

Junior Cycle History Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) & Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings (SLAR)

– Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is a SLAR meeting?

A Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting is where teachers will **'share and discuss'** samples of their assessment of **students' work** and **build common understanding** about the quality of **student learning**'. *Junior Cycle Framework for Junior Cycle 2015, Page 39*

Q: Should I give feedback to my students when they are completing their Classroom-Based Assessment?

The process of completing the Classroom-Based Assessment should be viewed as part of the teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that the teacher will guide, support and supervise throughout the process.

Q: What type of support should I give?

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, and providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the assessments.

Q: Can students get help with their work outside the classroom?

Support for students can be given but the teacher must monitor the student throughout the process. Only work that is the student's own can be accepted for assessment for the JCPA.

Q: I have a student with special educational needs (SEN). What supports can they be given?

If 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 the Classroom Based Assessments. These supports e.g. the support provided by a special need's 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 school year.

Q: How do we assess the work using the features of quality?

Page 35 of the History Assessment Guidelines describes how to use the Features of Quality as follows: *'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.'*

Q: Does the CBA count towards the SEC grade at the end of Third Year?

CBAs do not form part of the SEC component. The Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement will document achievement in CBAs and for the SEC component separately. The SEC component includes student achievement in the assessment task and the final assessment towards the end of third year. It should be noted that the Assessment Task is directly related to the nature and focus of the second Classroom-Based Assessment, A life in Time.

Q: Should every History teacher in a subject department attend a SLAR meeting?

Section 2.13.4 of DES circular 0077/2019 (page 18) states that *'When students have completed CBAs, the CBAs will be assessed by the students' teachers, and the outcomes will be reported to the students and parents/guardians. To support teachers in assessing students' Classroom Based Assessments, teachers will engage in Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLARs)'*. If you, as a History Department, feel there is merit in other teachers attending, then you have the freedom at a local level to decide if they do attend and the nature of their involvement at the SLAR meeting.

Q: What if a teacher is absent on the planned date for the SLAR meeting?

The key date to establish at the outset is the timing of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review meeting from the range of dates provided by the NCCA. In setting this date the school will be guided by its own local circumstances bearing in mind that the Past in My Place CBA must be completed by the end of Year Two'. Ensuring that you have an agreed date at the outset for the SLAR meeting will help to ensure everybody is available to attend. If there is an unavoidable absence, local circumstances will dictate whether the meeting can be rescheduled or not.

Q: Can a descriptor be appealed?

'Queries in relation to the Descriptors awarded for the Classroom-Based Assessments, where they arise, will be dealt with by the school' (History Assessment Guidelines page 21).

Q: When does the SLAR meeting happen?

CBA and SLAR window dates are updated annually by the NCCA on www.ncca.ie.

Q: What happens if consensus cannot be reached in a SLAR meeting?

In a SLAR meeting, teachers will *'share and discuss samples of their assessments of students' work and build a common understanding about the quality of students' learning. This structured support for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) will help to ensure consistency and fairness within and across schools in the appraisal of student learning'* (Framework for Junior Cycle, 2015, pages 8-9). It is through discussion that consensus about standards are reached. If consensus cannot be reached, this should be noted in the facilitator's report of the meeting.

Q: Do you have to reassess all students' work after the SLAR meeting?

'Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they 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. A record of final descriptors awarded is kept by the class teacher and is shared with the SLAR facilitator, to be 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)' (History Assessment Guidelines page 32).

Q: Can a PME student attend a SLAR meeting? If a PME is working with a class that is being assessed, the cooperating teacher awards and revises the descriptors. A school may deem it relevant however to permit PME attendance at a SLAR meeting in an observation and professional development capacity

Q: Is the work returned to students or stored in the school?

The work is returned to the students once you, the teacher, have reconsidered the judgement of the student's work based on the outcomes of the SLAR meeting and the work has been awarded a final descriptor. 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 further Subject Learning and Assessment Review Meetings.
- To use with students and parents in demonstrating the standard of work achieved.

Circular 0055/2019 section 2.13. states that (page 18) states *'In all instances, when recording and storing students' work, teachers and schools are required to act in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in force since 25th May 2018, and child protection requirements.'*

Q: How are Classroom-Based Assessments results shared with the school management?

Following the Subject Learning and Assessment Review each individual teacher re-considers the judgement they 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. A record of the final descriptors awarded is kept by the class teacher and is shared with the school.

Q: How are Classroom Based Assessments reported?

The Classroom Based Assessments are to be 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).

Q: Should the CBA replace summer tests?

Circular 0055/2019 section 2.13 states that (page 15) *'Students entering 1st year in September 2019 will be the first cohort of students undertaking a full programme under the new Framework for Junior Cycle. As all new subject specifications include ongoing feedback, formative assessment, CBAs, assessment tasks as well as final examinations, there is a need to avoid 'over-assessment' and to minimise the cumulative burden on students and teachers of multiple assessments across the full range of subjects. In this context, the Classroom-Based Assessments will substitute for other assessments currently undertaken in the school such as in-house examinations. Schools should examine their own assessment policies and must plan for the replacement of in-house examinations with Classroom-Based Assessments for students, where relevant.'*