



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission

Corr na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí, N37 TP65.  
Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath., N37 TP65.

## TO THE AUTHORITIES OF POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

### Online Marking, Examination Paper Design and Stationery Design 2020

The purpose of this circular is to provide information on:

1. Roll out of Online Marking in certain Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle subjects in 2020.
2. Examination Question Paper Design for those subjects.
3. Related Examination Stationery Design.

#### 1. Roll out of Online Marking in certain Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle subjects in 2020.

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) successfully used an online marking system to mark certain Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle subjects in 2019. This followed a pilot in 2016 and 2017. Online marking facilitates high quality, reliable marking of candidate's examination responses. There are many advantages to online marking both for the examiners and for the examination system as a whole. In particular, marking online allows examiners to focus on the marking itself and not on the administration of the marking. As the calculation and transfer of marks are inherent in the system, online marking eliminates the possibility of mistakes being made in mark calculation and transcription.

The subjects that will be marked online in 2020 are listed below:

LEAVING CERTIFICATE	JUNIOR CYCLE
English <i>New for 2020</i>	English*
Mathematics*	French*
History <i>New for 2020</i>	German <i>New for 2020</i>
Geography <i>New for 2020</i>	Spanish <i>New for 2020</i>
French <i>New for 2020</i>	Business Studies*
Business <i>New for 2020</i>	Science*
Accounting <i>New for 2020</i>	Home Economics – written paper only <i>New for 2020</i>
Biology*	
Physics*	
Chemistry*	
Home Economics – written paper only <i>New for 2020</i>	
LCVP Link Modules – written paper only*	
Politics and Society*	
Physical Education – written paper only <i>New for 2020</i>	

\*Marking online of this subject commenced in 2019.

For the 2021 examinations, the SEC intends to extend online marking to the majority of the remaining Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle subjects. Certain subjects may not be online marked due to low numbers of candidates or for technical reasons.

There is no significant change for candidates. They will still sit their examinations in the normal way. When the scripts are returned to the SEC, the scripts will be scanned, at which point they will become electronic scripts. The paper scripts will continue to be retained. The candidates' electronic scripts will then be marked by examiners on screen using specially designed software. Before the examinations commence, candidates sitting any of the examinations in subjects which will be marked online should be made aware of the following:

- Candidates should complete their responses in black or blue pen. Gel pens should not be used.
- Pencils and coloured pencils may be used for completing diagrams and graphs.
- There are some changes to stationery to facilitate the scanning process, details of which are listed in Section 3 of this Circular.
- Candidates should not use correction fluid (such as *Tippex*) on examination material. Where a candidate makes an error, they should just cross out the error, and continue with their work. This is the case for all subjects, whether they are marked manually or online, as there is a possibility that the cancelled work may merit the award of marks. It should therefore be crossed out but left visible to the examiner.
- Candidates should complete their responses using the spaces provided on the examination paper/answerbook to ensure that all of their responses are captured in the scanning process. Anything outside of these areas or in the margins may not be seen by the examiner.

## **2. Examination Question Paper Design for Examinations Being Marked Online.**

There is no material change to the content of examination papers as a result of them being marked online. The changes described here relate to formatting and appearance only.

Broadly speaking, there are two different formats of examination paper:

- examinations in which the question paper is separate from the answerbook or other stationery used.
- examinations consisting of a returnable booklet that incorporates both the questions and the spaces for answering them.

Previously, there have also been some examinations consisting of one part that was a returnable question-and-answer booklet and another part that was answered in a separate answerbook. However, as online marking is rolled out in these subjects, this arrangement will change. The returnable question-and-answer booklet in these cases will in future include lined pages for answering the portion that was previously answered in a separate answerbook. This changed arrangement applies, for instance, to Leaving Certificate Geography, Biology, Business and Home Economics in 2020. This will eliminate the need for separate stationery in these subjects for the vast majority of candidates, although supplementary 4-page answerbooks will continue to be available to any candidate who runs out of writing space in the booklet. Where relevant, graph pages and other specialised stationery will be incorporated into the returnable question-and-answer booklet, although in this case too supplementary stationery will be available to candidates who have used up all such spaces in the booklet.

The effect of this change is that, in all cases, candidates will be handing up *either* a returnable question-and-answer booklet, *or* an answerbook, but not both.

