



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

25 April 2024

S21/24

TO THE AUTHORITIES OF POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS

RACE Scheme - Provision of a scheme of Deferred Examinations for Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied candidates unable to sit one or more papers in the main sitting in June on grounds of;

- A. Close family bereavement – funeral preparation and attendance.**
- B. Serious medical conditions – accident, injury or illness.**

1. Context and Policy

The attention of school authorities is drawn to the important information which follows. The purpose of this circular is to set out the details of the Scheme of Deferred Examinations for the 2024 Leaving Certificate within the policy context of the Scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE Scheme). School authorities are asked to familiarise themselves with the content of this circular in order to be able to advise candidates and parents/guardians about this continuation of the RACE Scheme and the limitations which apply. Specific information for candidates, and parents/guardians will also be provided.

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) provides the RACE Scheme to support candidates with a complex variety of special educational needs including learning difficulties as well as permanent or temporary physical, visual, hearing, medical, sensory, emotional, behavioural or other conditions. In common with similar schemes which operate in other jurisdictions, the focus of the RACE scheme is on the need to remove examination access barriers, while retaining the need to assess the same underlying skills and competencies, and to apply the same standards of achievement, as apply to all other students.

As well as providing accommodations to candidates with permanent and/or enduring special needs, the RACE scheme also provides for a broad range of emergency situations which occur during the examinations each year such as in the case of students who suffer illness or trauma in the lead up to or during the examinations. There are arrangements that can be made between the SEC and the school in the best interests of an ill or injured candidate to enable the candidate to proceed with their examination on the scheduled date.

It is acknowledged that students experience many forms of trauma and adversity, such as serious illness and bereavement, around the time of the Leaving Certificate examinations. The issues arising here are complex and must be balanced against the need to maintain integrity and public confidence in the examinations system.

To maintain robust examinations and certification procedures and standards, the threshold for access to the deferred Leaving Certificate examinations has been set at an appropriate level and will provide for candidates who experience a close family bereavement at the time of the examinations or for those who have a serious

accident, injury or illness issue which renders them unable to take their examinations in the main sitting subject to the strict conditions of eligibility set out below.

It is important to note at the outset that accessing the Deferred Examinations in line with the arrangements and access criteria set out below is intended to be an action of last resort. Every effort should be made to facilitate and encourage candidates to take their examinations on the scheduled date. Indeed, it is anticipated that many of the candidates who would meet the eligibility requirements below will nonetheless take their examinations as scheduled, using, where required, the well-established support arrangements that can be put in place.

2. Deferred Examinations 2024

The SEC provides a Scheme of Deferred Examinations within the policy context of the RACE Scheme. The deferred Leaving Certificate examinations sitting applies to candidates who were unavoidably absent from their examinations in the main sitting due to;

- a serious medical condition, whether through accident, injury or illness, OR
- a close family bereavement.

Applications for access to the deferred examinations sitting will be considered in relation to candidates who are unavoidably absent from their examinations in the main sitting in line with the reasons set out in this circular.

Candidates who are eligible under the bereavement criteria may apply for an absence of up to three days to allow them time to prepare for and attend the funeral of their relative.

Eligible candidates who experience a serious accident, injury or illness, either unexpectedly or a flare up of an existing condition, which render them unable to sit their examinations, may apply to defer some or all of their examinations depending on the timing, nature and severity of their condition.

There are eligibility criteria for access to the deferred sitting and these will be strictly applied. The criteria have been determined with due regard to the principles of equity, fairness and integrity which govern all aspects of the examinations system.

The provision will be available for the Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied examinations as an acknowledgement that missing examinations at this time would otherwise mean missing out on a college place or a job opportunity and having to wait a full year for the next available opportunity to sit the examinations. No alternative arrangements are available for candidates who are unable to take their Junior Cycle examinations as scheduled.

The number of examinations which may be deferred depends on the grounds on which access is provided i.e. Bereavement, or Serious Medical Conditions (accident, injury or illness). The conditions of eligibility which apply to each of the grounds of access are set out in this governing circular and will be strictly applied.

Applications must be made as set out below and all decisions made will be by reference to this governing circular.

Under the RACE Scheme, the existing arrangements to support candidates experiencing challenging circumstances at examinations time continue to be available to;

- a. Leaving Certificate candidates who do not meet the eligibility criteria for access to the deferred examinations sitting.
- b. Leaving Certificate candidates who meet the eligibility criteria for the deferred examinations sitting but who choose to proceed with the examinations in the main sitting.
- c. Junior Cycle candidates.

The accommodations that can be made when unforeseen circumstances occur include sitting in an alternative location such as in hospital; access to a shared or individual examination centre; rest breaks (including extended rest breaks); alterations to the standard timetable; and the taking of food, drinks or medicines in the centre. These arrangements are detailed in the *RACE Instructions for Schools 2024* and in the *RACE 2024 – Implementing Access Arrangement during the Written Examinations* guide. See Section 4 below.

