



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

Inaugural Annual Report
2003



Mission Statement

To provide a high-quality state examinations and assessment system incorporating the highest standards of openness, fairness and accountability.

Mandate

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) was established under Section 54 of the Education Act, 1998 and is mandated in its functions under the State Examinations Commission (Establishment) Order 2003. The order sets out the functions and responsibilities of the SEC as follows:

- To organise the holding of examinations
- To ensure the preparation of examination papers and other examination materials
- To determine procedures in places where examinations are conducted including the supervision of examinations
- To make arrangements for the marking of work presented for examination
- To issue the results of examinations
- To determine procedures to enable the review and appeal of results of examinations at the request of candidates
- To charge and collect fees for examinations and apply such monies to the carrying out of its functions
- To designate places where examinations may be held

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Foreword by the Chairman



I am pleased to publish the inaugural annual report of the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The report provides a review of the organisation's performance and development during 2003. It includes a general overview of the operations of

the SEC, which demonstrates the diversity of the functions required in conducting the state examinations.

In March 2003, the Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Noel Dempsey, TD, took an historic step by establishing an independent Commission to run the state examinations. The establishment of the SEC was brought about by a major Programme of Structural Reform within the Department following the publication of the Cromien report of the review of the Department's operations, systems and staffing needs. The necessity to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the state examinations system was of paramount importance in setting up the SEC.

In the past number of years, the Department of Education and Science had made significant improvements to the examinations system. The system transferred to the SEC is well run, robust and delivers a quality service that puts the candidate at the heart of the service, and is underpinned by the highest standards of quality, openness and transparency. It is a testament to the quality of the system and the continued hard work and dedication of the staff of the SEC that the 2003 examinations were run to the high standards expected by the Irish public.

During 2003, our work was conducted by reference to the strategic goals set out by the Department of Education and Science. Considerable progress has since been made in establishing our own strategic objectives for the years 2004-2006 and our Statement of Strategy will be published shortly. The mission statement for the new organisation **"To provide a high quality state examinations and assessment system incorporating the highest standards of openness, fairness and accountability"** speaks for itself and underpins our commitment to the guiding principles concerned.

I believe that the SEC is well placed to respond to future challenges. We are committed to working in cooperation and in collaboration with our education partners to enhance and improve our examinations and associated services.

I am grateful to Minister Dempsey and the staff of his Department for their support in establishing the SEC and for the assistance that has been given throughout the year. I would like to express my sincerest thanks to all who have contributed to ensuring a seamless transition to the new organisation. In particular, I must make mention of the invaluable contribution made by my four colleague commissioners who have brought their wealth of experience to bear. I am also grateful to the media for their constructive contributions since our establishment. Finally, I wish to pay tribute to the staff of the SEC who have, under the leadership of the Chief Executive, Pádraic McNamara, and his management team, worked so hard over the past year.

Jimmy Farrelly
Chairman

Statement from the Chief Executive Officer



I am pleased to present the SEC's 2003 Annual Report. This is the SEC's first Annual Report following its establishment in March 2003.

The SEC faced a dual challenge in 2003.

The first was to assume immediate responsibility for conducting the state examinations from the Department of Education and Science and to maintain the high standards set by the Department in this regard. The second was to commence building the organisational structure and capacity to support the operations of the SEC as a body independent of the Department of Education and Science.

The Report gives valuable statistical information on the outcomes of the 2003 examinations and a useful overview of a number of other areas of interest to our customers and partners.

While it is important to reflect on what has been achieved in 2003, the SEC must continue to focus on its core function of conducting the state examinations while at the same time addressing other priorities. These include the maintenance of full public confidence in the SEC as an effective organisation, which administers the examinations in a fair, open and accountable manner, and initiating and supporting relevant research and development on examination issues.

Information and communication technology has a vital role to play in ensuring that the examination processes and services continue to be effective, open and transparent, and facilitates enhancement of quality customer services through the wider e-government agenda. Continuous investment in, and exploitation of, key information technology tools is vital to our future improvement and development. We are particularly focused on the development of secure internet-based solutions to meet our business needs.

