Examinations 2021

* Yesterday, government decided that the Leaving Certificate Examinations in 2021 will proceed and that students will have the additional option to access SEC Accredited Grades.

*Leaving Certificate examinations*

* Written examinations will operate, subject to public health advice, in accordance with the normal timetable which has been published by the SEC at [this link](https://www.examinations.ie/?l=en&mc=ex&sc=tt). These examinations will commence on June 9th 2021.
* Additional assessment components, such as orals, practical performance tests and coursework will run, subject to public health advice, with certain elements not running for public health reasons and schools locally sourcing teachers to administer some of the tests, but not assessing their students. These examinations will run during Easter and shortly after. Assessment will be arranged by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

*Orals and practicals*

* It will not be possible to hold (day) practical examinations in a small number of subjects because of COVID-related restrictions. In these subjects, where the practical skills tests are not possible, the proportion of marks normally allocated to for the practical examinations will be reallocated to the coursework assessment components and the proportion of the marks for the written examination will remain unchanged.

* In the case of Music, the performance component of the examination will take place with some revised arrangements to ensure adherence with public health requirements.
* Oral examinations for languages will take place in schools during the period from 29 March 2021 to 16 April 2021. Oral examinations will be conducted under examination conditions by a teacher or teachers, qualified in the subject/s, appointed by the management of the school. The teacher may be a suitably qualified member of staff of the school, a neighbouring school, or another suitably qualified teacher engaged by the school. Teachers carrying out this task will be remunerated by the SEC.

*Accredited Grades system*

* This system will be operated by the SEC. Leaving Certificate candidates can opt to have grades in some or all of their subjects (to be known as “SEC Accredited Grades”) issued to them at the same time as the examination results. An SEC Accredited Grade results from combining data as follows:
  1. A school estimation of a percentage mark to be awarded to a student in respect of her/his expected performance in an examination in that particular subject.
  2. Data available from the State Examinations Commission – this may include *national* data on past Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle examination performance (pre-2020) of 2021 Leaving Certificate students in each subject
  3. The combination of these data sets through a process of national standardisation carried out by the SEC will determine the grade to be awarded to each student in each subject, thereby resulting in an SEC Accredited Grade.
* Students will not have to sit orals and practical examinations to access an Accredited Grade, but Accredited Grades will seek to fairly reflect a student’s oral and practical abilities.

*Will historical school profiling be part of the Accredited Grades Model?*

* No. An SEC Accredited Grade results from combining data as follows: A school estimation of a percentage mark to be awarded to a student in respect of her/his expected performance in an examination in that particular subject, as well as data available to the State Examinations Commission, which may include Junior Certificate results and national Leaving Certificate data.

***Junior Cycle Examinations***

* The Junior Cycle examinations will not be run in 2021. Schools will be provided with guidance on continuing to engage this year group in online learning and assessment during the period of school closure and through in-person learning when schools re-open.

*When will results issue and what will they look like?*

* Results from Leaving Certificate 2021 and Accredited Grades will issue at the same time. The results of the Leaving Certificate 2021 process will issue to students within the required timeframe for CAO admission to higher and further education. The Department will engage with the Department of Higher and Further Education, Research, Innovation and Science in this regard.

*Will out of school learners be eligible for an Accredited Grade?*

* Yes, the SEC Accredited Grades process will seek to make accredited grades available to as many students as possible, including students who are studying one or more subjects outside of school and those studying entirely out of school. For these candidates, robust evidence will have to be available on which an estimated mark may be based. In some cases, it may not be possible to provide estimated marks and/or SEC Accredited Grades to candidates, but every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate as many students as possible. Further details of the processes to enable these candidates to seek an SEC Accredited Grade will be provided as soon as possible.

*When will the Accredited Grade be delivered to the students?*

* Given that students have missed out on a number of weeks of face-to-face teaching and learning, it will be important to allow the maximum possible period for face-to-face teaching. For this reason, teachers will assemble data and schools will hold alignment meetings at the end of May and early June. Students will receive the combined outcomes of their SEC Accredited Grades and their examinations (if they choose to sit examinations) at the same time following the issue of Leaving Certificate results.

*If I am not happy with my result is there an appeals process?*

* It is open to a candidate to appeal his/her result in the Leaving Certificate Examination and/or his/her SEC Accredited Grades. Candidates appealing the result of an examination will follow the usual SEC appeals process. This will include an opportunity to view the written scripts marked by SEC examiners. In the case of candidates appealing an SEC Accredited Grade, the appeals process for the appeal of an SEC Accredited Grade is a process review.