3. Principles and Requirements

- a) The deferred examinations sitting is for candidates who experience the death of a close family member or a serious accident, injury or illness and, as a result, are unable to take their examinations in the main sitting.
- b) To safeguard integrity and maintain confidence in the Leaving Certificate, access to the deferred examinations sitting will be strictly limited to those genuinely unable to sit their examinations in the main sitting for one of the specified reasons.
- c) The RACE scheme is underpinned by a number of fundamental principles which include ensuring that alternative arrangements do not undermine the integrity, status or reputation of the examinations.
- d) A core principle in the examinations system is ensuring equitable treatment for all candidates. This leads to another principle of the RACE Scheme, which is that any alternative arrangements should not give the candidate for whom they are made an advantage over other candidates.
- e) Therefore, any arrangements that can be made for candidates who miss their examinations for one of the specified reasons must be mindful of the requirement to maintain robust examination and certification procedures and standards.
- f) For this reason, the threshold for access to the deferred Leaving Certificate examinations has been set at a high level. The eligibility criteria have been determined with due regard for the principles of equity, fairness and integrity which govern all aspects of the examinations system.
- g) The criteria for serious medical conditions have been informed by research into international best practice in other jurisdictions with similar examinations systems to Ireland. This research has been published and is available [here](#).
- h) School authorities have a critical role in being fully aware of the scheme in order to counsel candidates about their eligibility, or otherwise, and of the supports available for candidates who, though unwell on the day of an examination, are ineligible for the deferred sitting.
- i) School authorities also have a critical role in the application process by confirming the application as made and safeguarding the integrity of the examinations.
- j) Candidates will need to present evidence of their inability to sit the examinations during the main sitting so as to establish that they meet the eligibility criteria set out in this circular;
 - i. Candidates who experience bereavement of a close family member will be required to provide evidence of their bereavement.
 - ii. Candidates who experience serious accident, injury or illness (either unexpectedly or a flare up of an existing condition which render them unable to sit their examinations) will be required to provide medical evidence provided by a consultant or, if hospitalised, from a hospital.
 - iii. The medical evidence which is submitted will have to include both evidence of the condition and the degree to which it impacts on their ability to attend for their examinations as scheduled.
- k) Other than in the extreme circumstances which follow at l, these examinations are not available once a candidate has commenced an examination or completed an examination in the main sitting even if it is asserted by candidates that they were unwell while taking the examinations.
- l) In extreme circumstances, the SEC may consider an application for the deferred examinations sitting where an event occurs after the examination has commenced which renders the candidate medically unable to complete the examination. Such circumstances are serious and life-

threatening medical emergencies which result in hospitalisation or an acute episode of an existing chronic serious medical condition for which the candidate is under the care of a consultant. (See Paragraph 6, Part B below).

- m) It is important to note, that the deferred sitting is not a repeat examination;
- If a candidate elects not to avail of this measure and goes ahead with examinations as scheduled in June (in full or in part), they will not be permitted to access the deferred sitting.
 - If a candidate elects to avail of this measure and indicates their intention to present for the deferred sitting then they cannot also sit those same examinations during the main sitting.
 - Under the extreme circumstances provision as 6.B.3 below, any part of an examination that had been taken in the main sitting will be regarded as not having been sat.
- n) Candidates may not know the decision on foot of their application at the time that they miss an examination. Therefore, candidates need to be fully aware of the strict access criteria as set out in this circular.
- o) Candidates need to be aware that there is a risk that if they miss the main sitting, they may not be eligible to sit an examination at the deferred sitting and they will only be permitted to do so if their application is approved.
- p) There is an extremely short time window for the application, decision-making, and appeals processes to transact. For this reason, all deadlines will be strictly applied. (For information, the first examinations of the main sitting are on Wednesday 5 June and the first examinations in the deferred sitting are on Wednesday 26 June).
- q) Applications will not be approved simply because the candidate has missed an examination in the main sitting.

4. Supports Available in the June Examinations

All candidates are encouraged to take their examinations as scheduled and every effort will continue to be made by the SEC and by schools to support candidates in taking their examinations in the main sitting.

There are arrangements that can be made between the SEC and the school in the best interests of the candidate to enable the candidate to proceed with their examination on the scheduled date. It is extremely important that school authorities are aware of these arrangements and can advise candidates appropriately.

Candidates who are ill or injured but who are not eligible for access to the deferred examinations sitting will be able to avail of the longstanding supports available under the RACE Scheme. Candidates who experience bereavement or a serious accident, injury or illness but who decide to continue with their original schedule of examinations will, of course, be entitled to these support arrangements. These supports include;

- access to a shared or an individual special examination centre (depending on need).
- arranging for examination sittings in atypical venues such as in hospitals or at another location or another school.
- granting of supervised breaks or rest periods having regard to the physical, medical or emotional condition of the candidate.
- access to food, drink and medicine.
- Amendments to the published timetable provided the examinations take place on the day scheduled on the timetable and appropriate supervision arrangements are in place.
- Hospital Sits will be accommodated. However, once a candidate sits an examination in hospital, they will not be allowed subsequently to access the deferred sitting of that examination.

5. Limitations on the Deferred Sitting.

A number of caveats are presented in the *Principles and Requirements* at section 3 above. In addition, in making an application to access the deferred examinations sitting for any of the specified reasons, school authorities, as well as candidates and parents/guardians, should note the following limitations which apply;

There is **no contingency for the deferred examinations sitting**. If a candidate is considered eligible for the deferred examinations and remains, or becomes, unwell at the time of the deferred examinations, or experiences a bereavement, or misses their examinations for any other reason, their next opportunity to sit the Leaving Certificate examinations will be in June 2025. No alternative arrangements will be provided.

