



IMPORTANT INFORMATION IN RELATION TO THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS 2021

Below are the relevant extracts for students from Circular 07/21 issued by the State Examinations Commission on March 4th 2020

The purpose of this circular is to provide an update in relation to the arrangements for the delivery of the Leaving Certificate examinations following the announcement by the Government on Wednesday 17th February. Details of this announcement have been set out in the Department of Education's *Letter to Schools* dated 24 February and the recently published *Guide to State Examinations and Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021*.

1. Coursework Completion Dates

The following information updates and replaces information about extensions in previously issued individual subject circulars for the 2021 Examinations.

Prior to the Christmas break, the SEC published important information (Circular S64/20) available [here](#) in relation to exceptional arrangements for the completion and authentication of coursework for Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle candidates in 2021 owing to COVID 19. The purpose of the circular was to assist and support schools and candidates in relation to the completion of coursework by providing as much flexibility as possible for students and schools, while maintaining the integrity and fairness of the assessment process. The circular set out flexibility owing to Covid related absences of either individual candidates or of the class teacher impacting on full class groups. The SEC issued a further communication to schools on 14 January 2021, available [here](#) which set out certain scenarios in relation to dates for coursework completion having regard to an extended period of school closure.

The SEC committed to provide some additional time for the completion of Category 1 coursework; which is capable of being completed by candidates at home, subject to appropriate oversight.

In relation to Category 2 coursework, which requires attendance at school for completion, the commitment was to extend the completion deadline to take account of the period of the school closure.

The table below sets out the revised completion dates for Leaving Certificate practical coursework to take account of the period of school closure from 6 January to 26 February 2021 inclusive. Details are also provided of the arrangements for the submission* and/or marking of this work.

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Coursework Leaving Certificate 2021	Category	Completion Date	Submission/Marking arrangements
Home Economics	1	Completed	Already submitted and marked.
LCVP Portfolio of Coursework	1	March 12	To facilitate timely marking of this subject, return by post to SEC immediately following the completion date of March 12
Economics#	1	March 15	Retained in school. Printed and returned to SEC together with the written script in June.
Design and Communication Graphics	2	March 19	Return by post to the SEC during week ending 26 March.
Physical Education – Physical Activity Project	2	March 22	Projects returned to SEC via School Portal during week beginning April 12.
History	1	April 23	Retained in school. Returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Geography	1	April 23	Retained in school. Returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Religious Education	1	April 23	Retained in school. Returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Agricultural Science#	1	April 23	Retained in school. Printed and returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Engineering (project)	2	May 7	Retained in schools for marking
Politics and Society#	1	May 7	Retained in school. Printed and returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Art	2	May 20	Retained in schools for marking
Technology	2	May 27	Retained in schools for marking
Computer Science	2	May 27	Projects returned to SEC via the School Portal immediately following the completion date of May 27
Construction Studies (project)	2	May 28	Retained in schools for marking
Home Economics (Textile Studies Elective)	2	May 28	Retained in schools for marking

*The SEC will issue further guidance to schools on the requirements for each subject prior to the closing date(s) for submission.

Practical coursework in these subjects must be returned in hard copy together with the written script and not through the School Portal as previously notified.

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2. Orals, Practical Skills Tests and Music

Oral Examinations

Oral examinations in Gaeilge and the Modern Foreign Languages will be arranged by schools during the Easter period and shortly after, outside of tuition time and subject to public health advice. Tests should be undertaken in school by a teacher of the school wherever possible. There will also be flexibility to source a teacher locally, should the need arise. The tests will be conducted by the locally appointed teacher, recorded and returned to the SEC for marking.

Following the closure of the portal and the validation of the data, the SEC will provide schools with details of candidates who indicate that they will be sitting the examinations in subjects with oral components. However, the timing of the availability of this data is such that schools should engage with their own students about their intentions in order to plan for the oral tests.

To facilitate the orderly conduct of the marking, the tests must be held between 26 March and 15 April. Noting that the SEC will not be involved in the delivery of the tests in schools, or in the identification of teachers for this work, guidance on the conduct of these tests will be provided by the SEC no later than 15 March.

Practical Performance Test in Music

The Practical Performance Test in Music is planned to take place in the second week of the Easter holiday. The tests will be conducted by examiners appointed by the SEC. Running the tests outside of the school term means that there will be fewer personnel and students in the school and more space will be available for ensuring physical distancing between the candidate and the examiner.

