

LEAVING CERTIFICATE CANDIDATE INFORMATION GUIDE 2021

JUNE 2021 - PREPARING FOR EXAMINATIONS



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

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1. Introduction

The 2021 Leaving Certificate comprises both examinations and Accredited Grades. Candidates have been able to opt to sit their examinations, to receive Accredited Grades, or both on a subject-by-subject basis. Candidates finalised their choices through the Candidate Self Service Portal in early May.

The majority of candidates in both the Leaving Certificate (established and Vocational) and the Leaving Certificate Applied have confirmed their intention to sit examinations this year. From the latest information available to the State Examinations Commission (SEC), 90% of all candidates have indicated their intention to sit examinations in one or more subjects with almost 40,000 indicating their intention to present in 5 or more subjects.

The purpose of this Guide is to provide you with further information about the 2021 Leaving Certificate with a focus on the examinations.

This Candidate Information Guide provides important information about what you should expect during the examinations including the Public Health measures that are being taken to keep you safe and how you should manage yourself over the course of the examinations. We are also providing some updated Accredited Grade information that we hope is of assistance. Information is also provided about the examinations marking process; when and how you will receive your results; and some preliminary details about the stages that follow after the issue of the results – including the information that will be provided to you about your examination results and your Accredited Grades; the viewing of marked examination script; and the Appeals processes that you will have access to. A further guide to the results and the post-results stages will be provided at the time of issue of the results noting that the results are expected to issue through the Candidate Self Service Portal on Friday 3 September.

Information on the 2021 Leaving Certificate – Examinations and Accredited Grades- is available on www.gov.ie/LeavingCertificate which will be updated from time to time.

The SEC works in very close cooperation with school authorities throughout the year and especially over the course of the summer examinations. If you have any concerns during the examinations, your first point of contact should be with your school. You will find information about the services provided by the SEC on our website www.examinations.ie. Our general email address is info@examinations.ie and our general phone number is: 090-6442700.

The SEC may contact you by text, email or phone using the contact details you registered on the Candidate Self Service Portal. Emails from the SEC will issue from stateexamscommission@phonovation.com or from other e-mail addresses ending in @examinations.ie. SMS text message from SEC will issue from State Exams

We sincerely hope that those of you who have indicated your intention to sit the examinations will continue with your plans and sit the examinations for which you have been preparing. We at the SEC would like to wish you the very best of luck with your forthcoming examinations.

2. The Examinations Timetable

When do the examinations start and end?

The written Leaving Certificate examinations start on Wednesday 9 June. Leaving Certificate Applied examinations finish on Thursday 17 June while the last examinations in the Leaving Certificate (established) are Tuesday 29 June 2021. The official examination timetables for 2021 are available on www.examinations.ie and are presented on the inside covers of this Guide.

Will I have to take more than two examinations in one day?

There is a possibility that you may, because of your particular subject choices, have to sit more than two examinations in one day. For reasons of candidate wellbeing, since 2019, the Leaving Certificate written examination timetable was extended from 13 days to 15 days. The extended timetable is designed to alleviate pressure on candidates by eliminating subject clashes as much as possible. There has been a very particular focus on ensuring that there is only

a minimal chance that a candidate will have to take three examinations on one day. However, not all clashes have been eliminated and a small number of candidates may have this experience.

3. COVID-19 and the Examinations

Will I be able to sit my examinations if I have COVID-19 or have any symptoms or I have been advised I am a close contact?

No. In all circumstances, Public Health considerations must take precedence over examinations attendance.

You must not present for your examinations if you:

- are diagnosed with COVID-19.
- are unwell and have any of the symptoms of COVID-19.
- develop COVID-19 symptoms at any stage over the course of the examinations.
- are self-isolating or have been instructed to self-isolate.
- are quarantining or otherwise restricting your movements.
- are a close contact of a confirmed case.

In any of these circumstances, you must not attend the examinations. You will be expected to follow all Public Health directions and to only undertake your examinations when it is safe for you to do so. You should familiarise yourself with the latest HSE information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, close contacts, the length of time you will need to self-isolate or restrict movements if you come into contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, etc. Information, which is updated as required, is available from the **Parents and Carers Section** on the following HSE webpage <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>. NOTE: This is provided for information only and is not a substitute for medical advice.

What can I do to ensure I get the opportunity to sit my examinations?

While the country is starting to open up, the actions of all involved in minimising the opportunity for COVID-19 to spread will be instrumental in ensuring that you can be provided with the opportunity to take their examinations in June. The key messages for school staff, candidates, their families and the wider community, which are relevant until the end of the examinations on 29 June, are as follows:

- Continue to follow the basic Public Health advice in relation to social distancing, handwashing/sanitising, respiratory etiquette, and the wearing of face coverings.
- Stay within your normal pod, such as your class or family pod.
- When the examinations commence, you should stay within your examination centre pod. This includes before, between and after examinations.
- Limit interactions with others even in outdoor settings and avoid gatherings that present risks of COVID-19.
- Do not get together with other candidates in study groups in advance of, or over the course of, the examinations.
- Follow the advice about the signs or symptoms of COVID-19; if you or anyone in your household shows signs or symptoms, isolate and contact your GP for testing, and household members should restrict their movements until the results are known.
- We are also asking candidates who have not opted to sit any examinations (and who may have finished school earlier as a result) to be mindful of their friends who intend to sit the examinations.

You should take personal responsibility for your own health to ensure that you have the opportunity to take your examinations. If you act without due care, it could mean that you or your friends do not get to sit their examinations due to COVID-19. In line with Public Health advice, limit your interactions with others in the run up to and over the course of your examinations. There will be no alternative sittings of the examinations in 2021.

The Chief Medical Officer Dr Tony Holohan has recorded a video message for Leaving Certificate candidates to encourage them to stay safe and look out for each other in the run-up to the exams. You can watch this video at <https://youtu.be/JnOGBT0C3Fg>

What arrangements have been made to ensure the examinations can be as safe as possible?

There has been detailed engagement with the Public Health authorities in planning for the delivery and conduct of all aspects of 2021 Leaving Certificate examinations, including the written examinations. The arrangements are focussed on delivering the 2021 Leaving Certificate while managing the risks of the spread of COVID-19. These are built around basic Public Health principles for infection prevention and control and the Public Health measures already in practice in post-primary schools.

There will be particular attention to cleaning and sanitation of all room surfaces and any equipment used (e.g. CD players, etc.) before and after. There will be attention by all parties to respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene to reduce the risk of transmission. All rooms must be adequately ventilated even when taking account of the need to ensure that external noise does not interfere with the examinations. The examinations are taking place in schools with 6th year candidates and the personnel involved in the running of the examinations present. Otherwise, far fewer people will be on the school premises compared to normal. The SEC is maintaining a high number of examinations centres so that most examination centres will not be operating at full capacity.

There are some particular measures that individual candidates need to take note of. At the examinations, you:

- Will be part of an examination centre pod. This means you will be assigned to the same desk in the same examination centre for the duration of your examinations other than for specific logistical reasons (e.g. Aural examinations).
- Must observe 2 metre social distancing and minimise your interactions with others.
- Must wear an appropriate face covering (i.e. a face mask covering nose and mouth) at all times while on school premises.
- Should practice good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene.
- Should avoid mingling with other candidates in advance of the start of the examinations, between examinations, and departing the examination centre each day.
- Must comply with all other Public Health measures put in place for the examinations.

