

When will Project Maths start?

Project Maths gets under way from September 2008. Initially a small number of participating schools will implement the first two changed strands, with support for a changed approach being provided to all mathematics teachers in these schools. The classroom resources provided will be evaluated and, if necessary, refined before the changed strands are implemented subsequently in all schools. It is expected that 24 schools will participate in the initial stage of the project and all students in first year and fifth year from these schools will study the changed strands of mathematics, with corresponding changes to the examination questions in the appropriate year (2010 at Leaving Certificate, 2011 at Junior Certificate). Additional strands will be introduced in subsequent years for the new first year and fifth year cohorts

How will participating schools be selected?

All schools are invited to indicate their interest in participating in the initial stage (a response form is provided for this). A representative sample of schools (school type, size, gender, regional distribution, etc.) will then be selected to implement the phased changes from September 2008. These schools will be contacted in May to confirm their participation.

What will participation involve?

The initial group of schools will introduce revised syllabus strands on a phased basis, beginning with the first year and fifth year classes in September 2008. All teachers of mathematics in the school will be supported in implementing and evaluating the changed syllabus strands. They will be provided with classroom resource materials and professional support from a Project Maths Support Team. The experience of these teachers and their students will enable the NCCA to learn as much as possible about the syllabus revisions and the teaching and learning resources, which will help to shape any refinements needed before these are scaled up to all schools.

Given the significance of the changes for the students, school management should ensure that students and their parents are informed about Project Maths and the impact of the changes on the teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics.

What about text books?

Students will continue to use current mathematics textbooks, supplemented by resource materials in the relevant strands. Publishers will be kept informed of the phased syllabus changes and they will make decisions about the timing of revised textbooks.

Project Maths and schools

While initially 24 schools will be involved from September 2008, all schools will implement the phased changes subsequently, with a two year gap in start-up. Information on Project Maths, including schedules and progress reports, will be available to all schools. Teachers of mathematics will receive professional support, including resource materials, prior to and during implementation of the syllabus changes. This support will begin in the school year 2009/2010.

Check the NCCA website www.ncca.ie/projectmaths for further information on Project Maths. The NCCA can also be contacted by phone at **01-6617177** and email at projectmaths@ncca.ie

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PROJECT MATHS

– information for schools

Following its review of post-primary mathematics education, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has prepared a strategy, Project Maths, for the phased implementation of syllabus change in mathematics over a four year period from September 2008. This change will see the current mathematics syllabuses at both junior cycle and senior cycle phased out and full replacement syllabuses in place for all schools by September 2012.

This leaflet gives a summary of Project Maths and invites schools to participate in the project from the start. An initial group of 24 schools will begin to implement the changes from September 2008, with roll-out to all schools starting in September 2010.

More detailed information on the project can be obtained on the NCCA website:
www.ncca.ie/projectmaths

About Project Maths

Project Maths represents a significant departure from the traditional process of curriculum and assessment change in Ireland. While it involves changes to what students learn in mathematics, how they learn it, and how they will be assessed, it differs from previous changes because schools are involved in the process

from the outset. Also, curriculum change takes place on a phased basis.

The NCCA course committees and board of studies for mathematics are preparing revisions to the mathematics syllabuses in order to

- provide greater coherence and progression between the mathematics experiences of students in primary school and in the post-primary junior cycle, and between junior cycle and senior cycle mathematics
- make mathematics more relevant to the lives and experiences of students and provide an appropriate mathematics education to meet the needs of all learners
- give greater emphasis to the understanding of mathematical concepts and the application of mathematical knowledge and skill
- encourage more students to study higher level mathematics; the intended targets are 60% at Junior Certificate and 30% at Leaving Certificate
- contribute to the development of higher order skills, including logical reasoning and problem solving
- ensure that there is closer alignment between how mathematics is taught and learned and how it is assessed
- engender an appreciation of the value of a good mathematics education to the present and future lives of students.

What are the phases involved in Project Maths?

In both junior cycle and senior cycle mathematics syllabuses, five strands of mathematics have been identified:

1. statistics and probability
2. geometry and trigonometry
3. number
4. algebra
5. functions

These strands follow on from the strands and strand units in mathematics in the primary school curriculum. In Project Maths, syllabus revisions will be undertaken in each strand and the changes will be introduced on a phased basis over three years. In the first year, revisions in strands 1 and 2 will be implemented, while the remaining areas of mathematics stay the same. In the following year, for the next cohort of students, two further strands will be changed and the final strand will be introduced in the third phase. The changes will take place from the start of each programme (Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate).

As part of Project Maths, a bridging framework in mathematics is being developed that links mathematics in the primary school curriculum with that in the post-primary junior cycle, with a particular focus on first year. A common

course in mathematics is being prepared that all first year students will undertake, before they choose what syllabus level to follow subsequently. The revised syllabuses in Junior Certificate mathematics will be at two levels only; however, a foundation level examination will initially continue to be provided. This situation will be reviewed as part of Project Maths to determine whether two examination levels at Junior Certificate can meet the needs of all students, given the intended uptake targets. At Leaving Certificate, three syllabus levels and three corresponding examination levels will continue to be provided.

What about the examinations?

As part of the syllabus revisions, changes to examination questions will also be implemented on a phased basis, in the strands that are being revised. Thus, for example, the students in the pilot schools will see changed questions in statistics and probability (strand 1), and in geometry and trigonometry (strand 2) when they sit their examinations (in 2010 at Leaving Certificate and 2011 at Junior Certificate).

When all the strands have been implemented, an overview will be taken of the structure and format of the examination papers at both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate to see whether any overall changes are desirable or necessary.