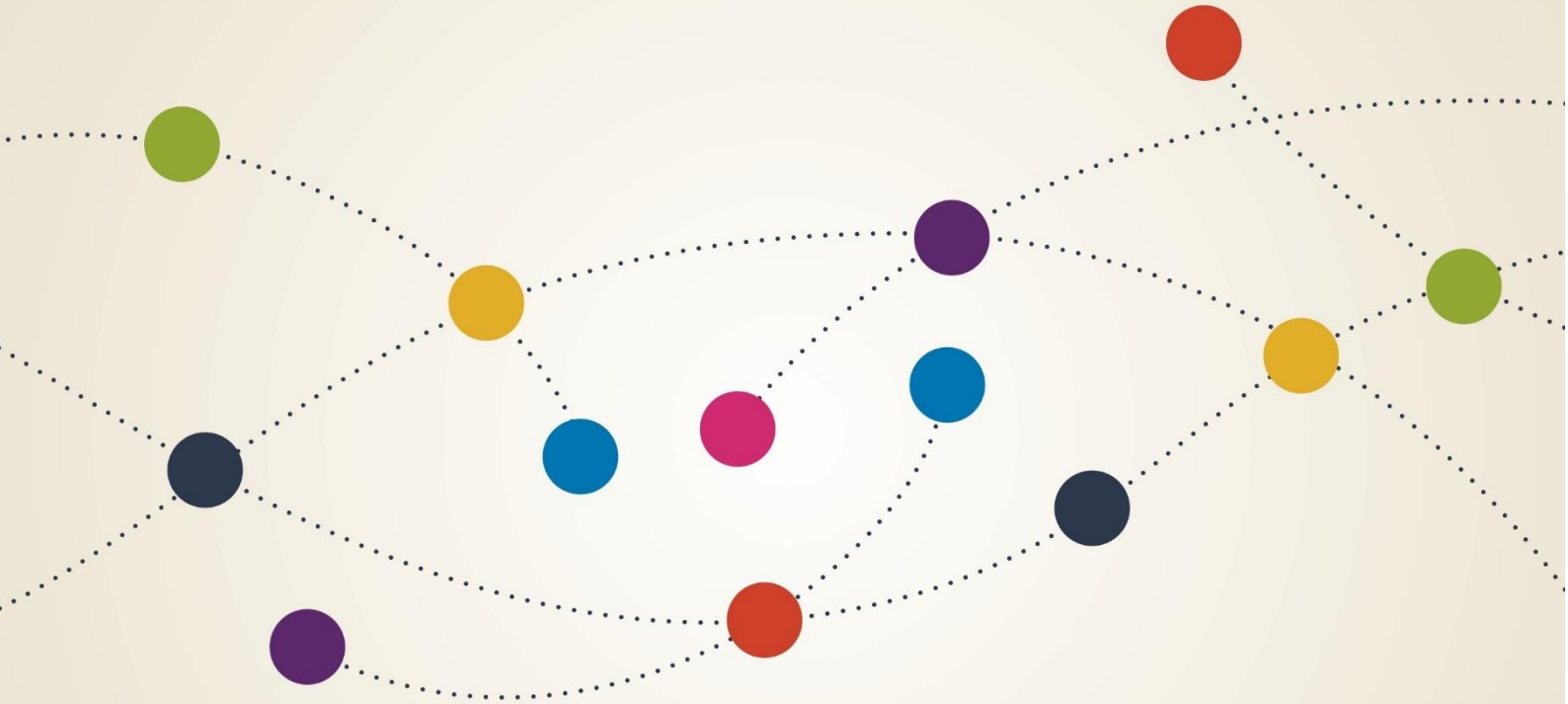


Junior Cycle Applied Technology

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments

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

December 2020

Contents

Introduction

This document, *Junior Cycle Applied Technology: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments* provides:

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

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the curriculum specification for Junior Cycle Applied Technology and the NCCA's online assessment support material for junior cycle, which includes further details of the subject learning and assessment review process and other aspects of junior cycle assessment set out in these guidelines.

All documentation can be accessed at https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Applied-Technology. 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 subject specification. They are included within the time allocated for Applied Technology, which is a minimum of 200 hours. The Classroom-Based Assessments and the Features of Quality, which support teacher judgement, are set out in these guidelines.

