



S15/22

**Leaving Certificate (Established) Examinations 2022; Oral Examinations in Irish and the Modern Foreign Languages, and the Music Examination**

**To: The Management Authorities of Post Primary Schools and other Entities recognised by the SEC to hold examinations**

Circular **S90/21**, which is available [here](#) announced the changes to the timing of the delivery of the Leaving Certificate oral examinations and the Leaving Certificate Music practical examinations for the 2022 Leaving Certificate.

These examinations have been confirmed for the period **Saturday 9 April, 2022 to Thursday 14 April, 2022** inclusive.

This change in timing was actively sought by many stakeholders, including school management representatives, in order to address concerns about potential further disruption to learning for Leaving Certificate candidates.

The successful conduct of the above examinations during this year's revised time window over the Easter holiday period absolutely relies on having sufficient examiners. **These examinations can only be delivered provided that there are sufficient examiners available in the examination window.** We continue to have concerns about the number of examiners that will be available to undertake these tests in the Easter holiday period and this is reflected in the arrangements which follow. We have contacted all school leaders on a number of occasions about the need for more applications from teachers to undertake the Oral examinations. We are repeating this appeal and would ask Principals and Deputy Principals to play an active role in ensuring that all schools are supporting the efforts of the SEC to provide these tests for all candidates over the Easter holiday period. Your cooperation and assistance in relation to this is appreciated as is your cooperation in relation to the release of teachers from schools to attend the one-day training conference and to be released on the contingency days of Thursday 7 and/or Friday 8 April should that prove necessary.

For the 2022 Leaving Certificate (Established), oral examinations will be held in Irish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Russian and, for the first time, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese. The Practical examinations in Music will also take place during this period.

The purpose of the circular is to provide schools authorities with further details of the arrangements for the conduct of the examinations and instructions as to what schools are required to do now. You are asked to note the contents of this circular and to bring it to the attention of relevant people in your school.

**1. GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE CONDUCT OF THE ORAL AND MUSIC EXAMINATIONS**

- The examinations will be conducted by visiting examiners, recruited and appointed to schools by the SEC
- Examiners will be assigned a list of schools in which they will deliver the examinations (Oral) examination and Music examination) over the designated examination period
- From Wednesday 23 March, designated examiners will contact the schools to which they are assigned to advise them of the days they intend to attend the school to deliver the examinations and the number of candidates they will examine each day.
- Due to the ongoing shortage of examiners for the Oral examinations, most examiners have been assigned a full 6-day itinerary (Saturday 9 April to Thursday 14 April inclusive) to cover all of the schools to which they have been

assigned. This greatly limits their flexibility. Your co-operation in relation to accommodating examiners on the particular days they intend to visit the school is appreciated

- Examiners have been instructed not to examine more than a set number of candidates on each day. The examinations will be delivered in the normal hours of a full school day, in as far as is possible.
- Given that all of the examinations are being delivered in the same assessment window, it is highly likely that it will be necessary to accommodate a number of examiners on the same day in your school.
- Schools are asked to be cognisant of the impact of the scheduling on candidates, in particular those entered for oral examinations in multiple languages and the music examination. Please see section 4 below
- There should be a designated Examination Aide assigned to deal with the Oral and Music examinations to act as the coordinator and central point of contact for these examinations. (See Section 2 below re supports for schools).
- Examiners should be provided with an out-of-hours contact number for the Examinations Aide for the Oral and Music examinations in case they need to get in touch for any emergency issues arising over the duration of the examinations. Examiners will also be instructed to provide their contact details to the school.

### **Use of Contingency Days**

- Thursday 7 and Friday 8 April 2022 have been identified as contingency days. Holding examinations on these days will require the examiner to be released from their own school to deliver the examinations on these contingency days so use of these days will be considered only in the most exceptional circumstances
- Examiners do not have discretion to arrange the examinations on these days.
- Individual schools must liaise with the SEC in relation to arranging examinations on these days. Examinations will only be arranged on these days in exceptional circumstances where the issue is beyond the control of the candidate and the school.
- Decisions on the use of these contingency days will be made by the SEC where exceptional and extraordinary circumstances have occurred, necessitating the scheduling of examinations on a contingency day(s)
- The SEC will need to be satisfied that it is not practicable to hold the examinations without availing of a contingency day(s)

## **2. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SCHOOLS**

The SEC provides financial support for schools in the administration of the annual Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations. Under the current scheme, school authorities have discretion to engage an Examinations Aide for a period of 15 days each year to assist the Principal during the state examinations or to fully substitute for the Principal if they are unavailable for any reason. Additional days are also available to schools based on the number of examination candidates and the duration of the timetable in that school. The Examination Aide days are to be used for both the written examinations and the related assessment components.

In recognition of the changed workload associated with this Easter model of delivery an additional 8 Examination Aide days will be available to schools with 120 Leaving Certificate candidates or fewer while 10 days will be available to those schools with in excess of 120 Leaving Certificate candidates.