I want to express my thanks to all SEC staff for their hard work and dedication and in particular for their positive response to the new challenges presented by the establishment of the SEC. I also want to say a sincere thanks to school authorities and staff, teachers, parents, students, examiners, superintendents and all other examination personnel whose commitment, application and professionalism contributes so generously to the successful conduct of the state examinations.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the support and leadership provided by the Commissioners under the chairmanship of Mr. Jimmy Farrelly. Their contribution has been of immense importance during what has been, and will continue to be, a period of change, development and challenge for this organisation.

Pádraic McNamara

Chief Executive Officer

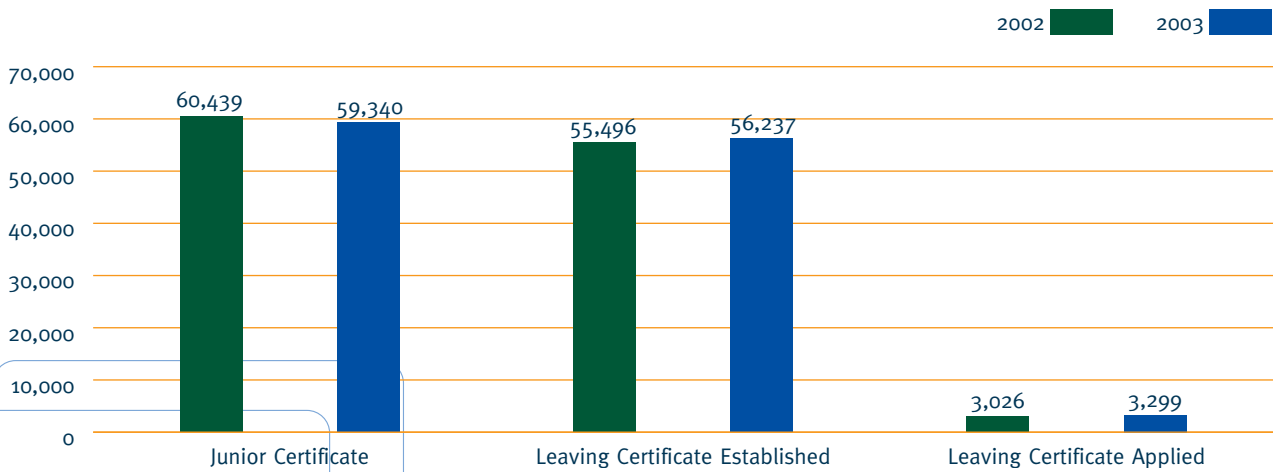
Examination Statistics at a Glance

KEY EXAMINATION STATISTICS 2003

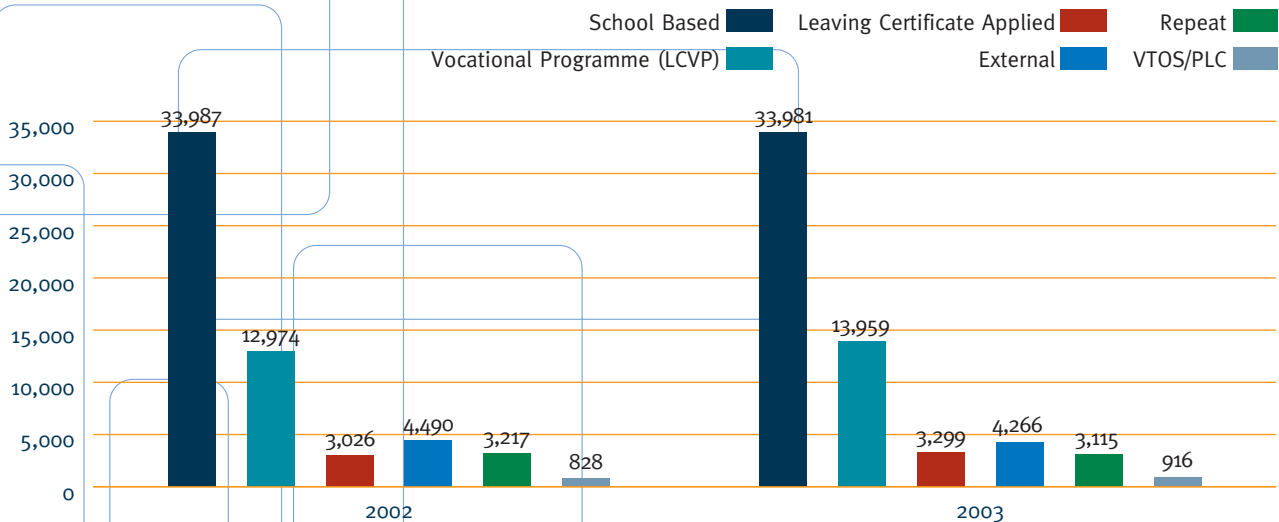
	Leaving Certificate	Leaving Certificate Applied	Junior Certificate	Total
Candidates	56,237	3,299	59,340 ¹	118,876
Subjects	31	28	24	83
Test Instruments	120	58	67	245
Components Examined	816,926	68,763	932,123	1,817,812
Grades	387,749	40,998	577,053	1,005,800
Appeals (Grades)	10,229	65	1,659	11,953