Although the assessment is similar to the ongoing assessment that occurs every day in class, in the case of 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 specified periods of time in second and third year. The results of other projects, 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.

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

These guidelines set out a range of options for the Classroom-Based Assessments so that they can suit the particular needs and circumstances of students and the school. Students and teachers have a choice of topics and formats for the Classroom-Based Assessments in Applied Technology. A variety of possibilities are presented as to how the Classroom-Based Assessments can be conducted and presented for assessment to allow students to pursue their own interests and motivations. For both Classroom-Based Assessments, students are encouraged to use a variety of support materials and to present their work in a variety of formats. Within the parameters set by these guidelines, the range of themes and topics for the assessments can be determined independently by the school, teachers and students.

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

The school supports the completion of the assessments by:

- ensuring that the NCCA *Junior Cycle Applied Technology Specification* and *Junior cycle Applied Technology Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments* 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 meetings
- applying the guidelines for Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- 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 on-going reporting procedures and through the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA).

Further information can be found at http://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting

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 assessments
- 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 Assessments in Applied Technology

There are two Classroom-Based Assessments in Applied Technology. They are assessed at a common level. They relate to learning outcomes and are scheduled to be undertaken by students in a defined time period within class contact time to a national timetable (as advised by the NCCA) in the school calendar. This timetable for Classroom-Based Assessments for all subjects will be provided on an annual basis at www.ncca.ie/junior-cycle and at www.curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle. The Classroom-Based Assessments for Applied Technology and indicative timings are outlined in Table 1 below.

Classroom-Based Assessments	Format	Student preparation
Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context	Investigation and presentation on a controlled system solution Response may be presented in a wide range of formats Students can collaborate, but each student must present an individual piece of work	During a maximum of 3 weeks with support/guidance from teacher
Student self-analysis and evaluation	Individual analysis of their own skills Response may be presented in a wide range of formats	During a maximum of 3 weeks, with support/guidance from teacher

Table 1: Classroom-Based Assessments for Applied Technology

Classroom-Based Assessment 1: Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context

Exploring the application of controlled systems[1] in a local context provides opportunities for students to engage in practical, authentic learning experiences that gives them the opportunity to investigate the role of controlled systems in a local setting. The local setting can be the classroom, the school, within their community, etc. The Classroom-Based Assessment will ask students to research, analyse and draw conclusions on the function of their chosen controlled system.

Students have the option of investigating a controlled system that currently exists in their chosen local setting or alternatively, they may choose to explore the option of introducing a controlled system that would result in it having a defined function. Either of the approaches should be conducted through the lens of:

- research and analysis
- function
- evaluating their Classroom-Based Assessment
- communicating their Classroom-Based Assessment.

Students will capture the various stages of the Classroom-Based Assessment through a learning log that will be presented as part of their final submission. The learning log can be produced in a suitable format, to be decided upon in agreement with the teacher that captures the student's work throughout the Classroom-Based Assessment. Students may present models, artefacts, and any other form of evidence to accompany the learning log to further communicate their findings if they deem it necessary.

The learning outcomes assessed will, to an extent, depend on the topic chosen and the media in which the work is presented.

[1] Controlled system = a controlled system is where components are used to modify the behaviour of a system so it behaves in a specific way

Guidelines for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment

Figure 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.

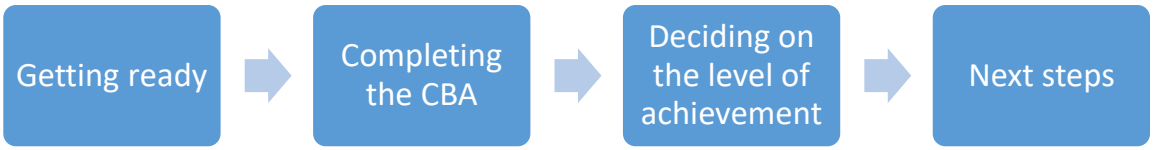
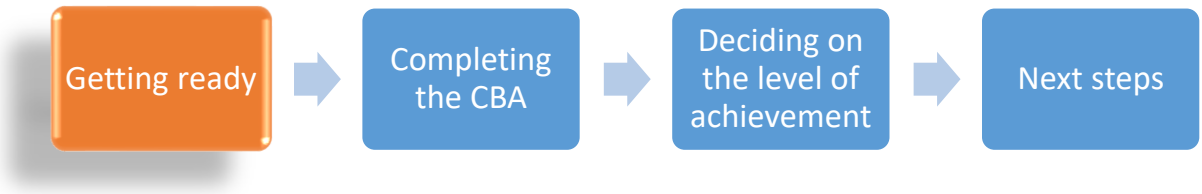


