

School Guidance Compliance Return

Explanatory Notes and a sample response to support completion of the compliance return

Overview

The aim of this document is to support schools in responding to the compliance return issued by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). NCGE has provided the list of questions to be asked in the compliance return in advance of the DES online questionnaire being available. This is to support schools in planning their responses to the compliance return prior to completing the online questionnaire. Please note that it is necessary to complete the online questionnaire in one sitting i.e. it is not possible to save and complete the compliance return at a later date. It is expected that the online questionnaire will be available from mid-June onwards. The closing date for submission of responses is the 26th October, 2017.

Definitions

The following definitions may support completion of the compliance return.

Guidance in schools:

“refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, that assist students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked, areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance”.

(Department of Education and Science; 2005, pg. 4).

Counselling offered within a guidance context:

“is a key part of the school guidance programme, offered on an individual or group basis as part of a developmental learning process and at moments of personal crisis. Counselling has as its objective the empowerment of students so that they can make decisions, solve problems, address behavioural issues, develop coping strategies and resolve difficulties they may be experiencing. Counselling in schools may include personal counselling, educational counselling, career counselling or combinations of these”.

(Department of Education and Science, 2005; pg. 4).

Guidance Activities

The work of the guidance counsellor includes the following activities (DES, 2016; pg. 8):

- *Designing, delivering and evaluating guidance learning and developmental programmes relating to personal and social, educational and career development for individual, group and classroom settings*
- *Developing effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies for the guidance class*
- *Providing individual and group counselling to facilitate personal and social, educational and career development and at moments of personal crisis*
- *Providing labour market, learning and career-related information through Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and blended learning approaches*
- *Planning and organising workplace learning and establishing links with the wider business community, agencies and voluntary sector*
- *Using psychometric tests (i.e. ability and aptitude tests and career interest inventories) to facilitate career decision-making and personal development, and to support learning and educational choices*

- *Providing support to, and working in collaboration with, school and ETB management and staff in the planning, leading, delivery, review and evaluation of the guidance service/programme and the whole school guidance plan*
- *Working with parents (as appropriate) and referral agencies in facilitating the personal and social, educational and career development of students and service users*
- *Referring students and service users to external agencies and professionals, as appropriate*
- *Establishing close ties with feeder schools, where appropriate, and with centres of further education and training and higher education.*

Whole School Guidance

Members of school management and staff may be involved in the planning/delivery of the above activities according to the specialist knowledge, skills and competences that they may have e.g. the learning support teacher/special educational needs coordinator (SEN) due to training undertaken in psychometric testing may have a role in supporting the guidance counsellor in the administration of psychometric tests (please refer to Circular Letter 0035/2017 http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0035_2017.pdf for more information on the administration of psychometric tests in schools). Such involvement of other members of school staff in the planning and delivery of guidance activities is part of a whole school approach to guidance.

Providing students with 'Access' to 'Appropriate Guidance' is a requirement of The 1998 Education Act. The DES defines 'Appropriate Guidance' as "...the whole school's response to meeting the guidance needs of all its students" (DES, 2005; pg. 4). A whole school's response is defined as involving the guidance counsellor in the first instance and all other relevant members of school management and staff (see the DES 2005 Guidelines for more information - https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/m37_03.pdf).

The Whole School Guidance Plan

NCGE (2004) defines the Whole School Guidance Plan as "... the document in which the school, in a systematic way, defines the guidance programme it offers, and states how resources are organised to deliver the programme." (NCGE, 2004: pg. 8).

The DES (2005) Guidelines state that schools should "...develop a comprehensive guidance plan as part of their overall school development plan, taking into account the needs of students, available resources and contextual factors" (DES, 2005; pg. 4). The guidance plan is described by DES as:

- setting out the learning experiences and activities of the guidance programme
- reflecting the needs of both Junior and Senior Cycle students
- achieving a balance in the provision of personal/social, educational and career guidance offered to students.

DES CL 0010/2017 provides information on the whole school guidance plan http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0010_2017.pdf

For more information on whole school guidance planning please refer to the NCGE (2004) publication *Planning the School Guidance Programme* – http://www.ncge.ie/uploads/PI_Sch_Gui_prog_leaf.pdf and the DES website <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Post-Primary-School-Policies/Policies/Guidance-Plan.html>.

