



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit**  
*State Examinations Commission*  
**Corr na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí**  
*Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.N37TP65*

**S40/21**

## **Leaving Certificate Results, 2021**

### **To the Boards of Management /Authorities of Second Level Schools**

The 2021 Leaving Certificate provisional results are available from Friday 3 September.

The SEC recognises that the experience of candidates for the 2021 Leaving Certificate was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The choices available to candidates in relation to their Leaving Certificate this year recognised that it would be unfair to have candidates rely entirely on the examinations as the sole means of assessment for their Leaving Certificate qualification in 2021.

The SEC had responsibility for the delivery of the examinations and the system of Accredited Grades. It was decided that there should be no link between examinations performance and Accredited Grades either at an individual candidate level or at the overall system level. The SEC has operated both processes entirely independently of each other, bringing them together only for the purposes of determining the higher result in a particular subject for those candidates who have opted for both examinations and Accredited Grades.

The SEC has sought to ensure that all aspects of the 2021 Leaving Certificate are of the highest quality, and that candidates are treated fairly and equitably. To ensure the accuracy and the integrity of the results, sufficient time was allowed not only in the parallel operation of examinations and Accredited Grades, both complex processes in their own right, but also in the integration of the results to ensure that candidates are provided with a set of Leaving Certificate results that comprises, based on their individual options on a subject by subject basis, examination results, Accredited Grades or the higher of the two. This has meant that the results issue date is later than in a normal year. Following the issue of the provisional results from 5pm on Tuesday 7 September details of performance in examinations and Accredited Grades will be provided to individual candidates and to schools.

The purpose of this circular is to provide you with details of the arrangements for accessing the results by both candidates and schools as well as providing important information in relation to the post result services.

This circular is divided into three Sections;

- Section 1 sets out the arrangements for access to results by schools and candidates
- Section 2 sets out the arrangements schools should put in place to support candidates receiving results
- Section 3 sets out the arrangements for the post results Viewing of Scripts and Appeals processes

A matrix showing the results for each candidate was posted to schools on Thursday 2 September 2021.

## **1. Arrangements for access to results for candidates and schools including accessing the Schools' Examinations Portal**

The 2021 Leaving Certificate comprises the results of the examinations and the Accredited Grades. This is provided for in the legislation which underpins the system of Accredited Grades, **the Education (Leaving Certificate 2021) (Accredited Grades) Act 2021**. The results from both processes have equal status and the provisional statements of results and the final certificates will not distinguish examination results from Accredited Grades.

### **Accessing Results – Candidates**

Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme and Leaving Certificate Applied candidates will have access to their provisional Leaving Certificate results on the Candidate Self Service Portal from 10 am on, Friday 3 September. Candidates can view their results and will also be able to print a statement of their provisional results.

On Wednesday 25 August, a *Short Guide to the Accredited Grades Data Collection, National Standardisation and Quality Assurance Processes* was emailed to all candidates which provided them with information about the system of Accredited Grades. The Short Guide has also been published on [www.gov.ie/LeavingCertificate.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie/LeavingCertificate.gov.ie) and on the SEC's website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).

By now all candidates should also have received a copy of the *Candidate Information Guide to Results and Appeals* which issued by email on Wednesday 1 September. It sets out details of the SEC's policies and procedures in relation to all aspects of the Leaving Certificate results and appeals for both examinations and Accredited Grades. This Guide has also been published on [www.gov.ie/LeavingCertificate.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie/LeavingCertificate.gov.ie) and on the SEC's website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).

On Friday 3 September, neither candidates nor schools will know whether the provisional result awarded was from an examination or an Accredited Grade.

Following the issue of the provisional results, from 5pm on Tuesday 7 September details of performance in examinations and Accredited Grades will be provided to individual candidates and to schools.

## Helplines

The helpline for schools is available at **1800 520 540** from 9 am to 5 pm from 3 to 13 September.

This line will deal exclusively with post result issue enquiries from school authorities. The line is not linked to the switchboard and should only be used for queries on the Leaving Certificate results. If you call the number for any other reason it will not be possible to transfer your call to any other section within the SEC.

For this service to operate effectively it is essential that the free-phone number is made available only to bona fide representatives of the school for their use on matters related to the issue of the Leaving Certificate results alone.

