



AsIAM's Submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on proposed reforms to the Senior Cycle, including the Leaving Certificate Examinations

AsIAM warmly welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on the subject of proposed reforms to the Senior Cycle, including the Leaving Certificate examinations and assessments. It is our ambition that the proposed reforms to the Leaving Certificate take steps to proactively and inclusively address the barriers to education that many Autistic students experience, which can range from negative experiences at school, to unmet educational support needs, to added stress and anxiety around the examinations and assessment process. As Ireland's National Charity for the Autism Community, we see that the Leaving Certificate's format and rigid focus on rote learning and the 'points race' has a disproportionate impact on our community, we have continuously advocated for an examination process that takes into consideration the strengths and differences that Autistic students possess; that is flexible enough to accommodate neurodiverse ways of learning and absorbing information, as well as for more tailored, consistent and continuous support for students who are going through the examination process. We have, through our Training Department, sought to bring about a greater understanding of autism and the barriers that might present at secondary school and at University by providing online and in-person training, as well as through our Autism-Friendly Schools and Autism-Friendly Universities programmes.

Executive Summary

- **Ensure that the autism community, including Autistic students, are actively consulted and can proactively contribute towards the design and production of all future changes to the Senior Cycle, including the Leaving Certificate examinations;**
- **Ensure that future reforms to the Senior Cycle are designed in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and on the Principles of Universal Design for Learning, so that all aspects of the Leaving Certificate are accessible to all Autistic students;**
- **Develop soft skills programmes, employment support programmes and increase access to career guidance advice and counselling services to ensure that all Autistic people, across a diversity of support needs, can access employment and higher and further education opportunities.**
- **Increase further and vocational education options, including access to apprenticeships, so that more Autistic people have more options when they leave school;**
- **Provide more choice and flexibility in all ways in how students are assessed to meet the diverse needs of all students, including Autistic students, to be fully accessible to Autistic students and students with disabilities across the diversity of strengths and support needs.**
- **Ensure that the voices and experiences Autistic students are taken on board when making future reforms to the Leaving Cert which impact students' wellbeing, and increase mental health supports for Autistic students.**
- **Mainstream autism and disability into all future policy decisions around the Senior Cycle.**

This opportunity to reexamine the Senior Cycle comes at a timely moment given that we have an opportunity, post-COVID-19, to make significant reforms to our education system which will benefit all students, and to mainstream autism and disability across the wider education system in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These include the systems used to determine not just entry into third-level, but also to offer a wider range of post-Leaving Certificate options by expanding opportunities for students to pursue apprenticeships and further education opportunities. AsIAM anticipates that this should offer more career pathways for

students, and challenge the stigma that may be associated with apprenticeships and further and vocational education,¹ particularly the perception that everybody has to go to University to get into their chosen career.

Whilst a national conversation around how best to reform the Leaving Certificate has been taking place for some time², this has been informed by the experiences of students who were given the choice to use calculated grades to form part or all of their overall exam results.³ Indeed, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students has sparked a wider public debate around Leaving Cert reforms, and whether the current Leaving Certificate and the 'points race' for third-level places have on young people's wellbeing, and if it reflects our values as a society, particularly towards education. Indeed, the aftermath of COVID-19 has presented an opportunity. Such reforms should, as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) notes, "help equip Irish children and youth with the skills to face the challenges of the 21st century, succeed in higher education, enter and progress successfully in the labour market, access a range of alternative education pathways, and exercise a responsible global citizenship." The Senior Cycle should offer students a wide range of choice and flexibility, for increased opportunities for students to pursue subjects that match their interests and be fully accessible and inclusive to students across the full diversity of abilities and support needs, in line with Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It should also align with the Principles of Universal Design for Learning, which allows the curriculum to be flexible and be designed to ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to engage in learning by introducing more flexible means of teaching, assessment and support which meet the diversity of students, and their constituent strengths and support needs.⁴

¹ O'Brien, C., 'Trainee mechanic says more school-leavers should consider apprenticeships', The Irish Times (Dublin, 19 Apr 2021), <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/trainee-mechanic-says-more-school-leavers-should-consider-apprenticeships-1.4540754>, accessed 05 Oct 2021.