A Sample Response by NCGE to Support Completion of Compliance Return

Please note that this is a worked example to highlight how individual questions may be addressed and to provide clarity re the information requested by individual questions. It is not intended to be a definitive response.

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Q 1. Please provide information about the completion of this survey

This relates to the person completing the online questionnaire. It is recommended that the response is planned and discussed in advance of the completion date by school management and the guidance counsellor.

I am	Please tick (one only)
The Principal	✓
Deputy Principal	
Chairperson of the Board of Management	
Guidance Counsellor	
Other	

Q 2. Please tell us a little about your school:

School enrolment 2015-16 880

School enrolment 2016-17 886

DEIS **NO**

SECTION 2

Q 3. **The Guidance Plan**

A School Guidance Plan provides an essential framework for delivery of the school's guidance programme. Successful planning ensures a structured response to the educational, vocational and personal/social needs of the students. [Please refer to information presented above on whole school guidance planning \(page 2\).](#)

a) Do you have a whole-school guidance plan? **YES**

b) Does your whole-school Guidance Plan have the following contents?

	Yes	No
Aims of school guidance programme	✓	
Description of current guidance provision	✓	
Outline of current guidance programme	✓	
A description of resources for Guidance, including information on the curriculum areas and teachers involved in the delivery of whole-school guidance	✓	
A list of the school's guidance priorities	✓	
An action plan related to those guidance priorities	✓	

Procedures for monitoring and evaluation of the guidance programme	√	
Drafts of relevant policies	√	
Other		√

Q 4. Oversight Role by Board of Management

- a) Has the BOM reviewed and approved the Guidance Plan? **YES**
- b) If yes, when was the plan reviewed and approved? **2013**
- c) If not, when was the last review of the Guidance Plan? **2016/2015/2014/2013/2012/earlier (school review of the plan) – NA in this instance as YES to part a.**

Q 5. As part of the Board’s oversight role the Board approved the allocation of resources for Guidance – 2016/17 school year:

- a) What was the total allocation (hours per week) in 2016/17 by your school for **whole-school guidance**? See above for an explanation of whole school guidance. Whole school guidance includes members of school management and staff involved in the planning and delivery of the whole school guidance programme i.e. a whole school’s response to meeting the guidance needs of students. Please refer to the whole school guidance plan when making your response. For instance, you could include the following members of school staff (if the programmes are on offer in your school) in your response: SPHE (number of hours per week offered to Junior Cycle students), year heads & class tutors (time with students per week), LCVP link modules (if LCVP offered by the school – number of hours delivered by a teacher), work experience coordinator etc. This list is not exhaustive.

32 hours

- b) How many of these hours were allocated specifically to the **Guidance counsellor(s) Hrs Mins**

Note: 18 hours is indicated on the basis of the recommendation of DES CL 0001/2016 that guidance is supported through the additional 0.3 improvement in the PTR
<http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2016/01.pdf> (page 1 & 2).

18 hours (guidance counsellor hours only)

- c) Was the full staffing allocation specifically provided for Guidance in Circular 01/2016; 02/2016 and 03/2016 (as relevant) allocated to guidance in the school year 2016-2017? **YES**
- d) Was any of the guidance allocated used for non-guidance purposes? **NO**
Please specify amount HRS: MINS
Please outline the purpose of allocating guidance hours for non-guidance activities?

Q 6. As part of the Board’s oversight role the Board approves the allocation of resources for Guidance - 2017/18 school year:

- a) What is the total allocation (hours per week) in 2017/18 by your school for **whole-school guidance**?

Note: refer to CL 0010/2017 for further improvement in the PTR (0.1)
http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0010_2017.pdf

33 hours (as per Q5a above – 1 additional hour due to improvement in PTR)

- b) How many of these hours are allocated specifically to the **Guidance counsellor Hrs Mins**
22 hours (guidance counsellor hours only – increase due to 0.1 improvement in the PTR)
- c) Has the full staffing allocation specifically provided for Guidance in Circular 10/2017; 11/2017 and 12/2017 (as relevant) been allocated to guidance in the school year 2017-2018? **YES**
- d) Will any of the guidance allocation been used for non-guidance purposes? **NO**
 Please specify amount **Hrs Mins**
 Please outline the purpose of allocating guidance hours for non-guidance activities?

