

**Subject:****NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM: 1996 SUBJECT ORDERS FOR KEY STAGES 3 AND 4.****Circular Number:**

1996/21

**Date of Issue:**

29 July 1996

**Target Audience:**

- Principals, Teachers and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools;
- Education and Library Boards;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; and
- Other Educational Bodies..

**Summary of Contents:**

This Circular is issued to advise that the Department has made Orders for all the compulsory contributory subjects, and a number of non-compulsory subjects, of the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

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**Governor Awareness:**

Essential

**Status of Contents:**

Advice  
Information for Schools

**Related Documents:**

1996 Subject Orders

**Superseded Documents:**

All previous Orders relating to the compulsory contributory subjects of the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4.

**Expiry Date:**

Not applicable

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## **Introduction**

1. In February 1996, following a review of the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 by the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), the Minister announced his approval of revised programmes of study and attainment targets.
2. Accordingly, the Department, in accordance with Article 7 of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (the 1989 Order), which places a duty on the Department to set in place by statutory Order programmes of study and attainment targets for the compulsory contributory subjects, has made Orders for all the compulsory contributory subjects, and a number of non-compulsory subjects, of the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4.
3. All previous Orders relating to the compulsory contributory subjects of the curriculum at key stages 3 and 4 have been revoked.

## **Commencement**

4. The provisions of the Orders relating to the Key Stages 3 and 4 will come into operation as follows:-

**AT KEY STAGE 3:** all Orders will come into effect for all years of the key stage on 1 September 1996;

**AT KEY STAGE 4:** all Orders will come into effect;  
on 1 September 1996 for the first year of the key stage; and  
on 1 September 1997 for the second year of the key stage.

The phased introduction at Key Stage 4 is to allow pupils who have commenced a course of study which does not conform to the relevant programme of study to complete the course.

## **Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets**

5. The Orders specify programmes of study and attainment targets for subjects as shown in the table below. The subjects are grouped by area of study: those printed in normal text are compulsory subjects: those in italics are non-compulsory subjects for which a programme of study is specified.

If a pupil opts to take a non-compulsory subject at either key stage 3 or 4, or more than one of the optional compulsory subjects in the Environment and Society area of study at key stage 4, then the specified programme of study must be followed in each case.

Where a subject is compulsory at both Key Stage 3 and 4, a single Order covers both.

**AT KEY STAGE 3:**

English

Mathematics

Science, Technology and Design

History, Geography, *Home Economics*

Physical Education, Art and Design, Music

Modern Languages

**AT KEY STAGE 4:**

English

Mathematics

Science

History or Geography or Business Studies or Home Economics or Economics or Political Studies or Social and Environmental Studies

Physical Education, *Art and Design, Music, Drama*

Modern Languages

6. The Orders specify that the programmes of study are those set out in a number of Documents published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. These Documents largely take the form of replacement inserts for subject binders already held by schools. The exceptions are the 3 subjects Economics, Political Studies, Social and Environmental Studies, for which no binders were previously issued - the programmes are therefore bound together in a single Document.

A list of the Orders made and the corresponding Documents published is attached as an Annex to this Circular.

**Level Descriptions**

7. Level descriptions replace, at Key Stage 3, the levels of attainment previously contained in programmes of study and attainment targets as the basis of assessment. No level descriptions are provided at Key Stage 4. With the exceptions set out in paragraph 8 below, the level descriptions related to the attainment targets described in the documents are specified in relation to the Key Stage 3 at levels 1-8.

8. As the subjects in the Creative and Expressive area of study - Physical Education, Art and Design, Music and Drama - at both key stages, together with Home Economics at Key Stage 3 and Technology and Design at Key Stage 4, are not to be the subject of compulsory assessment, the level descriptions contained in the Documents specified for these subjects at these key stages are included for the guidance of teachers only.

9. The Orders provide that those contents of the Documents which are printed in italics or not printed on a tinted background do not form part of the statutory provisions.

10. Copies of the Orders and of the Documents may be obtained from HMSO, 16 Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GD.

**11. THE COPIES OF THE DOCUMENTS SUPPLIED FREE OF CHARGE TO SCHOOLS REMAIN THE PROPERTY OF SCHOOLS AND NOT THE PERSONS TO WHOM THEY MAKE THEM AVAILABLE.**

**P LOWRY**  
Curriculum Branch

## ANNEX

The Orders made and the Documents they specify are listed below by area of study.

### **AREA OF STUDY: ENGLISH**

Curriculum (Programme of Study and Attainment Targets in **English** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programme of Study and Attainment Targets, English (ISBN 0 337 04293 4)

### **AREA OF STUDY: MATHEMATICS**

Curriculum (Programme of Study and Attainment Targets in **Mathematics** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programme of Study and Attainment Targets, Mathematics (ISBN 0 337 04294 2)

### **AREA OF STUDY: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets in **Science** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets, Science (ISBN 0 337 04295 0)

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Target in **Technology and Design** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996.

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Target, Technology and Design (ISBN 0 337 04302 7)

### **AREA OF STUDY: THE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY**

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Target in **History** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Target, History (ISBN 0 337 04297 7)

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Target in **Geography** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Target, Geography (ISBN 0 337 04298 5)

Curriculum (Programmes of Study in **Business Studies** at Key Stage 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stage 4, Programme of Study, Business Studies (ISBN 0 337 04305 1)

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Target in **Home Economics** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996.

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Target, Home Economics (ISBN 0 337 04303 5)

Curriculum (Programmes of Study in **Economics, Political Studies** and **Social and Environmental Studies** at Key Stage 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stage 4, Programmes of Study, Economics, Political Studies and Social and Environmental Studies (ISBN 0 337 04306 X)

### **AREA OF STUDY: CREATIVE AND EXPRESSIVE STUDIES**

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets in **Physical Education** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets, Physical Education (ISBN 0 337 04299 3)

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Targets in **Art and Design** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Target, Art and Design (ISBN 0 337 04300 0)

Curriculum (Programmes of Study and Attainment Target in **Music** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programmes of Study and Attainment Target, Music (ISBN 0 337 04301 0)

Curriculum (Programme of Study in **Drama** at Key Stage 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stage 4, Programme of Study, Drama (ISBN 0 337 04304 3)

### **AREA OF STUDY: LANGUAGE STUDIES**

Curriculum (Programme of Study and Attainment Targets in **Modern Languages** at Key Stages 3 and 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 1996

Key Stages 3 and 4, Programme of Study and Attainment Targets, Modern Languages (French German Italian Spanish and Irish) (ISBN 0 337 04296 9)