



8/05/2020

Dear Parents/Guardians/Students

I hope you are all well at this time. I realise it is a time of mixed emotions.

After a long wait and many changes, the Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh T.D. has today (Friday 8 May 2020) announced the postponement of the 2020 Leaving Certificate.

Following a decision at Cabinet, all students will be offered the option of receiving Calculated Grades for the subjects they are studying and the alternative of sitting the 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations at a date in the future when it is considered safe to hold the examinations.

The decision has been taken following an assessment of public health advice and other information and the implications for holding the exams from the previously rescheduled date of Wednesday 29 July 2020.

Minister McHugh said: “I have made every effort to run the 2020 Leaving Certificate as close as possible to the way the examinations were originally intended to be held.

“My desire had been to allow students to undertake the written and practical examinations in July and August but I have compelling evidence, based on medical advice and other assessments, that the Leaving Certificate examinations cannot be held in a reliable and valid manner, nor in a way that would be equitable for students.”

Minister McHugh said: “The reality of the impact of Covid-19 has led to a decision that has never happened in our country before. I fully appreciate the magnitude of this issue, for the students and their families, for the teachers and for school principals.

“This decision is taken with the best interests of students at heart. I have a responsibility to find a fair way to address the disadvantage that some students are facing and the impact a lack of time in school has had in recent weeks.

“The system being put in place will allow a young person to progress to the next stage of their life in a timely fashion.

“The fairest and most equitable way to do that in the current circumstances is to offer students the option of Calculated Grades for the 2020 Leaving Certificate but also to guarantee them the right to sit the examinations at a later stage when it is safe to hold them in the normal way.

“The decision has to be taken now to remove the anxiety that many students have been experiencing over how the exams would look later in the summer.”

The following is a breakdown of the process to be applied for students to be given the option of Calculated Grades or to sit the examinations.

- 1. The 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations, previously scheduled to take place in late July and August, have been postponed.*
- 2. There will be no Leaving Certificate fee this year. All exam fees which have been paid will be refunded.*
- 3. Teachers will be asked to provide a professional judgment of each student's attainment which will be subjected to a rigorous in-school alignment process to ensure fairness.*
- 4. The school principal will approve the estimated scores being provided and the rankings of each student in each subject in the school.*
- 5. A special unit is being established within the Department of Education and Skills to process the data provided by each school and operate national standardisation, again to ensure fairness amongst all students.*
- 6. The Department will finalise the grades for each student which will be issued to each student as close as possible to the traditional date. Formal State certification will also be provided.*
- 7. Students will retain the right to appeal. This will involve checks on school-entered data; correct transfer of that data to the Department; a review that it was correctly received and processed by the Department; and a verification of the Department's processes by independent appeal scrutineers.*
- 8. Students will also retain the right to sit the 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations at a date in the future when it is deemed safe for state examinations to be held.*

Please understand that a Student or Parents on behalf of a student should not make contact with the school with cause to influence grading. It is essential in order to uphold equity and fairness in order to enable all candidates to be assessed on an equal footing. The school is duty bound to report any such instances to the State Examinations Commission.

A FAQs document is also being published on <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2f07eb-leaving-cert-2020-information/> for students, teachers and parents and [A Guide to Calculated Grades for Leaving Certificate students 2020](#) .

Many of you will be happy with this decision and I realise that many also will be disappointed. A new process now starts for us all and there are still some questions to be answered. Please now take the time to think about your options. Enjoy your weekend and take time to look at options. This will take time to get sorted but the school will follow the guidelines issued by the department and everyone will be treated fairly.

We will be in contact with you shortly to get the process started.

Kind regards and stay safe

Michael O Sullivan

Michael Sullivan