The provision of these additional Examination Aide days is intended to act as a support to school leaders at examination time in order to alleviate some of the administrative burden associated with examinations. Principals are not required to be in attendance in school on these days in the Easter holidays and are empowered to assign a member of teaching staff to discharge the Examination Aide days in respect of these examinations.

Where a school has students undertaking the Music examination, up to 2 additional Examination Aide days will be provided which may be assigned to a Music teacher whose attendance in school at the time of the examination is deemed necessary to candidates' performance. It should be noted that the Music Teacher is not the Examination Aide, rather Examination Aide funding can be used for this purpose.

Reasonable additional costs specifically incurred in relation to light, heat, cleaning, caretaking and PPE, within schools, associated with the Oral and Music examinations taking place in the Easter holidays will be reimbursed by SEC. A claim for the additional costs relating to cleaning and PPE should only be made where the COVID-19 capitation payment provided by the Department of Education has been expended.

To facilitate attendance by candidates reliant on the school transport scheme, school will be asked to arrange taxi services for examinations events at the Easter Holidays where necessary and to recover the costs from SEC. Schools are asked to facilitate the attendance of candidates using taxi services in the following limited circumstances. The candidate must:

- be eligible for school transport under the terms of the Department’s School Transport Scheme and
- be availing of school transport in the current school year for whom transport services will not be available over the Easter holiday period
- have to attend for an examination event over this period

The SEC will reimburse schools for reasonable costs of such services on the production of valid receipts.

Full details of the supports available to schools this year to support the running of all aspects of the examinations including details of how to claim will be the subject of a separate circular to issue from the SEC in due course.

### **3. ORDER OF MERIT LIST FOR THE ORAL EXAMINATIONS**

In line with the SEC’s normal practice in the Oral Examinations, an Order of Merit list is required to be prepared showing the school’s estimate of the oral proficiency of each candidate. This will be required only in the exceptional circumstances where a recording of a candidate’s oral examination cannot be accessed. To facilitate the preparation of an Order of Merit list, copies of form ML10/BT10 are available [here](#). School authorities should ensure that the forms ML10/BT 10 are completed at the time of the oral examinations and retained in the schools. Where this form is required by the SEC we will contact you to ask for it to be submitted. The forms should not be routinely sent to the SEC nor should they be given to the examiners.

Please use a separate form for each language.

Please place the names of the pupils in each Leaving Certificate class on the enclosed forms in order of merit according to the school’s estimate of proficiency. When completing the ML10/BT10 forms please use the following symbols:

A.L. = Higher Level	G.L. = Ordinary Level
B.L. = Foundation Level	M = Mixed class

All that is required is an Order of Merit; do not award any marks.

### **4. ORDER OF ENTRY OF CANDIDATES (ORAL EXAMINATIONS AND MUSIC).**

On arrival at the school on the first day of their assignment, examiners should be given a list showing the order in which candidates will present for the examinations. Examiners will have informed the school in advance of the number of candidates that they will examine each day. Any timetable made out by the school, therefore, can only be approximate. While every effort will be made to hold the examinations as close to the designated time as possible, it is really important that candidates be made aware that they will not necessarily be examined at that specific time.

Consideration should be given, where practicable, to candidates who are due to take more than one examination. In scheduling the examinations, the Examinations Aide should seek to avoid circumstances in which a candidate is taking two examinations on one day, while noting that this may not always be possible. Under no circumstances, should a candidate be scheduled to take more than two examinations on one day.

### **5. LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR ORAL AND MUSIC EXAMINATIONS AND PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDELINES**

#### **Oral Examinations**

The SEC is conducting all of its examinations in accordance with prevailing public health advice. In line with the recent Information Note SD 0003/2022 from the Department of Education to the Managerial Authorities of all recognised Primary, Post Primary and Special Schools providing updated Covid-19 guidelines to schools the SEC recognises the removal of remaining restrictions relating to mask-wearing and physical distancing in schools.

The wearing of face masks or covering is generally no longer mandatory, other than as outlined by the HSE in certain specific circumstances. However, the SEC acknowledges that examiners and examination candidates may wish to wear a face mask or covering or not to do so. This will lead to circumstances

- in which the examiner may wear a mask but the candidate chooses not to;
- the candidate may wear a mask but the examiner chooses not to;
- both parties may wear a mask;
- neither party wears a mask.

All of these scenarios will constitute a valid test. Candidates should be advised of their choice and the examiner's choice in relation to mask/face coverings in advance of the commencement of the examinations. Schools and candidates should make themselves aware of the latest public health advice.

It is important that schools have the following logistical arrangements in place to ensure they adhere to the health and safety guidance when facilitating the oral examinations.

- Rooms suitable for the conduct of the oral examinations should be made available to the examiners
- Rooms with visual access should be used whenever possible.
- Schools are asked to ensure that noise in the vicinity is kept to a minimum
- The examiner remains in the same room for the duration of the work
- Candidates use their own pens to sign the Roll
- Any document being shared between the examiner and the candidate will be laminated
- Adequate space between the candidate and the examiner (and any other person who may need to be present in the room)
- Attention to hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Rooms to be adequately ventilated, even when taking account of the need to ensure that external noise does not interfere with proper and clear communication between the candidate and examiner.

