



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Deputy Denis Naughton TD,
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26th November 2021

Dear Deputy Naughton,

The Minister for Education, Ms Norma Foley, TD, has asked the State Examinations Commission (SEC) to respond directly to your Parliamentary Question Ref 56584/21 as follows:

To ask the Minister for Education if the option of accredited grades will be offered to those due to sit the leaving certificate in 2022; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Following an update to the Advisory Group on Planning for State Examinations in late June in relation to the 2022 Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle examinations, the Minister for Education, Ms. Norma Foley, TD, announced that adjustments would be made to the 2022 examinations which are similar to those published in December 2020 in respect of the 2021 examinations.

The adjustments are outlined in the document [Assessment Arrangements for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate 2022](#) which was published in August 2021. These adjustments have been arrived at through discussions between the Department of Education, the State Examinations Commission, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and key stakeholders. It was considered that the most appropriate way to reflect and take account of the challenges for students that have occurred is to incorporate adjustments to the certificate examinations in 2022 in a manner similar to the initial adjustments that were made for the students due to take examinations in 2021.

Changes to the national assessment arrangements have been made with due regard for the principles of equity, fairness and integrity as these principles apply to assessment and examinations and refer to student-to student, subject-to-subject, and year to-year comparisons. Overall, the changes can be viewed as reflecting and recognising the loss of learning time students experienced in a fair manner with some contingency for future learning loss that may occur during the 2021/22 school year also built in. They provided clarity, certainty and reassurance to students, their parents/guardians, teachers and schools in advance of the start of the 2021/2022 school year

The adjustments leave intact the familiar overall structure of the examinations, while incorporating additional choice for candidates in the examinations, providing greater choice for candidates across a wide range of subjects. A [summary advice note](#) setting out the key curriculum and assessment arrangements for Leaving Certificate Applied Year 1 and Year 2 students in the 2021/22 school year has also been published.

The system of Calculated Grades which operated for Leaving Certificate 2020 was a one-off event given the sudden and very challenging public health situation at that time and the impossibility of safely running examinations in their traditional form in the summer of 2020. For the 2021 Leaving Certificate, a decision was made by Government in February 2021 to offer the class of 2021 a dual system of Accredited Grades and examinations. The rationale for

this unprecedented measure was that, given the levels of disruption to learning experienced by this group of Leaving Certificate students during two significant and prolonged periods during their Senior Cycle education, it would have been unfair to assess their attainment based on the traditional Leaving Certificate only without offering an alternative or parallel process, noting that it was possible to run the examinations.

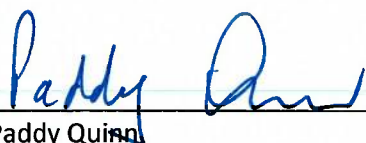
The capacity of the school system to provide for remote tuition has improved hugely in recent times. While schools were closed as a result of Covid-19 from January 2021, all students, including students who are now in sixth year and who are due to sit the 2022 Leaving Certificate examinations, engaged in a programme of remote learning with their schools from 11 January until their return to in-person tuition. Fifth year Students were also prioritised for a return to school following the return of sixth year students in Spring 2021.

In terms of contingency arrangements for 2022, the Minister has also announced the intention to provide that an alternative set of Leaving Certificate examinations will be run in 2022, shortly after the conclusion of the main set of examinations. These examinations will be limited to certain students who are unable to sit the main set of examinations due to close family bereavement, COVID 19 illness and certain other categories of serious illness to be determined with due regard for the principles of equity, fairness and integrity which govern all aspects of the examinations system.

The SEC will issue further details regarding the 2022 examinations, with all arrangements guided by prevailing public health advice. There will be further engagement with stakeholders, through the Advisory Group on Examinations Planning, and with other stakeholders as appropriate, in advance of any detailed announcements.

I trust that this information is of assistance in clarifying the position.

Yours sincerely



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