The SEC Candidate helpline will be available at **1800 111135 or 1800 111136** from 9 am to 5 pm from 3 September to 13 September. Outside of these hours queries may be e-mailed to [candidateportal@examinations.ie](mailto:candidateportal@examinations.ie). Please note this helpline is provided for queries relating to the Candidate Self Service Portal and the services provided through the portal.

Candidates have been advised that they should contact their school if they wish to schedule a visit to meet with members of the Student Support Team such as Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads, Tutors and Chaplains, and that the arrangements for this will be in line with public health advice, the schools COVID-19 Response Plan and the school's visitor policy.

## Accessing Results – Schools.

Schools will have access to the Leaving Certificate results in two formats:

- (i) *A Matrix report*
- (ii) *Report also from the SEC's new Schools' Examination Portal which will open from 10 am on 3 September*

*Note: The Provisional Statements of Results are available from the Candidate Self Service Portal only.*

The Schools' Examination Portal is a new service for the 2021 examinations. This is a different system to the Accredited Grades Data Collection System and the ESINET system that was used by the Department of Education to deliver the calculated grades results to schools in 2020.

By now schools should have logged on to the portal and printed a PDF test file using the Username and Password and link provided by the SEC. The Username and password letters issued to schools on Thursday 26 August, and the link was provided by email on Monday 30 August.

On 3 September, schools have access to a printable matrix report in PDF format of the provisional results by candidate and subject/level for all of the candidates in the school. Schools will not know whether the provisional result awarded was from an examination or an Accredited Grade.

On Tuesday 7 September, schools will be able to access a more detailed report in spreadsheet format (which can be imported into the school's CMS for analysis) which will set out the following for each candidate for each of their subjects;

- i. Examination grade (if applicable)
- ii. Accredited Grade (if applicable)
- iii. Final provisional grade

### **Understanding the Results**

In many subjects with a related examination component (an oral test, project, coursework, etc.) many candidates completed these components but did not ultimately sit the written examinations. The SEC generated a grade for any component weighted at 30% or more of the overall marks for the subject in order to ensure that candidates had every opportunity to be provided with the best result available to them from either process. Coursework can be worth up to 60% of the overall mark depending on the subject.

A Candidate Information Guide 4 – *Guide to your Examination Results by Subject* will be made available on Monday 6 September which will assist candidates with understanding their results.

On Tuesday 7 September you will receive by post a Supplementary Report in respect of any candidate who has a result that is not based on all mandatory components of the subject.

Further information in relation to the details of what will be provided in the Supplementary Report will accompany the report on Tuesday.

### **Data Privacy, GDPR and Data Breaches**

As you are aware the General Data Protection Regulation and related Data Protection Act 2018 are in force. Examination scripts, Schools Results Matrix and Supplementary Reports containing candidates' personal data should be treated with absolute regard to confidentiality and security. Extreme care should be taken when accessing candidates' personal information when accessing the school portal and or the hard copy of the School Matrix.

There is now a requirement for organisations to report personal data breaches to the relevant supervisory authority, where the breach presents a risk to the affected individuals. Where applicable the SEC will notify the Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) within 72 hours of Data breaches that are advised to the SEC.

If in the course of accessing candidates' Provisional results, you think there might be a possible Data Breach, please immediately contact the SEC Data Protection Officer by sending an e-mail to [dpo@examinations.ie](mailto:dpo@examinations.ie)

## **Accredited Grades**

Schools are asked to remind students and teachers of the following:

The process of providing estimated marks is governed by a piece of legislation called the **Education (Leaving Certificate 2021) (Accredited Grades) Act, 2021**. At the time the estimated marks were being provided by schools, candidates nor anyone acting on their behalf was permitted to discuss their estimated marks with their teachers or with the principal or deputy principal or any other member of the school authority.

Under the legislation, seeking to improperly influence the process of providing estimated marks, or providing false information about those marks, carries with it very serious consequences including the withholding of a Leaving Certificate result. It should be noted these provisions remain in effect in the context of the Accredited Grades appeal process. It continues to be the case that candidates, or anyone acting on their behalf, is not permitted to discuss their estimated marks with their teachers or with the principal or deputy principal or any other member of the school authority. A breach of this provisions in the course of the appeals process could lead to a provisional result being withdrawn. If false or misleading information is provided in the course of the appeals this could also lead to a result being withdrawn.

