

Statement from the State Examinations Commission on the State exams

Since the Government announcement last week of the closure of schools until the 29th March, the State Examinations Commission has been working closely with the Department of Education and Skills on considering alternative arrangements for candidates approaching the state examinations. The planned closure period directly impacts on the scheduled dates for this years' oral and practical performance tests. Following a review of all possible options the Minister has just now announced at a press conference that it has been decided to cancel these tests and to award candidates the full marks for the components in question.

For your attention and information, see below the SEC's press release on this decision. We have also announced an extension of the completion date for project work and coursework which was due for completion on various dates between the 20th March and the 24th April. Candidates will now have until the 15th May to complete this work. The SEC will provide further details on the revised arrangements in the coming days to school authorities and will publish details on our website for the information of students, parents and guardians.

Awarding full marks for the oral and practical performance tests was considered to be the most fair to candidates as it guarantees that no candidate can be awarded a mark lower than they would have achieved in the test. No other approach to generating a result for these components would have given this guarantee. These decisions have at all time been guided by consideration of the best interests of candidates.

Our advice to candidates is that they should continue to prepare for the remaining elements of their examinations as scheduled.

We are continuing to actively monitor the evolving health emergency and are working very closely with the DES in assessing the impact on the examinations system.