The **scheduling of the deferred Leaving Certificate Established examinations is fixed from** (Wednesday 26 June to Saturday 13 July inclusive, including Saturday 29 June and Saturday 6 July). In the case of Leaving Certificate Applied the timetable is also fixed from Wednesday 26 June to Thursday 4 July including Saturday 29 June. **(See Appendix 1)**

Examinations will be held on all weekdays and all Saturdays in the period of the deferred examinations sitting.

The **deferred examinations sitting will be held at a number of regional locations** and candidates should opt to sit any deferred examinations in the host school location closest to them. **Venues may be subject to consolidation** depending on the number of candidates ultimately sitting the deferred examinations sitting. **Candidates must be aware that their selected host school is subject to change.**

Attendance at the deferred examinations sitting is likely to involve travel to another location for the duration of each deferred examination. **Candidates taking the deferred examinations will be responsible for their own transportation and accommodation expenses and must be able to make their own arrangements for attending the deferred sitting.**

No alternative dates, locations or arrangements will be provided at the request of candidates.

Candidates will only be admitted to the deferred examinations sitting on instruction from the SEC.

6. Eligibility

A. Close Family Bereavement – Funeral Preparation and Attendance.

The purpose of this accommodation is to provide candidates who experience bereavement at examinations time with some time away from their examinations to prepare for and attend the funeral of their loved one without having to contend with the added pressure of their full set of examinations at the same time.

Eligible candidates who experience a **close family** bereavement will be able to **defer up to three days of examinations**.

Noting that the measure is associated with funeral preparation and attendance, eligibility¹ will be determined by reference to the date of the funeral. In order to be eligible, the death of the close relative (within the definition provided below) must occur between Friday 31 May and Tuesday 25 June inclusive. If the date of death is outside of this eligibility period but the date of the funeral occurs during the period of the examinations (taken for this purpose as the period Wednesday 5 June to Tuesday 25 June inclusive) then the SEC will consider an application for access to the deferred examinations.

The candidate will, at their discretion, be able to defer the examinations they were due to take on the day of the funeral, if that falls on a day on which they were scheduled to sit examinations, and two other days.

A candidate may not defer their examinations **and** also seek an early or late sitting to allow them to attend the funeral. If they seek to defer examinations, then one of the days must be the day of the funeral if the funeral is on a day on which they are due to take their examinations.

The three days do not need to be consecutive, but must fall between the date of death and the day after the date of the funeral.

For the purposes of deferred examinations sitting close relatives are defined as one of the following: a father, step-father, mother, step-mother, legal guardian, brother, step-brother, half-brother, sister, step-sister, half-sister, grandfather or grandmother. The scheme also provides for the death of the child, spouse or civil partner of a Leaving Certificate candidate.

B. Serious Medical Conditions – Accident, injury or illness.

6.B.1. General Provisions - Range of Conditions

Candidates who experience serious accident, injury or illness (either unexpectedly or a flare up of an existing condition which render them unable to sit their examinations) will be able to defer some or all of their examinations depending on the timing, nature and severity of their condition.

It is not possible to be entirely prescriptive as to the range of conditions which might arise but the following are intended to exemplify the seriousness of the medical conditions and circumstances which will warrant consideration of an application for access to the deferred examinations sitting.

¹ In the 2023 scheme, the SEC extended the dates of eligibility to include the weekend before the examinations commence.

Type of Serious Accident, Injury or Illness	Examples of conditions which will be considered	Examples of conditions which will not be considered*
Serious illness.	Cancer, cardiac conditions.	Gastroenteritis, migraines.
Major surgery at or near the time of the examination.	Non-elective major surgery, Transplant, appendectomy.	Any elective surgery.
Severe disease or severe condition event / episode.	Sepsis, epilepsy, Crohn's disease, severe asthma attack resulting in hospitalisation.	Bronchitis, mild Asthma, Hay-fever.
Severe or permanent injury occurring at the time of the examination.	Bones breaks requiring hospitalisation at the time of the examination, brain injury, amputation, spinal injury.	Sprains, minor burn injuries, tendon damage, bone breakages which can be accommodated within the existing provisions of the RACE Scheme (e.g. providing access to a recording device/scribe for a candidate with a broken arm).**
Psychiatric illness.	Life threatening mental health episode; detention in a hospital.	Stress, Anxiety, Non-medical trauma.

**Unless any of these conditions result in a period of unexpected hospitalisation at the time of the examinations.*

*** See 6.B.4. below regarding an exception that might be considered in the event of a candidate granted emergency access to a scribe in certain examinations.*

6.B.2. General Provisions – Medical Evidence

For reasons of examinations integrity, the threshold for evidence is high and evidence will be required from **a medical consultant or hospital consultant with a Medical Council Registration Number (MCRN)**. Other evidence, provided by a GP or other medical practitioner, will not be considered.

The medical evidence must include both evidence of the condition and the degree to which it impacts on the candidate's ability to attend for their examinations, including the dates on which they are unable to attend.

There must be no existing conflict of interest where the candidate has personal ties with the medical consultant or that of the referred medical hospital.

Candidates are expected to defer as few examinations as possible and to resume their examinations in the main examinations session as soon as they are able.

6.B.3. Extreme Circumstances – Examination session has already commenced (See Section 3 K & L above)

Deferred examinations are not second chance examinations and are not generally available once a candidate has commenced an examination or completed an examination in the main sitting even if it is asserted by a candidate that they were unwell while taking the examinations.