In the normal course of examinations, you are required to comply with the direction of the Superintendents about all examination related matters. In the context of COVID-19, you will also be required to comply with the Public Health arrangements in relation to examination centres and with the arrangements for access to the examinations centres each day.

Failure to comply with the reasonable directions of a Superintendent, or other person in authority, may lead to you being denied the opportunity to take your examinations noting that Public Health considerations will be an over-arching priority.

Do I have to wear a face mask for the examinations?

Yes. The wearing of face coverings (i.e. a mask covering nose and mouth) is mandatory in post-primary schools and for all involved in the Leaving Certificate examinations including in non-post-primary school centres and halls where examinations are being held. All examination candidates, SEC Superintendents, special centre Superintendents, examination aides, student attendants, and all other school/centre/hall staff on the premises when the Leaving Certificate examinations are taking place will be required to wear a face mask at all times.

In schools, candidates who have not normally been required to wear face masks are those exempted from this requirement on medical grounds under the limited exemptions which apply. Those exempted have provided medical certification to the school certifying that they fall into one of the three categories listed below;

- any person with difficulty breathing who cannot wear a cloth face covering or a visor
- any person who is unable to remove the cloth face-covering or visor without assistance
- any person who has special needs and who may feel upset or very uncomfortable wearing the cloth face covering or visor, for example persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities, mental health conditions, sensory concerns or tactile sensitivity.

If, on medical grounds, you are not normally required to wear a mask to school or you wear a visor instead of a mask, you will already have been assigned to a special examination centre by your school so that you can sit your examinations.

Other than this, a candidate who refuses or fails to wear a face mask will be refused access to the examinations.

What should I do if I cannot attend my examinations?

If you are unable to attend your examinations please let your school know (or, if you are an external candidate, the school at which you were due to sit your examinations) and they will notify the SEC Superintendent who will update the attendance record. Of course, if you want to sit the examinations you would no doubt be extremely disappointed in the event that you are not able to attend for your examinations due to COVID-19, but public health is the absolute priority

What happens if I am unable to attend for some or all of my examinations?

Accredited Grades (for those eligible to receive them) is the contingency measure that will apply in all circumstances this year where candidates cannot sit their examinations. This includes for both COVID-19 and non COVID-19 related absences. Information on Accredited Grades as the contingency measure for the 2021 examinations is presented later in this Guide.

4. External Candidates

I entered for the examinations as an External Candidate - not attending a school or private college – are there any special rules that I need to be aware of?

You will be sitting your examinations at a host school; the one you nominated to the SEC when you registered for the examinations earlier this year. To do so, you should have obtained the permission of the principal of that school to sit examinations there. Or you may be sitting examinations at one of the two external candidate examination halls in Dublin.

The SEC has provided your nominated host school with contact details for you in case they need to contact you in relation to any school specific notices.

You are required to let the school know if you will be absent from an examination or a number of examinations. All such reports should come through the school and you should not contact the SEC directly about absences.

Am I required to provide proof of my identity?

You will be required to present proof of identity to school management on your arrival at the school for the first time. Any one of the following forms of identification is acceptable:

- Driving Licence
- Passport
- Garda I.D. (for over 18s)
- USIT Student Identity Card
- Public Service Card.

You are also required to show your ID to the Superintendent for each examination at which you present.

Are there any COVID-19 rules to be aware of?

You have also been provided with a COVID-19 declaration form which you will need to complete and present when attending for your first examination in the school. You are required to comply with the school's COVID-19 protocols. If you have a medical condition which might prevent you from wearing a face mask, you should by now have applied to the SEC for an exemption from this requirement under the limited grounds for exemption set out in the face covering sections above.

5. During the Examinations

What do I need to bring with me to the examinations?

You should make sure to bring your own pens, pencils (for diagrams only) and your calculator. A clock will be on display in the centre so you do not need to bring a watch (and also noting the prohibition on smart watches and other devices which is explained later). Due to COVID-19, there should be no sharing of equipment between candidates. Everything else that you need will be provided.

How are the examinations supervised?

A Superintendent supervises each examination centre and oversees the running of the examinations. This includes distributing examination papers and answer books, ensuring that the examinations start and finish at the correct times and that you have a suitable environment in which to sit your examinations. You are required to comply with the direction of the Superintendents about all examination related matters.

What do the colours of the examination papers mean?

The papers are colour coded by level. You should familiarise yourself with the colours of the examination paper as this will help you to ensure that you have been given the correct level by the Superintendent.

The Leaving Certificate examinations papers are colour coded as follows;

- Leaving Certificate Higher Level examination papers have Pink and White covers
- Leaving Certificate Ordinary Level examination papers have Blue and White covers
- Leaving Certificate Foundation Level examination papers have Peach and White covers

The papers are white on the inside and the title and level is printed at the bottom of each page.

All subjects for the Leaving Certificate Applied examination are common level and the covers are coloured Mocha and White.

Can I change level on the day of the examination from the level that I selected on the Candidate Self Service Portal in early May?

Yes – you will continue to have this choice and to change levels on the day of the examinations. This may mean that you have an Accredited Grade at one level and an examination result at another level. We will take this into account when we are comparing the results of the examinations with the Accredited Grades in determining which result is better.

Are there detailed rules regarding the conduct of candidates in the examinations?

Yes. The full list of rules is set out at the back of this Guide in the section titled “[Extract from Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools – Conduct of Candidates during Examinations](#)”. Your responsibility is to ensure that you know the rules and that you comply with them at all times. These deal with matters such as: -

- the times of attendance,
- leaving the centre before the end of the examination,
- cheating or attempted cheating

The attendance rules include that you are required to be in your assigned seat in the examination centre at least 30 minutes before the start time of examinations on Day 1 and at least 15 minutes in advance of your examinations on subsequent days. If you are late for the examination, you can be admitted late, up to 30 minutes after the start time, by the Superintendent, but the time is forfeited. You are not allowed to leave the examination centre within the final 10 minutes of the examination.

Are there rules on bringing notes, books, mobile phones, smart watches, electronic devices, etc. into the examinations centre or other rules about cheating?

There are very strict rules about what you can and cannot bring with you into the examination centre and about cheating or attempting to cheat in the examinations. They are the back of this Guide and at <https://www.examinations.ie/?l=en&mc=ex&sc=se> - Breach of Regulations and the Conduct of Candidates during examinations.

Each centre will have a notice on display titled “*Notice – Penalty for Violation of Regulations*” which you should pay full attention to.

The following is designed to assist you but it is not a legal interpretation of the rules:

- Other than your examination paper or answer- book, you must not bring any books, memos, notes, papers, mobile phones, smart-watches, data banks, electronic equipment, etc., into the examination hall nor have these items in your possession or under your control.
- You must not attempt to use any of these items (but noting that just having them represents a breach of the regulations).
- You must not aid or attempt to aid another candidate.
- You must not obtain or attempt to obtain aid from another candidate.
- You must not communicate or attempt to communicate in any way with another candidate within the centre, or by electronic means with a person outside the centre.

What happens if I am suspected of cheating in the examinations?

In the interest of being fair to all candidates, the SEC must be satisfied that marks awarded have been gained fairly and will investigate any suggestion, suspicion or allegation of cheating or other impropriety in relation to the examinations. This is essential in order to uphold the integrity of the Irish State examinations system and to underpin equity and fairness within the system in order to enable all candidates to display their achievements on an equal footing.

If you are suspected of cheating during the examinations, the Superintendent is required to make a report to the SEC and to provide with the report any available evidence which might include the books, notes, devices, etc.