Figure 1 Process for conducting a Classroom-Based Assessment: Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context

Getting ready



Student preparation

While this Classroom-Based Assessment has strong links to the *Energy and control* and *Technology and society* strands, students should have developed some knowledge, understanding and skills across the three strands of study of Applied Technology before engaging with the first Classroom-Based Assessment. As part of the ongoing teaching, learning and assessment of the learning outcomes for Applied Technology, students should have opportunities to develop research and evaluation skills which will help them to engage meaningfully with **Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context**. Where opportunities arise, their curiosity should be fostered to explore topics and ideas that are of interest to them and they should be encouraged to identify relevant links between

classroom learning and everyday life. Such experiences will be of benefit to them as they engage with the Classroom-Based Assessment at a level appropriate to their age and stage of learning.

This Classroom-Based Assessment promotes student curiosity and engagement when students:

- are encouraged to explore their surrounding for technological features
- identify and choose the controlled system that will form the focus of their response
- choose the format(s) in which to present their response
- consider a wide variety of media sources to ensure a broader range of perspectives are researched and considered
- collaborate through the discussion and exploration of the researched information.

Whilst 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. At an appropriate moment in their learning, students should be familiarised with the Features of Quality that will be used to judge the quality of their work.

Teacher preparation

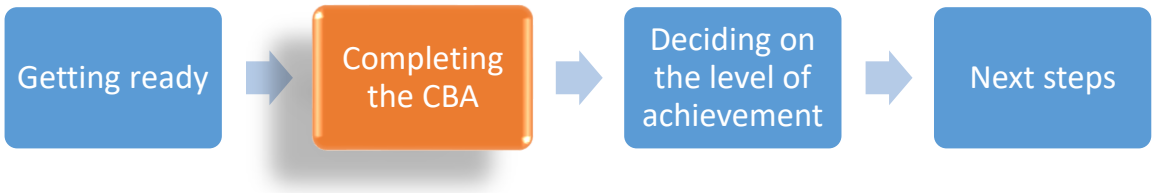
Planning for teaching, learning and assessment should develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and values across the learning outcomes of the specification incrementally in advance of, and during the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment. The role of the teacher should be to guide, support, enable and provide direction to students as they complete their **Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context** Classroom-Based Assessment.

Where possible, it is recommended that teachers discuss the Classroom-Based Assessment with colleagues and plan any teaching and learning that may be required. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate students to see the relevance in what they are learning to everyday living. A non-linear approach across learning outcomes and strands is suggested in the Applied Technology specification. This will provide opportunities for students to experience interactions, interconnections and implications across different areas of study. In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation available on www.curriculumonline.ie:

- *Junior Cycle Applied Technology Specification*
- *Junior Cycle Applied Technology Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment*

- annotated examples of student work
- assessment and Reporting in junior cycle (https://www.ncca.ie/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting).

Completing CBA 1



Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context will be completed within a three-week period. In this Classroom-Based Assessment, students will engage in, and document the four areas of activity in their learning logs which contribute to the generation of their evidence of learning and achievement:

1. research and analysis
2. function
3. evaluating their Classroom-Based Assessment
4. communicating their Classroom-Based Assessment.

Further details on the learning log can be found on p. 14.

1. Research and analysis

An area of focus for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment is the development of a student's research skills. Once the student and teacher have decided which approach, they wish to pursue to explore a controlled system, students should define their idea(s) by brainstorming key words, phrases and other pieces of information that will assist their research. Each student will be required to gather data and information from different sources to research their project. Each individual student must conduct their own research using some field (primary) research and/or some desk (secondary) research. Appendix A offers some possible headings students may include in their learning log. It is

important that each student records the source(s) of all the information gathered in order to assess its reliability and quality, and to ensure that the sources used can be referenced in the task. They should be encouraged to search effectively, evaluate and synthesise material. A sample of possible controlled systems can be found below.