In extreme circumstances, the SEC will consider an application from a school on behalf of a candidate who commenced an examination in the main sitting and then experienced a serious medical

emergency that prevented them from carrying on with that examination. This consideration will only be given in two very specific situations:

1. Where the candidate has an acute episode of a pre-existing chronic condition² for which they have been under the care of a medical consultant (for example, epilepsy), or
2. Where the candidate has a serious and life-threatening medical emergency, which results in hospitalisation on the day of the examination.

The attention of school authorities is drawn to Section 4 above which sets out the arrangements which are available to candidates who are unwell on the day of the examinations but who will not be eligible to defer their examinations.

Given the extreme circumstances which govern this provision, eligibility for the deferred examinations sitting for those who have started an examination should be exceptionally rare.

For these extreme circumstances, a letter or report with appropriate detail, from a hospital or a medical consultant, will be required to support an application for access to the deferred examinations sitting. A letter with an account of the circumstances leading up to the emergency should also be submitted by the school as part of the application.

Applications under this provision will not be approved unless they meet all of the requirements including the detailed letter from a consultant/hospital and the support of the school authority. The bar for entry to the deferred examinations sitting for those who have already commenced an examination sitting in June is intentionally set at a high level in order to protect the integrity of the State examinations.

In such instances, if the candidate is approved to sit the deferred examinations sitting it will be considered that the main examination has not been sat and therefore any work from this examination will not be marked or considered by the SEC.

6.B.4. Candidates with emergency access to a Scribe in certain subjects

Any candidate who suffers an accident, injury or illness that is not considered under the scheme of deferred examinations will be accommodated under the existing provisions of the RACE Scheme as set out at Section 4 above.

There are limitations on using a scribe in certain Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied subjects. A scribe is not permitted at all in Leaving Certificate Design and Communications Graphics (DCG). In other subjects (LC Art, Construction Studies, Engineering and Technology; LCA Craft & Design, Graphics & Construction, Engineering and Technology) the scribe is precluded from producing sketches, drawings, and related labelling and annotations. In the subjects Leaving Certificate Japanese and Mandarin Chinese, a scribe cannot be used for questions to be answered in Japanese or Mandarin Chinese. See details at **Appendix 2**.

Some candidates will experience a last-minute emergency (e.g. broken arm or collar bone) affecting their writing hand. The default accommodation in this case is access to a Scribe. While the condition itself would not ordinarily confer eligibility for the Deferred Examinations, the SEC recognises that the limitations on the use of a scribe in certain subjects mean that the candidate cannot be accommodated in the main sitting within the existing provisions of the RACE Scheme. Therefore, due to the limitations on the use of a scribe in the subjects listed at **Appendix 2**, the SEC will consider an application on behalf of a candidate to sit the deferred examinations in these subjects.

² Candidates and schools should take note of the examples of the type of conditions which will and will not be considered as meeting the threshold of eligibility in the table in 6.B.1 of this circular.

It should be noted that the SEC will consider an application on these grounds exceptionally and only in relation to candidates granted access to a scribe due to a last-minute emergency and only in respect of the subjects in which use of a scribe is limited. If their application is approved, they will sit all of their other examinations in the main sitting. If the candidate is not healed as of the date of the examination in the deferred examinations sitting, and they still require the use of a scribe, then no other alternative arrangement is possible.

Schools should contact the SEC directly for advice in such cases and should not apply through the Schools Portal.

7. Requests for Advice to the SEC on Candidate Eligibility

School authorities should keep the following information in mind prior to contacting the SEC in respect of a candidate's eligibility to sit the deferred examinations:

- The conditions of eligibility are set out clearly in this governing circular.
- The SEC cannot give an opinion on likely eligibility of a candidate over the phone or through email or otherwise.
- Candidates missing their examinations in the main sitting do so at risk. The SEC cannot provide any guarantees that a candidate will be deemed eligible for the deferred examinations sitting.
- Full application forms complete with supporting documentation and medical/bereavement evidence must be received by the SEC before an application will be considered.
- A decision on the eligibility of a candidate will only issue from the SEC when all the information (application form, supporting information and medical/bereavement evidence) has been provided and assessed.
- When making an application to sit a deferred examination the school authority should make candidates and their parents/guardians aware that they may not be eligible to sit the deferred examinations following the application process.

8. Timetable

May Examinations

The deferred examinations sitting for May examinations - Link Modules, Computer Science & LCA ICT - will be arranged in selected schools on Wednesday 26 June. The grounds of eligibility are the same as for all other examinations as set out in this circular. See Section 9 below for details of the application process.

Main Examinations

The deferred examinations sitting for the main examinations will commence in selected schools (see below) on Thursday 27 June. Leaving Certificate Established examinations are scheduled to continue until Saturday 13 July. Leaving Certificate Applied examinations are scheduled to continue until Thursday 4 July. Examinations will be held on Saturdays in the deferred examinations sitting.

Timetables for the deferred examinations are at **Appendix 1**.

Candidates accessing deferred examinations sitting must;

- a. be available during the time window for the deferred examinations sitting and must be available to take the deferred examinations as scheduled on the final timetables;
- b. note that examinations will be held on Saturdays in the deferred examinations sitting period.