The principles of natural justice are applied when following up such cases. Later on, details of the evidence available, such as superintendent’s reports, confiscated material or items, notes or work prepared that exhibits evidence of collusion, will be brought to your attention through your school and you will be invited to offer a response to the evidence presented. The school authority is also free to offer comment if they consider it appropriate. The decision will be communicated in writing to the candidate. A decision to withhold a result is open to appeal. While every effort is made to conclude an investigation prior to the issue of the examination results, it is not always possible to do so. In these circumstances results are withheld on a without prejudice basis pending further communication with the schools and candidates concerned.

What are the penalties if I am found to have broken the rules?

The SEC would strongly caution any student that might be tempted to cheat that serious consequences can result. They could lose marks or the full result in a subject; they could lose the results of the entire examination; or they could be debarred from entering for any of the State examinations for a specified period. In general, if you violate the rules in respect of a component completed in a non-invigilated examination (i.e. work completed over a period of time such as project work, coursework, etc.) you are likely to lose all of the marks for that component. If you violate the rules in an invigilated examination (such as a written examination, an oral test or a practical test) you are likely to lose the result for the entire subject. Note though that more serious penalties can apply, depending on the gravity of the offence and these include withholding all of the results of the examination (the entire Leaving Certificate) and/or debarment from entering for future state examinations. Penalties are applied in line with Rule 76 of the Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools. The SEC will also consider whether the incident represents an offence under Section 52 of the Education Act. If it is considered that an offence has been committed then the incident will be pursued under the legislation.

6. Reasonable Accommodations for students with special educational needs

How are candidates with special educational needs accommodated?

If you have special educational needs (including learning difficulties as well as permanent or temporary physical, visual, hearing, medical, sensory, emotional, behavioural or other conditions), which significantly impairs your ability to access the examinations, you or your school will have already applied to the SEC for a reasonable accommodation. In some cases, the accommodation involves being exempted from being tested on something that otherwise you are tested on, such as having accurate spelling.

The reasonable accommodations are intended to:

- a) remove, as far as possible, barriers to accessing the examinations and thus enable you to demonstrate your level of attainment, and
- b) ensure that, whilst giving you every opportunity to demonstrate your level of attainment, the special arrangements will not give you an unfair advantage over other candidates in the same examination.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include: access to reading assistance, modified papers, Braille translations or examination papers in large print. It can also include allowing you to record your answers on a recording device or word processor or to dictate your answers to a scribe. If you have been granted a reasonable accommodation, you will have received a copy of the SEC letter regarding same and will be aware of the exact nature of the accommodation which is to be provided. If you have any queries on reasonable accommodations, please refer to this letter and the booklets on Reasonable Accommodations at the 2021 Certificate Examinations: 'Guide for Students' and 'Instructions for Schools'.

**If you have any queries on about reasonable accommodations contact: Reasonable Accommodation Section
Phone 090-6442782 Fax: 090 644 2744 Email: race@examinations.ie**

How are candidates who suffer illness or accidents immediately prior to or during the examinations accommodated?

As already set out, you will miss some or all of your examinations if, in advance of, or at any stage during, the period of the examinations, you

- are diagnosed with COVID-19.
- are unwell and have any of the symptoms of COVID-19.
- are self-isolating or have been instructed to self-isolate.
- are quarantining or otherwise restricting their movements.
- are a close contact of a confirmed case.

You may also miss your examinations for other reasons such as other medical emergencies including hospitalisation.

Under the existing provisions of the RACE Scheme, every effort will continue to be made by the SEC for candidates who experience accidents, or other trauma either immediately before or during the examinations. However, due to COVID-19, there are significant limitations to what can be arranged. There will be no sittings of examinations in hospitals or other out of school settings and if there is any concern that an illness is COVID related you will not be able to take their examinations. If you do get ill (with a non-COVID-19 illness) or you are injured there are certain limited arrangements that can be made between the SEC and the school provided you are able to proceed with their examination on the scheduled date. This might include supervised rest breaks during the examinations; access to a smaller examination centre; and alterations to the start and end time of the examinations as long as the examination is taken on the date as on the published timetable. Your school is best placed to consider whatever arrangements are most appropriate acting in your best interests.

Notwithstanding the very best efforts of all concerned, there may be circumstances in which individual candidates or groups of candidates will be unable to take their examinations and will instead have to rely on Accredited Grades.

Is there an alternative sitting of the examinations this year for candidates who are bereaved over the course of the examinations or for any other reason?

No. there is no alternative sitting of the Leaving Certificate in 2021 and any eligible candidate who is unable to take their examinations this year will have the safety net of Accredited Grades of available to them.

Are there any arrangements that can be considered if I experience a bereavement?

In the event of a bereavement of a close relative, there continues to be flexibility in scheduling an examination to allow a late or early start to an examination scheduled on the day of the funeral but there will be no opportunity to sit an examination on an alternative date as there was in 2019. If you experience an emergency situation such as this, your school is best placed to assist you. By the time the examinations commence, the school will be aware whether a candidate who has been taken ill or injured has qualified for an Accredited Grade and to bear this mind in seeking to put in place alternative arrangements.

Will the alternative examinations be reintroduced next year?

In 2019, the SEC introduced, on an interim, pilot basis, a limited provision for supporting Leaving Certificate candidates who experienced the death of a close relative during the period of the written examinations under the emergency provisions of the RACE Scheme. Under that arrangement, a candidate who experienced a bereavement of a close relative was allowed to defer up to three days of their examinations and to take the examinations that they missed at an alternative sitting of the examinations in July that year. The purpose of this measure was to allow the bereaved candidate some time to prepare for and attend the funeral of their loved one without having to contend with the added pressure of a full set of examinations.

Following the interim, pilot measure in 2019, the Board of the SEC had commenced a comprehensive review of the broader issue of how best to support students experiencing all forms of trauma and adversity at examination time.

The review process, which has been interrupted due to COVID-19, included research into practices in other jurisdictions as well as engagement with stakeholders and candidates. The SEC will be recommencing this extensive review process as soon as it is feasible.

Can I use a bi-lingual dictionary in the examinations if my mother tongue is not Irish or English?

Only in the following circumstances. You may use a bilingual dictionary between your mother tongue and English or Irish (e.g. Russian-English-English-Russian) but not a monolingual one (e.g. a Russian dictionary where words are explained in Russian).

- You may use bilingual dictionary in all examinations except:
 - an examination in your mother tongue
 - an examination in Irish
 - an examination in English
 - an examination in a language closely related to your mother tongue.
- The bilingual dictionary used must not contain same-language explanations or definitions.
- The use of an electronic dictionary, glossary, wordlist or translator is not permitted.
- The dictionary used must not contain any additional annotation.
- Bilingual Dictionaries should conform to **Circular S04/19 Use of Bilingual Dictionaries in the Certificate Examinations**

7. Accredited Grades - Contingency arrangements for candidates unable to take their State examinations

In addition to being available as a choice for candidates, Accredited Grades will be available to the vast majority of candidates as a safety net in the event that they are unable to sit their examinations for any reason. While less likely, circumstances also need to be considered where it is not possible for the SEC to run the examinations due to a more significant disruption such as a school closure or a local, county, regional or national lockdown.

Even if you have not opted for Accredited Grades, and provided you are eligible, they are available to you as contingency. And if you are eligible there will be a further opportunity for you to receive Accredited Grades if you have not opted for them already. (See details below)

Will all candidates have access to Accredited Grades?

Great efforts have been made to ensure that you have the opportunity to be provided with Accredited Grades. In this respect, your school will have information provided on your behalf for all subjects you are studying in school.