² Donnelly, K., 'Lessons from the pandemic: principals call for Leaving Cert reform', The Irish Independent, (Dublin, 02 Jun 2021), <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/lessons-from-the-pandemic-principals-call-for-leaving-cert-reform-40492973.html>, accessed 05 Oct 2021.

³ O'Connor, A., 'Let the pandemic's silver lining be Leaving Cert reform', The Irish Examiner (Cork, 19 Feb 2021), <https://www.irishexaminer.com/opinion/columnists/arid-40229495.html>, accessed 01 Oct 2021.

⁴ AHEAD, 'Universal Design for Learning' <https://www.ahead.ie/udl>, accessed 05 Oct 2021.

The Senior Cycle's current format disadvantages Autistic students

The current format of the Leaving Certificate, and what it expects of students, poses significant and often disproportionate barriers to many Autistic people fulfilling their potential⁵, particularly those with additional educational support needs, as well as those with other forms of neurodiversity, disabled students and students who experience other forms of educational disadvantage. The current system's near singular focus on rote learning and its 'one-size-fits-all' approach to assessing students, with much of the curriculum dedicated to preparing students to sit the Leaving Certificate exams and as an entry system into third-level, the workforce and adult life with few opportunities for students to pursue their non-curricular or particularly their focused interests, fails to meet the diversity of learning styles, academic strengths and needs of our student population, particularly Autistic students. Furthermore, the focus on rote learning can have substantial impacts on an Autistic person's, and indeed people with disabilities', employment outcomes when they leave school, and may be seen as a contributing factors towards Ireland's dismal record on employing disabled people. Recent EUROSTAT statistics showed that just 32.2% of people with disabilities were in employment in 2017, when compared to the EU average (50.6%),⁶ the worst in western Europe, with employment outcomes being particularly poor for not Autistic people and people with intellectual disabilities - over 80% of Autistic people are unemployed or underemployed⁷. This stresses the need for developing soft skills and for employment support programmes, in conjunction with improved access to guidance, to be a part the Senior Cycle programme, particularly for Autistic students who are in special schools and in autism classes in mainstream schools.

What does the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and General Comment 4 outline the right to education for Autistic children and children with disabilities in Ireland?

Article 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that people with disabilities have the same right to inclusive education as their

⁵ Horgan, J. 'Irish Teacher: The Leaving Cert just isn't fair', The Irish Examiner (Cork, 16 Sep 2021), <https://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/people/arid-40698593.html>, accessed 06 Oct 2021.

⁶ Moloney, C., Academic Network of European Disability Experts, '2018/2019 country fiche on disability', p. 34. <https://www.disability-europe.net/downloads/945-country-report-on-the-european-semester-ireland>. Accessed: 6th August 2020

⁷ The UK National Autistic Society, 'The autism employment gap: Too Much Information in the workplace', p. 5, <https://www.autism.org.uk/~media/nas/get-involved/tmi/tmi%20employment%20report%2024pp%20web.ashx?la=en-gb>, accessed 06 Oct 2021.

non-disabled peers, to develop their human potential, dignity, personality, respect for human rights and diversity, fully develop their talents, personality and abilities and fully participate in a free society.⁸ For secondary school students, this obliges States to:

- ensure that students are not excluded from their local secondary school on disability grounds,
- have equal access to the same inclusive secondary education in their local community,
- access reasonable accommodations for their support needs,
- receive effective and person-centred support and the need for not just developing an inclusive education system, but also ensuring that the design of curricula can be accessed by everyone, including Autistic students across the breadth of support needs.

