

## Junior Certificate (NFQ Level 3 – major award)

The first stage of post-primary schooling that learners encounter, usually commencing at age 12, is junior cycle, a three-year programme within the compulsory period of education that builds on the young person's educational experience at primary school by offering a broad, balanced and coherent programme of study across a wide range of curriculum subjects and areas. It is in junior cycle that the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills of learners—including the personal, social, moral and spiritual aspects—are extended and deepened with the aim of generating a love of learning in young people. In the process, junior cycle prepares learners for transition to senior cycle, for other further education opportunities, in some cases for employment and, in general, for the challenges involved in growing towards adulthood.

In junior cycle learners follow a number of subjects which include Irish, English, Mathematics, Social Personal & Health Education, Civic, Social and Political Education and two other subjects from a list which includes languages, Science, Business Studies, Art, Music etc. In addition, students in secondary schools must study History and Geography. The Junior Certificate examination takes place at the end of the junior cycle. Learners normally sit the examination at the age of 14 or 15. Junior Certificate subjects are usually assessed by means of a written terminal examination, along with practical examinations, project work, orals and aurals in some subjects. The majority of students in school will sit Junior Certificate examinations in at least seven subjects. However, candidates – including many learners in second chance education settings or repeat students – can also sit one or more individual subjects.

### Descriptor

<b>Title</b>	Junior Certificate
<b>Purpose</b>	This is a multi-purpose award-type. The knowledge, skill and competence acquired are relevant to personal development, participation in society and community, employment, and access to additional education and training.
<b>NFQ Level</b>	3
<b>Volume</b>	Large
<b>Knowledge - breadth</b>	Knowledge moderately broad in range.
<b>Knowledge - kind</b>	Mainly concrete in reference. Some comprehension of relationships between knowledge elements.
<b>Know-how and Skill – range</b>	Demonstrate a limited range of skills and tools in various domains of activity - artistic, intellectual, scientific, physical and practical.
<b>Know-how and Skill – selectivity</b>	Choose from a limited range of varied procedures. Apply known solutions to a limited range of predictable problems.
<b>Competence - context</b>	Act within a limited range of contexts
<b>Competence - role</b>	Act under direction with limited autonomy. Function within familiar homogeneous groups.
<b>Competence - learning to learn</b>	Learn to learn within a managed environment.
<b>Competence - insight</b>	Assume limited responsibility for consistency of self- understanding and behaviour.
<b>Progression and</b>	Progression to programme leading to Leaving Certificate.

<b>transfer</b>	Progression to programme leading to Level 4 Certificate, or at a higher level.
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**Awarding body:** The State Examinations Commission

The Junior Certificate is typically awarded to learners following a three-year full-time programme prescribed by the Department of Education and Science.

**This is a major award. Major awards are the principal class of award made at a level. There are also component (minor), specific purpose (special purpose) and supplemental awards at the same level.**

**Minor awards**

Minor Awards are for partial completion of the outcomes for a Major Award.

**Supplemental Awards**

Supplemental Awards are for learning that is additional to a Major Award.

**Special Purpose Awards**

Special Purpose Awards are for relatively narrow or purpose-specific achievement.