The process of providing Accredited Grades to you if you are an out of school learner or a school candidate taking subjects outside of school required you to proactively engage in the relevant Accredited Grades process. Accredited Grades cannot be provided, even as contingency, to you if you have not engaged in the process, or, having engaged in the process, have been unable to provide evidence of your learning in the relevant subject(s) to allow the provision of an estimated mark.

It is important to note that if it has not been possible to provide you with an Accredited Grades and where you have not, for whatever reason, attended for your examination(s), your next opportunity to sit the Leaving Certificate will be at the 2022 examinations.

I have not opted for Accredited Grades in some or all of my subjects. Is it too late now?

The Leaving Certificate 2021 Candidate Self-Service Portal was open to you from 27 April until 1st May to enable you to review and confirm your choices of examinations, Accredited Grades or both for the 2021 Leaving Certificate. The Candidate Self Service Portal is closed and there is no further opportunity to update choices on the portal at this time.

However, a further opportunity will be provided for eligible candidates who have not up to now opted for Accredited Grades to do so later in the summer. This does not require you to take any action at this time. The SEC will contact all eligible candidates during the summer and offer them the option to receive Accredited Grades. You are eligible if you are attending school for those subjects you are studying in school.

This further opportunity to receive Accredited Grades means that those candidates who are eligible can be provided with the Accredited Grade whether or not they sit the examinations in the relevant subjects, regardless of the reason.

Note: this further opportunity does not apply to you if you are an out-of-school learner or a school student taking subjects out of school. You had a very specific application process in which you were required to engage and present evidence of your learning for consideration on or before 21 May. All of the application dates for the out-of-school processes have now closed and there is no further opportunity to engage in the Accredited Grades process.

8. Accredited Grades - The Standardisation Process

What Information will be used in the Accredited Grades standardisation process?

As part of the SEC Accredited Grades process, schools have been asked to provide school-estimated marks in all subjects for all candidates. These marks have been provided following an in-school alignment process and were approved at school level. The main purpose of the alignment process is to ensure that all teachers who are providing estimated percentage marks in respect of the same subject in the school are applying standards that are appropriate and are consistent with each other when doing so-

Research makes clear that because teacher judgements are made in the context of each school, they need to be examined and adjusted at a national level to ensure comparability across different schools and that a common national standard is applied. The school estimated percentage marks will be combined with recent national data through a process called standardisation in order to generate SEC-Accredited Grades. This standardisation process will seek to mitigate the effects that can arise from different schools, despite their best efforts, applying different standards in their estimation. The process of standardisation at national level will ensure as much fairness as possible amongst this year's candidates.

The standardisation process will not use historical school by school data on past performance in Leaving Certificate Examinations. Data on the Junior Cycle performance of the Leaving Certificate class of 2021, recent national Leaving Certificate results data **from previous years** and the national distribution of students' results may form part of this process.

Will my examinations performance be taken into account in my Accredited Grade?

Your performance in the examinations in June 2021 will not be used to calculate your Accredited Grade.

If you sit the examinations, and we would strongly encourage you to do so, your examination will be marked. In advance of the issue of the results, your examination result will be compared to your Accredited Grade and you will receive the result which is most advantageous to you. After the results have been issued you will be able to see how you performed in both your examinations and your Accredited Grades in each of your subjects. However, this will be for your information only. The official result, the one which will be provided to you in your provisional results, to the CAO and, following any appeals processes, will appear on your final Leaving Certificate, will be the best result that you achieved between these two processes.

The examinations and the Accredited Grades will be run as two separate processes and will be brought together only for the purposes of determining the better result for those candidates who have opted for both.

9. The Examinations Marking Process

Are there ever mistakes on the examination paper? If so, what does the SEC do?

The SEC has extensive measures in place during the paper setting process to prevent errors from happening in the first place or to detect them before the examination happens. Unfortunately, in all examination systems, and no matter how extensive these measures are, there will be rare occasions when an error in an examination paper is not detected in advance. We follow the core principle that you should not be disadvantaged as a result of any error on a question paper.

In the case of any error, we will put measures in place to ensure, as far as possible, that this principle is upheld. These measures will vary, because it will result from a detailed analysis of the likely and observed impact of the error on your work. Further details on how errors in examination papers are dealt with are available on our website at www.examinations.ie.

Are the examination papers the same format and structure as in previous years?

In response to the disrupted learning experienced by candidates during the periods of school closures, two sets of adjustments have been made for the Leaving Certificate examinations:

- The Department of Education published *Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021* in September 2020 and an updated version of that document in December 2020. <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/assessment-arrangements-junior-cycle-and-leaving-certificate-examinations-2021.pdf>
- A further set of adjustments was made by the SEC in March 2021 with the objective of lessening the load for candidates in your preparations for the written examinations and also on the day of the examination <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/70c4d-further-adjustments-to-the-written-examinations/>

The written examination papers will reflect the further adjustments that have been announced. The SEC has aimed to maintain the overall structure and layout of the examination paper so that the examination papers remain as familiar as possible. To the greatest extent possible, all amendments to the papers were transacted by changing the instructions on the examination paper. In the case of Gaelge no fair adjustment to paper 1 was feasible, so the adjustments have been confined to paper 2.

In almost all cases, further choice has been provided by reducing the number of questions to be answered in the examination. While this will have the effect of also reducing the time needed to complete the examination, the duration of each examination will remain unchanged, thus substantively relieving time pressures.

In 2021, both the examinations and the marking will take account of the adjustments announced in September and December 2020 and the further adjustments announced in March 2021.

Will this year's examinations be of the same standard as other years?

The SEC has a responsibility to maintain consistent examining standards from one year to the next. It lays down detailed procedures that the people involved in setting the examination papers must follow to ensure that, as far as can be predicted in advance, each examination will be similar in demand to those that went before. If any unevenness in the level of difficulty of the examination remains despite these procedures, this is dealt with through the marking scheme and its application. The draft marking scheme, which is prepared before the examination, is considered carefully after the examination by subject experts. As well as their own knowledge and experience, they take account of observations from teacher groups and others. They trial a version of the marking scheme on a random sample of candidate work, to check whether it is fair and to determine whether the paper and marking scheme combine to reflect the same examining standards as in previous years. They adjust it if necessary and then all the candidate work is marked using this final version of the marking scheme. Further details on how the standard setting and marking processes are conducted, including quality assurance measures, are available on the SEC website at www.examinations.ie

Who marks my work?

Examiners, typically experienced teachers in the particular subject, are appointed by the SEC to carry out the marking. They are trained and monitored by staff from the SEC's Examination and Assessment Division

How is my work marked?

In order to ensure that the work of each candidate is marked in the same manner, a marking scheme is prepared for each examination. This marking scheme is much more detailed than the allocation of marks shown on the examination paper and deals with the allowable ways of answering each question. The marking scheme is finalised by experienced examiners at conferences held shortly after the examinations. This allows account to be taken of observations on the examination paper by the Teacher Association for the subject and other interested parties. The SEC subsequently publishes a marking scheme for each subject. The marking schemes will be available in schools and on www.examinations.ie in time for the viewing of scripts.

How is the marking process monitored?

The marking of examination work is monitored by the Chief Examiner who requires all examiners to mark in accordance with the marking scheme. At various stages during the marking process, examiners submit samples of you' work that you have marked. You also supply statistics on the marks being awarded to enable ongoing monitoring of the marking process to take place.

How do the adjustments made to the examinations for 2021 affect how my grade is calculated?