- Explore an emergency stop system in a workshop
- Automatic lighting system in a corridor
- Entry/Egress system into a building
- Fire Extinguisher
- Communications control system
- Radio controlled system
- Motion controlled system to enhance inclusivity in our school

2. Function

Once the research and analysis has been conducted, the students should relate their findings to communicating the defined function[2] of their chosen controlled system. Students can draw on existing knowledge of their chosen controlled system but should support their ideas with their research to gain enhanced understanding of their chosen controlled systems. By engaging with this lens, students should be showing an understanding of their topic and should be considering what key information will be needed to accurately communicate their findings.

3. Evaluating their Classroom-Based Assessment

Having undertaken the **Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context** Classroom-Based Assessment, using their chosen topic, the student should:

- Evaluate what they have learned about the controlled system they focused their task on
- Reflect on the process that led from them from start to finish of their submitted work.

Areas that could be included at this stage:

[2] Explaining or describing a key functionality

- Exploring the importance of the topic for personal, local, social or environmental relevance
- Were they able to apply their knowledge, understanding and ideas to the chosen topic
- Explaining different opinions related to the chosen topic where appropriate
- Reflecting on what they thought about the topic before the research and what they think now

In other words, the student should aim to develop a personal opinion in relation to the Classroom-based Assessment.

4. Communicating their Classroom-Based Assessment.

Each student will present on what they have learned having investigated a controlled system in the setting of their choice. The information should be presented in their own words to demonstrate personal understanding of the knowledge and ideas relevant to the chosen topic. Students should be encouraged to identify which information best communicates their work and choose the most suitable medium in which to present it.

Evidence of learning

The students are required to capture their Classroom-Based Assessment using an individual learning log. The learning log can be produced in any format that is appropriate for capturing the ideas of the students. For example:

- In written form, such as a report
- In digital form, such as a blog, a video or slide presentation
- In visual form, such as a graphic presentation or a display
- In audio form, such as a podcast or a voice-over.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but serves to offer suggestions as to the possible choices in developing the learning log. Students may present models or prototypes as part of their submission to support their learning logs.

Deciding on the level of achievement: Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context

Features of Quality

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 Assessments.

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 a 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.

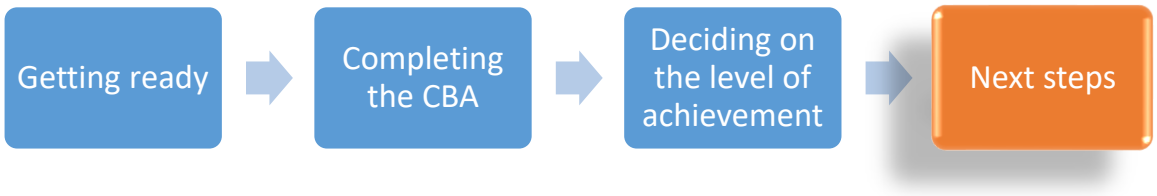
Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances. Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Applied-Technology by the features of quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings.

Features of Quality: Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context	
Exceptional 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.	▪ The research method chosen demonstrated a comparison of a range of sources which led to the production of a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the data/findings ▪ The controlled system chosen was investigated with a high level of detail showing excellent understanding of its defined function ▪ Critical evaluation of their task was evident throughout that lead to refinements at various stages resulting in meaningful, accurate conclusions ▪ The presentation of the task is of an excellent standard; using a highly effective medium which allowed for a critical consideration of what information best communicates the task
Above expectations 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.	▪ The research method chosen was effective for the topic and generated an in-depth level of analysis of the data/findings ▪ The controlled system chosen was investigated in detail showing a very good understanding of its defined function ▪ The evaluation of their task is at a high level, with relevant and accurate conclusions ▪ The task is presented to a very high standard, using an effective medium, with careful consideration of what information accurately communicates the task
In line with expectations 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.	▪ The research method chosen was appropriate for the topic and generated some analysis of the data/findings ▪ The controlled system chosen was investigated with some reference to its defined function ▪ The evaluation was appropriate and conclusions are brief ▪ The task is well presented, using an appropriate medium, with careful consideration of what information to communicate to best showcase the task
Yet to meet expectations A piece of work that falls someway 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.	▪ The research method chosen for the topic/issue was ineffective and the analysis of the data/findings lacks depth ▪ The controlled system chosen was investigated with little detail with little or no reference to its defined function ▪ The evaluation of their task offers little or no conclusions ▪ The task is presented in an unsuitable format resulting in an ineffective communication of the Classroom-Based Assessment

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
- annotated examples of student work will be published on www.curriculumonline.ie.

