



Senior Cycle Redevelopment (SCR)

A Guide for Parents & Guardians of 5th Year Students

The Leaving Certificate is changing. Over the coming years, the Department of Education, the NCCA and the State Examinations Commission (SEC) are redeveloping Senior Cycle subjects to reduce reliance on a single final exam and to give students more ways to show what they can do. This guide explains what that means for your son/daughter this year.

1. What is Senior Cycle Redevelopment?

Senior Cycle Redevelopment (SCR) is a national reform programme. New and revised Leaving Certificate subject specifications are being introduced in stages (“tranches”), with all subjects due to be revised by 2029. Each redeveloped subject includes an Additional Assessment Component (AAC) alongside the written exam.

Tranche 1	Already live in schools – Business, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. On their 2 nd cohort.
Tranche 2	Introduced from the 2026/27 school year – Geography, LC Physical Education, and Life Community and Work (formerly LCVP) On their 1 st cohort
By 2029	All Leaving Certificate subjects will have been revised under SCR.

2. What is an AAC (Additional Assessment Component)?

An AAC is a piece of assessment – for example a project, practical task, oral or other investigative piece of work – completed in school during 5th and/or 6th year. It is marked externally by the State Examinations Commission, not by the class teacher, and forms a compulsory part of the final grade in that subject.

Key points for parents

AACs are worth a significant share of the final grade in each redeveloped subject – typically at least 40%.

AACs are completed under teacher supervision, in class time, over an extended period – not as “homework” done alone at home.

Work is authenticated by the class teacher and Principal (Form P.2) before it is sent to the SEC.

If a student's work cannot be authenticated as their own, it cannot be submitted – so steady, visible progress matters.

3. Timeline: What Happens and When

The dates below show the general national pattern for a subject's AAC in the year it is introduced. Your child's teacher will confirm the exact dates for each of their subjects on the school's own AAC calendar.



Stage	When	What happens
Sample examination papers	April (school year before the new specification starts)	SEC publishes sample papers so teachers can see the new-style written exam ahead of teaching it.
Sample AAC brief	September of 5th year	NCCA/SEC issue a practice version of the Additional Assessment Component brief so students and teachers know the shape of the task.
Live AAC brief	January of 5th year (approx. 4 months later)	The official, marked brief for that year group is released. This is the task students will actually complete.
Coursework / AAC period	Set annually per subject (5th and/or 6th year)	Students work on the AAC in class time, under teacher supervision, with regular checkpoints.
Completion date & authentication	Set annually per subject	Teacher and Principal sign off (Form P.2) that the work is authentically the student's own before it is sent to the SEC.
Submission to the SEC	Set annually per subject	Completed AACs are submitted for external marking by the State Examinations Commission.

4. AI Use, Coursework and Academic Integrity

The SEC's Coursework Rules and Procedures apply to all AACs. The core rule is simple: all submitted work must be the student's own authentic, individual work.

What is and isn't allowed

Allowed: using AI or other digital tools to help understand a topic, generate ideas, organise research or improve clarity – provided the use is clearly documented and referenced, just like any other source.

Not allowed: using AI to generate the actual coursework content that is submitted for assessment. This is treated as a breach of the rules (in the same category as plagiarism or collusion).

Consequence of a breach: coursework may be referred to the SEC, not accepted for marking, awarded no marks, or in serious cases the student may be ineligible for a grade in that subject.

Because of this, teachers will build in regular checkpoints – seeing work-in-progress, discussing it with students, and keeping records – so they can honestly stand over the authentication of each student's AAC. Parents can help by encouraging steady, visible progress rather than work being left until the deadline.

5. What This Means for Your Child This Year

Timing	AAC work happens during normal class time across 5th (and sometimes 6th) year – it is not a separate exam sitting.
Records	Encourage your child to keep drafts, notes and evidence of their own progress – this supports the teacher's authentication process.
AI tools	Fine for research, ideas and understanding; not fine for generating the submitted work itself – and any use must be referenced.



Deadlines	Coursework completion dates are set annually by the SEC for each subject and communicated to students well in advance. However, each teacher will be setting their own earlier submission date (Usually a month in advance of the SEC date)
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