The adjustments made to the 2021 Leaving Certificate examinations in recognition of the disruptions to learning arising from COVID-19 mean that the total number of marks for the written component of many examinations have changed. However, a commitment was also given that the value of the different components relative to each other (written, coursework, oral, etc.) would stay the same. Because of this, your marks from different components in some subjects may be "reweighted" as part of the grading process. For example, the written examination in History is normally marked out of 400, while the coursework is marked out of 100. This year, the written examination is marked out of 300. In order to preserve the relative weighting of the two components, our grading program will multiply your mark from the written paper by a weighting to bring it from a mark out of 300 to a mark out of 400. In some subjects, (Art, Engineering, Construction Studies, and Physical Education,) reweighting also arises because an examination component was cancelled.

Because of this reweighting process, working out your own total mark when you view your scripts is not as straightforward as usual. Further information will be made available at results time. Also, when you access your component results on the Candidate Self-Service Portal, the information about how the components are weighted will be shown.

10. Online Marking

What subjects are being marked online this year?

The SEC has been successfully using an online marking system to mark certain examinations subjects since 2017. This involves scripts being scanned, converted to digital images, and being marked by examiners using special designed software. The Leaving Certificate subjects that will be marked online in 2021 are:

Subject	Level
English	Higher
Mathematics	Higher and Ordinary
History (written examination paper and Coursework)	Higher
Geography (written examination paper and Coursework)	Higher
French	Higher
Biology	Higher and Ordinary
Chemistry	Higher and Ordinary
Physics	Higher and Ordinary
Home Economics (written examination paper)	Higher
LCVP (written paper only)	Common

What does this mean for me?

You will sit your examinations in the normal way. Your scripts in the subjects in the table above will be scanned on return from the exam centre and will become an electronic script. The paper script will also be retained. The scanned images of your examination scripts will then be marked by examiners using software specially designed for this purpose. Your work is being marked **ON** a computer, not **BY** a computer. Online marking facilitates high quality and reliable marking of your examination answers.

Are there any changes to examination papers that I should be aware of as a result of my scripts being marked online?

There is no material change to the content of examination papers as a result of them being marked online. The changes described here relate to formatting and appearance only.

There are three different formats of examination paper:

- examinations in which the question paper is separate from the generic answerbook or other stationery used.
- examinations consisting of a returnable question-and-answerbook that incorporates all the questions and the spaces for answering them.
- examinations consisting of a returnable question-and-answerbook that incorporates the short answer questions and the spaces for answering them, as well as the lined pages for answering the longer response questions. The longer response questions themselves are presented in a separate question paper.

In relation to the third format listed above, previously these examinations consisted of one part that was a returnable question-and-answerbook and another part that was answered in a separate answerbook. However, as online marking is rolled out in these subjects, this arrangement will change. The returnable question-and-answerbook in these cases will include lined pages for answering the portion that was previously answered in a separate answerbook. This will eliminate the need for separate stationery in these subjects for the vast majority of your examinations.

The effect of this change is that, in all cases, you will be handing up *either* a returnable question-and-answerbook, *or* an answerbook, but not both.

The following are the online marked subjects which will have a **returnable question-and-answerbook** in 2021:

Leaving Certificate – Returnable Question-and-Answer book	
Mathematics	LCVP Link Modules
Geography	Biology
French	Home Economics

There have been some minor changes to the appearance of the papers to facilitate the scanning process such as the addition of barcodes to the cover and to each page. In addition, the short answer section in Leaving Certificate Biology has been similarly modified and is now a separate returnable section. There is a new answerbook for use in Leaving Certificate Accounting, Applied Mathematics, Art, Chemistry, Engineering, English, History, Physics and Religious Education which will be provided to you by the Superintendent. Samples and a specimen is available to view on our website. If you are sitting any of these subjects, you will need to indicate the subject, level and paper version (Irish/English) you are using by fully shading in the relevant circles on the cover. You are required to clearly mark each question number in the space provided and to use a new page for every question. The new answer book contains graph paper throughout so loose sheets of graph paper should not be required.

Can I request extra paper?

Supplementary 4-page answerbooks will continue to be available to any candidate who runs out of writing space in the book. Where relevant, graph pages and other specialised stationery will be incorporated into the returnable question-and-answerbook. The supplementary lined answerbook will be available to candidates who have used up all such spaces in the returnable answerbook where necessary for all subjects. Supplementary graph answerbooks and supplementary accounting answerbooks will be available upon request.

What if I write outside the margins/designated areas, will my answers be seen by the examiner?

You should complete your answers using the spaces provided on the examination paper/answerbook to ensure that all answers are captured in the scanning process. While the scanning process will capture an image that includes more than just the spaces for writing, there is a small risk that material written outside these areas will not be seen by examiners.

Will I be allowed to use pencil in the examinations or must I just use Blue or Black pen?

The examination papers in subjects being marked online will include the following instruction “Write your answers in black or blue pen. You may use pencil for graphs and diagrams only.”

We have had lots of questions about this instruction from teachers, parents and candidates and would like to clarify this. We strongly recommend that you use blue or black pen for writing your answers. The use of pencils (incl. coloured pencils) should be restricted to graphs and diagrams. If you do use pencil, you should be aware that faint pencil may not be clearly visible to the examiner.

Is there anything I should not use when completing my examination?

Correcting fluid should not be used nor should you rub out any mistakes. Instead, you are advised to cross/strike out your mistake and carry on. In addition, do not use gel pens or highlighters.

Other notable changes that apply to examinations marked online

- There are L-shaped marks in the four corners, and all have clearly defined areas where your answers are to be written. It is important that you confine your work to within these areas and do not stray beyond them into the margins, as this risks your work not being seen by the examiner.
- You will also be required to provide your **Day and Month of Birth** on the front cover along with your examination number on all examination stationery that you use.
- On the new generic barcoded answerbook described in Section 3 above, you must also indicate the subject, level and language version (Irish or English) you are using the answer book for by fully shading in the relevant circles on the cover. This must be completed carefully to ensure that the script is presented to the correct examiner for marking.
- You will be required to clearly mark each question number within the answerbook in the space provided and to begin each question on a new page.

11. Results - Preparation and Issue

When will the results be issued?

The results this year are expected to issue on Friday 3 September through the Candidate Self Service Portal.

The SEC will also provide the Leaving Certificate results directly to the CAO. This will allow the CAO to process applications for entry to higher education without delay and bring about the earliest possible issue of higher education offers to you.

This is later than normal. Why is this?

In a normal year, with examinations starting on Wednesday 9 June, the results would have been due for issue on Tuesday 17 August. The results issue date this year must take account of both the examinations marking process and the Accredited Grades process operating in parallel and being brought together at the end to issue to candidates. To ensure the accuracy and the integrity of the results being provided to candidates, sufficient time must be allowed not only in the parallel operation of both of these complex processes but also in the integration of the results to ensure that candidates are provided with a set of examinations results that comprises, based on their individual options on a subject by subject basis, examination results, Accredited Grades or the better of the two.

How are the results processed and checked?

When an examiner has completed the marking of scripts, all of the information is returned to the SEC. Your total marks for each component of a subject (oral, aural, practical, written papers etc.) are keyed into our computer system and then keyed a second time, by a different operator, to ensure accuracy. A range of checking and quality assurance procedures apply to the resulting and grading processes for the examination results focussed on maintaining data integrity and on identifying and reconciling candidate information.

There will also be extensive checking and quality assurance procedures applied to the Accredited Grades.

Can mistakes happen in the examinations process?