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 and with annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

Samples of **Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context** 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. 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 devices 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 subjects where students will be recorded]

Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in the Appendix and are available online at https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings.

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/

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step in **Exploring the application of controlled systems in a local context** 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 https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning.

Querying a result

Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

Classroom-Based Assessment 2: Student self-analysis and evaluation

Student self-analysis and evaluation provides opportunities for students to conduct an analysis of their coursework and skills to date in Applied Technology. Students will focus their analysis and evaluation on a range of tasks or on a specific task. Students are expected to critically review their progress and identify areas of strength and areas for improvement, with a view to informing their work for the State Examination Commission project at a later date.

The importance of the second Classroom-Based Assessment, **Student self-analysis and evaluation**, is that it allows for students to engage in the practice of reflecting on their abilities prior to commencing a piece of work. Once the student conducts the self-analysis, they must interpret their analysis and evaluate their findings to offer constructive direction for the upcoming project. The student can communicate the self-analysis and evaluation process through any appropriate media that captures the process. To help structure their approach to the Classroom-Based Assessment, the students should focus their work through the lens of:

- Self-analysis of coursework elements
- Making judgements
- Communicating their Classroom-Based Assessment

The learning outcomes assessed will, to an extent, depend on the topic chosen and the media in which the work is presented.

Guidelines for completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment: Student self-analysis and evaluation

Figure 2 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.

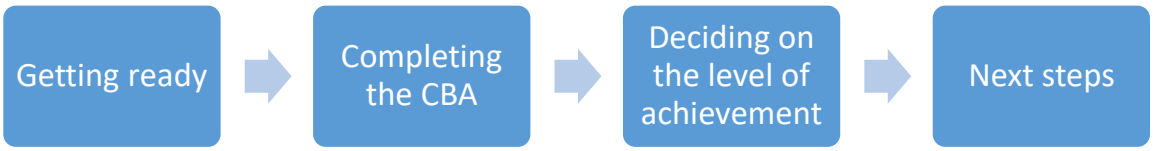
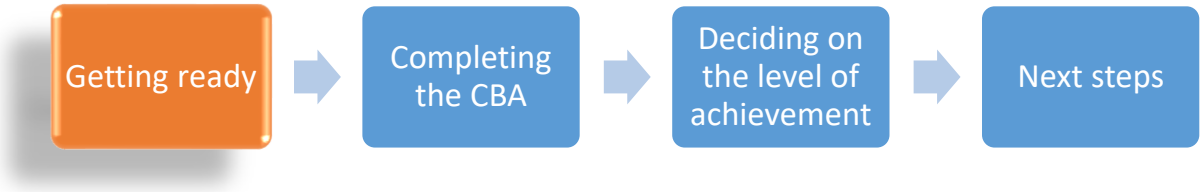


Figure 2 Process for conducting a Classroom-Based Assessment: Student self-analysis and evaluation

Getting ready



Student preparation

While **Student self-analysis and evaluation** is focusing on reflecting, students should have developed sufficient knowledge, skills and understanding to undertake the second Classroom-Based Assessment. As part of the ongoing teaching, learning and assessment of the learning outcomes for Applied Technology, students should have opportunities to develop evaluation skills that allows them to review their work/tasks/artefacts in order to inform future work which will help them to engage meaningfully with **Student self-analysis and evaluation**.

Whilst 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. At an appropriate moment in their learning, students should be familiarised with the Features of Quality that will be used to judge the quality of their work.

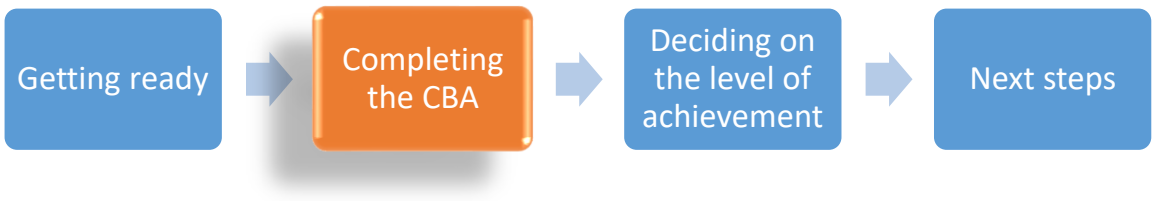
Teacher preparation

Planning for teaching, learning and assessment should develop students' knowledge, understanding, skills and values across the learning outcomes of the specification incrementally in advance of, and during the completion of the Classroom-Based Assessment. The role of the teacher should be to guide, support, enable and provide direction to students as they complete their **Student self-analysis and evaluation** Classroom-Based Assessment.