¹ Figure excludes 293 Leaving Certificate candidates who took Junior Certificate language subjects *ab-initio*.

NUMBER OF STATE EXAMINATION CANDIDATES



CATEGORY OF LEAVING CERTIFICATE CANDIDATES





LEAVING CERTIFICATE (ESTABLISHED) PARTICIPATION RATES

The following table shows the participation rates for the fifteen most popular subjects in the 2003 Leaving Certificate examination and a comparison with the participation rates in these subjects in the 2002 examination.

Subject	2003		2002		% Change
	Candidates	Percentage of Cohort	Candidates	Percentage of Cohort	
1 Maths	54,256	96.5%	53,658	96.7%	-0.2%
2 English	53,460	95.1%	52,997	95.5%	-0.4%
3 Irish	49,828	88.6%	49,085	88.4%	0.2%
4 French	32,491	57.8%	32,116	57.9%	-0.1%
5 Geography	28,951	51.5%	28,430	51.2%	0.3%
6 Business	23,531	41.8%	23,605	42.5%	-0.7%
7 Biology	22,671	40.3%	22,064	39.8%	0.5%
8 Home Economics*	18,055	32.1%	18,508	33.4%	-1.3%
9 History	11,842	21.1%	10,792	19.4%	1.7%
10 Art	9,848	17.5%	9,224	16.6%	0.9%
11 Construction Studies	8,898	15.8%	8,512	15.3%	0.5%
12 Physics	8,806	15.7%	8,651	15.6%	0.1%
13 German	8,692	15.5%	8,722	15.7%	-0.2%
14 Accounting	6,699	11.9%	7,070	12.7%	-0.8%
15 Chemistry	6,698	11.9%	6,497	11.7%	0.2%

*Social & Scientific

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE PARTICIPATION RATES

The following table shows the participation rates for the fifteen most popular subjects in the 2003 Junior Certificate examination and a comparison with the participation rates in these subjects in the 2002 examination.

Subject	2003		2002		% Change
	Candidates	Percentage of Cohort	Candidates	Percentage of Cohort	
1 English	58,716	98.9%	59,590	98.6%	0.3%
2 Maths	58,441	98.5%	59,295	98.1%	0.4%
3 Civic, Social & Political Education	57,526	96.9%	58,278	96.4%	0.5%
4 Irish	53,979	91.0%	55,433	91.7%	-0.7%
5 Geography	53,786	90.6%	54,446	90.1%	0.5%
6 History	53,453	90.1%	53,796	89.0%	1.1%
7 Science	51,090	86.1%	52,092	86.2%	-0.1%
8 French	39,323	66.3%	40,523	67.0%	-0.7%
9 Business Studies	37,315	62.9%	38,041	62.9%	0.0%
10 Art, Craft, Design	21,592	36.4%	21,536	35.6%	0.8%
11 Home Economics	20,224	34.1%	20,591	34.1%	0.0%
12 Materials Technology (Wood)	15,902	26.8%	15,675	25.9%	0.9%
13 Technical Graphics	13,387	22.6%	14,410	23.8%	-1.2%
14 German	11,385	19.2%	12,277	20.3%	-1.1%
15 Music	8,402	14.2%	8,691	14.4%	-0.2%

