



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

**S90/21**

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT IN RELATION TO ORAL LANGUAGE EXAMINATIONS IN IRISH  
AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND THE MUSIC PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS FOR  
LEAVING CERTIFICATE 2022**

**TO THE BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT/AUTHORITIES OF POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND OTHER  
ENTITIES RECOGNISED BY THE SEC TO HOLD THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE ESTABLISHED  
EXAMINATIONS**

**Purpose of Circular**

The purpose of this circular is to:

- Announce a change to the timing of the delivery of the Leaving Certificate oral language examinations and the Leaving Certificate Music practical performance test for the 2022 Leaving Certificate
- Provide some preliminary information on the arrangements for these examinations
- Provide information in relation to the recruitment of examiners
- Seek the assistance of schools with examiner recruitment
- Outline the additional supports that will be available to schools.

Traditionally, the Leaving Certificate oral language examinations, and Music practical performance test are conducted by SEC-appointed examiners over a two-week period, either before or after the Easter break depending on how early or late Easter falls.

For the 2022 Leaving Certificate, the oral language examinations and the Leaving Certificate Music practical performance test will be conducted, by SEC appointed examiners, in the Easter holiday period using a revised 6-day model to run from Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April to Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April. The examiner training conferences for these examinations will continue to be held in school time and attendance at these conferences is mandatory. This revised arrangement reduces individual teacher absence from school on examining duties from six days (seven days in the case of Music) under the previous arrangements to one day.

This change, which has been discussed with the Education stakeholders, is being made in response to the need to take steps to limit teacher absences from schools given current challenges associated with sourcing substitute teachers. Furthermore, it will assist in minimising disruption to teaching and learning in schools and in particular for those candidates preparing for their examinations. Given that the SEC has faced significant

constraints in previous years in recruiting sufficient numbers of teachers to act as examiners, it is expected that these new arrangements will enable greater numbers of teachers to participate in this important work.

The reasons for these amended dates include enabling schools to release staff on examination duties, thus limiting the disruption to school in terms of encroachment on tuition time.

By arranging the examinations in the initial week of the Easter holidays, the revised arrangements will provide that examiners, candidates, and schools staff have a consecutive ten-day break from school after the examinations have been completed.

### **Overview of 2022 Delivery Model**

For the 2022 Leaving Certificate (Established), oral language examinations will be held in Irish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Russian and, for the first time, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Lithuanian and Portuguese. This circular does not apply to the oral or practical performance tests in the Leaving Certificate Applied.

In a change to the normal (pre-COVID-19) arrangements, the oral language examinations and the Music practical performance test, will be conducted over a six-day period commencing on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April and concluding on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

The examinations will be conducted by visiting SEC appointed examiners, recruited and appointed to schools by the SEC.

Under the traditional arrangements, a candidate would not have their Irish oral and their oral examinations in the modern foreign languages in the same week (although they could have multiple modern foreign language oral examinations and Music in the same five-day period). In collaboration with the SEC and SEC appointed examiners and schools, attention will be required to the scheduling at school level to take account of these considerations.

All of the days Saturday to Thursday inclusive will be available for scheduling these examinations. Working with the SEC, and the examiners assigned to the school in each subject, schools will have some flexibility if there is a particular day over the six days on which examinations cannot be held due to local needs. However, in choosing not to use the full 6 days, schools will be asked to be cognisant of the impact of the scheduling on candidates and particularly the impact on those entered for multiple language subjects.

In the event that it is not possible to facilitate all of the examinations in the 6-day period, two contingency days have been identified. The contingency days are Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> and Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April in 2022. Decisions on the use of the contingency days will be made by the SEC in conjunction with the SEC examiners. The SEC will need to be satisfied that it is not practicable to hold the examinations without availing of one or both of those contingency days. It will not be up to individual schools to seek to arrange examinations on these days in the first instance.

Candidates who miss their oral language examination and/or Music practical performance test due to illness will be facilitated in mid to late May with a later examination. This is in line with existing practice.

### **Examiner Recruitment**

During the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> January the SEC will commence the recruitment of Leaving Certificate oral language examiners and Music practical examiners for 2022. The rate of remuneration, which will reflect the change to the timing of these examinations, will be notified by the SEC to applicants early in January as part of the recruitment process.

The SEC will be offering automatic appointments to examiners who meet the relevant criteria who were previously appointed in 2020 and 2021. New applications will also be invited.

The SEC will be seeking the active assistance and support of the second-level school system in ensuring that we will have sufficient examiners available to conduct these examinations in 2022. In particular, we expect that releasing examiners for a one-day online training conference will not be any impediment to participation. The SEC will arrange the training conferences in order to minimise impact on individual schools.

The rate of remuneration for the examiners will reflect the change to the timing of the tests. Examiners also receive travel expenses and subsistence allowances.

Examiners are primarily recruited from a pool of experienced serving and retired teachers. The most essential requirement for examiners is subject competence and any personnel appointed to mark the state examinations must be appropriately qualified. Examiners will be selected on the basis of their academic qualifications, their teaching experience and their examination experience. New applicants for these positions will be required to complete an interview to demonstrate their language competence.

### **Provision for additional Examination Aide Days**

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. Details are provided below of additional days to be used for the oral language examinations and Music practical performance tests in 2022.

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. Where a school has students undertaking the Music practical performance test, 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 performance test is deemed necessary to candidates' performance.

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.

### **Further Support for Schools**

Reasonable additional costs specifically incurred in relation to light, heat, cleaning, caretaking and PPE, within schools, associated with the oral language examinations taking place in the Easter holidays will be reimbursed by SEC.

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.

### **Junior Cycle**

These revised arrangements do not apply to Junior Cycle Music and Home Economics which will continue to be arranged as heretofore.

### **Further Information**

The SEC will issue a more detailed circular in January 2022 with further details of these arrangements including details in relation to the management of the tests during the 6-day period over the Easter holidays and the support arrangements available to schools.

In the meantime, I would appreciate your assistance in bringing the details of these revised arrangements to the attention of school staff, students and parents/guardian.

Richard Dolan  
Director of Operations  
State Examinations Commission

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