



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit

State Examinations Commission

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S85/09

To: Management Authorities of Second Level Schools

Leaving Certificate Geography – Clarification of the list of Prescribed Topics 2010 and supplementary assessment information

The purpose of this circular is to:

- (a) provide additional information regarding assessment in Leaving Certificate Geography
- (b) outline the arrangements for the completion, submission and assessment of the Reporting Booklet 2010
- (c) confirm the list of prescribed topics for the 2010 Leaving Certificate Geography examination
- (d) confirm the list of prescribed topics for the 2011 Leaving Certificate Geography examination.

This circular should be read in the context of circulars S68/08 and S69/04, which set out the policy and practice of the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in relation to the assessment of practical coursework in the certificate examinations. Copies of these circulars are available on the SEC website: www.examinations.ie/schools.

1. Introduction

A revised syllabus for Leaving Certificate Geography was introduced in September 2004. The revised syllabus was examined for the first time in 2006.

Assessment in the subject features two components at both Ordinary and Higher Levels, as follows:

- (i) Practical coursework (20% of the total available marks) and
- (ii) A Final, Written Examination (80% of the total available marks).

2. Additional information regarding assessment in Leaving Certificate Geography

2.1 Significant Relevant Point (SRP)

As previously advised in Circular S40/05 and in the Sample Marking Indicators available on the SEC website, a Significant Relevant Point (SRP) is a single piece of factual information, to which an examiner will assign a mark weighting as prescribed in the marking scheme.

Each SRP should emerge from the information put forward by the candidate, leading to an overall coherent response to the question. The following are given as examples of information from which SRP's may be derived:

- a statistic and additional relevant information
- a geographical term and a brief explanation
- a development of a point
- additional annotation or information on a diagram / map / chart / illustration etc.

2.2 Geographical Investigation

2.2.1 Gathering of Data

A method of gathering may be a single activity, such as, for example, measuring. A method of gathering may also be a task. A task is a group of relevant linked activities. For example, in a land use survey, a task could involve a number of the following activities – sketching, counting, measuring, colour coding etc. Any number of these, or similar activities, could be combined to form one gathering task.

2.2.2 Coursework Length

The total length of the Reporting Booklet should not exceed 1,000 words. Candidates are required to synthesise the investigation process and write a report using the structure and headings given in the Reporting Booklet. To assist candidates in maintaining an appropriate focus in their report, the 2011 Reporting Booklet will consist of 24 pages.

3. Arrangements for the completion, submission and assessment of the Geographical Investigation Reporting Booklet 2010

3.1 The Geographical Investigation Reporting Booklets

A Geographical Investigation Reporting Booklet is to be completed by each candidate in the course of the current school year. Copies of the 2010 Reporting Booklets have already been sent to schools.

3.2 Importance of ensuring that the Reporting Booklet is each candidate's own individual work

The writing up of the reporting booklet must be the individual work of each candidate. Completed booklets will be accepted for assessment only if the school authorities have certified on the relevant forms that they are the candidates' own unaided work. Teachers should monitor the progress of the candidates' work on a regular basis.

Any incidence of suspected copying, improper assistance from another party, or plagiarism will be thoroughly investigated. Candidates should be advised of the penalties that may be applied under the *Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools*, which range from loss of the subject, to loss of the entire examination in all subjects, to being debarred from the Certificate Examinations in future years.

It is recognised that the field-based work in a Geographical Investigation may be undertaken in groups. However, the report must, in every case, be the candidate's own work and the candidate's own individual contribution must be clearly identified in the booklet. It is the responsibility of each candidate in the group to ensure that his/her own individual contribution is clearly identified in the booklet.

3.3 Completion of the Reporting Booklet

Each candidate should submit only one Reporting Booklet, reporting an investigation on one of the prescribed topics for 2010 (see Section 4 below).

The structure and headings given in the Reporting Booklet are intended to enable candidates to present their work in a clear, concise and structured way. Candidates are expected to use the headings precisely as provided. Failure to do so will result in a loss of marks.

The attention of teachers and of candidates is drawn to the *Information for Candidates*, on pages 2 and 3 of the Reporting Booklet. It is the responsibility of each candidate to ensure that he/she reads and understands this information *before* commencing completion of the Reporting Booklet.

In particular, it is emphasised, that extra material – paper or otherwise should not be included with the Reporting Booklet. Examiners will mark only what is presented on the pages of the Reporting Booklet itself. This stipulation is made because of the Commission’s concern that such material might become detached and lost, resulting in a possible loss of marks.

3.4 Submission of the Reporting Booklet

Reporting Booklets should be completed by 30 April 2010. On the date of completion, each candidate should be instructed to place his/her completed Reporting Booklet into a candidate envelope, which the Commission will provide to schools. The candidate should put his/her examination number on the cover of this envelope. The envelope when sealed should be handed by the candidate to the school authorities. Schools are requested to retain all reporting booklet envelopes in a secure place until the day of the written examination in June.

3.5 Answering through Irish

In keeping with all other examinations that have components other than the formal written examination, bonus marks will not be awarded to any coursework completed in Irish.

4. List of Prescribed Topics for the 2010 Leaving Certificate Geography examination

The List of Prescribed Topics for candidates sitting the Leaving Certificate Geography examination in 2010 was circulated to schools in October 2008. The topics are also available on the Commission’s website under the Project/Practical Coursework section. They are also printed on the front cover of the 2010 Reporting Booklets which were issued to schools recently.

An incorrect list of 2010 Topics inadvertently issued with circular S72/09. Care should be taken to ensure that the List of Prescribed Topics for 2010 is provided to candidates sitting the 2010 Leaving Certificate examination only. The list of Prescribed Topics for 2010 is as follows:

1. Geomorphic processes of erosion in a fluvial or coastal or glaciated environment.
2. Geomorphic underground processes in a karst environment.
3. Demographic change in a local setting.
4. Management of a local environmental issue.
5. Traffic patterns in a rural or urban setting.
6. Changing land-use in a local setting.

5. List of Prescribed Topics for the 2011 Leaving Certificate Geography examination

The list of Prescribed Topics for candidates sitting the 2011 examination is as follows:

1. Geomorphic process of transportation and / or deposition in a fluvial or coastal environment.
2. Human interaction with the geomorphic processes in a glacial or coastal or fluvial or karst environment.
3. A study of how land-use affects traffic flow patterns in a local area.
4. Analysis of a waste management strategy in a local area.
5. Fifty years of population – a local demographic study.
6. The changing economic landscape in a rural or urban setting.

Please bring this circular to the attention of all teachers of Leaving Certificate Geography in your school.

If you have any queries please contact the State Examinations Commission at 090 644 2741/42/43.

Tom O'Neill
Higher Executive Officer
November 2009