Chapter 1: A New Organisation

The year 2003 was an historic one for the state examinations in Ireland. For the first time since 1924, the examinations were conducted by a body other than the Government department with responsibility for education. The establishment of the State Examinations Commission (SEC) arose out of a major Programme of Structural Reform within the Department of Education and Science.

The SEC is a statutory body under Section 54 of the Education Act, 1998 and was established by Mr Noel Dempsey, TD, Minister for Education and Science, on 6th March 2003. Recognising the key role of the state examinations in Irish public life, the new organisation has been established as a non-departmental public body staffed by civil servants.

The five non-executive commissioners have been appointed by the Government on the nomination of the Minister for Education and Science and will serve for a period of three years. There is a permanent executive of 185 staff.

The key business activity of the SEC is the development, assessment, accreditation and certification of the second-level examinations of the Irish State: the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate. The SEC is committed to providing, in co-operation with the education partners, an examination and assessment system that is efficient, fair and accessible, and to ensuring that the examinations system is operated in an environment of openness, transparency and accountability. This commitment is underpinned by the SEC's mission statement:

To provide a high-quality state examination and assessment system incorporating the highest standards of openness, fairness and accountability

The functions of the SEC are as follows:

- organising the holding of examinations
- preparing examination papers and other examination materials
- determining procedures for the conduct and supervision of examinations
- arranging for the marking of work presented for examination
- issuing the results of examinations

- determining procedures to enable the review and appeal of results of examinations at the request of candidates
- charging and collecting fees for examinations
- designating places where examinations may be held

Each of these functions is essential to achieving the overall goal of providing a high-quality examinations system that commands national and international respect.

In order to illustrate the extent of the activity that goes into running the state examinations, it is worth noting that the 2003 examinations involved the following activities:

- engaging 650 contract personnel to assist in drafting and setting examination components such as written papers and oral, aural and practical components
- producing almost 2 million examination components and arranging for the distribution of these components to more than 4,600 examination locations
- engaging 4,620 superintendents to supervise at 4,610 examination centres including 30 special centres in hospitals
- engaging 6,000 examiners to mark the examinations
- generating 1 million individual grades in 83 different subjects leading to the award of 120,000 examination certificates.
- returning almost 300,000 Leaving Certificate examination scripts to examination centres to allow individual candidates to view their own marked scripts
- arranging for 12,000 examination results to be reviewed as part of the appeals process
- managing the expenditure of €47 million on running the examinations of which some €7 million was collected in examination fees.

The SEC operates to extremely tight timeframes while still placing a huge emphasis on operational efficiency, security, and quality. All in all, running the examinations is an immense logistical operation that requires coordination, cooperation and teamwork for it to be successful.



THE COMMISSIONERS

The Commissioners are mandated in their duties under the State Examinations Commission (Establishment) Order 2003 and hold office for a period of three years. The Government has appointed the following as the first State Examinations Commissioners:



Mr Jimmy Farrelly,
Chairperson, Former Secretary-General of the Department of the Environment and Local Government