## **2. Details of the arrangements that schools should make to support candidates receiving results**

Schools have always provided an important role in offering guidance and support to Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied candidates on results day. It is recognised that for the Leaving Certificate class of 2021 the tradition of coming back to school to celebrate the results with teachers and classmates on the day that the results issue will not be the same as in normal years.

In particular, schools are asked to have regard to the fact that, at the time of writing, the incidence of COVID-19 in Ireland is continuing to increase. Schools are asked to bear in mind the strong probability that Ireland is not yet at the peak of the incidence of the Delta variant. Therefore, caution in making arrangements in relation to Leaving Certificate 2021 Results Day is strongly advised.

In recognising the unusual set of circumstances for Leaving Certificate candidates of 2021 who are to receive their Leaving Certificate results, schools will be able to put a number of measures in place to support candidates on the day and in the following number of days. These measures, which have been approved by the Department of Education, recognise the role that schools played in nurturing and supporting students throughout their years in post-primary.

You are asked to provide support to candidates in an appropriate way today, through enabling candidates to come to the school if they wish at a scheduled time, to meet with members of the Student Support Team such as Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads, Tutors and Chaplains. The arrangements for this should be in line with public health advice, the schools COVID-19 Response Plan and the school's visitor policy.

Former students who attend the school for a scheduled visit will be required to respect physical distancing requirements and to behave in a responsible way. Gathering groups of students in one venue is not recommended at this time. This is in order to minimise the risk of COVID-19 for staff, students, families and the wider community. The health and safety of the entire school community must be considered.

You also have flexibility to ask some classes of current students not to attend school on that day to ensure adequate social distancing in schools.

From mid-morning (3 September) and for the following week, you will have discretion to release Guidance Counsellors and other members of the support team from lessons, using the Supervision and Substitution scheme. This is to allow support to be provided to candidates in person or on the phone. These planned interactions with candidates are intended to support wellbeing and to discuss future education and career options. There should be no discussions about school estimated percentage marks submitted as part of the Accredited Grades process. Guidance Counsellors will play a crucial role in supporting these young people to navigate the next steps in their education and career journey by providing up to date information and reassurance in a calm and positive manner.

The wellbeing of the candidates who receive Leaving Certificate results will be supported through a number of additional measures.

- a. The Leaving Certificate candidate helpline, at 1800 265 165, which is provided by the National Parents Council post-primary will be available from 11 am on 3 September for students to reach a guidance counsellor with any queries that they may have. This helpline will operate until after the CAO first round offers and is staffed by qualified guidance counsellors. Further details can be found at <https://www.npcpp.ie/leaving-cert-helpline/>
- b. HSE/HSE-funded service providers will be available to support students through the provision of e-mental health services. <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/covid-19/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>
- c. Wellbeing resources developed by the National Educational Psychological Service are available at [www.gov.ie/leavingcert](http://www.gov.ie/leavingcert)
- d. Information available from the Central Applications Office (CAO) is available at [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

### 3. Viewing of scripts and Appeals Services

#### (a) Viewing Service

The SEC will provide two Viewing of Scripts services this year:

- 1) in person in schools for subjects marked on paper
- 2) online for subjects marked online.

This year the following Leaving Certificate subjects were marked using an online system.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE	
Subject	Level
English	Higher level only
Mathematics	Higher and Ordinary level
History	Higher level only
Geography	Higher level only
French	Higher level only
Physics	Higher and Ordinary level
Chemistry	Higher and Ordinary level
Biology	Higher and Ordinary level
Home Economics (written paper only)	Higher level only
LCVP (written paper only)	Common Level

Candidates must apply to view examination scripts through the Candidate Self Service Portal between **5pm on Tuesday 7 September** and **8pm on Wednesday 8 September**.

**There is a very tight timeframe for applying to view scripts. The application deadline will be strictly applied and it will not be possible to accept late applications. This is necessary in order to ensure that the other stages of the appeal process can be completed as quickly as possible.**

Marking schemes will be available on [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie) from **12pm on Wednesday 8 September**.