### **Music Examinations**

The position on mask wearing as set out in relation to the Oral Examinations also applies to Music examinations.

### **Examination centre requirements:**

- The examination centre must be set up in a large well-ventilated area. Where possible, a concert hall / P.E. hall / social resource area should be used
- A minimum of two areas/rooms should be set up as examination centres to allow for continuity when the primary area/room is being aired.
- A desk inside the entrance to the centre for the signing of the roll. Each candidate must bring their own pen for signing the roll
- Hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes
- A desk for the examiner placed a minimum of five metres from the performing area
- A second desk, for the use of an advising examiner, placed two metres from the examiner's desk
- A music stand for the unprepared tests

## **6. RECORDING OF THE ORAL EXAMINATIONS**

Digital Voice Recorders (DVRs) will be used to record the oral examinations in all languages. Examiners will be provided with the equipment that they need to record each examination for later use such as monitoring, for quality assurance purposes and appeals. Schools or candidates are prohibited from making their own recordings (See also note 11 below).

## **7. ATTENDANCE AT THE ORAL AND MUSIC EXAMINATIONS**

On their arrival at the school on the first day of their assignment the examiner should be asked to provide identification. Any advising examiners from the SEC who visit the school should also be asked for identification.

SEC advising examiners may visit the school over the course of the assignment to advise and support the work of the examiner. This will require their attendance in the room during the examinations.

The Manager/Principal (or his/her appointed representative) may, in exceptional circumstances on instruction from the SEC, be present during the examinations.

It is also expected that the Examination Aide will maintain a presence in the vicinity, as appropriate, during these examinations.

## **8. ILLNESS, TRANSFERS AND EXTERNAL CANDIDATES**

### **8.1 Absence of a Candidate through Illness**

It is intended to initiate late examinations from Wednesday 4 May for situations where a candidate is absent through illness, for example, at the time the examinations are held. Medical certificates or similar documents should not be given to the examiner.

An application for such arrangements must be made by the school authorities and must be supported by medical evidence to reach the SEC on or before 15 April 2022 using the Late Application form which will be available on our website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie) under the Examination Information section, prior to **28 March 2022**.

It will not be possible to make alternative arrangements for any candidate other than those mentioned above. Medical certification is required in all circumstances including for reasons of absence due to Covid- 19.

### **8.2 Transfer of Candidates**

Orals Section of the SEC should be notified immediately of any candidate transferring from, or to, your school and the name and candidate number and details of other school should be given.

### **8.3 External Candidates**

All candidates who do not attend your school but who may wish to attend for the purpose of the examinations are required by the SEC to have received prior permission. On the understanding that such permission is received the SEC will make appropriate arrangements with the candidates concerned.

## **9. MULTIPLE SUBJECT EXAMINERS IN THE SAME SCHOOL**

Where two (or more) examiners for the same language have been appointed to one school, candidates must present for examination to the examiner to whom they have been assigned.

## **10. GROUP MEETING WITH CANDIDATES**

In light of the revised arrangements for the delivery of these examinations outside of school time during the Easter holidays, it is not practicable to hold the usual group meeting with candidates in advance of the examinations commencing. Information in relation to the 2022 oral and music examinations is available on the SEC website at [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie). You are advised to ensure that this information is brought to the attention of all candidates in advance of the examinations.

## **11. MOBILE PHONES/RECORDING/ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Candidates should be instructed by the school authority that **mobile phones and/or other recording/electronic devices** are prohibited in the examination room and that such devices are to be left outside.

## **12. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

On arrival examiners should be provided with details of any candidate with a visual, speech or hearing impairment. They should also be advised of any specific circumstances where candidates have been granted reasonable accommodations to access these examinations under the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations including those that may require the

support of an additional person during the examinations. Schools are advised that they may put practical measures in place such as timetabling the candidate(s) last in order of appearance.

### **13. CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE ORAL AND MUSIC EXAMINATIONS TEST RESULTS**

The examinations will be conducted entirely by the examiners who, subject to monitoring by the SEC, will decide the marks to be assigned to the candidates. The marks assigned are strictly confidential and may be communicated only to the SEC. Schools are advised that Examiners and Advising Examiners are expressly prohibited from divulging any information with regard to candidates' performance in the oral examinations. Therefore, examiners should not be asked about the performance of candidates.

### **14. ENQUIRIES**

Issues of concern in relation to these examinations should be made by School Management or his or her appointed representative directly to the Orals or Practicals Section of the SEC as soon as they come to light.

Queries related to the oral examinations should be directed by email to [orals@examinations.ie](mailto:orals@examinations.ie) or by telephone to 090 6442741

Queries related to the Music examinations should be directed by email to [practicals@examinations.ie](mailto:practicals@examinations.ie) or by telephone to 090 6442867

It is noted that the period during which examinations are being held can give rise to unexpected issues or concerns. Over the course of the window for the conduct of these examinations, staff of the SEC will be on hand to address these issues as and when they arise.

**Richard Dolan**  
**Director of Operations**  
**State Examinations Commission**

**March 2022**