

PRESS EMBARGO UNTIL 6.00 AM MONDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2020

STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Commencement of the 2020 State Examinations

Monday, 16th November 2020

On Monday, 16 November 2020, 2,569 candidates will commence the postponed 2020 Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied examinations at 574 locations across the country. The opportunity to sit Junior Cycle examinations was offered to adult learners and early school leavers and 60 candidates are due to take these examinations which also commence on Monday.

The examinations are being conducted with the support and assistance of post-primary schools and other venues recognised by the State Examinations Commission to hold the certificate examinations. Candidates will take their examinations in the school or other venue at which they were scheduled to sit the June 2020 examinations had those examinations proceeded.

There will be one examination each weekday evening and two examination sessions at weekends, on both Saturdays and Sundays. The Leaving Certificate examinations will commence on Monday 16 November and conclude on Friday 11 December. Examinations at Junior Cycle conclude on Monday 30 November.

All aspects of these examinations will be run in accordance with public health advice which includes social distancing and the wearing of appropriate face coverings by superintendents and candidates. Candidates have previously been advised that they must not attend for the examinations if they have tested positive for Covid-19; if they are experiencing any symptoms or are required to self-isolate or restrict their movements, and must otherwise comply with public health advice.

Following updated guidance from the HSE, the SEC has recently notified candidates that if they are a close contact of a confirmed case; have no symptoms and are restricting their movements, that in certain limited circumstances, and with 24 hours' notice, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) will seek to make arrangements for candidates in this category to sit their examinations at an alternative location where appropriate controlled arrangements can be made to enable the sitting of the examinations without compromising public health. Candidates must be able to attend the examinations through their own/immediate household transport. Candidates in this category must not attend the examinations at their school but have been advised to contact the SEC. The SEC will seek to

put in place arrangements to accommodate these candidates noting that this will not always be possible depending on the individual's circumstances.

It continues to be the case that any candidate diagnosed with Covid-19, self-isolating or experiencing any symptoms should not attend the examinations and no accommodation will be possible given the risks to public health. Candidates who are within a restricted movement period following travel into the country (sometimes called quarantining) must also not attend for the examinations in that period.

There will be one sitting of the Leaving Certificate 2020 examinations in November 2020. Candidates unable to attend an examination for which they have entered can apply to sit the Leaving Certificate examinations in 2021.

Mr Pat Burke, Chairperson of the State Examinations Commission and his fellow commissioners extend their very best wishes on behalf of the SEC to all those sitting state examinations. Speaking before the examinations, Mr Burke said *"this year has been particularly difficult and stressful for Leaving Certificate candidates and their families, in these unprecedented times amidst the COVID 19 pandemic when the holding of Examinations was cancelled for the first time in the history of the State and an alternative to state examinations, the Calculated Grade, was introduced.*

Mr Burke concluded by saying "The Board and staff of the State Examinations Commission are very aware of the particular effort which candidates and their families have invested in the forthcoming examinations and extend our best wishes to all candidates"

It is expected that the provisional Leaving Certificate/LCA 2020 results will issue in early February 2021. Candidates who receive an improved CAO offer on foot of these results, will receive a deferred college offer to start their course in the 2021/22 academic year.

The SEC wishes to express its sincere thanks to school authorities for hosting these examinations at a time when schools are operating as normal.

Ends

NOTES FOR THE EDITOR

Examinations 2020 will commence on Monday 16th November 2020 with Leaving Certificate written examinations concluding on Friday 11 December, LCA written examinations concluding on Saturday 28 November and Junior Certificate examinations concluding on Monday, 30th November.

Examinations will take place with one examination on weekday evenings and two examination sessions at weekends, on both Saturdays and Sundays. The examinations are scheduled to start at 5.30pm each weekday evening, and at 9.30am and 2pm on both days at weekends.

The published timetables for the examinations are available on the SEC website www.examinations.ie

Format of Examination question papers

The examinations will be based on the normal question paper format, content and structure, and duration as in previous years. Candidates will be graded on the basis of their written papers only, except for five subjects, where project work had been completed prior to school closure last March and these marks will be included in the grading of these subjects. These are:

- Home Economics practical coursework;
- LCVP Portfolio;
- Design and Communication Graphics practical coursework;
- Physical Education (PE) Physical Activity Project;
- Engineering practical coursework.

