

To take into account the disruption to teaching and learning experienced by the Leaving Certificate class of 2022, extensive changes will be made to the written Leaving Certificate 2022 examinations. In addition, the Minister has announced that the overall set of results in 2022 will be no lower than in 2021, ensuring that the class of 2022 will not be disadvantaged. The Junior Cycle examinations will run in June as normal for the first time since 2019.

The Minister attended a meeting of the advisory group on state examinations this morning and advised of these changes.

The decision to make the extensive changes to the examination papers has been taken to provide the Leaving Certificate students of 2022 with certainty and clarity and will provide the fairest pathway to successfully completing their post-primary education and enabling them to progress to further and higher education and training, apprenticeships, and the world of work.

Full details of the extensive changes made to the examinations will be published next week on [gov.ie/Leavingcertificate](https://www.gov.ie/Leavingcertificate) and on the SEC website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie) and notified to schools who will communicate this to students. The examination papers from 2021 will form a useful guide to students in preparing for the examinations and teachers assisting them in their preparations.

<https://www.examinations.ie/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9c82d-leaving-certificate-2022/>

Minister Foley said: “The Leaving Certificate class of 2022 has experienced significant disruption to their learning and their school experience. In light of this, following extensive engagement with the advisory group on planning for state examinations, I can confirm this plan for significant changes to the examinations, which takes account of the experiences of students during the pandemic and will provide the best possible pathway for this year’s Leaving Certificate students.

“The students had a number of concerns. They wanted clarity and certainty. I have answered both of those valid concerns by making this announcement earlier than last year.

“Students also raised concerns over the potential disadvantage the class of 2022 would face when compared to the class of 2021 in terms of grade inflation. To alleviate this concern, I have asked the SEC to put in place measures to ensure that the overall set of results in the aggregate for this year will be no lower than last year.

“Today I can confirm extensive changes to the written paper in acknowledgement of the challenges our students have faced. They build on the changes already made to the papers and notified to students last August. These combined changes mean that students need not be concerned that they will be disadvantaged compared to their peers. The exams will be

structured in a familiar way, but with more choice and a reduction in the number of questions to be answered this will not be the traditional Leaving Certificate exam.

"Throughout this extensive engagement process there were many varied and valued opinions and concerns raised by the stakeholders. I want to thank sincerely all the members involved in the Advisory Group process, students, parents, teacher unions, school management bodies and the State Examinations Commission, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Higher Education Authority and representatives of higher education for their intensive engagement with my Department on this issue."

An alternative set of Leaving Certificate examinations will be run in 2022, shortly following the main set of examinations. These examinations will be limited to certain categories of students, such as those who experience a close family bereavement, COVID-19 illness and certain other categories of serious illness, during the first examination period. There will be strict eligibility criteria applying to this contingency sitting.

Junior Cycle examinations will also take place this summer. Adjustments to the assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle have been made and advised in August 2021, including a reduction in the number of Classroom Based Assessments to be completed, the removal of the requirement to complete Assessment Tasks and adjustments to the requirements in coursework and practical performance tests. These adjustments provide for more teaching time in schools.

The timetable for the written Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle examinations in June will be published by the State Examinations Commission in the coming days, following engagement with stakeholders. The arrangements for Leaving Certificate Oral Examinations in Irish and the Modern Foreign Languages and the practical performance tests in Leaving Certificate Music are as advised late last year.

These examinations will take place outside of school time over the first week of the school Easter holidays, with the examinations running in schools during the six-day period Saturday 9 April to Thursday 14 April inclusive. Working with the State Examinations Commission (SEC), and the SEC examiners assigned to the school in each subject, schools will have some flexibility in scheduling the examinations during this period based on local needs.

Running the oral examinations before Easter will leave students free over the second week of the Easter holidays. The SEC has also notified students and schools of additional flexibility in the completion of coursework.

All aspects of staging the State examinations will be guided by public health advice and schools will be supported and given clear guidance on the staging of the examinations.

The impact of COVID-19 continues to present many challenges and present many unknowns. The Department of Education will be working closely with the State Examinations Commission with a view to ensuring that the results of the examinations are available in time to meet the needs of students and stakeholders.

Regards,  
John Curtis,  
General Secretary