On occasion, mistakes can happen. However, the viewing of scripts and appeal processes are there so that you can see exactly how your work was marked and so that you can have an opportunity to make an appeal if you think there has been a mistake. Considering the enormous volumes of examination scripts and associated examination material, and the large number of people involved in marking and processing the results, the error level is very low. The SEC's system of checks and double checks is designed to detect and correct errors before the results are issued.

What is the format of the results?

On the day of the results you will get a statement of provisional results. The results are provisional as they are subject to appeal. Depending on the choices you made, the statement of results you receive will show your examination results or Accredited Grades. In any subject in which you have sat the examination and opted for an Accredited Grade, the provisional results will show the best result that you achieved between the examinations and Accredited Grades noting that candidates will not know at the time of issue whether the results achieved is from the examination or the Accredited Grade.

In the case of the examinations, additional information will be provided in any case where your result in a subject with more than one component does not contain credit for an essential component. For example, if you do not sit Paper 1 in Irish you will get no credit for that paper in the overall grade. Supplementary information will issue with your result confirming that no credit was given for Paper 1. This allows you to check that all components taken by you are included in the final results. Schools are also provided with a copy of the provisional results which this year will be provided in digital format.

You should note that it is an offence, under the terms of the Education Act 1998, to alter any record containing the results of an examination or make use of any such record knowing that the results are false.

What happens if I opted for Accredited Grades in a subject at one level and sat the examinations at a different level?

The SEC will use grade equivalences between levels to establish the better grade in the case of level changes. The table of grade equivalences is presented in the **Leaving Certificate Grading System** section of this guide. These equivalences were established as a matter of educational policy in the context of the revised grading scheme and revised common basic points scale introduced in the 2017 Leaving Certificate.

If your results in a subject (examinations and Accredited Grades) are considered equivalent, then the result provided to you on your provisional statement of results will be whichever result is at the higher Level. In due course, in advance of the issue of the final certificates, you will be invited to apply to the SEC if you wish to have the lower level result shown on their final certificate.

If you have an Accredited Grade in a subject at one level and an examination result in the same subject at a different level (even if these results are considered equivalent), you should note that the SEC will provide the CAO with both your examination result and your Accredited Grade. This will allow the CAO to undertake checks regarding minimum entry requirements.

I have reasonable accommodations for my Leaving Certificate, will my results be annotated?

No. Certain accommodations provided under the Scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the certificate examinations involve a waiver or exemption from the assessment of a core element of the examination which normally gives rise to an explanatory note (annotation), indicating the nature of the adjustment, on the provisional statements of results and on the final examination certificates.

Due to the unprecedented circumstances associated with COVID-19, for the 2021 examinations, and the exceptional nature of the arrangements which applied this year, a decision has been taken not to include any annotations on the results of the 2021 Leaving Certificate, whether examination results or Accredited Grades, either at the time of issue of the provisional results or on the final examination certificates. This is an exceptional measure which is being applied for 2021 only and does not interfere with normal examinations policy in relation to the annotation of examination results.

12. Candidate Self Service Portal

What is the Candidate Self Service Portal?

The Leaving Certificate Candidate Self Service Portal (CSSP) is a service provided by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and the Department of Education for 6th year candidates entered for the 2021 Leaving Certificate. The CSSP is a one-stop-shop for a range of online services to candidates. By now you have created an account on the portal. You need to keep your account details safe so that you can access your results on 3 September.

THE SEC may contact you at various stages during the Leaving Certificate 2021 process to keep you informed of the stages above and also any information that may arise during the Process that may affect you. You will be contacted via the email and phone number you provided upon first registering through the Candidate self Service Portal.

13. Results Issue and Post- Results Issue-Viewing of Scripts and Appeals

What happens after the issue of the results?

A further guide to the results and the post-results stages will be provided at the time of issue of the results. Through the CSSP, you will have access to a range of online services for the issue of the results and the processes which follow the issue of the results. These are:

- Access to your Leaving Certificate results comprising, on a subject by subject basis, depending on your choices and/or whether you were able to sit the examinations;

- examination results
- Accredited Grades
- the better of the two processes
- For any examinations that you sat –
 - Access to the component marks in subjects (e.g. written paper marks, oral marks; practical marks, etc.)
 - The application to view your marked scripts
 - Online viewing of marked scripts (in certain subjects)
 - The appeal application process
- For your Accredited Grades –
 - the estimated percentage mark provided by your school and the accredited mark following the process of standardisation
 - The appeal application process
- Access to the Leaving Certificate Appeal results.

Access to Data

Following the issue date of the results candidates will be provided with access to detailed information about their examinations results, Accredited Grades or both in order to be fully informed about making a decision to appeal results.

The adjustments made to the 2021 Leaving Certificate examinations in recognition of the disruptions to learning arising from COVID-19 mean that the total number of marks for the written component of many examinations have changed. However, a commitment was also given that the value of the different components relative to each other (written, coursework, oral, etc.) would stay the same. Because of this, marks from different components in some subjects may be “reweighted” as part of the grading process. For example, the written examination in History is normally marked out of 400, while the coursework is marked out of 100. This year, the written examination is marked out of 300. In order to preserve the relative weighting of the two components, the SEC’s grading program will multiply marks from the written paper by a weighting to bring it from a mark out of 300 to a mark out of 400.

In some subjects, (Art, Engineering, Construction Studies, and Physical Education,) reweighting also arises because an examination component was cancelled. Because of this reweighting process, working out total marks when candidates view their scripts is not as straightforward as usual. Further information will be made available at results time. Also, when candidates access their component results on the Candidate Self-Service Portal, the information about how the components are weighted will be shown.

What appeal processes will I have access to?

If you sat examinations only you will have access to the examinations appeal process. If you received Accredited Grades only you will have access to the Accredited Grades appeal process. In any subject in which you sat the examinations and received an Accredited Grades, you will have access to both processes.

The process for the appeal of an Accredited Grade is a process review focused on looking for errors in the transmission and receipt of student data. The scope of the appeal excludes the professional judgment of the school in providing the estimated marks and the process of standardisation. These aspects of Accredited Grades are not open to appeal.

Both appeals processes will include further recourse to Independent Appeals Scrutineers whose role is to check to ensure the correct procedures were followed throughout the appeals process.

Every effort will be made to process appeals as quickly as possible but it is not possible at this time to commit to a date for the issue of the appeal results. Students will be notified of this date as soon as possible”.

Appendix 1. Leaving Certificate Grading System

A revised grading system was introduced to all Leaving Certificate subjects from 2017. The grading system reduced the number of grades from 14 in the old system to 8 under the current arrangements.

	Since 2017	
Level	Percentage	Grade
Higher, Ordinary, Foundation. Ard, Gnáth, Bonn.	≥ 90 to 100	1
	≥ 80 and < 90	2
	≥ 70 and < 80	3
	≥ 60 and < 70	4
	≥ 50 and < 60	5
	≥ 40 and < 50	6
	≥ 30 and < 40	7
	≥ 0 and < 30	8

Statements and Certificates will indicate the level taken using the following notation beside each subject

Higher/Ard level, H/A

Ordinary/Gnáth level, O/G

Foundation/Bonn level F/B

Table of established Grade Equivalences between levels

H1		
H2		
H3		
H4		
H5	O1	
H6	O2	
H7	O3	
	O4	
	O5	F1
	O6	F2
	O7	F3
		F4
		F5
		F6
		F7
H8	O8	F8

For candidates with equivalent grades between Accredited Grades and the Leaving Certificate examination grade who received:

- a higher result on a lower level paper
or
- a lower result on a higher level paper

The result at the highest level will be output on your final certificate unless you notify us that you want to be awarded the lower level result. (e.g. if you received an Accredited Grade of H5 and an examination grade of O1, H5 will be included on your final certificate). You will be provided with this opportunity in advance of the issue of the final certificate of results (Note this is not the provisional statement of results).

