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November State Examinations 2020 – Your Questions Answered Section

When will the Examinations take place?

Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate/LCA written examinations will commence on Monday, 16th November 2020 and will take place over a 4-week period to Friday, 11th December 2020 in the case of the Leaving Certificate.

LCA examinations will begin on Monday 16th November and conclude on Saturday 28th November.

Junior Cycle examinations will commence on Monday 16th November and conclude on Monday 30th November.

There will be one examination on weekday evenings, Monday to Friday, and two examination sessions at weekends, on both Saturdays and Sundays.

How do I apply to sit the Examinations?

In the case of the Leaving Certificate, the Candidate Portal used for the Calculated Grades will be open to allow students to register for the November examinations. The portal will be open from 9am on Monday 28th September and close at 5pm on Friday 02nd October.

The portal will also include those who did not receive a calculated grade but were entered to sit the Leaving Certificate in June 2020. Some candidates may have to register on the portal prior to accessing the application to enter for the November examinations.

In the case of Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA), candidates wishing to sit a written examination in November should contact the SEC by email at LCAexams2020@examinations.ie.

In the case of the Junior Cycle examinations, the SEC will shortly be contacting the schools/education centres attended by adult learners with a view to offering the November Junior Cycle examinations to these learners. Contact will also be made with schools regarding offering the examinations to early school leavers.

What time do the Examinations start and how long are they?

The examinations are scheduled to start at 5.30pm each weekday evening, and at 9.30am and 2pm on both days at weekends.

Candidates will be required to attend at the school 15 minutes before the start of each examination and to sign on an attendance/centre roll to confirm their attendance.

Each examination will last the same duration as previous years. The timetable is available on the SEC website at www.examinations.ie.

When will the results of the examinations be available?

The provisional results of the examinations will issue in early February 2021 at the earliest.

What is the position in relation to results obtained in the Calculated Grades and results in the Leaving Certificate Examinations?

Where a candidate sits the Leaving Certificate examination and has also received Calculated Grades, their final Leaving Certificate will reflect the better of the two results on a subject basis.

For example, if a candidate sits an examination and receives a grade lower than the Calculated Grade that they received in the subject, their final certificate will display the Calculated Grade, as this is higher.

If a candidate receives a higher grade in the examination than the Calculated Grade that they received, then this is the grade that will appear on their final certificate.

Will there be an appeal process and if so, when?

Yes, candidates may appeal the results of the 2020 examinations in the same manner as in previous years. Details of the appeals process will be issued in due course.

What is the position in relation to the CAO and college places?

Candidates who opt to sit the Leaving Certificate 2020 – November examinations and who receive an improved CAO offer on foot of these results, will also receive a deferred college offer to start their course in the 2021/22 academic year. If a candidate who has started first year of a course becomes entitled to a higher CAO offer and chooses to accept same in the following academic year, attendance for the first year on the new course would remain eligible for free fees and SUSI funding as appropriate.

What do I need to Bring with Me to the Examinations?

Candidates need to bring photographic ID with them to **each** examination they are sitting. The following forms of photographic ID are acceptable: driving license, passport, Public Services card, Garda ID or student ID card.

Candidates need to bring the usual pens, pencils, erasers etc.

Detailed instructions will be sent to Leaving Certificate candidates before their examinations regarding types of pens to use, as some of these examinations will be marked online.

Candidates must wear an appropriate face covering at all times on the school premises, including for the duration of each examination(s).

What format will the Examinations take (i.e. written, aural, orals, practical)?

Candidates will be provided with written examinations only, including the aural tests in Music and language subjects, and use of audio-visual material in LCA and LCVP. The written examinations will be based on the normal question paper format, content and structure, and duration as in previous years. Examinations with two written question papers will continue to have two question papers.

Candidates taking the postponed examinations will be graded on the basis of their **written papers only**

It is not feasible or practical at this stage to conduct examinations in oral or practical components, or to try to complete unfinished coursework. The oral and practical components of the exams are school-based, requiring significant levels of support at school level, including the requirement to take serving teachers out of their schools to undertake state examinations work.

In the case of five subjects for Leaving Certificate, the coursework involved will be marked as this had been completed prior to school closure and these marks will be included in the grading of these subjects. These are:

- Home Economics (already marked by the SEC);
- LCVP Portfolio;
- Design and Communication Graphics;
- Physical Education (PE) Physical Activity Project;
- Engineering.

Will I still get full marks for orals/practicals?

The earlier arrangement communicated in March, that full marks would be awarded in respect of oral language and music performance tests for Leaving Certificate, no longer applies. The March announcement was intended to support the running of all other examination components in the normal fashion as part of a response to the emergency situation relating to Covid-19 at the time.

Candidates are not automatically being awarded full marks in respect of any examination component in the Calculated Grades system. Accordingly, it would not be appropriate or fair to now award full marks for some examination components in the interest of inter-candidate equity between those sitting a later examination and those receiving a calculated grade.