The following are the online marked subjects which will have a returnable question-and-answer booklet in 2020:

Leaving Certificate	Junior Cycle
Mathematics**	English
Geography	French
French	German
Business	Spanish
Biology <i>New format</i>	Business Studies
Home Economics	Science
LCVP Link Modules	Home Economics
Politics and Society	
Physical Education	

\*\*As in 2019

In some of these cases, it may arise that the questions for one or more sections are presented in a separate non-returnable document, but in all cases, all of the candidate's work will be written into the returnable booklet.

### 3. Examination Stationery Design

The SEC is introducing some new stationery for Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate examinations in 2020. Some of this stationery applies to subjects marked online only, and some is replacing existing stationery and is for use in all of the examinations. The new or amended stationery products that will be provided to SEC-appointed superintendents are:

- i. **Two new types of answerbook for use in particular subjects:**
  - a. A new 36-page answerbook to be used for the subjects of Leaving Certificate English, Accounting and History only. In addition to the front cover and some instructions on page 2, it will have 32 lined pages followed by two specially ruled pages for use in Accounting only.
  - b. A new 32-page answerbook to be used for the subjects of Leaving Certificate Chemistry and Physics. In addition to the front cover and some instructions on page 2, it will have 26 lined pages followed by four graph pages.
  
- ii. **Two types of supplementary paper, which have been designed to facilitate scanning but which will replace the existing supplementary paper in all examinations:**
  - c. A 4-page supplementary answerbook consisting of a cover page and three lined pages.
  - d. A 4-page graph paper booklet consisting of a cover page and three pages of graph paper.

As is the case for the returnable question-and-answer booklets, the above answerbooks have both been designed to allow sufficient writing space for candidates. By increasing the number of pages in the answerbooks, this should eliminate the requirement for additional supplementary lined or graph paper and should give sufficient writing space for all of these subjects. For this reason, supplementary paper should not be required. In line with the SEC's longstanding instructions in all examinations, Superintendents will not hand out supplementary paper at the start of the examination and are

instructed to provide supplementary paper to candidates only when they have used the space in their question paper or main answerbook.

Details of the format and stationery for each examination are in Appendix 1.

### **Other notable changes that apply to examinations marked online**

- Certain features that facilitate scanning and preparation of scripts for online marking will appear on all pages of all of the examination products that candidates hand up – that is, the returnable question-and-answer booklets, the new answerbooks, and the supplementary stationery. These features are: barcodes, L-shaped marks in the four corners, and ‘hatching’ along the central spines. Additionally, all of these products have clearly defined areas where candidates’ answers are to be written. It is important that candidates confine their work to within these areas and do not stray beyond them into the margins, as this risks their work not being seen by the examiner.
- Candidates will also be required to provide their **Day and Month of Birth** on the front cover along with their examination number. This is to allow the SEC to carry out further reconciliation checks to ensure that candidates have submitted their correct examination number.
- On the two new answerbooks described in Section 2 above, candidates must also indicate the subject, level and language version (Irish or English) they are using the booklet for by fully shading in the relevant circles on the cover.
- Candidates will be required to clearly mark each question number in the space provided and to begin each question on a new page.

To illustrate some of the above features, a sample of a front cover of the special answerbooks, as it might appear after completion by a candidate, is shown in Appendix 2.

If you have any queries in relation to any of the information contained in this circular, please contact us on [onlinemark@examinations.ie](mailto:onlinemark@examinations.ie) or 090 644 2473/2418/2461

**Please bring this circular to the attention of teachers and particularly to the attention of candidates and parents/guardians. All of the information detailed here, including samples of the 4 new stationery products, can also be found on [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie)**

Trisha Jordan/Michelle Hanafee  
Higher Executive Officers  
Online Marking/Projects  
State Examinations Commission  
Cornamaddy  
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Co. Westmeath

## Appendix 1 – Examination Stationery in use for 2020

### Leaving Certificate

Subject	Coursework	Written Examination
English	-	Special barcoded answerbook
Mathematics	-	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
History	Special barcoded coursework booklet	Special barcoded answerbook
Geography	Special barcoded coursework booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
French	-	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Business	-	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Accounting	-	Special barcoded answerbook
Biology	-	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Physics	-	Special barcoded answerbook
Chemistry	-	Special barcoded answerbook
Home Economics	Not being marked online in 2020	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
LCVP link modules	Not being marked online in 2020	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Politics and Society	Digital coursework booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Physical Education (Phase 1 schools only)	Not being marked online in 2020	Returnable question-and-answer booklet