9. Examination Venues

It is intended that the deferred examinations will be **held at a number of regional locations** and candidates should opt to sit any deferred examinations in the host school location closest to them. **Venues may be subject to consolidation** depending on the number of candidates ultimately sitting the deferred examinations. **Candidates must be aware that their selected host school is subject to change.** A list of the host schools will be provided to schools before the commencement of the main sitting and will also be available to select on the online application system.

When making the online application on the Schools Portal, the school authority will be asked to indicate the candidate's preferred host school from the list of schools. It is important to note the selection of the host school is not a guarantee and may be subject to change depending on the number of candidates ultimately sitting the deferred examinations. The SEC reserves the right to alter the host school locations depending on numbers presenting for the examinations.

Candidates must be able to make their own arrangements for attending the deferred sitting and will be responsible for their own transportation and accommodation expenses and the SEC will not entertain requests for sitting these examinations at alternative venues.

The SEC is extremely grateful to the host schools for their support in putting in place these arrangements.

10. Application Process

Schools Portal Application Process

The May examinations of LCVP – Link Modules (Wednesday 1 May 2024), Computer Science (Wednesday 15 May 2024), and LCA ICT (Wednesday 22 May 2024) will take place on Wednesday 26 June 2024 in the deferred examinations sitting. The June examinations commence on Wednesday 5 June; the examinations scheduled on this date will, in the deferred sitting, take place on Thursday 27 June.

There is a very short time window for the application, decision-making, and appeals processes for the deferred examinations to transact. For this reason, all deadlines will be strictly applied.

Applications for support arrangements under the RACE Scheme are school based and this provision is no different. School authorities have a critical role in the application process confirming their support for the application as made and safeguarding the integrity of the examinations.

The SEC will not accept applications directly from candidates or parents/guardians³.

The SEC has developed an online application process for school authorities to apply through the Schools Portal.

School authorities must put in place arrangements for candidates (including external candidates) or parents/guardians of candidates to inform the school immediately if they are absent from an examination.

The school authority must make an initial application to the SEC on the Schools Portal for access to the deferred examinations sitting either before or on the day of the examination for which the candidate was absent. **At the very latest the initial application must be made on the day of the missed examination in the main sitting.**

Candidates whose absence from an examination session is;

1. not reported by the candidate or the parent/guardian to the school on or before the date of the absence

³ Other than in the case of a small group of external candidates who are sitting their examinations at one of two Dublin venues and are not affiliated to any school.

OR

2. not reported by the school authority to the SEC on or before the date of the absence

will, irrespective of the reason, be deemed ineligible for access to the deferred examinations sitting.

The school authority will then have 5 working days to complete the full application process which includes providing all of the required evidence, to include, where necessary, appropriate medical evidence or evidence of the bereavement.

As part of the initial application process, the School Principal, or their authorised agent will be required to confirm that the application appears to meet the conditions of eligibility and to support the application.

Candidates, parents/guardians and school authorities need to be aware of the criteria and that all applications will be considered against the criteria and subject to formal decision. The application process will require confirmation from the candidate (if over 18) or candidate and parent/guardian (if under 18) of their understanding of the terms on which the application is made. The deferred examinations sitting declaration form RA8/2024 should be completed by the candidate, parent/guardian and the relevant school authority then uploaded by the school to the online application form on the Schools Portal. A copy of this form is at **Appendix 3**.

The required medical evidence or evidence of bereavement must also be uploaded to the system to support the application. While medical evidence or evidence of bereavement may need to follow the initial application there is a need for the supporting evidence to be available and uploaded by the school to the Portal within 5 working days of the application.

Note on External Candidates

School authorities are required to make applications for the deferred examinations sitting for both school-attending candidates and external candidates sitting examinations in the school. The SEC will provide school authorities and SEC appointed superintendents with details of any external candidates sitting examinations in the school. In this context, it is noted that these are candidates to whom the school authority gave their permission for them to sit their Leaving Certificate examinations in the school.

External candidates will be advised by the SEC that they are responsible for ensuring that they notify the school authority in which they are due to sit examinations of any absences from the examinations on or before the date of the absence from the first examination.

Online Application System

The following steps should be followed when making an application:

1. Candidate's, parents/guardians must notify the school immediately if they are absent for an examination.
2. The school authority must make an initial application on behalf of the candidate to the SEC on the Schools Portal <https://schools.examinations.ie/> at the very latest on the day of the missed examination.
3. As part of the initial application process candidates, parents/guardians and school authorities need to be aware of the criteria and that all applications will be considered against the criteria and subject to formal decision.
4. The deferred examinations sitting declaration form (**Form RA8/2024**) Section 2 must be completed by the school authority confirming the candidate meets the conditions of eligibility and to support the application.
5. Section 3 should be completed by the candidate (if over 18) or candidate and parent/guardian (if under 18).

6. The online application form must be fully completed by the school authority within 5 working days of the initial application including the upload of **Form RA8/2024** and the relevant medical or bereavement evidence.

11. Reasonable Accommodations

Candidates who were granted an accommodation in the main examinations will automatically receive the same accommodation in the deferred examinations sitting. The candidate's school must also be available to support the candidate throughout the deferred examinations sitting in the school they are assigned to. School authorities can contact the Deferred Examinations section of the SEC at 090 644 2480 to seek advice and assistance in relation to reasonable accommodations.