General Comment 4, which covers Inclusive Education, provides additional guidance on how the Department of Education can make the Senior Cycle more inclusive for Autistic students. It highlights the need for all teachers and support staff to receive training to support Autistic people to be inclusively educated in their local school, where possible, and to support Autistic students, particularly Autistic students who are in mainstream schools, according to their level of support needs.⁹ Such training should: “address a basic understanding of human diversity, growth and development, the human rights model of disability, and inclusive pedagogy including how to identify students’ functional abilities -strengths, abilities and learning styles- to ensure their participation in inclusive educational environments.”¹⁰ It also states that teachers should receive additional training about the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, including large print, accessible multimedia, Easy-to-Read, and plain language, education techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.¹¹ It also states that teachers need practical guidance and support in providing an education tailored to an the learning styles and unique abilities of every student, including Autistic students.¹²

⁸ Article 24, United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html>, accessed 04 Oct 2021

⁹ United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General Comment 4 on Inclusive Education, p.22 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57c977e34.html>

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.23.

Impact of the Senior Cycle on the Mental Health of Students

The current format of the Senior Cycle has a significant impact on the mental health of students and particularly Autistic students. According to the Irish Second-Level Students Union, over 71% of Senior Cycle students have experiences with their mental health¹³, which was particularly pronounced among girls and non-binary students.¹⁴ This was often attributed to the academic workload at school and/or the prospect of examinations during the Senior Cycle, which nearly 80% of students experienced at some point in their time at school,¹⁵ particularly during exam season. Many students also highlighted that there are significant barriers to accessing mental health support at school¹⁶, and that the Senior Cycle has a disproportionate focus on grades and study as opposed to physical and mental wellbeing, and does not give adequate consideration for their personal circumstances or their mental health.¹⁷ Moreover, many Autistic students, particularly Autistic girls, may find themselves having to mask, camouflage or hide their Autistic traits at school and are more likely to experience 'Autistic burnout', which can be pervasive and have real and damaging long-term consequences on their mental health and wellbeing¹⁸. This is something that should be kept in mind when reforms to the Leaving Certificate are considered by the Department of Education, the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and key stakeholders in the education system, such as parents, Boards of Management, teachers, and teachers unions. This augurs the need for students, including Autistic students, to have input into any future reforms, to be involved in such reform's design and implementation, and to be included on any future reforms aimed on maintaining the mental health and wellbeing on all secondary school students.

The experiences of Autistic students and neurodivergent students

Autistic students and for neurodivergent students have a wide diversity of experiences of both going through Senior Cycle and sitting the Leaving Certificate exams. An example

¹³ Irish Second-Level Students Union, 'ISSU Senior Cycle Reform Report 2021' <https://www.issu.ie/news2/senior-cycle-reform-report>, p. 34, accessed 28 Sep 2021.

¹⁴ Irish Second-Level Students Union, 'ISSU Senior Cycle Reform Report 2021' <https://www.issu.ie/news2/senior-cycle-reform-report>, p. 34, accessed 28 Sep 2021.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

¹⁸ Winegarner, B., "The Battery's Dead': Burnout Looks Different in Autistic Adults', The New York Times (New York, 3 Sep 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/03/well/live/Autistic-burnout-advice.html>, accessed 06 Oct 2021.

of this is the disparate experiences in getting reasonable accommodations - whilst some students are able to get the supports they need, such as access to a separate room or extra time, this isn't always the case for many Autistic students, and the often prescriptive way of getting supports may mean that the supports may not always match their needs or be consistently applied. This is particularly the case with schools that are situated in highly competitive areas such as Dublin and Cork, where academic achievement is often prioritised over personal development. In these schools, AsIAM notes that there is often a reluctance in these schools to open autism classes, which can often come from outdated perceptions that the inclusion of Autistic students, as well as other disabled students, would have a negative impact on the academic prospects of non-disabled students. This fear of a backlash from parents of non-disabled students can also have a chilling effect on schools opening autism classes and including the autism community. This has a particularly pernicious impact on Autistic students and their families, particularly those with complex support needs, where reduced timetables and refusal of school places is all-too-often the reality¹⁹, and this is a significant contributing factor to the academic and employment disadvantages the autism community experiences as a whole. This can greatly exacerbate the anxiety and uncertainty that families may have over their child's future prospects when they leave school and reach adulthood.