Q 7. Whole-School Guidance

- a) The key to effective Guidance is a whole-school, collaborative approach. Who was involved in delivering aspects of the **whole-school guidance programme** in 2016/17?
Note: 0.5 indicated below = 30 minutes

	Level of involvement (estimated average) in hours per week (Refer to your answer to Q5a above)		
	Yes	No	
Principal/Deputy principal	✓		2.5
Guidance Counsellor	✓		18
Student Support team	✓		4.5
Learning Support Teacher/SEN Co-ordinator	✓		0.5
Home/School/Community Teacher		✓	
Year Heads	✓		1
Class teacher/tutor	✓		1
School Chaplain		✓	
Other teachers	✓		3
Externally contracted counsellor		✓	
Guest speakers/presenters	✓		0.5
Other	✓		1

- Q7 b)** Please estimate the average number of hours **per week** devoted to guidance for each of Junior Cycle, Senior Cycle and other (for example PLC). This will include all those involved in **whole-school guidance**, **including** the work of the Guidance Counsellor. Refer to question 5a above.

<i>As per SAMPLE answer to question 5a: 32 hours</i>	Hours
Junior Cycle	10
Senior Cycle (including TY)	22
Other (eg. PLC)	-

Q 8. JUNIOR CYCLE AND SENIOR CYCLE: WHOLE-SCHOOL GUIDANCE

Junior Cycle

- (a) Of the total time that was allocated for guidance to Junior Cycle, please estimate the average percentage of time per week devoted to each category of guidance practice indicated in the table below.

This includes all those involved in whole-school guidance, including the work of the Guidance Counsellor(s). Refer to question 7b (note: for the purposes of this question JC total hours indicated above i.e. 10 hours should be taken as 100%).

<i>As per SAMPLE answer to question 7b</i>	%	Hrs (out of a total of 10 hours)
Total given for JC will equal 100% i.e. as SAMPLE answer gave 10 hours – this represents 100%		
Personal & Social (including personal counselling)	63	6.3
Educational	22	2.2
Career	15	1.5

Senior Cycle

- (b) Of the total time that was allocated for guidance to Senior Cycle, please estimate the average percentage of time per week devoted to each category of guidance practice indicated in the table below.

This includes all those involved in whole-school guidance, including the work of the Guidance Counsellor(s). Refer to question 7b (note: for the purposes of this question SC total hours indicated above i.e. 22 hours should be taken as 100%).

<i>As per SAMPLE Answer to question 7b: total given for SC will equal 100% i.e. as above 22 hours represents 100%</i>	%	Hrs (out of a total of 22 hours)
Personal & Social (including personal counselling)	55	12.1
Educational	18	3.9
Career	27	5.9

Q9. JUNIOR CYCLE AND SENIOR CYCLE: GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR HOURS

- (a) Please estimate the average percentage of time per week allocated specifically to the Guidance Counsellor(s) used for the following guidance activities in Junior Cycle (refer to your response to question 5b for guidance counsellor hours). Please note part b to this question. Percentage of total time for both Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle should add up to 100% (unless the school offers PLC programmes).

As per SAMPLE answer given to question 5b: 18 hours (specific to guidance counsellors)

For the purposes of this sample answer guidance counsellor time for JC is estimated as 30% of the 18 hours. Information for SC is asked for in question 9b. Therefore, 70% of these 18 hours will be indicated for SC in question 9b.

Cycle	Total % of time should take account of % of time indicated in 9b	Area of guidance	Refer to the % of time indicated for Junior Cycle when providing %s below	Individual/group	Refer to % of time provided for Junior Cycle when providing %s below
Junior Cycle (JC)	% of time: 30%	Personal & Social (includes personal counselling)	% of time: 16	Individual	% of time: 7
		Educational	% of time: 9		
		Career	% of time: 5	Group	% of time: 23
			Note: Total of %s above should add up to the total % indicated for JC		

- (b) Please estimate the average percentage of time per week **allocated specifically to the Guidance Counsellor(s)** used for the following guidance activities in **Senior Cycle (refer to your response to question 5b for guidance counsellor hours)**. Please note your response to **part a** of this question. Percentage of total time for both Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle should add up to 100% (unless the school offers PLC programmes).