Who can sit the examinations?

Leaving Certificate/LCA, candidates who had previously entered for the Leaving Certificate examinations which were postponed from last June can opt to sit the Leaving Certificate examinations in any or all of their registered subjects.

This includes candidates who are not satisfied with their calculated grades, including those who have appealed their calculated grades; or who opted out from receiving a calculated grade or who were not in a position to receive a calculated grade.

In the case of the Junior Cycle examinations, these examinations are being made available to adult learners who had registered to sit the June 2020 examinations. They will also be made available to early school leavers who had been registered for these examinations in June 2020 and who have neither returned to school nor commenced a formal alternative educational pathway.

Where will the examinations take place?

It is intended that candidates will take their examinations in their own school (i.e. the school in which they were entered for or scheduled to sit the June 2020 examinations).

It is not possible to make changes to these arrangements.

Candidates who had been due to take their examinations in other centres such as halls in June 2020, will be contacted directly by email by the SEC to advise them of the venue for their examination(s) in November.

Do I have to pay a fee to sit my examinations?

There will be no fees charged in relation to sitting these examinations.

What subjects and how many subjects can I sit in the Examinations?

Candidates who had previously registered for the Leaving Certificate examinations which were postponed from last June can enter for the Leaving Certificate in any or all of the subjects for which they are registered.

This includes any or all subjects in which a candidate received a Calculated Grade and subjects being appealed under the Calculated Grades Appeals Process.

It is not possible to enter to sit an additional subject in the November Examinations.

Candidates will be asked to indicate the subjects they wish to sit in the examinations on the Candidate Portal.

Can I change the level I wish to take in the Examination/s (i.e. Higher/Ordinary/Foundation)?

Yes. Candidates will be asked to indicate on the Candidate Portal, the level they wish to sit in each subject.

Candidates may change the subject levels from those they received a Calculated Grade and/or those they were entered for the June 2020 examinations

Can candidates get reasonable accommodation for their Examinations in November (i.e. special centre, scribe, access to a reader, spelling and grammar waiver etc)?

If candidates were approved reasonable accommodation(s) for the June examinations, they will have access to this resource in November.

It is not possible to approve new applications for reasonable accommodation in any other circumstances, other than the normal emergency situations which can arise such as a broken arm at the time of the examinations

What Public Health Guidelines will Apply at the November 2020 Examinations ?

Candidates must comply with public health guidelines and school regulations in force at the time of the examinations.

In line with current policy, these include:

- Social distancing at all times while on the school premises
- Wearing an appropriate face covering (e.g. a mask) **at all times** while on the school premises and in the examination centre;
- **NOT** attending for any examination(s) if, for example, a candidate is displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, suffering from the virus, or have been advised to self-restrict/isolate at the time of the examination(s).

What is the position if a candidate is unable to sit their examinations in school due to illness or receiving medical treatment?

Due to the constraints and public health guidance arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, it will only be possible to provide the 2020 November state examinations in schools and other educational settings.

SEC will operate the examinations in line with public health guidelines at the time. In line with current policy, candidates will not be able to attend at school to sit these examinations if they are suffering from COVID-19, have symptoms of the virus or are required to self-isolate or restrict their movements due to the virus,.

The normal range of measures that the SEC provides under the emergency provisions of its scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE scheme) for candidates who are ill at the time of their examinations will be available to assist candidates in the state examinations.

These measures include alternative scheduling of an examination(s) (e.g. to facilitate medical treatment) provided such was possible within the confines of the day/evening of the examination. This could involve either early or late examinations sittings requiring candidates to be supervised so that they did not have access to other candidates who had already sat or who have yet to sit the examinations in question, though noting that this facility will be quite limited in November as the examinations take place during the normal school year. Candidates can also have access to a special examination centre and the provision of rest breaks during the examinations.

It is highly unlikely that it will be possible to facilitate sitting examinations in hospital settings in November 2020 due to HSE restrictions on access to hospitals as a consequence of COVID-19.

What is the position if a candidate suffers a bereavement during the Examinations in November?

In 2019, new provisions were introduced under the RACE Scheme so that Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) candidates who suffered a close family bereavement during the state examinations in June which allowed candidates to defer some of their examinations to an alternative sitting of the examination in July.

The purpose of this measure, which was introduced on an interim pilot basis, was to facilitate Leaving Certificate and LCA candidates who suffered a bereavement at examination time and consequently could not sit certain examinations due to having to prepare for and attend a family funeral. Candidates were allowed to defer up to three days of their examinations and to take the examinations that they missed at an alternative sitting of the examinations in July.

It will not be possible to provide such alternative sittings for these examinations for candidates who suffer a close family bereavement given the already delayed sitting of these examinations and associated time constraints, and also the requirement to progress preparations for the 2021 examinations.