Whilst the Leaving Certificate exams are a very difficult and stressful period for all students, they can be a particularly difficult and traumatic experiences for many Autistic students, which can be compounded by any negative or traumatic experiences that may have happened at school. For some Autistic students, the essay-based formats of many exams can cause a great deal of anxiety, particularly if they are naturally anxious and have a tendency to overthink or worry about how exams may go, which can be exacerbated if they don't believe the exam or question is going the way they expected. Executive functioning differences may mean that it can be more difficult for an Autistic person to plan or structure questions, or to know how much time they need to give to each question. Autistic students with executive functioning differences may mean have a harder time trying to stay on task, directly answer the question asked or interpret

¹⁹ Ward, T., 'Basic rights denied: Our education system needs a radical overhaul', The Irish Times (Dublin, 07 Jul 2021) <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/basic-rights-denied-our-education-system-needs-a-radical-overhaul-1.4613293?mode=sample&auth-failed=1&pw-origin=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.irishtimes.com%2Fopinion%2Fbasic-rights-denied-our-education-system-needs-a-radical-overhaul-1.4613293>, accessed 05 Oct 2021.

questions in a way that allows them to answer a question within a given time frame. Because a person might only receive a limited amount of time to structure and answer a question, many Autistic students feel that they don't have enough time to research and answer the question, and if they might have perfectionist tendencies, become considerably more stressed if they feel they did not answer the question in the right way. Many Autistic students may also feel the need to move around or to 'stim' when they're sitting an exam and may feel frustrated or uncomfortable if they're expected to sit still for extended periods of time. This can be further exacerbated if Autistic students are sitting exams in crowded exam halls, and if they may be sensitive to lights, sounds or smells or crowds that go with sitting exams in these settings, and which may add to any anxiety that Autistic students may be experiencing. Equally, some Autistic students, particularly those with executive functioning differences may have difficulties in keeping up with the demands and expectations of assignments and continuous assessment. This is particularly evident in the experiences of Junior Cycle students, where some students particularly struggled with keeping up with the demands placed by the increased emphasis on group work and continuous assessments, which shows the diversity of experiences, strengths and support of Autistic students. Lessons should be learned from the reforms to the Junior Cycle, and this both demonstrates the need for increased flexibility in how students are assessed to meet the diverse needs of Autistic students, and for all methods of assessing students, be it exams, continuous assessments, or group or individual projects or assignments to be fully accessible to Autistic students and students with disabilities across the diversity of strengths and support needs.

The need for students to do compulsory subjects, such as Irish, English and Mathematics, particularly disadvantages not just Autistic students, but also those with other neurotypes such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, and people with intellectual disabilities. Whilst there are indeed exemptions and waivers in place for these cohorts of students, from the outset the way these waivers are obtained can put students at a disadvantage, and can also discourage students who have an interest in languages from taking up these subjects. This is because such waivers can be very difficult to obtain, are not always consistently applied as it places an onus on the student and their family to get an official diagnosis to the exemption, and not on making these subjects more engaging and accessible to this cohort of students. This leaves many Autistic students who haven't had an official diagnosis, though not having the means to obtain a diagnosis or through

biases inherent in the diagnostic criteria, at a considerable disadvantage. This is symptomatic of a wider issue where a significant number of students have fewer opportunities to study the subjects that they want to do, and that outside pressure plays a key part in informing subject choices.²⁰