Ms Mary Bridget O'Hara,
Deputy-Chairperson, Former post-primary school principal



Dr Dympna Glendenning,
Barrister, author and former primary school principal

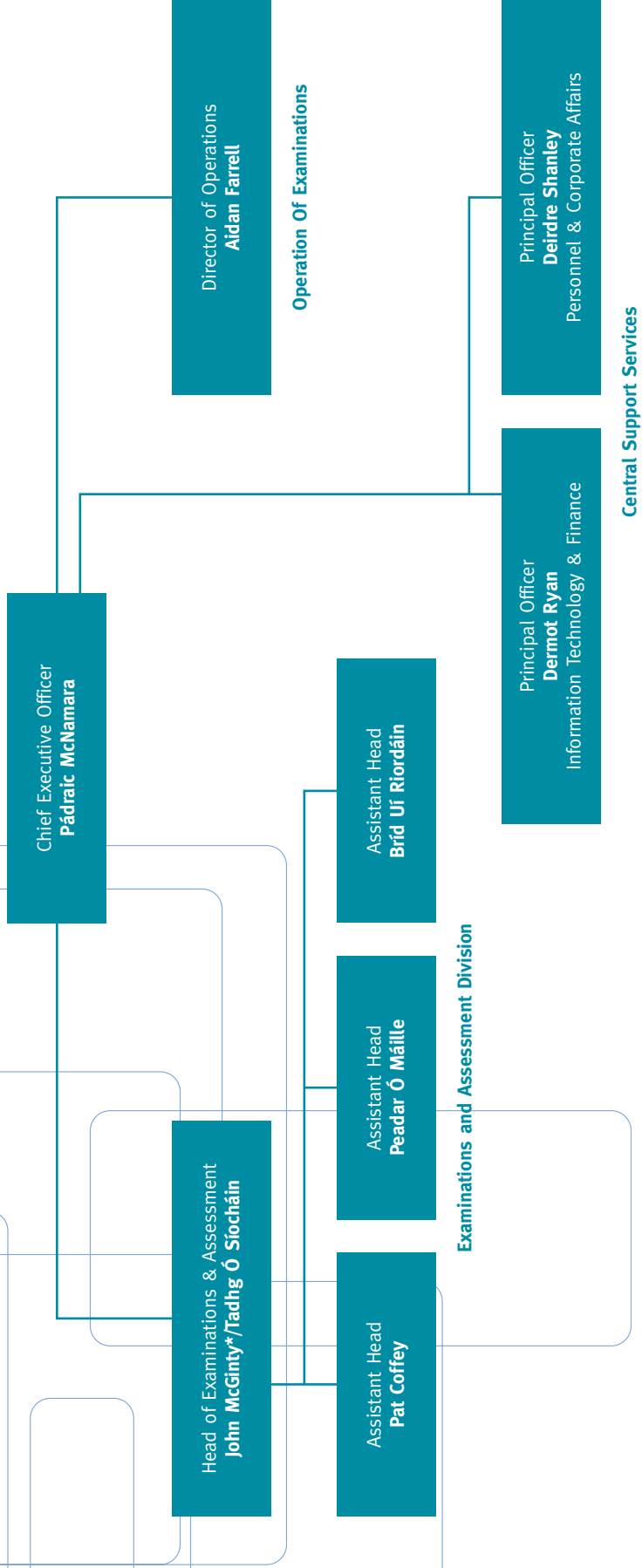


Dr Martin Newell,
Secretary to the Central Applications Office



Mr Barra Ó Briain,
Chief Executive Officer, Co. Cork Vocational Education Committee

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM



*John McGinty retired in November 2003 and was replaced by Tadhg Ó Siocháin as the Head of the Examinations and Assessment Division



THE EXECUTIVE

The executive consists of 150 staff based at SEC Headquarters in Athlone, Co. Westmeath and 35 staff in the Examinations and Assessment Division located throughout the country including Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick.

Examinations and Assessment Division

The Examinations and Assessment Division is responsible for ensuring the quality and standards of all of the SEC's examinations. This involves taking all necessary actions to maintain the highest standards in each examination subject annually and ensuring compliance with the specified protocols and procedures. The division is also responsible for ensuring that full account is taken of all relevant legislation and guidelines in areas such as equality and special needs in the preparation of the examination papers, in the conduct of the examinations, the marking process and subsequently in the appeals process.

