

Dear Ciarán,

Thank for your email of May 6<sup>th</sup> and for copying me on the letter to Minister Foley which set out findings from a survey with the members of the Irish Mathematics Teachers' Association.

In light of your correspondence focusing on the *Junior Cycle Mathematics Specification*, I want to draw your attention to the ongoing longitudinal study which NCCA is funding on the implementation and impact of the introduction of the *Framework for Junior Cycle* in schools. The study was commissioned following an agreement between the Department of Education and education stakeholders that monitoring of the introduction and implementation of the *Framework for Junior Cycle* would be supported by a study that would consider the overall impact on teaching and learning experiences and student outcomes and would provide a basis for making proposals for change where these are merited.

Following a competitive tender process in 2020, a Research Team from the School of Education at the University of Limerick was commissioned by NCCA to carry out this mixed methods, multi-dimensional research study. The Team is led by Prof Oliver McGarr (Project Director) and Drs Orla McCormack and John O'Reilly (Project Co-Directors) with Prof Merrilyn Goos, a world renowned researcher, contributing as expert advisor.

The study has three guiding principles:

- Independence: the research is conducted by independent researchers with a moral commitment to freedom of scholarly inquiry and debate.
- Voice: the research seeks to give voice to teachers, students, and school communities, including parents.
- Responsiveness and sensitivity to context: drawing on experiences of working with schools, the research team will respond to the needs and changing circumstances of schools.

There are three dimensions to the study:

- **Dimension one** consists of interviews with representatives of stakeholder bodies and agencies.
- **Dimension two** explores curriculum planning, teaching, learning, assessment and reporting practices in a representative sample of 100 schools, via structured interviews with school principals and an online teacher survey in years two and three of the study.
- **Dimension three** consists of case studies of 12 schools, via site visits in years two and four of the study.

Every academic researcher has to have their research methodology and process approved by a university wide research ethics committee. This was the case here with the longitudinal study and as such, the research team are held to the highest ethical standards in terms of the rigour of data collection and analysis.

The research team will publish interim thematic reports at key points during the study which runs from 2020 to 2024. Findings from this research will inform NCCA's ongoing work with the Board for Junior Cycle and Council to support schools' implementation of the *Framework for Junior Cycle*. You can find out more about the study [here](#) and if you have any questions about the research, you can email: [JCFStudy@ul.ie](mailto:JCFStudy@ul.ie).

I hope this information is helpful and I look forward to continuing to work with the IMTA on developments related to mathematics education in junior cycle.

With kind regards,  
Prof Mary O'Sullivan

Interim Chairperson