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) observed when conducting its review of the Senior Cycle, that the Senior Cycle was acting as a filter towards entering higher education and its vision and purpose was “too narrow and rigid for Ireland’s aspirations”²¹, and that the Senior Cycle in its current form was not meeting the goals of stakeholders, who took a holistic outlook towards educating student. The OECD noted that “With a robust emphasis on knowledge and testing, and the embedding of skills in the curriculum in 2009, it is not clear how senior cycle is at present preparing students for the future beyond sitting the Leaving Certificate.”²² These observations are also broadly reflected in the views of many students, including Autistic students. In its study into possible options for Senior Cycle Report, the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD) found that as many as 83% of students “do not feel the Leaving Cert is the best way to assess educational achievement, or that it prepares them for the world of work or life outside of education.”²³ 51% of students found the Leaving Cert difficult, and had particular difficulties in coping with the pressure and stress resulting from the realisation that everything rested on one final exam.²⁴ The absence of practical and continuous assessments was highlighted by a significant number of students who would like the opportunity to apply these skills.²⁵ This is because many students, particularly Autistic and neurodiverse students, have multiple ways of learning, or whose ways of learning that may not lend themselves so easily to the Senior Cycle’s current format.

²⁰ Irish Second-Level Students Union, ‘ISSU Senior Cycle Reform Report 2021’
<https://www.issu.ie/news2/senior-cycle-reform-report>, p. 16, accessed 28 Sep 2021.

²¹ Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, ‘Education in Ireland : An OECD Assessment of the Senior Cycle Review’,
https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/636bc6c1-en/1/3/1/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/636bc6c1-en&_csp_ =7422916350b1276caccdd145a9f2ca0a2&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book, accessed 01 Oct 2021.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, ‘Senior Cycle Reform: What Do You Want, January 2019’,
https://ncca.ie/media/4358/napd_report_final.pdf, p. 11, accessed 30 Sep 2021.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

²⁵ National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, ‘Senior Cycle Reform: What Do You Want, January 2019’,
https://ncca.ie/media/4358/napd_report_final.pdf, p. 13-14., accessed 30 Sep 2021.

The Leaving Certificate also puts significant financial pressure on families to pay significant fees for private schools, or for grinds through schools or for private tutors, as this can give students a greater chance of getting into the course they want. This highlights some of the socio-economic biases within the system which can reinforce, and sometimes widen, educational inequality for many students. This can particularly be the case for Autistic students given the additional costs of accessing supports for autistic students²⁶, and the often intrinsic link between disabilities like autism, and socio-economic disadvantage²⁷ and social exclusion.²⁸

The rigid focus on academic outcomes and on the 'points race' highlights some of the extent of socio-economic barriers and education within the Senior Cycle. For example, it undermines the right to education of Autistic people who may be as academically inclined, or prefer to seek other opportunities into their chosen career such as apprenticeships or PLC courses. This is symptomatic of a wider issue within the education system which expresses that the State wishes that all students be included in mainstream schools, where possible, but the curriculum's design is geared towards those whose strengths allow them to pursue the opportunity to go to college, and not students whose support needs may necessitate pursuing other opportunities, such as further or vocational education or pursuing apprenticeships. It is even starker for the cohort of Autistic students who attend special schools and special classes, where there is not only a lack of accessible career pathways or post-school opportunities, but also a lack of access to appropriate career guidance and other supports. Often, there are very limited opportunities for Autistic students with high or complex support needs who attend special school to pursue higher or further education. Often, people with high or complex support needs, find themselves with the choice of attending a sheltered workshop or a day or respite service, which fall far short of meeting their right to

²⁶ O'Brien, C., 'Parents of children with autism face extra €28,000 bill annually' The Irish Times, (Dublin, 03 Oct 2018), <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/parents-of-children-with-autism-face-extra-28-000-bill-annually-1.3650625?mode=sample&auth-failed=1&pw-orig=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.irishtimes.com%2Fnews%2Feducation%2Fparents-of-children-with-autism-face-extra-28-000-bill-annually-1.3650625>, accessed 06 Oct 2021.

²⁷ Inclusion Ireland, 'Poverty and Disability: A public-friendly guide to economic inequality and the cost of disability.' <http://www.inclusionireland.ie/sites/default/files/attach/basic-page/1695/poverty-and-disability-plain-english.pdf> accessed 05 Oct 2021.