The division comprises the Head of the Examinations and Assessment Division, three Assistant Heads and thirty-one Examinations and Assessment Managers (EAMs) – all of whom were formerly with the Inspectorate in the Department of Education and Science and are highly qualified subject specialists. The EAMs are responsible for the management of the various examinations assigned to them in their capacity as Chief Examiners. They also have a monitoring role in ensuring that the regulations of the SEC are complied with in schools and examination centres.

The division manages the work of 650 contract personnel engaged in drafting and setting examination papers and other test instruments. The division is also responsible for managing the work of the 6,000 examiners engaged each year to assist in marking the examinations and any subsequent appeals.

Operations Division

The Operations Division has a permanent staff complement of 100 personnel and is headed by the Director of Operations.

During the peak examination period in June, July and August, 80 additional temporary staff are employed.

The division is responsible for all of the administrative and logistical functions that go into running the examinations and is at the core of the day-to-day activities. The division processes applications for examinations and appeals, arranges for the printing and the packing of the examination papers, recruits examiners and superintendents, approves examination centres and assigns superintendents to these centres, distributes the examination papers and other stationery, distributes examination scripts to assistant examiners, arranges marking conferences, arranges the viewing of scripts, co-ordinates the appeals process, and issues the provisional results and the examination certificates. The focus of all of these activities is on guaranteeing the quality, security, integrity and delivery of the state examinations system.

Central Support Services

Information Technology and Finance Division

The Information Technology and Finance Division is headed by a Principal Officer. The state examinations benefit hugely from the high quality information technology systems in place. In addition to the central examinations systems, web-enabled interactive services have been developed which enable candidates to access their examination results, pay their appeal fees and allow external candidates to enter and pay for their examinations on-line. The expertise of its IT Unit ensures that the SEC remains at the forefront in international examination administrations, through the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of existing systems in line with new and evolving technologies.

The Finance Unit sees that all of the operations of the SEC are carried out in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible and that value for money is obtained. The Finance Unit is also responsible for all payments made by the SEC. These include fee payments to all contract personnel including drafters, setters, superintendents and examiners.

The Finance Unit deals with compliance in all matters relating to taxation, procurement, and interest on late payment legislation and sees that all of the financial transactions of the SEC are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Corporate Affairs and Personnel Division

The Corporate Affairs and Personnel Division is headed by a Principal Officer. Corporate Affairs supports the business needs of the organisation by ensuring compliance with all central Government commitments and initiatives and by coordinating the modernisation programme under the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) and the Sustaining Progress Social Partnership Agreement. The Division also provides a number of other services including the Press and Public Relations Office, co-ordination of the Partnership structures, development and administration of the website, provision of information, development of corporate publications and also acts as a secretariat to the Commissioners.

The Personnel Unit supports the personnel needs of the 185 permanent and 80 temporary staff in the SEC. The unit is responsible for meeting all personnel and accommodation requirements, for coordinating recruitment and promotion, and planning staff training and development. It also ensures that the organisation promotes and complies with equality legislation and guidelines, and implements central Government personnel policy, including family-friendly initiatives.

Chapter 2: Review of Performance in 2003

DEVELOPMENT OF MODES AND PROVISION OF ASSESSMENT

It is imperative that the educational needs of students are met and appropriately assessed and that young people are provided with the best opportunities to fulfil their potential. In this context, the state examinations system has continued to develop in response to the assessment needs of students.

The programmes of study available have developed significantly in recent years. Within the Senior Cycle, students are provided with three options: the established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. At Junior Certificate level, the option of the Junior Certificate School Programme is available. Modes of assessment appropriate to these programmes have been developed and implemented over the years.

Individual subjects continue to be developed both in terms of syllabus content and assessment modes. Diverse modes of assessment evaluate a broad range of knowledge, skills and competencies. This diversity in assessment has been characterised by the inclusion of orals, aurals, practical tests, coursework, interviews, project work, journals, investigations, and tasks.

Multi-component examinations are now a regular feature in the state examinations. Assessment in languages, for example, involves written, oral and aural components, while the assessment of music involves written, aural and practical performance tests.