12. Examinations Integrity

The SEC has a duty to protect the integrity of the examinations. In all cases, the SEC must be satisfied as to the validity of the application and will reserve the right to seek independent proof of the bereavement or serious accident, injury or illness.

The SEC reserves the right to consider and determine whether a Breach of Examinations Regulations has occurred if a candidate claims relief under this provision and is found to have made a false claim. A person aiding a candidate to claim a relief under this provision to which the candidate is not entitled may be guilty of an offence under Section 52 of the Education Act 1998 and/or under other legislative provisions.

13. Appeal Procedure

In cases where a parent/guardian or candidate is dissatisfied with any aspect of the SEC's decision, they will have access to an Independent Appeals Committee (IAC) for the Deferred Examinations. All members of the IAC (Deferred Examinations) will be drawn from outside the SEC and include those with relevant medical expertise. The remit of the IAC (Deferred Examinations) covers appeals against the SEC's decisions on the deferred examinations sitting. Appeals will be considered in light of the published principles, requirements and criteria as set out in this governing circular. Appeal applications must be submitted within 4 working days of the formal decision from the SEC.

Details of the appeals process, including all relevant deadlines, will be included with the decisions on applications for access to the deferred examinations sitting. Briefly, appeals **must be made through the school** using the appeal application form (**FORM RAAP2**) which will be available on request. This form must be completed in full and signed by the candidate (if over 18) or candidate and parent/guardian (if under 18), and the school authority.

In making an appeal, school authorities, on behalf of candidates and parents/guardians, will be invited to resubmit all of the evidence available at the time they completed the initial application.

Appeal decisions will be notified to the candidate and the school. If an appeal is being denied then the reasons for the decision of the Committee will be provided. Schools in turn are required to communicate the outcome of the appeal to the candidate and their parents/guardians.

Following the completion of an appeal, any candidate, parent/guardian who considers that their case has not been processed correctly, can make a complaint to the Ombudsman (if they are over 18) or to the Ombudsman for Children (if they are under 18).

Again, it should be noted that there is a very short time window for the application, decision-making, and appeals processes for the deferred examinations sitting to transact. For this reason, all deadlines will be strictly applied.

14. Role of All Schools

All schools should be prepared to have a role in the administrative arrangements for the deferred examinations including;

- a. Familiarising themselves with the criteria and conditions of eligibility for access to the deferred sitting in order that they can advise candidates and parents/guardians appropriately.
- b. Providing the support arrangements for unwell or bereaved candidates to take their examinations in the main sitting.
- c. Putting in place arrangements to facilitate immediate reporting of absences by candidates or parents/guardians to the school.
- d. Completing all stages of the application process including the initial report on or before the first day on which the candidate will be unavoidably absent from an examination.
- e. Safeguarding the integrity of the Leaving Certificate examination process by standing over all applications made by candidates from the school noting that it is not expected that many candidates will need to avail of the deferred examinations sitting.

Schools with candidates deemed eligible for access to the deferred examinations and where those candidates have special educational needs and are being provided with reasonable accommodations under the RACE Scheme should be prepared to assist the schools hosting the deferred examinations. For example, in exceptional circumstances a candidate may, as a result of their particular needs, be authorised to work with their SNA as the superintendent of their special examination centre/Reader/Scribe. In addition, special centre superintendents undertaking roles as Readers and Scribes need to have language competences for the language subjects. Schools may be asked to provide these staff to the host school.

As a support for schools in the administration of the deferred examinations application process all schools may claim up to **one additional Examinations Aide day**. If there are no applications from candidates in a school, then no claim should be made.

The host schools in which the deferred Leaving Certificate examinations are being held will be provided separately with details of the support arrangements which will apply.

15. Results

There will be no difference for the candidate or for the end users of the results (CAO, etc.) between results attained in main sitting and those attained in the deferred examinations sitting. The SEC will endeavour to deliver the deferred Leaving Certificate examinations results at the same time as the main examination results.

16. Review

Deferred Leaving Certificate examinations are provided within the policy context of the RACE scheme. The RACE scheme is subject to ongoing review by the SEC.

17. Enquiries

All enquiries on foot of this circular can be made by phone 090 - 644 2480 or email to deferredexaminations@examinations.ie.

Richard Dolan
Director of Operations
State Examinations Commission
25 April 2024

Appendix 1

Schedule of Examination Dates for Deferred Examination Sitting 2024

Wednesday 26 June 2024

- **Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme – Link Modules Written Examination 10:00 – 12:30**
- **Leaving Certificate Computer Science - Written Examination Higher and Ordinary Level. Section A & B – 14.00 – 15.30 - Section C – 16.00 – 17.00**
- **LCA ICT – 10:00 – 11:30**

Double click image for expanded view

Deferred Examinations Timetable

 Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
 State Examinations Commission
LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
TIMETABLE 2024

Each candidate should note carefully the dates and hours, as fixed on this official timetable, for the examinations in the subjects in which he/she intends to present himself/herself. The Commission will not be responsible for any errors which may occur in the reproduction of this timetable by outside agencies. Candidates are required to be in attendance at least half an hour before the examination begins in the subject in which they first present themselves.

