

Press Release State Examinations Commission

10th April 2020 - Postponement of the Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle Examinations.

Following the closure of schools on the 13th March, the decision was made to cancel Leaving Certificate oral tests and Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle practical performance tests due to commence at the end of March and to extend the closing date for the completion of project work and coursework until the 15th May.

Since that time, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and the Department of Education and Skills have been closely monitoring the emerging public health situation and developing contingency plans. Based on the latest advice from public health authorities, the Minister for Education and Skills, Joe McHugh TD, has today announced the postponement of the remaining elements of the 2020 Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle examinations. At Leaving Certificate, all final written examinations due to take place in May and June will be rescheduled to a new timetable commencing at end July/early August. At Junior Cycle, the written examinations are postponed and will be rearranged as school based tests when schools reopen.

The SEC will be engaging with the education partners in putting in place arrangements for the safe conduct of the 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations acting at all times in accordance with the best available public health advice. The decision to postpone the Junior Cycle examinations recognises the need to prioritise the running of the Leaving Certificate examinations in order to allow 6th year students to progress to higher and further education or to the world of work. Retaining all of the available space that was to be used for both sets of examinations will allow the SEC to significantly reduce the number of Leaving Certificate candidates in each examination centre. The SEC will be making every effort to run the examinations as close to normal as possible and plans to publish the July/August Leaving Certificate examinations timetable in early June, along with the other detailed arrangements for the rescheduled examinations. At all stages, the health and safety of candidates, examination superintendents, school staff and others involved in the delivery of the examinations system will be at the forefront of the SEC's approach.

In addition to the written examinations due to be held in June, there are also three terminal examinations scheduled in May in the subjects LCVP Links Modules, LCA ICT Specialism and Computer Science. These May examinations will now also be rescheduled to the July/August period.

The remaining elements of the 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations comprise;

- Project work and coursework in a range of subjects had been due for completion by 15th May, which is now extended to immediately prior to the commencement of the written examinations in the July/August period.
- Practical tests in Art, Engineering and Construction studies due to commence on 27th April and the oral and practical performance tests in the Leaving Certificate Applied programme due to take place in May, will now be rescheduled for the July/August period

At Junior Cycle the SEC will provide schools with the examination papers and related materials they need to deliver these tests when schools reopen. All of the remaining elements of the Junior Cycle, project work, coursework and assessment tasks, will also be rescheduled to that time.

Delivering the state examinations each year requires a partnership approach between the SEC, teachers, school principals and the education partners. The SEC will continue to engage collaboratively with the education stakeholders and the Department of Education and Skills in the weeks and months ahead. The SEC will continue to act in accordance with advice from Government and public health authorities in relation to this evolving public health emergency.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

The written examinations were due to commence on Wednesday 3rd June and conclude on the Thursday 11th June at Leaving Certificate Applied; Tuesday 16th June at Junior Cycle and Tuesday 23rd June in the case of the Leaving Certificate established and vocational programmes

Over 126,000 students are due to take examinations this year; 61,063 at Leaving Certificate, including 2,999 Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) students, and 65,190 at Junior Cycle.

The certificate examinations are held at 718 second-level schools and 102 non-school institutions such as Youthreach and other further education centres; special schools; private colleges; prisons and youth detention centres. Not all programmes (Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and Junior Cycle) are provided in all institutions.

The key logistics involved in the delivery of the examinations annually includes

- Providing examinations to 126,953 candidates across all examination programmes; 65,190 at Junior Cycle (JC), 58,064 at Leaving Certificate (LC), and 2,999 at Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)
- Establishing 5,200 main examination centres and 8,900 special examination centres in 820 distinct venues; 718 recognised secondary schools at 102 other institutions such as VTOS/Youthreach centres; special schools; private colleges; and prisons/youth detention centres.

- Arranging for examinations in 81 curricular (38 LC, 19 LCA and 24 JC) and 18 non-curricular examination subjects.
- Producing 4 million examination papers comprised of almost 47.7 million A4 pages packed into c. 200,000 tamper-evident plastic envelopes.
- Engaging 5,400 superintendents and reserve superintendents for main examination centres.
- Providing exam access arrangements, under the scheme of reasonable accommodations (RACE Scheme) to 20,000 candidates with special educational needs
- Accommodating 15,000 of these candidates in special examination centres; 6,700 individual special centres and 2,200 shared special centres, requiring the appointment of 8,900 special centre superintendents.
- Establishing examination centres in atypical locations on an emergency basis such as in hospitals or in homes.
- Examining some 2 million individual test items including written examination scripts; art and craft work pieces; physical, digital and audio-visual artefacts; oral tests; coursework journals, research reports and portfolios.
- Recruiting and training almost 7,000 examiners to mark the examinations comprised of 4,400 written examiners, 1,100 oral examiners and 1,400 practical examiners.
- Processing some 20,000 appeals at Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and Junior Cycle.
- Making 400,000 Leaving Certificate scripts available to candidates for viewing either in schools or online.

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