These developments, in assessment, are significant in that they reflect current educational research, which suggests that the process of assessment should enable candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and competencies. Welcome as these developments are, in terms of further developing the authenticity of assessment, they have also

created challenges for the examinations system. The number of oral tests, for example, requires the availability of a large number of examiners. Responding to this need, while having regard to the integrity of the school year, places significant demands on the examinations system.

ASSESSMENT OF NEW SYLLABUSES

The year 2003 introduced the first examination in Junior Certificate Religious Education. It was particularly significant as it was the first time that Religious Education was examined by the State. The syllabus is built around a framework of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes relating to religion. Preparation for this examination included pre-testing sample examination papers in a number of the schools participating in the introduction of the syllabus.

The subject is examined at both Ordinary and Higher levels. The examination requires the preparation of a journal worth 20% of the overall mark, which is completed by candidates in the final year of the Junior Cycle, and a terminal written examination.

The 2003 results are shown below (Figure 2.1)

A new Leaving Certificate syllabus in Religious Education was introduced in September 2003. It is currently being taught in 5 schools and it is expected that a cohort of 100 candidates will sit the first examination in 2005.

Leaving Certificate Russian was examined for the first time this year. The revised Junior Certificate Mathematics syllabus also had its inaugural examination in 2003.

Figure 2.1: 2003 Junior Certificate Religious Education Results

Level	Number of Candidates	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E, F or NG
Higher	4,164	14%	34%	35%	14%	3%
Ordinary	1,623	14%	37%	26%	16%	7%

INCLUSION OF LANGUAGE ORALS IN THE APPEALS PROCESS

The SEC is committed to supporting a quality agenda in examinations and to consolidating the openness, transparency and accountability of its systems and processes. In 2003, the SEC introduced a number of measures to further enhance both quality assurance and customer service.

The oral component, in all language examinations, was included in the appeals process for the first time this year. This involved the recording of each oral examination and the tracking, filing, storage, retention and retrieval of each recording in the event of an appeal.

The introduction of this measure facilitates a full re-marking of all components, of an examination, in the event that a candidate appeals a result in a subject with an oral component. The subjects involved are Gaelic, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese. Almost 100,000 oral examinations were recorded in 2003.

MONITORING OF PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

Monitoring compliance with the regulations of the SEC in relation to the conduct of examinations is an important function of the Examinations and Assessment Division. Practical examinations are held annually during April and May in both the Leaving Certificate and the Junior Certificate.

The year 2003 saw a significant increase in the level of monitoring of the practical examinations and of Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme examinations. Examination and Assessment Managers monitored examination centres in selected schools throughout the country.

The SEC appreciates the assistance of school management and teachers in the conduct of the practical examinations.

Further development of the monitoring of these examinations is planned for 2004.

TRAINING OF CONTRACT STAFF

The SEC employs a significant number of contract staff annually to assist in the preparation, delivery and assessment of the examinations. These include drafters, setters, assistant setters, translators, typesetters, and graphic designers, among others.

In the light of the new practices necessitated by the establishment of the SEC, training needs analysis of contract staff was conducted. The provision of training for setters and assistant setters was prioritised. A working party was established to plan, design and deliver a cohesive training programme and to draft a training manual for setters and assistant setters.

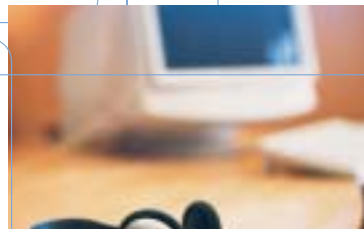
The training was delivered in November 2003, by members of the Examinations and Assessment Division, and embraced both generic and subject-specific issues. It included inputs on assessment theory, validity, reliability, ethical issues and confidentiality, question design, language usage and the design of marking schemes. Each participant was provided with a copy of the *Manual for Setters and Assistant Setters*.