Additional Support for Schools in order to conduct the Examinations outside school times

In recognition of the additional demand on schools associated with the hosting of the examinations at a time when very considerable time and attention is required for the normal operation of the schools at this time of COVID-19, additional support and resources have been made available to schools to minimise the impact on school management and resources generally, as follows:

- Additional Examination Aide days for pre-planning, collection of examinations question papers & materials and for logistical support who is the school's appointed person, responsible for assisting, supporting and liaising with the SEC appointed Superintendent, for the conduct of examinations on the weekday evenings and at weekends over the course of the schedule.
- SEC appointed Superintendent to each school, with overall responsibility for the custody of the examination papers, enrolling of candidates for each examination session, distribution of examinations papers, monitoring of exam centres, completion of the advice lists and centre roll, return of examination scripts, posting of advice lists, and completion of all documentation at the end of the examination in the school, to ensure the security, integrity and operation of the examinations in schools.
- Examinations Attendant, if required.

- Funding towards additional cleaning, caretaking, light & Heat and PPE associated with the running of the Examinations.

Marking Examinations 2020

The marking of the November examinations will rely principally on the expert judgment of the Chief Examiner and members of the senior examining team based on the content of the examination papers and the demands of the marking scheme. This expert judgment approach will ensure that the standards applied in the marking of these examinations will be fair and valid for these candidates, who form a small subset of the overall candidature for Leaving Certificate 2020.

Results

Leaving Certificate Results will be available no earlier than early February 2021.

Leaving Certificate candidates sitting the written examinations in November who opted to receive Calculated Grades will be credited with the higher subject grade achieved between the Calculated Grade and the written examination.

2020 Applicants to the CAO will have their final Leaving Certificate results forwarded to the CAO, using their best results of examinations and Calculated Grades, where applicable. They will receive any relevant CAO offers that their results indicate, as a deferred offer for 2021/22.

Appeals

Candidates who sit the Leaving Certificate November written examinations will have access to an appeals process. This will involve the opportunity to view their script(s) in advance of applying for an appeal. Appeal scripts will be marked by a different examiner to the one who marked the work originally and candidates will ultimately have access to the Independent Appeals Scrutineer service to confirm that all SEC appeal procedures were correctly followed.

Further details of the appeals process will be provided when Results are issued.

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Statistics

Leaving Certificate/Leaving Certificate Applied – Number of Candidates by county:

COUNTY	TOTAL
CARLOW	31
CAVAN	28
CLARE	46
CORK	222
DONEGAL	71
DUBLIN	874
GALWAY	156
KERRY	86
KILDARE	124
KILKENNY	29
LAOIS	56
LEITRIM	26
LIMERICK	84
LONGFORD	23
LOUTH	70
MAYO	74
MEATH	100
MONAGHAN	18
OFFALY	36
ROSCOMMON	23
SLIGO	30
TIPPERARY	84
WATERFORD	76
WESTMEATH	62
WEXFORD	73
WICKLOW	67
Total	2,569

Number of Candidates sitting number of subjects:

No. of Subjects	No of Candidates
1	879
2	630
3	449
4	233
5	144
6	122
7	88
8 or more	24
Total	2,569

Candidate Entries by Subject:

Subject	Candidates
Biology	1,003
Mathematics	984
English	561
Chemistry	537
Irish	427
French	367
Geography	301
Business	299
Physics	265
Agricultural Science	188
Spanish	173
Economics	164
Home Economics S & S	149
German	145
Accounting	139
History	132
Art	112
Music	76
Applied Mathematics	75
Link Modules	73
Construction Studies	65
Polish	64
Design & Communication Graphics	45
Engineering	42
Russian	34
Religious Education	28
Romanian	22
Politics and Society	22
Italian	19
Arabic	17
Physical Education	17
Computer Science	16
Technology	16
Physics & Chemistry	15
Classical Studies	15
Japanese	13
Croatian	12
Lithuanian	11
*Other Subjects with fewer than 10 Candidates	45
Total	6,688

* Portuguese, Latvian, Latin, Czech, Slovakian, Bulgarian, Modern Greek, Hungarian, Ancient Greek, Dutch, English And Communication, Social Education and Mathematical Applications.