

Key points from “A Guide to State Examinations and Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021”.

Leaving Certificate 2021 results will be awarded on the basis of the better of either :

- Students’ performance in Leaving Certificate examinations in any subject taken by them, including, where appropriate, their performance in the completion of additional components (coursework, orals, etc.)

or

- SEC Accredited Grades awarded to students in each subject based on schools’ estimates of students’ likely performance in the 2021 examination¹ and a national standardisation process.

In response to the disrupted learning experienced by students during the periods of school closures in 2020 and 2021 adjustments have already been made to the assessment arrangements for post-primary students taking State certificate examinations in the 2020/21 school year.

- Assessment Arrangements for Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021 available <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/assessment-arrangements-junior-cycle-and-leaving-certificate-examinations-2021.pdf>.
- These adjustments will be reflected in the written examinations.
- Further subject-by-subject guidance in relation to these adjustments will be issued by the SEC in the week of 22 March.

Coursework

Further subject-by-subject guidance in relation to these adjustments will be issued by the SEC in the week of 22 March. New dates will issue shortly taking into consideration the school closure and consideration has been given to the need to protect students’ tuition time for the remainder of the school year.

Practical examinations

Due to COVID-related restrictions it will not be possible to hold practical skills tests in the Performance Assessment in Physical Education. In this subject the proportion of marks normally allocated to these components will be reallocated to the project component

Oral examinations

Oral examinations in Irish and modern foreign languages will take place in schools during the period from 26 March 2021 to 15 April 2021. Schools will hold the examinations at times outside of normal tuition time so that students’ normal tuition is not interrupted to take the examination. For example,

examinations may be scheduled in periods before or after the normal school day, during the Easter vacation, or at weekends.

Teachers conducting the examinations will be provided with guidance by the SEC. The oral examination will be recorded electronically and the recording will be sent to the SEC for marking.

SEC Accredited Grades will be provided:

1. In addition to examinations: As far as possible, students will be provided with SEC Accredited Grades for all subjects for which they are entered in the Leaving Certificate examinations in 2021, provided that adequate evidence is available on which to base an SEC Accredited Grade.
2. To students who are unable to sit the examinations at the scheduled time
3. When it is not possible to take the examinations: It may not be possible to run the examinations in one or more examination centres because of COVID-19 related restrictions. In such cases, students will instead rely on an SEC Accredited Grade.

Students will be required to register on the SEC's Candidate Portal;

- to confirm their subject and level entry details;
- opt for the examinations and/or to receive SEC Accredited Grades.

The SEC's Candidate Portal is expected to open in the week of **8 March 2021** to allow students to make their choices.

Students will have approximately one week in which to do this.

The portal will re-open in late April/early May to enable candidates to review their choices

What is an SEC Accredited Grade?

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.
- Data available from the state examinations – this includes, but is not necessarily limited to, national data on past Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate/Cycle examination performance (pre-2020) of students in each subject.

The combination of these data sets through a process of national standardisation will determine the grade to be awarded to each student in each subject, thereby resulting in an SEC Accredited Grade being awarded.

What informs the teacher's estimated marks?

In coming to their judgements, teachers should draw on existing records and available evidence. It is important that the judgements are objective, and they should only take account of information about student performance. This will include the following, where available:

- Records of each student's performance over the course of study including for example, assignments, projects and practical work
- Performance on any class assessments, for example, tasks, questions, house or term examinations etc. taken over the course of study. Evidence of learning from the period of school closures in 2021 should be used. In using this evidence account must be taken of students whose circumstances made effective engagement with remote teaching and learning particularly difficult. Teachers should exercise great care in using evidence of learning from the period of school closure in 2020, especially if the teaching and learning experiences of students were very different at that time.
- Performance on any coursework component, even if this has not been fully completed .
- Any other relevant information related to student performance.

Are additional assessments required?

Following the return to school, teachers may set a limited number of additional assessments up to **14 May 2021**. It is important in the period leading up to the determination of estimated percentage marks that over-assessment is avoided.

If administering an in-class teacher-designed test, the test should be no more than one lesson in duration (maximum one hour) and a maximum of three class tests may be administered up to 14 May 2021.

Examples of tests that may be administered are written, oral, aural or practical tests.

Spring Assessment

1 hour in length.

The focus of these exams is to practice answering a question in exam like conditions so as to prepare for the written exams in June.

Report AFL feedback will focus on how the student can improve their performance in a written exam.

RACE accommodations will be catered for as far as possible

Because the assessments are designed by the teacher and corrected by the teacher they may be used to inform the overall accredited grade.

These assessments will be reported to parents/students.