Appendix 2. Extract from Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools

2004/05, as amended.

SECTION XI. - CONDUCT OF CANDIDATES DURING EXAMINATIONS

56. It is each candidate's own responsibility to note carefully the days and hours, as fixed on the timetable, for the examinations in the subjects in which the candidate intends to present himself/herself. Candidates are required to be in attendance at the examination hall at least half an hour before the examination commences in the subject in which candidates first present themselves. On subsequent days candidates are required to be in attendance at least fifteen minutes before the hour stated in the timetable. Candidates will be responsible for making their own arrangements to ensure timely attendance at the examination hall. External candidates must sign an attendance roll (Form E10A) at the start of each examination. The signature on this roll must agree with and appear in the same format as that on the candidate's I.D. Card. No candidate will be admitted to the examination in any paper after thirty minutes of the time for that paper have elapsed.
57. No candidate may be authorised to leave the examination hall until the expiration of thirty minutes from the time at which the examination began.
58. A candidate may not be permitted to leave the hall and return during the examination period unless the Superintendent is satisfied that the candidate's need to leave the hall is genuine, (e.g. because of illness, urgent need to visit the toilet, etc.). A candidate who leaves the hall during any period of examination shall not be re-admitted during that period unless the candidate has been in the care of a representative of the school authority or, failing that, in the care of the Attendant during the entire period of the absence. The candidate must hand the answer book and question paper to the Superintendent on leaving the hall; the Superintendent should record on the cover of the answerbook the time of departure from and return to the hall and the reason for the absence; the time lost by the candidate may not be compensated for at the close of the examination period.
59. A candidate who leaves the examination hall before the expiration of any period of examination must surrender his/her examination paper and answerbook to the Superintendent.
60. A candidate must occupy during the entire examination the place first assigned to him/her by the Superintendent, unless otherwise directed by the Superintendent.
61. A candidate should raise his/her hand if he/she wishes to attract the attention of the Superintendent during the examination. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that he/she brings to the attention of the Superintendent if he/she has not been provided with the level of the examination paper at each examination that he/she is due to take.
62. No candidate shall write his/her name on any answer book or other paper supplied. The candidate's number should be entered on every envelope, answer book, map, drawing, or sheet of square paper used. Candidates should not commence writing until instructed to do so by the Superintendent.
63. A candidate must enter on the envelopes and answer books used by him/her the particulars required as to subject, etc.
64. Any additional answer book, squared paper, etc. issued to a candidate, whether used or unused, should be attached to his/her answer book before it is sealed with the treasury tag provided for that purpose. Candidates will be supplied with a booklet of Formulae and Tables by the Superintendent. Candidates may not bring their own copy of this booklet into the examination hall. Formulae and Tables booklets are only allowed in certain subjects. **See Circular S50/12 Re: Formulae and Tables Booklet**
65. A candidate shall not bring into the examination hall, or have in his/her possession or under his/her control or within his/her reach, whilst he/she is in such room -
- (a) any book or paper (save his/her I.D. card, where such is required, the examination paper, and such answerbooks, etc., as shall have been supplied to him/her by the Superintendent);
 - or
 - (b) any memorandum, notes or mobile phone, electronic address book, data bank, etc., except a calculator as permitted under the regulations or bi-lingual translation dictionary where its use has been approved.

66. In the case of Art examinations of a practical nature (i.e. drawing, craftwork), candidates are permitted to bring such materials into the Examination Hall as may be notified to schools by the Commission.
67. A candidate shall not, while in the examination hall -
- use, or attempt to use, any book, memorandum, notes or paper (save the examination paper and such answer books, etc., as shall have been supplied to him/her by the Superintendent and a bilingual translation dictionary where its use has been approved); or
 - aid, or attempt to aid, another candidate; or
 - obtain, or attempt to obtain, aid from another candidate or Superintendent;
or
 - communicate, or attempt to communicate, in any way, with another candidate within the centre or by electronic means with a person outside the centre.
68. A candidate,
- shall not write on the examination paper (except where answers are to be written on part of the examination paper itself) or I.D. card or the Formulae and Tables booklet or on any of the mathematical instruments brought with him/her; except where a candidate uses a highlighter pen or underlining as an aid to interpreting the question paper.
 - shall not write in his/her answer book anything that is not directly connected with the subject matter of the questions to be answered;
 - shall not remove from the answer books any leaf or part of a leaf;
 - shall not take out, or attempt to take out, of the examination hall, any answer books, whether used or unused;
 - shall not damage the examination hall or its furniture
69. A candidate who has finished his/her work at least ten minutes before the time appointed for the conclusion of the examination may be permitted to leave the hall on handing up to the Superintendent -
- his/her answer book(s) and
 - the examination paper
70. A candidate who completes his/her work during the last ten minutes of the examination should remain in his/her seat until the Superintendent has collected his/her answer book(s) and he/she should not then leave the hall until the time appointed for the conclusion of the examination unless permitted to do so by the Superintendent.
71. At the conclusion of the examination each candidate who has not already done so should immediately seal his/her answer book(s) or envelope and remain in his/her seat until the Superintendent has collected the answer book(s).
72. A candidate shall, in all matters relative to the examination, submit to, and obey, the directions of the Superintendent.
73. In those subjects in which there is more than one paper, a candidate must take all the papers in a subject from one level, e.g. all papers at Ordinary Level or all at Higher Level. He/she may not be supplied with, or allowed to see, the papers in more than one level in the same subject.
74. Each candidate presenting himself/herself for examination in Construction Studies, Design and Communication Graphics, Engineering, Materials Technology (Wood) or in Technical Graphics is required to bring with him/her a drawing board, T-square, scales, set squares, protractor, compass, pencil, eraser and drawing clips or tape.

Candidates may use mathematical drawing instruments for all examinations. The use of science stencils is permitted for the examinations in the Science subjects. The use of string, thread, a magnifying glass and an opisometer is permitted for the examination in Geography.

Unless otherwise stated in the specific syllabus and on the specific examination paper, the use of calculators is allowed in all examinations, subject to the following:

- Neither the Department of Education and Skills nor the State Examinations Commission will supply calculators to candidates. Examination centres will not be responsible for the provision of calculators or batteries.
- The proper working condition of the calculator is the responsibility of the candidate. No allowance will

- be made for battery or other calculator failure during the examination.
- (c) Calculators must be silent and must not require the use of mains electricity supply.
 - (d) Calculators may not be borrowed from other candidates during the examination.
 - (e) Programmable calculators are prohibited. The term “programmable” includes any calculator that is capable of storing a sequence of keystrokes that can be retrieved after the calculator is turned off or powers itself off. Note that the capacity to recall, edit and replay previously executed calculations does not render a calculator programmable, provided that this replay memory is automatically cleared when the calculator is powered off. Also, the facility to store numbers in one or more memory locations, does not render a calculator programmable.
 - (f) Calculators with any of the following mathematical features are prohibited:
 - graph plotting
 - equation solving
 - symbolic algebraic manipulation
 - numerical integration
 - numerical differentiation
 - matrix calculations.
 - (g) Calculators with any of the following general features are prohibited:
 - data banks
 - dictionaries
 - language translators
 - text retrieval
 - capability of remote communication.
 - (h) Only non-programmable calculators can be used. Candidates must indicate on their answerbooks the make and model of any calculator(s) used in the examination. See **Circular S93/05 on www.examinations.ie regarding use of Calculators in the Certificate Examinations.**
 - (i) Candidates are not allowed to take an instruction manual into the examination hall. This includes instructions printed on the cover of the calculator. Any instructions printed on a casing that cannot be removed from the calculator must be securely covered.
 - (j) Candidates may not turn on their calculators until the examination begins.

