Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Corr na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí
Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

S15/2021

Additional Supports to Schools to Support the Running of the Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied Examinations and the Accredited Grades process in 2021

To the School Authority named in the address

The successful delivery of the state certificate examinations relies upon school authorities in general, and school principals in particular. In line with longstanding practice in the state examinations, school authorities (and the authorities of other centres of education in receipt of public funds) have discretion to engage an Aide to assist the Principal during the state examinations or to fully substitute for the Principal where they are unavailable for any reason. It was also the case that in 2020, schools had discretion to appoint an Aide to support school management in the administration of the system of Calculated Grades.

The purpose of this circular is to provide details of an enhanced range of supports which are available to schools to support the running of the Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied Examinations and the Accredited Grades process in 2021.

The range of additional supports are designed to support schools and ensure that essential work for Leaving Certificate Examinations and the Accredited Grades 2021 takes place; to minimise the impact on school management and resources generally; and in recognition of the additional work involved in planning and running the examinations safely during COVID 19, in line with public health advice. They also recognise that certain work is being done outside school time during the Easter holiday period, in the evenings and weekends to protect tuition time for candidates to the greatest extent possible, given the disruption experienced to candidates' learning already this year.

Each Leaving Certificate Aide appointed will work under the general guidance of the principal and deputy principal management team. While the role of the Aide is to assist the Principal during the state examinations, it is permissible for the Aide to fully substitute for the Principal where they are unavailable for any reason provided school management is satisfied the Aide is fully discharging the necessary duties on these occasions.

This circular should be read in conjunction with SEC Circulars S13/2021 Guidance to School Management and S07/2021 Leaving Certificate 2021 updated. Details of how to claim for Leaving Certificate Aides, Oral Interviewers, and other costs associated with the delivery of the 2021 Leaving Certificate will be the subject of Circular S16/2021 Payment arrangements for school appointed personnel.

1. Leaving Certificate 2021 Aides

School authorities have discretion to:

- Engage Leaving Certificate aides to work under the general guidance of the principal and deputy principal management team, in meeting the range of responsibilities set out below for each Aide role in the administration of the Leaving Certificate 2021 in schools.
- Choose to split the Leaving Certificate Aide roles over a number of school staff. It is recommended that the number of people appointed to this role is kept to a minimum. (While not ideal, schools may, if they need to, allocate days in half or quarter portions if they consider it desirable and suitable for their particular needs within the overall allocation of days at the per diem rate).
- Appoint the Leaving Certificate Aide in line with the existing methodology at individual school level.

As the range of duties of the Aide include certain functions that occur during school time the school must be satisfied that where a serving teacher is appointed, the teacher's normal duties are not impinged upon and that no additional costs are incurred (e.g. substitution costs).

Within a school's allocation of days, 5 days are reserved for the Principal.

The daily rate of payment for individuals appointed as Leaving Certificate Aides is €146.19

The number of Leaving Certificate Aide days available will depend on the number of candidates in the school and the range of activities that are required to meet the needs of candidates in that school, as follows:

Leaving Certificate Examinations 2021

Purpose	**Schools with up to 120 Leaving Certificate Candidates**	**Schools with 120 Leaving Certificate Candidates or more**
	Max Days	**Max Days**
Oral Examinations Planning and Administration	8 Days	10 Days
Days for planning and organisation of the examinations associated with Covid-19	10 Days	12 Days
June Examinations	10 Days	10 Days
LCVP Examination – Saturday 8 May 2021 (As needed)	2 Days	2 Days
Computer Science Examination – Saturday 22 May 2021 (As needed)	2 Days	2 Days
Schools opening on two Sundays in June to provide for the receipt of the written examination papers (As needed; 2 Days may be claimed per Sunday)	4 Days	4 Days

Leaving Certificate Accredited Grades 2021

Accredited Grades including Learners and Subjects Out of School Including a Language Proficiency Assessment for students of non-curricular languages[1] on the afternoon of Saturday 8th May.	20 Days	20 Days

[1] The Department of Education is organising a language proficiency assessment for students of non-curricular languages to inform the provision of Accredited Grades in these subjects.

2. Role of the Leaving Certificate Aide 2021

A. Examinations

Oral Examinations -
Leaving Certificate Oral Language Examinations 2021. The number of days assigned to the Orals Language Examinations are as set out above. See also Circular S13/2021 *Guidance to School* Management for details of the range of duties.

Schools with examinations in LCVP and Computer Science
This Aide/s will be the school's appointed person, responsible for assisting, supporting and liaising with the school appointed Superintendents, for the conduct of the LCVP and the Language Proficiency Assessment for non-curricular languages on Saturday, 8 May and Computer Science examinations on Saturday 22 May respectively. The SEC will provide guidance for the conduct of the examinations in due course.