Where possible, it is recommended that teachers discuss the Classroom-Based Assessment with colleagues and plan any teaching and learning that may be required. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate students to see the relevance in what they are learning to everyday living. A non-linear approach across learning outcomes and strands is suggested in the Applied Technology specification. This will provide opportunities for students to experience interactions, interconnections and implications across different areas of study. In order to prepare for the Classroom-Based Assessment, teachers should familiarise themselves with the following documentation available on www.curriculumonline.ie:

- Junior Cycle Applied Technology Specification
- Junior Cycle Applied Technology: Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessment
- Annotated examples of student work
- Assessment and Reporting in junior cycle (https://www.ncca.ie/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting)

Completing CBA 2



Student self-analysis and evaluation will be completed within a three-week period. In this Classroom-Based Assessment, students will engage in, and document the three areas of activity which contribute to the generation of their evidence of learning and achievement:

1. Self-analysis of coursework elements
2. Making judgements
3. Communicating their Classroom-Based Assessment

1. Self-analysis of coursework elements

In preparing for the Classroom-Based Assessment **Student self-analysis and evaluation**, students should retain some evidence of projects they would have completed throughout first and/or second year to offer them supporting stimulus to conduct their analysis and evaluation. The evidence does not require the student to retain the physical project, only aspects of the work that may assist the student in completing the Classroom-Based Assessment. The evidence may be in the form of:

- An electronic copy of a portfolio
- A picture of the project
- Any documented feedback from the teacher
- Copies of the research presented as part of project work

Note, the evidence listed above are only a sample of what could be used as stimulus for this Classroom-Based Assessment.

Once students have identified a piece of work or a range of work, the student is then required to identify and analyse various coursework elements for the purposes of their self-analysis. Students should analyse their skills progression to date in relation to their coursework elements, identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement. These coursework elements can include:

- Conducting research
- Analysing findings
- Presenting work
- Idea generation skills
- Sketching skills
- Bench skills
- Machine skills

- Final finishing

Note, the examples listed above are only a sample of what could be used as coursework elements for this Classroom-Based Assessment. Students may decide to specifically focus in on more specific areas e.g. electronics as part of their self-analysis and evaluation.

2. Making judgements

Once students have conducted their self-analysis in relation to their skills progression to date, they are required to make judgements based on their analysis. Their judgements are intended to inform future decisions in terms of areas of strengths and areas for improvement. Students should be encouraged to explore a balance of areas in terms of strengths and improvements to give students a comprehensive, realistic reflection of their skills to date.

3. Communicating their Classroom-Based Assessment

Each student will present on what they have learned having conducted the self-analysis and evaluation of their work to date. The information should be presented in their own words to demonstrate personal understanding of the knowledge and ideas relevant to them personally. Students should be encouraged to identify which information best communicates their work and choose the most suitable medium in which to present it.

Evidence of learning

The student's response to their Classroom-Based Assessment can be produced in any format that is appropriate for capturing their reflection. For example:

- In written form such as a report
- In digital form such as a blog, a video or slide presentation
- In visual form such as a graphic presentation or a display
- In audio form such as a podcast or a voice-over

This list is not intended to be exhaustive but serves to offer suggestions as to the possible choices in presenting the Classroom-Based Assessment.

Deciding on the level of achievement

Features of Quality

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.

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 a 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.