This Rule does not allow a candidate to bring into the examination centre any device that would be otherwise prohibited. In particular, mobile phones, electronic organisers or similar devices are not permitted under any circumstances. (See Rule 65)

- 75. A candidate may be expelled from the examination hall if his/her behaviour is such as to jeopardise the successful conduct of the examination. Submission of material of a pornographic nature or any other offensive material or the inclusion of any cash/cheque in the script may result in the examination in all subjects being disallowed.
- 76. Where the Commission forms the view that there has been a violation of these Rules, it should inform the Department and it will be for the Minister to decide on the penalty to be applied. Where the Minister is of the opinion that any candidate has violated any of these Rules, has attempted to obtain an examination result to which the candidate is not entitled, or has uttered or attempted to utter such a result or has furnished incorrect information in relation to his/her candidature, such candidate shall be liable to be deprived of the examination or of marks, or to have such deduction made as the Minister may think fit from any sum payable in respect of any grant or scholarship obtained by the candidate, according to the opinion which the Minister may form of the gravity of the offence; and the Minister may, if the Minister thinks fit, publish the candidate's name and address, as given in the notice of intention to present for examination, as those of a candidate who has been so deprived and the Minister may, according to the opinion of the Minister as to the gravity of the offence, debar the candidate from entering for any of the examinations run by the Department of Education and Skills for such period as the Minister may determine.

Appendix 3. Access to Examination Scripts - Data Protection

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) facilitates access to examinations scripts by Leaving Certificate candidates through a *Viewing of Scripts* facility which takes place in schools each year after the issue of the Leaving Certificate results. This facility, which has been available to Leaving Certificate candidates for the past twenty years, allows you to view your scripts and to see how the marking scheme has been applied to your work. This allows you to make an informed decision about whether or not to appeal your result(s) in advance of the appeals closing date. The Viewing of Scripts service allows you to see your script and if you wish, allows you to make copies of your scripts during the viewing sessions using your own digital device. Responses submitted by you in examinations and any comments made by examiners about those responses are considered to be your personal data under the Data Protection legislation. Under the Data Protection legislation, you, as a data subject, have a legal right to a copy of the personal data which the SEC holds about you. This right of access also extends to examination scripts.

While you have a legal right to get a copy of your examinations scripts, the SEC also has a duty to process and issue the results of the Leaving Certificate examinations and the appeals by the expected deadlines thus priority is given to the Viewing of Scripts. This does not affect your statutory rights. See details of the **Viewing of Scripts** in the following section.

When can I get copies of my scripts?

The earliest possible access you will have to your script will be during the Viewing of Scripts process. If you do not view your scripts at this time, and decide instead to make a data access request to the SEC, you will not receive copies of your scripts until after the closing date for appeal. Therefore, by the time you receive the copy of your script(s) you will have lost the opportunity to appeal your result.

Can I make an access request for my script under the Data Protection Act?

Yes – but there are limitations on when you can make an access request and how long it will take for you to have your request processed.

Under the Data Protection Act, the SEC, as a data controller, is required to respond to a data access request for personal data within 30 days of receipt of the request. However, data controllers are allowed to extend this time period to 90 days when the number and complexity of the requests received makes it too difficult to respond within 30 days. The SEC processes one million written examinations scripts and another million related examination components (practical and project work; oral tests; performances; etc..) each year. Subject to the restrictions set out below, those making requests for scripts under the Data Protection Act should expect that it will be up to 90 days before you will have received your scripts from the date of the request.

In addition to these general time limits, there are specific time restrictions on access to examination results and scripts contained in the Data Protection legislation. These restrictions seek to strike a balance between allowing you to exercise your right to your personal data and ensuring that examinations providers, such as the SEC, can continue to deliver on the primary function of running examinations and providing results of examinations and appeals by expected deadlines. There is also a very specific restriction on access to a Leaving Certificate examination script which is the subject of an appeal.

Under the legislation, the earliest date on which a data access request for examination results or scripts can be considered by the SEC is the date of issue of the results. So if you make such a request in advance of the issue date of the Leaving Certificate results, the clock does not start ticking on your request until the 3rd September, the date of issue of the results. Similarly, there is a time restriction on making a data access request for the result of an appeal. If you appeal a result and then make a data access request for the outcome of the appeal, the clock does not start ticking on your request until the date of publication of the appeal results.

In addition, if you appeal a Leaving Certificate examination result, and you have already made a data access request for the script associated with that result, then the clock does not start ticking on your request until the date of issue of the appeal results. You are strongly encouraged to exercise your right to view your scripts at the Viewing session or online. While you are of course entitled to make a data access request for a copy of your scripts, the Viewing of

Scripts service presents you with the **only** opportunity to access your scripts in advance of the appeal closing date. Furthermore, viewing your script does not prevent you from also making a data access request.

Can I get copies of examination material other than written examination scripts under the Data Protection Act?

Your right is to a copy of your personal data and not to the original work. If other components are amenable to being copied then you will be able to exercise your data protection rights to have a copy provided to you. All examination material that can be the subject of a data access request is subject to the same time restrictions as set out above. Some project and practical work which is held and marked in schools by the SEC can be returned to you after the issue of the appeal results. (See *Retention of Material* below).

Do I need to make a data access request to access my oral and practical marks?

No – We will update the results file on the Candidate Self Service Portal to provide not only the grade but the final mark awarded to each individual component within a subject. This includes marks for orals, practicals, projects, coursework and written papers in the same subject (paper 1, paper 2).

Can I get the recording of my Oral test under data protection?

If you make a data access request for a copy of your oral test, you should note that we can only provide you with your voice on the recordings. You will not hear the Oral Interviewers voice and we will not provide you with the questions that you were asked in the test. Unlike your answers, these questions are not your personal data and the questions asked in the oral examinations, unlike those which appear on examination papers, are not made public. The reproduction of such a recording with only your voice is a complex task and will take the full 90 days to be sent out to you.

My rights are to the examiner's comments also – how can I access these?

SEC examiners are not allowed to make written comments on scripts. They are limited to applying the marking scheme to the script. In certain subjects, e.g. English, the examiners use annotations to denote where a candidate has lost or gained marks in line with the marking scheme. When you view your examination script, or receive a copy of it through a data access request, you will see your examination responses and the examiner comments (i.e. the marks and any annotations used by the examiner) on the script.

How can I make a request for a copy of my script under the Data Protection Act?

If you wish to make a request for a copy of your script, or other personal data held about you by the SEC, you can make a request in writing to;

Data Protection Access Request,
State Examinations Commission,
Cornamaddy,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath.
N37TP65

Your request should provide us with enough information that will allow us to identify you as an examination candidate; to establish what you are seeking a copy of; and to contact you directly in the event that we need to confirm your identity or clarify your request.

In making such a request you are reminded that there are restrictions on your right of access and that **you will not receive a copy of your script or other examination materials in advance of the appeals closing date**. The only way to access your written scripts, journals and other written responses, in advance of the appeals closing date, is by attending the viewing session

Details of any changes to the arrangements for making a data access request will be published on our website.