JUNE / JULY	SUBJECT	TIME
	H = Higher Level O = Ordinary Level F = Foundation Level	
THURSDAY 27	English, Paper 1 - H & O Home Economics, Scientific and Social - H & O	9.30 – 12.20 2.00 – 4.30
FRIDAY 28	Engineering - O Engineering - H English, Paper 2 - H & O	9.30 – 12.00 9.30 – 12.30 2.00 – 5.20
SATURDAY 29	Geography - H & O Mathematics, Paper 1 - H & O Mathematics - F	9.30 – 12.20 2.00 – 4.30 2.00 – 4.30
MONDAY 1	Mathematics, Paper 2 - H & O Irish Paper 1 - H (incl aural) Irish Paper 1 - O (incl aural) Irish - F (incl aural)	9.30 – 12.00 2.00 – 4.20 2.00 – 3.50 2.00 – 4.20
TUESDAY 2	Irish, Paper 2 - O Irish, Paper 2 - H Biology - H & O	9.30 – 11.50 9.30 – 12.35 2.00 – 5.00
WEDNESDAY 3	French - H & O - Written - Aural History - H & O	9.30 – 12.00 12.10 – 12.50 2.00 – 4.50
THURSDAY 4	Business - O Business - H Art, Visual Studies - H & O	9.30 – 12.00 9.30 – 12.30 2.00 – 4.30
FRIDAY 5	German - H & O - Written - Aural Construction Studies - O Construction Studies - H	9.30 – 12.00 12.10 – 12.50 2.00 – 4.30 2.00 – 5.00
SATURDAY 6	Polish, Lithuanian, Portuguese and Mandarin Chinese - H & O - Written - Aural Hebrew Studies, Ancient Greek and Non Curricular Languages (see Note 2) Agricultural Science - H & O	9.30 – 12.00 12.10 – 12.50 9.30 – 12.30 2.00 – 4.30
MONDAY 8	Spanish - H & O - Written - Aural Chemistry - H & O	9.30 – 12.00 12.10 – 12.50 2.00 – 5.00
TUESDAY 9	Physics - H & O Physics and Chemistry - H & O Accounting - H & O	9.30 – 12.30 9.30 – 12.30 2.00 – 5.00
WEDNESDAY 10	Design and Communication Graphics - H & O Music - Listening (Core) - H & O Music Composing - H & O Music - Listening (Elective) - H	9.30 – 12.30 1.30 – 3.00 3.15 – 4.45 5.00 – 5.45
THURSDAY 11	Economics - H & O Physical Education - H & O	9.30 – 12.00 2.00 – 4.30
FRIDAY 12	Italian - H & O - Written - Aural Russian - H & O - Written - Aural Classical Studies - H & O Latin - H & O Technology - O Technology - H	9.30 – 12.00 12.10 – 12.50 9.30 – 12.00 12.10 – 12.50 2.00 – 4.30 2.00 – 5.00 2.00 – 4.00 2.00 – 4.30
SATURDAY 13	Japanese - H & O - Written - Aural Politics & Society - H & O Arabic - H & O Religious Education - O Religious Education - H Applied Mathematics - H & O	9.30 – 12.00 12.10 – 12.50 9.30 – 12.00 9.30 – 12.30 2.00 – 4.00 2.00 – 4.30 2.00 – 4.30

Notes

- The examination sessions highlighted in red include 20 minutes over and above the time traditionally allocated for the papers concerned.
- Leaving Certificate Examinations in Hebrew Studies, Ancient Greek and in the Non-Curricular Languages listed below will be held on Saturday 6 July from 9.30am to 12.30pm

Non Curricular Leaving Certificate Examinations											
Czech	Bulgarian	Croatian	Danish	Dutch	Estonian	Finnish	Hungarian	Latvian	Maltese	Modern Greek	Romanian
Slovakian	Slovenian	Swedish									

- Examinations based on the curricular specifications for: Lithuanian; Mandarin Chinese; Polish and Portuguese will be held on Saturday 6 July.
- There are also final examinations in Computer Science and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme – Link Modules – which will be held in June with dates to be announced separately.

Deferred Examinations Timetable

**LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED EXAMINATION
TIMETABLE 2024**

Each candidate should note carefully the dates and hours, as fixed on this official timetable, for the examinations in the subjects in which he/she intends to present himself/herself. The Commission will not be responsible for any errors which may occur in the reproduction of this timetable by outside agencies. Candidates are required to be in attendance at least half an hour before the examination begins in the subject in which they first present themselves.

JUNE	TIME	SUBJECT
THURSDAY 27	9.45 – 11.45	English & Communication
	2.00 – 4.00	Social Education
FRIDAY 28	9.30 – 10.30	Gaeilge Chumarsáideach
	9.30 – 12.30	Sign Language (see Note 1)
	2.00 – 4.30	Sign Language (see Note 1)
	2.00 – 3.00	French / German / Spanish / Italian
SATURDAY 29	9.30 – 11.30	Mathematical Applications
	2.00 – 3.30	Hotel Catering & Tourism
MONDAY 1	9.30 – 11.00	Engineering
	2.00 – 3.30	Child Care / Community Care
TUESDAY 2	9.30 – 11.00	Graphics & Construction Studies
	11.30 – 1.00	Hair & Beauty
	2.30 – 4.00	Office Administration & Customer Care
WEDNESDAY 3	9.30 – 11.00	Agriculture / Horticulture
	2.00 – 4.00	Technology
THURSDAY 4	9.30 – 11.00	Active Leisure Studies
	2.00 – 3.30	Craft & Design

NOTES:

1. LCA Sign Language examination is timetabled for 9.30 – 12.30 & 2.00 – 4.30. A candidate specific schedule, for a 30 minute individual assessment, will be drawn up for each centre.