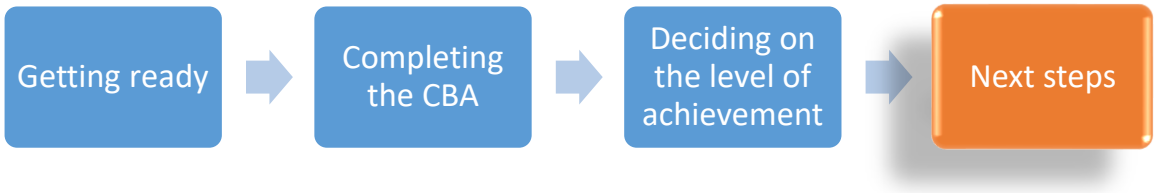
Teachers should not assume that the results of a group of students being assessed will follow any particular distribution pattern, as the students' work is being judged only against the Features of Quality rather than other students' performances. Teacher judgements about the quality of student work, with the aim of arriving at a shared understanding of standards and expectations, are supported by annotated examples of student work published on https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Applied-Technology by the features of quality in these guidelines; and by collaboration and discussion with colleagues during Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) meetings.

Features of Quality: Self Analysis and Evaluation	
Exceptional 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.	▪ The student has identified a broad range of coursework elements, that allowed them to make insightful detailed observations and a comprehensive self analysis on the development of their skills to date. ▪ Critical judgements were made on areas of strengths and areas for improvement and demonstrated an exceptional level of awareness of how these would inform future work. ▪ The presentation of the findings is of an excellent standard; using a highly effective medium which allowed for a critical consideration of what information best communicates their Classroom-Based Assessment.
Above expectations 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.	▪ The student has identified a broad range of coursework elements, that allows them to make detailed observations and some in depth self analysis on the development of their skills to date. ▪ Judgements made on areas of strengths and areas for improvement were detailed and demonstrated a very high level of awareness of how these would inform future work. ▪ The findings are presented to a very high standard, using an effective medium, with careful consideration of what information accurately communicates their Classroom-Based Assessment.
In line with expectations 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.	▪ The student has identified a range of coursework elements, that allows them to make valid observations and some relevant self analysis on the development of their skills to date. ▪ Judgements made on areas of strengths and areas for improvement were clear and demonstrated some awareness of how these would inform future work. ▪ The findings are well presented, using an appropriate medium, with careful consideration of what information best communicates their Classroom-Based Assessment.
Yet to meet expectations A piece of work that falls someway 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.	▪ The student has identified a very small range of coursework elements, providing a limited observation and self-analysis on the development of their skills to date. ▪ Judgements made on areas of strengths and areas for improvement were unclear and demonstrated limited awareness of how these would inform future work. ▪ The findings are presented in an unsuitable format resulting in an ineffective communication of their Classroom-Based Assessment.

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
- annotated examples of student work will be published on www.curriculumonline.ie.

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 and with annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA. Over time, this process will help develop a greater understanding of standards and ensure consistency of judgement about student performance.

Samples of **Student self-analysis and evaluation** 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. 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 subjects where students will be recorded]

Further details on managing and participating in the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting are included in the Appendix and are available online at https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/slar-meetings.

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/

Using feedback

Providing effective feedback is a crucial step **Student self-analysis and evaluation** 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 https://www.ncca.ie/en/junior-cycle/assessment-and-reporting/focus-on-learning.

Querying a result

Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school.

The state certified final assessment

All instructions for the state certified final assessment will be included in a brief, issued by the SEC and available for students during their third year of Junior Cycle.

Appendix A: Student research template

CBA title:	
Title of your project:	
Student name:	
Method of research:	Primary research ☐
	Secondary research ☐
Outline briefly the purpose of the research	
Method of research: Explain briefly why you have chosen your method of research	
Sources: List your source(s) of information	
Summary: Give a brief summary of what you found out as a result of your research	
Evaluation of findings: Think critically about the following questions and write a short response **(a) Were your findings as to be expected or otherwise? Give a reason for your answer.** **(b) Is the source of your research reliable? Give a reason for your answer.**	

(c) Is the information one-sided or biased? Give a reason for your answer.
Conclusion: Based on your findings what is are your key observations

Appendix B: 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

As a first step, teachers may find it helpful to review some of the relevant NCCA-annotated examples prior to coming to decisions about their own students' work.

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.
- Where there is a lack of agreement, the facilitator should refer to relevant annotated examples of student work provided by the NCCA and, if appropriate, a couple of examples of student work that other teachers in the group have assessed and awarded that descriptor to.
- 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.

The facilitator may also ask teachers, should they wish, to contribute some student work to a bank of examples

- to support the induction of new teachers
- to support future Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings
- to use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.

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

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