



**Circular Number: 0030/2025**

## **Cost Limits for Primary and Post-primary School Buildings**

### **Introduction**

The Planning and Building Unit of the Department of Education has kept under review the movements of Primary and Post-primary School building costs since the Basic Building Cost (BBC) was last increased in June 2022. As a result, it has been decided that the Cost Limits shown below will apply from 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

In the three-year period since the last BBC increase was calculated, construction costs have continued to rise at a pace considerably higher than standard inflation. The construction industry inflation as calculated by the SCSI (Tender Price Index) over this period equates to 18.1%. This is an average figure across the commercial building sector and is based predominantly on new-build projects with values in excess of €0.5m.

The BBC increase of 21.6% is trending marginally higher than the reported commercial increase over the same period. This can be attributed to the difference associated with pricing public works contracts (with greater risk transfer, contract administration and higher preliminaries) when compared to the commercial sector.

The revised Cost Limits apply to Employer Design school projects and allow for changes in market conditions since June 2022.

### **Cost Limits**

**1. "Basic Building Cost Limit" to a maximum of € 2,420 per m<sup>2</sup> of Floor Area.**

This cost is intended to include:

- 1.1 The building and substructures;
- 1.2 The proportion of Preliminaries and Insurances allocated to the above;
- 1.3 Value Added Tax.

Where the Schedule of Accommodation includes a P.E. Hall an addition of 30% to the Basic Building Cost Limit shall apply to the Hall area plus the associated ancillary accommodation (changing rooms, etc.). This addition is to allow for the additional costs associated with the provision of a Sports Hall including the heavier structure, sports floor to the playing area and a minimum 7.2 m clear height to the playing area. The additional allowance shall apply whether the Hall and ancillary accommodation comprises a stand-alone building or is part of a larger building or extension.



2. **"External Works Allowance" (EWA)** to a maximum of 12.5% of the Basic Building Cost (excluding the 30% P.E. Hall allowance), as determined by the actual Cost Plan / Cost Analysis Unit Cost, and is intended to include:
- 2.1 All work included in the National Building Elements, (-0) Site series, viz - 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 and 80. Work to boundaries and entrances, including bus lay-bys, etc., if required, are particular to each individual project and should be included under "Abnormal Costs".
  - 2.2 The proportion of Preliminaries and Insurances allocated to the above;
  - 2.3 Value Added Tax.

### "Abnormal Costs"

The BBC and EWA are deemed to cover the cost of the project. If the Design Team consider that costs in excess of the BBC and EWA are involved, they should be submitted to the Building Unit for a decision on whether they are eligible for inclusion in the project as ABNORMAL COSTS (refer to Design Team Procedures 2012 and associated Practice Notes).

### Refurbishment Works in Existing Buildings

Where refurbishment work in existing buildings forms part of the brief, these works should not be included under "Abnormal Costs" but instead shall be costed and included separately in the Cost Plan and the floor area affected by these works stated.

### Notes

1. The Cost Limits apply to all Post Primary Schools.
2. It should be noted that the Basic Building Cost and External Works Allowance are MAXIMUM amounts and that all Elements of the project must represent a proper value-for-money evaluation
3. For extension projects the External Works Allowance is generally under 10% of the Basic Building Cost.
4. When applying the Cost Limits, it should be noted that the Basic Building Cost and the External Works Allowance are two distinct Cost Limits. They should not be added together to form an overall cost limit in the process of Cost Planning or the Analysis of Tenders.
5. The inclusion of rainwater recovery is decided on a project by project basis and, when approved for inclusion, should be scheduled as an Abnormal Cost.
6. The inclusion of Surface Water Attenuation is also decided on a project by project basis and, when approved for inclusion, should be scheduled as an Abnormal Cost.



7. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Public Works Contracts specifically exclude the use of contingencies in building contracts. Consequently the Design Team must ensure that appropriate cost provision is made for design development throughout the design stages of a project and that the works are fully designed and detailed before going to tender.
8. All Drainage beneath the Building Ground Floor slab and all Services (Piped and Ducted) to the Building point-of entry should be included, where appropriate, in Elements (50) and (60) of the External Works Allowance.
9. The following items are part of either built-in Furniture or Equipment costs and consequently are excluded from the Basic Building Cost limit:
  - 13.1 Joinery fittings and furniture;
  - 13.2 Blackboards, notice boards and pin boards;
  - 13.3 Shelving;
  - 13.4 Curtains and blinds;
  - 13.5 Cloakroom fittings and lockers;
  - 13.6 Sanitary fittings, traps, taps and other fittings which are part of 13.1 above;
  - 13.7 Equipment.

*[Note: For information regarding which of the above are included in the building contract and which are outside the building contract and part of loose furniture and equipment, see relevant Design Guidelines on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) ]*
10. Supplies, services and wastes to built-in furniture and equipment **are included** in the Basic Building Cost Limit and/or External Works Allowance.
11. The Building Unit's Outline Cost Plan Template and Detailed Cost Plan / Tender Analysis Template documents (see website) should be used in all submissions, and **they should be fully completed in respect of all Data and Specification notes.**

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April 2025