Appendix 2

Extract from the Race Instructions for Schools

Limitations on Using a Scribe in Certain Subjects

In the Leaving Certificate subjects Technology, Engineering, Construction Studies, Art – History and Appreciation; in the Leaving Certificate Applied subjects Graphics and Construction Studies, Technology, Engineering, Craft and Design and in the Junior Cycle subjects Wood Technology, Applied Technology and Engineering, candidates are only allowed to use the scribe for questions or parts of questions which require a written response.

The scribe cannot under any circumstances produce sketches and/or drawings in any question in these examinations. Labelling and annotations are considered to be inherent parts of these diagrams and must also be the candidate's own unaided work. A scribe is not permitted in the subjects Leaving Certificate Design and Communications Graphics (DCG) or Junior Cycle Graphics.

In the subjects Leaving Certificate Japanese and Mandarin Chinese, a scribe can be used only for questions to be answered in English or Irish and not for questions to be answered in Japanese or Mandarin Chinese.

There may be other subject specific limitations to the use of a scribe and these will be detailed in the letter of approval.

LEAVING CERTIFICATE AND LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED DEFERRED EXAMINATIONS DECLARATION FORM

Before completing this form, you must consult the governing Circular S21/24.

This form must be uploaded to the online application form on the school's portal once complete.

*Deferred Examinations sitting will be provided with access strictly limited to students **unable** to sit one or more papers in the main sitting in June on grounds of serious medical reasons; close family bereavement.*

SECTION 1. CANDIDATE AND SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION DETAILS

School Name: _____

School Roll No: _____

School Contact on this Application (name): _____

Name of Candidate: _____

Candidate No: _____

Candidate Personal email address: _____

Candidate Contact number: _____

SECTION 2. SCHOOL ENDORSEMENT

SCHOOL ENDORSEMENT

I have read and understood the Circular S21/24 and the terms and conditions upon which this deferred examinations sitting process is provided. I certify that I believe this candidate is eligible in line with this Circular. I understand that the SEC has the right to review the evidence and information in support of all applications. The SEC must be satisfied as to the validity of the application and will reserve the right to seek independent proof of the bereavement or serious accident, injury or illness.

Reason for Application:

Bereavement ☐

Serious Illness ☐

Extreme Circumstances* ☐

*Candidate takes ill after commencement of an examination

Schools Principal (Signature) _____

School Principal (Name in block capitals) _____

Date _____

SECTION 3. DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE AND PARENT/GUARDIAN.

Declaration by Candidate and Parent/Guardian

I declare that I believe I am eligible for access to the deferred examinations sitting as detailed in the governing SEC Circular 21/24 and have provided the supporting evidence as required.

I consent to:

- a) This application being made on my behalf under the deferred examinations sitting principles, requirements and criteria as set out in SEC Circular S21/24.
- b) The school making all necessary information available to the State Examinations Commission (SEC).
- c) My personal details as provided on this form being used by the SEC to contact me about any aspect of this application or the deferred examinations sitting.

I acknowledge that:

- a) I am aware of the risk that if I am absent from the main sitting, I may not be eligible to sit an examination at the deferred sitting and will only be permitted to do so if my application is approved.
- b) All required supporting documentation must be supplied to make this application valid.
- c) That the SEC must be satisfied as to the validity of the application and will reserve the right to seek independent proof of the bereavement or serious accident, injury or illness.
- d) The deferred examinations sitting will be held in a reduced number of schools across the country and I will make myself available to attend the location assigned to me.
- e) I accept that the location of the venue could change at short notice.
- f) I am responsible for all travel expenses for attending the deferred examinations sitting.
- g) Examinations will be held on Saturdays during the deferred examinations sitting period.
- h) That if I am considered eligible and miss the deferred examinations sitting for any reason my next opportunity to sit the Leaving Certificate/Leaving Certificate Applied will be in June 2025. There is no contingency for the deferred examinations sitting and no alternative arrangements will be provided.

I acknowledge that the SEC has a duty to protect the integrity of the examinations and the right to review the evidence and information in support of any and all applications. I note the SEC reserves the right to seek independent proof of the bereavement or illness.

The SEC reserves the right to consider and determine whether a Breach of Examinations Regulations has occurred if a candidate claims relief under this provision and is found to have made a false claim. A person aiding a candidate to claim a relief under this provision to which the candidate is not entitled may be guilty of an offence under Section 52 of the Education Act 1998 and/or under other legislative provisions.

Signatures

1. Candidate: _____ Date: _____

2. Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Data Protection

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) is a registered data controller with the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. Your personal data will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Acts. The SEC will process the data provided in this form for the purposes of assessing eligibility for the accommodations sought, the provision of any approved accommodations in the examinations and as appropriate, the application of approved accommodations to the final results. You have the right to request access to your personal data as well as the right to rectify and, where applicable, erase any inaccurate, incomplete or immaterial personal data processed by the SEC.

Details on the State Examinations Commission Data Protection Notice can be located on our website <https://www.examinations.ie/data-protection/>

Data Protection Privacy notice Full details of the State Examinations Commission data protection policies are available <https://www.examinations.ie/data-protection>