Once candidates have applied on the Portal to view their examination scripts, the SEC will provide details of their application to an Organising Superintendent appointed by the SEC to the school at which they sat their written examinations. This year viewing sessions will take place as set out below:

Viewing Sessions - Saturday 11 September

Session 1:	9 am – 11am
Session 2:	12 pm – 2 pm
Session 3:	3 pm – 5 pm

Schools have been given flexibility to arrange a session on the morning of Sunday 12 September. Holding a Sunday viewing session is at the discretion of the school.

### **(b) Appeals Service**

Candidates can apply to appeal through the Candidate Self Service Portal.

From: **9 am on Saturday 11 September 2021**  
To: **12 pm on Monday 13 September 2021.**

**In order that the SEC can process the appeals as quickly as possible, the appeal application deadline will be strictly applied. Late applications will not be accepted.**

If candidates sat the examination and opted for an Accredited Grade in a subject, they can apply for both of these appeal processes regardless of which process generated their provisional results. Given that the examinations and the accredited grades are two separate processes, they must apply to appeal separately for each process on a subject by subject basis. They may choose to appeal none, one or both grades.

If they sat the examination only in a subject, they will have access to the examination appeals process. If they opted for an Accredited Grade only in a subject, they will have access to the accredited grades appeal process.

Every effort will be made to process appeals as quickly as possible but it is not possible at this time to commit to a date for the issue of the appeal results. Candidates will be notified of this date as soon as possible.

Please note that the review of results procedures are individual candidate led processes. **There is no provision for a school or group/class-based appeal.** Any requests from schools for a review of the results of a group of candidates will be responded to on the basis that any candidate who has a concern in relation to his/her result can make an application to appeal their result. Candidates who sat examinations can also view scripts.

Both appeals processes will include further recourse to Independent Appeals Scrutineers whose role is to check to ensure the correct procedures were followed throughout the appeals processes. Once all internal processes have been exhausted, decisions of the SEC are open to review by the Office of the Ombudsman, or in the case of candidates under 18 years of age, by the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Written Examinations Appeals**

The appeal process involves a full review of every part of every question by an experienced examiner, other than the original examiner, of the work submitted by the candidate in the examination. It is essential that school authorities do not dispose of, or return to candidates, any practical or coursework pieces until the appeal process has fully concluded, even in instances where a candidate has not appealed a result in that subject, as the SEC may need access to the material during the appeals and related quality assurance processes. For that reason, the integrity of the examinations system requires that the material continue to be securely stored by the school.



## **Accredited Grades Appeals**

The Accredited Grades appeals process involves the following stages;

**Stage 1:** Checks will be undertaken on the forms completed by the school to check that the information was transferred correctly from the forms to the data collection system.

Stage 1 will be completed by the school which provided the estimated mark on candidates' behalf. The SEC will provide each school with a report of appeal applications for that school. The school will undertake checks to ensure that, in the case of each Accredited Grade appealed, the estimated percentage mark provided in each case was correctly recorded and transferred to the data collection system. An Accredited Grade aide (in the school) will extract the documentation in respect of each appeal; and confirm that the data was accurately transferred from the relevant forms to the data collection system. The school will be required to submit a return to the SEC that all procedures were correctly followed and then return the documentation in relation to results which were the subject of an appeal to the SEC for quality assurance checks.

**Stage 2:** A review will be carried out to ensure that the data was correctly received and transmitted through the systems used in the national standardisation process conducted by the SEC.

In Stage 2, data checks will include a check to ensure that the Class ID for the subject and level taken has been preserved in the standardisation process and that candidates placed on the same school-estimated mark in the same subject and at the same level taken by the school are conferred with the same Accredited mark.

The Independent Appeals Scrutineers will check to ensure the correct procedures were followed throughout the appeals process. The Scrutineers will have access to the records and documentation considered at Stages 1 and 2.

Please ensure that the contents of this circular are brought to the attention of the Career Guidance teacher(s) in your school.

Again, we are very grateful to school authorities for your continued support and assistance with the 2021 examination process.

**Majella Smyth**  
**Acting Director of Operations**  
**State Examinations Commission**

**September 2021**