Answer given to question 5b above: 18 hours (specific to guidance counsellors)

For the purposes of this sample answer guidance counsellor time for SC is estimated as 70% of the 18 hours.

Cycle	Total % of time should take account of % of time indicated in 9a	Area of guidance	Refer to the % of time indicated for Senior Cycle when providing %s below	Individual/group	Refer to % of time provided for Senior Cycle when providing %s below
Senior Cycle (SC)	% of time: 70%	Personal & Social (includes personal counselling)	% of time: 32	Individual	% of time: 43
		Educational	% of time: 16		
		Career	% of time: 22	Group	% of time: 27
			Note: Total of %s above should add up to the total % indicated for SC		

(c) Junior Cycle: One-to-One meetings with students

Please indicate the three main areas that students presented with for 1-1 meetings with the guidance counsellor (for example, personal distress, self-awareness, managing transition to post-primary)

These are not in order of numbers presenting – just the three main areas

Area	
1	Exam stress and preparation
2	Transitions – 1 st year, SC
3	bullying

(d) Senior Cycle: One-to-One meetings with students

Please indicate the three main areas that students presented with for 1-1 meetings with the guidance counsellor (for example, personal distress; self-awareness; managing transition to senior cycle)

These are not in order of numbers presenting – just the three main areas

Area	
1	Subject choice
2	Progression – career options
3	Confidence and self-esteem

SECTION 3

Q 10 The work of the Guidance Counsellor(s)

a) How many teachers were designated as Guidance Counsellors in the school in 2016/17 (refer to question 5b)?

1 teacher

b) Does the Guidance Counsellor(s) have a professional qualification in Guidance Counselling?

YES – note the list of qualifications can be sourced from <http://www.ncge.ie/research/become-a-guidance-counsellor/>

c) Has the Guidance Counsellor(s) attended CPD provided by NCGE in the last 5 years? YES

d) Has the Guidance Counsellor(s) attended CPD provided by IGC in the last 5 years? YES

e) Has the Guidance Counsellor(s) attended the DES-funded Guidance Supervision Programme? YES

How many sessions were attended in 2016-2017? (Select one only)

1		2		3		4	✓	5	
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f) Has the Guidance Counsellor(s) attended any peer support/networking events in 2016/17?

(e.g. attendance at IGC branch meetings) YES

How many such events were attended in 2016/2017? 2

Has this attendance been authorised by the school? YES

Q 11. Please estimate the **average number of hours per week** allocated to the **Guidance Counsellor** and used for the following guidance-related activities:

Note: hours indicated may include hours indicated for question 5b i.e. in this worked example 18 hours are allocated to the guidance counsellor (the hours below may be accounted for/implied in the response to question 9 e.g. standardised test administration applies to both Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle). Hours below may also be in addition to the 18 hours rather than from within the hours.

a) Time spent networking / Liaising with Third Parties

	Hours
Networking and establishing links with the local business community, education providers, etc	30 minutes
Collaborative work and consultation with external agencies e.g. referral, information; NEPS	1 hour
Attendance with students at careers exhibitions/open days	30 minutes
Standardised test administration	1 hour
Liaising with former students	20 minutes
Liaising with parents: presentation evenings, meetings, phone calls	1 hour

b) Time spent on Administration

	Hours
Attendance at meetings related to whole-school guidance	30 minutes
Time spent on Guidance Plan	35 minutes
General administration, office work, filing etc.	1 hour 30 minutes

Q 12 REFERRALS TO OTHER SERVICES.

Please tell us about the level of referrals to external agencies and/or support agencies made **in the school year 2016/17 to date** following one-to-one support provided by the Guidance Counsellor (**Please calculate this as a % of the total number of students seen for one-to-one support**)

Refer to response to question 9.

In the worked example above 7% of students in Junior Cycle were seen for one-to-one support

In the worked example above 43% of students in Senior Cycle were seen for one-to-one support

50% of students were seen for one-to-one support – not all students required referrals to other services

Service	%
Duty Social Worker	4%
Garda Liaison Officer	
CAMHS	

NEPS	8%
NCSE	
Tusla	4%
NBSS	2%
Disability Services	1%
Counselling/Psychotherapy Services	10%
Other	