### Junior Cycle

Subject	Assessment Task	Written Examination
Irish***	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
English	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
French	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
German	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Spanish	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Italian***	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Business Studies	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Science	Special barcoded booklet	Returnable question-and-answer booklet
Home Economics	-	Returnable question-and-answer booklet

\*\*\*In the Junior Cycle subjects of Irish and Italian, neither the Assessment Task nor the written examination will be marked online in 2020.

## Appendix 2 – sample completed cover of special answerbook

The example below shows a completed cover of a special answerbook, used by a candidate with examination number 123456 and whose birthday is 29 April, to answer Leaving Certificate Higher Level Physics, through English.

Candidates should write their examination number and day and month of birth in a clear and legible manner as demonstrated below.



2020L999999L

Answerbook for use in the Leaving Certificate Examination of 2020 in the subjects

Freagarleabhar le húsáid i Scrúdú na hArdteistiméireachta, 2020 le haghaidh na n-ábhar seo a leanas

**Chemistry**  
**Physics**

**Ceimic**  
**Fisic**

**Centre Stamp**  
*Stampa an Ionaid*

Shade in fully the circle for the subject, the level, and the language (English or Irish) that you are answering through.

Scáthaigh an ciorcal go hiomlán le haghaidh an ábhair, an leibhéil, agus na teanga (Béarla nó Gaeilge) trína bhfreagróidh tú.

Subject <i>Ábhar</i>	Level <i>Leibhéal</i>	Answered through <i>Freagraíodh trí</i>
Chemistry <i>Ceimic</i> <input type="radio"/>	Higher <i>Ard</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	English <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Physics <i>Fisic</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Ordinary <i>Gnáth</i> <input type="radio"/>	<i>Gaeilge</i> <input type="radio"/>

**Examination Number**  
*Scrúduitimhir*

1
2
3
4
5
6

**Day and Month of Birth**  
*Dáta agus Mí do Bhreithe*

2
9
0
4

For example, 3rd February is 0302  
*Mar shampla, 0302 is ea 3 Feabhra*

**Make and model of calculator used**  
*Déanamh agus múnla an áireamháin a úsáideadh*



2020L999999L0132

The example below shows a completed cover of a special answerbook, used by a candidate with examination number 123456 and whose birthday is 29 April, to answer Paper 2 of Leaving Certificate Higher Level English, through English.

Candidates should write their examination number and day and month of birth in a clear and legible manner as demonstrated below.



2020L999X9XL

Answerbook for use in the Leaving Certificate Examination of 2020 in the subjects

Freagarleabhar le húsáid i Scrúdú na hArdeistiméireachta, 2020 le haghaidh na n-ábhar seo a leanas

**English**  
**History**  
**Accounting**

**Béarla**  
**Stair**  
**Cuntasaíocht**

**Centre Stamp**  
*Stampa an Ionaid*

Shade in fully the circle for the subject, the level, and the language (English or Irish) that you are answering through.

Scáthaigh an ciorcal go hiomlán le haghaidh an ábhair, an leibhéil, agus na teanga (Béarla nó Gaeilge) trína bhfreagróidh tú.

<b>Subject</b> <i>Ábhar</i>	<b>Level</b> <i>Leibhéal</i>	Higher <i>Ard</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Ordinary <i>Gnáth</i>	<input type="radio"/>
History <i>Stair</i>					
Accounting <i>Cuntasaíocht</i>					
	<b>Answered through</b> <i>Freagraíodh trí</i>	English	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Gaeilge	<input type="radio"/>
English <i>Béarla</i>		English Paper 1	<input type="radio"/>	English Paper 2	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

**Examination Number**  
*Scrúdúimhir*

1

2

3

4

5

6

**Day and Month of Birth**  
*Dáta agus Mí do Bhreithe*

2

9

0

4

For example, 3rd February is 0302  
Mar shampla, 0302 is ea 3 Feabhra

**Make and model of calculator used**  
*Déanamh agus múnla an áireamháin a úsáideadh*



2020L999X9XL0136