Further details on the arrangements for the tests will be provided as soon as possible, based on the public health advice.

Components Not Proceeding on Public Health Grounds.

It will not be possible to proceed with the day-practical examinations in Construction Studies and Engineering given public health considerations. Candidates who sit the examinations in these subjects will be resulted on the written and practical coursework components with the marks for the practical skills tests reallocated to the practical coursework.

It will not be possible to proceed with the Performance Assessment in Physical Education, given public health considerations. Candidates who sit the examinations in this subject will be resulted on the written and physical activity project components with

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3. Timetables 2021

The timetables for the written Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied examinations in June have been published and are available [here](#).

The following tests will take place in May with the exact date yet to be announced; LCVP Links Modules written examination; LC Computer Science final examination and LCA Information Technology (Specialism) examination.

4. Candidate Entries 2021 and Candidate Self Service Portal

For 2021, the SEC has, as part of its digital strategy, introduced a facility to allow school-based Leaving Certificate candidates to confirm their subject and level entry details replacing the E7 individual candidate entry forms. The Candidate Self Service Portal (CSSP) will open for this purpose on **Wednesday 10 March at 12 noon** and will remain open until **6 pm on Tuesday 16 March**. For candidates attending recognised schools, the portal will be pre-populated with the data entered by schools through the PPOD October returns process. This means that only those subjects which candidates have been studying in schools will be displayed on the portal. In line with the normal E7 process, candidates will be able to add any subjects that they are studying outside of school or withdraw from subjects. Candidates will also be able to indicate whether they want to take the examinations, or to receive SEC Accredited Grades, or both.

External candidates, those who entered for the examinations directly with the SEC prior to the closing date of 12 February 2021, will be asked to confirm their levels, based on the information already provided by them to the SEC, through the Candidate Portal and to make their selection of examinations, Accredited Grades or both on a subject-by-subject basis. Further details concerning arrangements for students attending recognised schools but studying subjects out of school and students studying entirely outside of schools will be available shortly. It should be noted that in both cases, for reasons of equity and fairness these students will need to be able to provide substantial evidence of their learning to be eligible for consideration for Accredited Grades.

Selection of Levels

It is extremely important at this stage that schools engage with candidates regarding their selection of their level in each subject. We know from the data that we have received from the October returns process that the numbers of candidates at Higher Level in most subjects exceeds what we would typically expect to see at this time. In Mathematics and Irish, the numbers entered for Foundation Level are significantly lower than would be expected. Candidates should be advised by their teachers to select the level at which they are currently studying each subject. SEC will use this information for planning purposes. We will also provide this information to schools through a turnaround document for review.

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Candidates will have a further opportunity at the end of April/early May to confirm their levels in each subject. At that time, candidates can also withdraw their intention to take the written examination but they will not be able to indicate their intention to sit examinations after the 16 March 2021.

The level selected by candidates at the end of April/early May will be an absolutely final decision when it comes to the level – Higher, Ordinary or Foundation – in which they will receive their accredited grade in each subject. As teachers will then be in the estimation process, candidates (or schools) will not be permitted to change levels for the purpose of the accredited grades process after that time.

Candidates opting to sit the examinations will be permitted to change their levels in respect of the written examinations on the day of the examination, as they are in a normal year.

Candidate Numbers and Matrix

Before using the Candidate Portal for the first time, candidates will be asked to create their own account and will need their examination number for this process. A matrix of Leaving Certificate candidate entries, showing the subject and level selections for each candidate, has issued to schools this week together with a set of self-adhesive labels, showing each Candidate's Name, Date of Birth and Examination Number. When you receive this mailing, you are asked to;

- o Distribute the labels to each candidate
- o Use the level selection on the matrix to consider whether the candidate is entered at the correct level and engage with candidates as required
- o Check whether any candidate in the school is not on the matrix or whether any candidate appears on the matrix who has left the school. Such changes must be notified by email to entries@examinations.ie no later than Monday 8 March 2021.

To access the portal candidates will need their Personal Identification Number as part of the verification process. For most candidates this will be the first four digits of their PPSN. As not all candidates have a PPSN recorded, we will be contacting some schools by email later this week in relation to any candidates for whom we do not have a PPSN. Schools will be asked to provide the PPSN details so that we can arrange for the candidates to have access to the portal when it opens.

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