



State Exams 2021

21st February 2021

Assessment Arrangements for Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021 - see link below

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d3ea2-leaving-certificate-2021/#information-provided-to-schoolsstudents>

Leaving Certificate Examination Timetable 2021 – see link below

<https://www.examinations.ie/misc-doc/EN-EX-46337197.pdf>

The Basics

- Leaving Certificate students will this year have the option of receiving a calculated grade or a written exam in each subject.
- They will not be called calculated grades but called 'accredited grades'.
- Students will be able to **opt to receive accredited grades in any or all of their subjects**, to be issued to them at the **same time as the examination results**
- Students will be able to **opt to sit the Leaving Certificate Exams in any or all their subjects**

Course work

- For those **choosing to take the Leaving Certificate exams, orals and other practical coursework assessments will go ahead, but with "certain elements" not running for public health reasons.**
- The Department of Education says **oral exams will take place during the Easter break** or in the days just after.
- Additional assessment components, such as orals, practical performance tests and coursework will be put in place, subject to public health advice, with components in certain subjects not operating for public health reasons.
- **Schools will locally source teachers to administer some of the tests, but not assessing their own students.**
- Assessment will be arranged by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).
- But for those **opting for accredited grades, work that has gone towards preparing for a non-examinations' component will not be taken into account.**



SEC Accredited Grades

- An Accredited Grades system, to be operated by the SEC, will be available whereby 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.
- They will **be overseen by the State Examinations Commission**, unlike last year.
- But like last year, this year's process will begin with a teacher awarding marks and end with a national standardisation process.
- Like last year, **a school's previous performance will not be taken into account** in calculating grades for this year's students.
- Measures will be put in place to **enable out of school learners** to avail of calculated grades, whether that is students who have been **entirely home-schooled or students who have been studying just one or more subjects independently of their school**.
- Legislation will be drawn up to, if possible, to **prohibit the release of any ranking of students for the purpose of awarding calculated grades**.
- The legislation will also enable the State Examinations Commission to award calculated grades, and it will **prohibit the canvassing of teachers by students or any person on their behalf**. Legislation is also planned to provide indemnity for teachers, schools and school patrons.
- The **professional judgement** of each of the candidate's teachers **which will not be subject to appeal**
- A form of **in-school alignment** to ensure fairness amongst candidates at school level
- **Approval by the school principal** of the estimated subject scores
- A process of **standardisation at national level** to ensure as much fairness as possible amongst this year's candidates
- A **right for students to appeal in respect of their Accredited Grade** which will comprise a process review focused on examining possible errors in the transmission and processing of student data.

Written Exams – Leaving Certificate

- Written Leaving Certificate examinations will be put in place, which will -
- Operate in accordance with the normal timetables
- Be conducted subject to public health advice and providing, as far as possible, access to the examinations for very high-risk students
- Be supported by clear information and guidance to students and schools
- Leaving Cert Timetable at link above.
- The exams are scheduled to start on **9 June**, though the Government said this is subject to public health advice.
- It is planned that students in the **very high-risk health category will be given access to the examinations**.
- Certain **modifications** have already been introduced to allow students more choice in the question they will have to answer on a paper. **Those modifications remain**.



Leaving Certificate Results

- The Department of Education has said it is **imperative that results be issued in a timely manner to allow students to progress to the next level.**
- The results of both exams and accredited grades will be released at the **same time.**

Dates available so far

The following indicative dates have been provided by the Department of Education:

- **May 14th** – Closing date for collection of evidence of learning from 6th year student for the purpose of establishing an estimated mark.
- **We may need to move the dates for strand 3 assessments slightly to facilitate this date**
- **May 28th** – Schools will close for all students to allow the final week for completion of alignment process and data entry related to SEC Accredited Grades by schools.
- **June 4th** – Closing date for schools to enter/return all data from the school to the SEC relating to SEC Accredited Grades.
- **June 9th** – Written Leaving Certificate examinations to commence in schools.

Course Work

- The SEC will issue revised dates for submission of Leaving Certificate course work and the scheduling/arrangements

Questions remain?

- Concrete dates for submission of coursework.
- Dates for the oral exams, and they and their teachers will want to know exactly how those orals will be conducted.
- Dates for coursework, practical's
- Detail on the process of choosing between calculated grades and the exam.
- Detail on how the initial teachers' marks for accredited grades will be arrived at.



Junior Cycle

- The Junior Certificate exams have been **cancelled for this year**.
- The department said that 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 reopen**.
- Teachers will now work with **3rd year students to complete all courses by the end of May**. Students are strongly recommended to engage as fully as possible with their teachers as all **work done in 3rd year forms the foundation on which a successful Leaving Certificate is built**.
- **3 assessments** in total between now & end of the year
- Specific time frames, within these timeframes will be Strand 1, Strand 2, Strand 3 for specific subjects
 - **Assessment 1 = 22nd Feb – 12th March – report (grade only) 19th March**
 - **Assessment 2 = 22nd March – 23rd April – report (grade only) 30th April**
 - **Assessment 3 = 29th April – 21st May – report (grade only) 28th May**
- Students' work will **continue to be assessed by teachers** in the coming months and a more formal **school-based assessment will be conducted prior to the summer holiday** in accordance with DES guidelines.

As happened in similar circumstances last year, the school will prepare **a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) for each 3rd year student**. This will have **three components** – results of summer school-based assessments, outcome of completed Classroom Based Assessments (CBAs) and a summary of other areas of learning engaged in by students. **JCPA certificates will be presented to students next September/October**.