Planning for and organisation of the Written Examinations 9 – 29 June 2021
The SEC will be providing schools with guidance on the safe conduct of the June examinations in due course. While it will ultimately be a matter for the school authorities to decide the purpose for which the Aide will be engaged in the examinations, it is suggested that they could, for example, be assigned by school management in undertaking some or all of the following list of duties noting that this is not exhaustive;

- Working under the guidance of the Principal and Deputy Principal management team in preparing for and organising, in accordance with the direction of the SEC, the 2021 Leaving Certificate examinations.
- Assessing the accommodation that will be used as examination centres and the number of candidates that can be assigned to each room and assisting in setting up the centres
- Assigning students to the centre/s to be used for the examinations on a session by session basis, and to special examination centres where appropriate.
- Putting in place the most appropriate arrangements for the conduct of the examinations in line with all applicable public health controls and requirements.
- Ensuring the most appropriate use of space in the context of the school infrastructure and local demands regarding appropriate physical distancing, cleaning, sanitising arrangements, etc.
- Engaging as required in the recruitment within the school of superintendents of special examination centres and the oversight of these superintendents over the course of their work
- Engaging as required in the sourcing and appointment the recruitment of examinations attendants.
- Ensuring that rooms and equipment are acoustically appropriate for aural tests in music and language subjects and provide for the use of DVD for LCA and LCVP.
- liaising with the examination superintendent or the centre attendant in the event of any difficulties occurring during the examination and liaising with the SEC on issues which arise.
- Organising the intake, secure storage or despatch of examination material to the SEC including the receipt of examination material in schools on two Sundays in June.
- Organising the intake and secure storage of examination stationery.
- Assisting, supporting and liaising with the SEC appointed Superintendents

The SEC will provide guidance for the conduct of the examinations in due course.

B. Accredited Grades: (See A Guide to the State Examinations and Accredited Grades for 2021)

In providing the estimated marks for the accredited grades process, there will be four main school-based steps:

1. The teacher's estimation of student percentage marks.
2. School alignment of marks for a subject through a subject alignment group comprising teachers who are teaching the subject to Leaving Certificate students this year.
3. Oversight of the alignment process by the school Principal.
4. Transmission of the marks for national standardisation.

Working under the guidance of the Principal and Deputy Principal management team, the range of duties for the Aide may include;

- Assisting the Principal and Deputy Principal with administrative tasks associated with the in-school phase of the system of Accredited Grades.
- Assisting with the organisation of subject alignment meetings.
- Organising rotas, and health and safety procedures, for meetings taking place in the school and for teachers to access project work stored in the school.
- Assisting teacher access to the school database for information if required.
- Ensuring all Leaving Certificate candidates are aware of the Leaving Certificate Candidate Self Service portal; of what they need to do at each stage and that they have access to it.
- Assisting with organising the assessment of estimated marks for students receiving home tuition.
- Assisting with organising the assessment of estimated marks for students studying a subject outside school, subject to DOE guidelines.
- Assisting with organising the process for students who are out of school learners and who select the school as their host school for Accredited Grades
- Assisting with the answering of queries from teachers.

NCL Proficiency Assessment

Czech	**Bulgarian**	**Croatian**	**Danish**	**Dutch**	**Estonian**
Finnish	**Hungarian**	**Latvian**	**Lithuanian**	**Polish**	**Maltese**
Modern Greek	**Portuguese**	**Romanian**	**Slovakian**	**Slovenian**	**Swedish**

On the afternoon of Saturday 8 May, the Department of Education is organising a language proficiency assessment for students of the non-curricular language subjects to inform the provision of Accredited Grades in these subjects. ***Note that this is not a Leaving Certificate examination and is not being run by the State Examinations Commission.***

Schools which are running the Links Modules examination in the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme on the morning of 8 May are asked to use the infrastructure established for the Links Modules examination to assist with the holding of this proficiency assessment in the afternoon. Schools that are not running the LCVP Links Modules examinations will need to establish centres for the proficiency assessments in line with guidance to be issued by the Department of Education in due course.

3. Leaving Certificate Applied Aide

There are additional duties this year for both for the rearranged examination events and in relation to Accredited Grades for the Leaving Certificate Applied. The role of the Aide described above incorporates the LCA written examinations. However, it is considered that the LCA Coordinator may

be best placed to fulfil an Aide role for the LCA demands apart from the written examinations. A separate quantum of Aide days will be provided to support these atypical LCA demands. This will be the subject of separate communication.

4. Cleaning, Caretaking, PPE, Light & Heat

Reasonable additional costs specifically incurred within schools to ensure cleaning, sanitising and provision of PPE, in order to adhere to public health advice for the safe conduct of the examinations and associated with the examinations taking place over the Easter holidays, in the evening and if your school is conducting the LCVP and/or computer science examinations at weekends will be reimbursed by SEC. This will be paid only where the COVID capitation payment provided by the Department has been expended.

5. **Transport for some Candidates to Examinations held outside School Time**

With regard to school transport, and under the terms of the Department of Education's School Transport Scheme, school transport services for eligible children generally operate during the standard school year to facilitate a child's attendance during normal school opening and closing times only. The Leaving Certificate Music performance tests and the LCA Tasks are taking place over the Easter holidays and the designated period for the Oral Language interviews includes evenings, weekends and the Easter Holidays; time periods during which the School Transport Scheme is not operational. For public health reasons, and as these events are of short duration in schools, it would not be appropriate to have a normal school transport system in operation.

Schools are asked to facilitate the attendance of candidates using taxi services in the following limited circumstances. The candidate must:

- be eligible for school transport under the terms of the Department's School Transport Scheme and
- be availing of school transport in the current school year for whom transport services will not be available over the period 26 March to 11 April (noting school resumes on 12 April) and
- have to attend for an examination event over this period noting that this should be considered when scheduling candidates.

The SEC will reimburse schools for reasonable costs of such services on the production of valid receipts.

Details of how to claim for Leaving Certificate Aides, Oral Interviewers, and other costs associated with the delivery of the 2021 Leaving Certificate will be the subject of a separate circular with accompanying claim forms.

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