²⁸ European Disability Forum, 'European Human Rights Report 2020 - Poverty and Social Exclusion of Persons with Disabilities', https://mcusercontent.com/865a5bbea1086c57a41cc876d/files/ad60807b-a923-4a7e-ac84-559c4a5212a8/EDF_HR_Report_final_tagged_interactive_v2_accessible.pdf, p. 18, accessed 05 Oct 2021

employment, including access to the labour market, and their right to be included as a part of our society. Stakeholders involved in developing reforms to Senior Cycle should also promote alternatives to sitting the Leaving Certificate, to meet the needs of a more diverse society, and neurodiverse ways of learning, or those who prefer to engage in vocational and practical subjects. It should also seek to remove any stigma associated with pursuing vocational education, including apprenticeships. The NAPD noted that many students expressed a desire to change from a final written exam to either a system of continuous assessment, or to have the assessment be a part of an overall system which may also include other forms of assessment, such as interviews, assignments, or practical assignments.²⁹ This highlights the need for existing programmes such as the Leaving Certificate Applied and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme to both be available at every school, and for these curricula to be expanded in order to meet the educational needs of the wider autism community.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has highlighted inequalities within the Irish education system which have been present long before the pandemic, and which particularly impact Autistic students. The Pandemic, as well as the public debate around reforms to the Leaving Certificate presents an unprecedented opportunity to reform the Senior Cycle to make it more equitable for all students, and meaningfully address barriers to education for Autistic students. Often Autistic people have been victims of low expectations in terms of their participation in mainstream schools, special schools and autism classes, and this has a knock-on impact on the educational and after-school prospects in many in our community. The reform process provides an opportunity for the Department of Education to meaningfully address barriers to education experienced by Autistic students, and the issues discussed in this submission highlight the need for the autism community to be consulted and to proactively participate in any and all changes to the Senior Cycle, in accordance with Article 4(3) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and to have an integral role in designing and implementing any future reforms to the Senior Cycle programme. This is because the autism community, and particularly Autistic students and educators, are experts not just by way

²⁹ National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, 'Senior Cycle Reform: What Do You Want, January 2019, https://ncca.ie/media/4358/napd_report_final.pdf, p. 14, accessed 30 Sep 2021.

of their educational background, but their lived experience can also help to reform the Leaving Certificate in ways that facilitate Autistic students' strengths and access needs, but also to engage in education in ways that best match their needs at school and with how they may learn. It is important to note that some of the issues experienced by students are particularly pertinent to Autistic students, particularly around mental health and in catering to a wider range of learning styles and support needs. For these reasons, and for the reasons outlined in this submission, it is essential that the Autistic students and their families' voices are heard in this process and that autism and disability should be mainstreamed as a key part of both the wider reform process, and throughout the second-level education system.

Whilst we recognise that some element of the traditional exam process will form a part of the Senior Cycle and the Leaving Certificate in the coming years, this is an opportunity to take on board the lessons learned during the implementation of the Junior Cycle reform and integrate these learnings into the Senior Cycle reform. This would also provide an opportunity to grant a greater degree of agency and flexibility to students in how they wish to engage with the Senior Cycle. For instance, some in the autism community prefer that the final examinations in June play a smaller part of the overall assessment process and a part of a process which shows which includes opportunities for students to engage with subjects which match their interests and to be assessed in ways that align with their academic strengths. However, some may find having to keep up with continuous assessments challenging and may like having the option of having bigger assignments, individual projects or assessments less frequently, or have the option to sit an exams at the end of the year as part of their overall grade. This would also mean a shift away from an emphasis on auditory learning, which the current Senior Cycle is based on, towards a system that also factors other learning styles such as visual learning, kinesthetic learning and reading and writing so as to support all students.³⁰ This means that a future Leaving Certificate should become a more holistic process which will not just include the final exams in June, but also continuous assessments, practical assessments, essay-based assignments, individual projects which form a wider picture of what students have learned over the two years of the Senior Cycle.

³⁰ Irish Second-Level Students Union, 'ISSU Senior Cycle Reform Report 2021' <https://www.issu.ie/news2/senior-cycle-reform-report>, p. 44, accessed 28 Sep 2021.