The programme of training for contract staff is ongoing and separate training programmes for drafters and translators will be delivered during 2004.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE EXAMINATION PROCESSES

The SEC receives a significant amount of commentary and correspondence on examination and assessment issues throughout the year and, in particular, during the examining period in June. These come from a variety of sources including candidates, parents, teachers, school authorities, and members of the public. Professional education bodies, such as subject associations, teacher unions, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and representatives of the universities also provide valuable feedback to the SEC on the examination papers. In addition, the media, in general, and the education correspondents, in particular, also draw the attention of the SEC to specific issues.

The SEC has in place a uniform system for dealing with the correspondence and commentary received. In the first instance, correspondence is recorded, and then forwarded to the relevant Chief Examiner. The Chief Examiner considers all such correspondence, commentary and representations prior to the finalisation of the marking scheme.



Seeking to ensure the highest standards of public accountability, the SEC wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the various professional and education bodies and others in relation to the examinations.

UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

In spite of the rigorous quality assurances measures in place throughout the examinations system, it is inevitable that unforeseen circumstances may occasionally arise during examinations. These may include, for example, acoustical issues during aural examinations, damage to examination work, technical ambiguity in question paper translation, or an unintended ambiguity in question setting.

The principle of fairness to all examination candidates underpins the work of the SEC. In the event of an unforeseen circumstance that could, in any way, undermine this principle, the SEC fully investigates and takes appropriate measures to ensure that no examination candidate is disadvantaged as a result of issues outside of his or her control.

For example, at this year's examination, the SEC established that part of a question in the Higher Level paper in the Leaving Certificate Chemistry examination was, through error, not within the scope of the published syllabus. Accordingly, this issue was taken into consideration in the development and application of the Higher Level Chemistry marking scheme and the marking scheme included a provision to ensure that no candidate was disadvantaged by this error.

CHIEF EXAMINERS' REPORTS

The SEC publishes Chief Examiners' Reports in a number of subject areas each year. These subject areas are selected on a cyclical basis. The reports are based on information and analysis provided by the team of examiners. Analysis is conducted on all aspects of the examination process, with particular emphasis on the quality of candidate responses and the statistical outcomes.

A common reporting template is utilised for the purpose of providing relevant information on all aspects of the assessment process and outcomes to candidates, teachers, professional bodies and other interested parties. The reports contain recommendations for teachers and students and generally include exemplars of candidates' answers.

Chief Examiners' Reports on the 2003 examinations were published in the following subjects.

Figure 2.2: Chief Examiners' Reports 2003

Junior Certificate	Leaving Certificate
English	Business
Home Economics	Spanish
Geography	French
Mathematics	German
Gaeilge	Classical Studies
Music	Music
Classical Studies	
Art, Craft and Design	

The reports may be accessed on the Commission's website www.examinations.ie

INTERNAL REVIEW OF THE 2003 EXAMINATION PROCESS

The SEC is committed to the maintenance of the highest possible standards within each aspect of the examination process and to improving practices and procedures on an ongoing basis.

In keeping with this objective the SEC undertook a detailed internal review of the operation of the 2003 examinations. The aim was to evaluate the various examination processes as they operated in 2003, with the objective of improving the operation of the examinations in 2004 and subsequent years. The implementation of system and customer service improvements is ongoing.

EXAMINATION OUTCOMES 2003

A detailed statistical report on the examination outcomes in all subjects in the 2003 examinations is presented at **Appendix D**. These statistics, taken in conjunction with the published Chief Examiners' Reports, provide a comprehensive analysis of the results achieved by candidates in the 2003 examinations.

PLANNING FOR 2004

The new syllabus in Leaving Certificate Home Economics will be examined and assessed for the first time in 2004. Preparatory work for the introduction of the new examination has included the issuing of sample papers and assessment information to schools and candidates.

A new Leaving Certificate syllabus in Biology will be examined for the first time in 2004. Circulars and sample papers were prepared and issued to schools in 2003.

In the LCVP Link Modules, while the framework and modes of assessment are substantially the same as in 2003, new areas, such as career investigation, have been added. The investigation can also be presented on audiotape for the first time. The SEC has published assessment guidelines, sample questions, and exemplar material and has issued circulars to schools in relation to the changes.

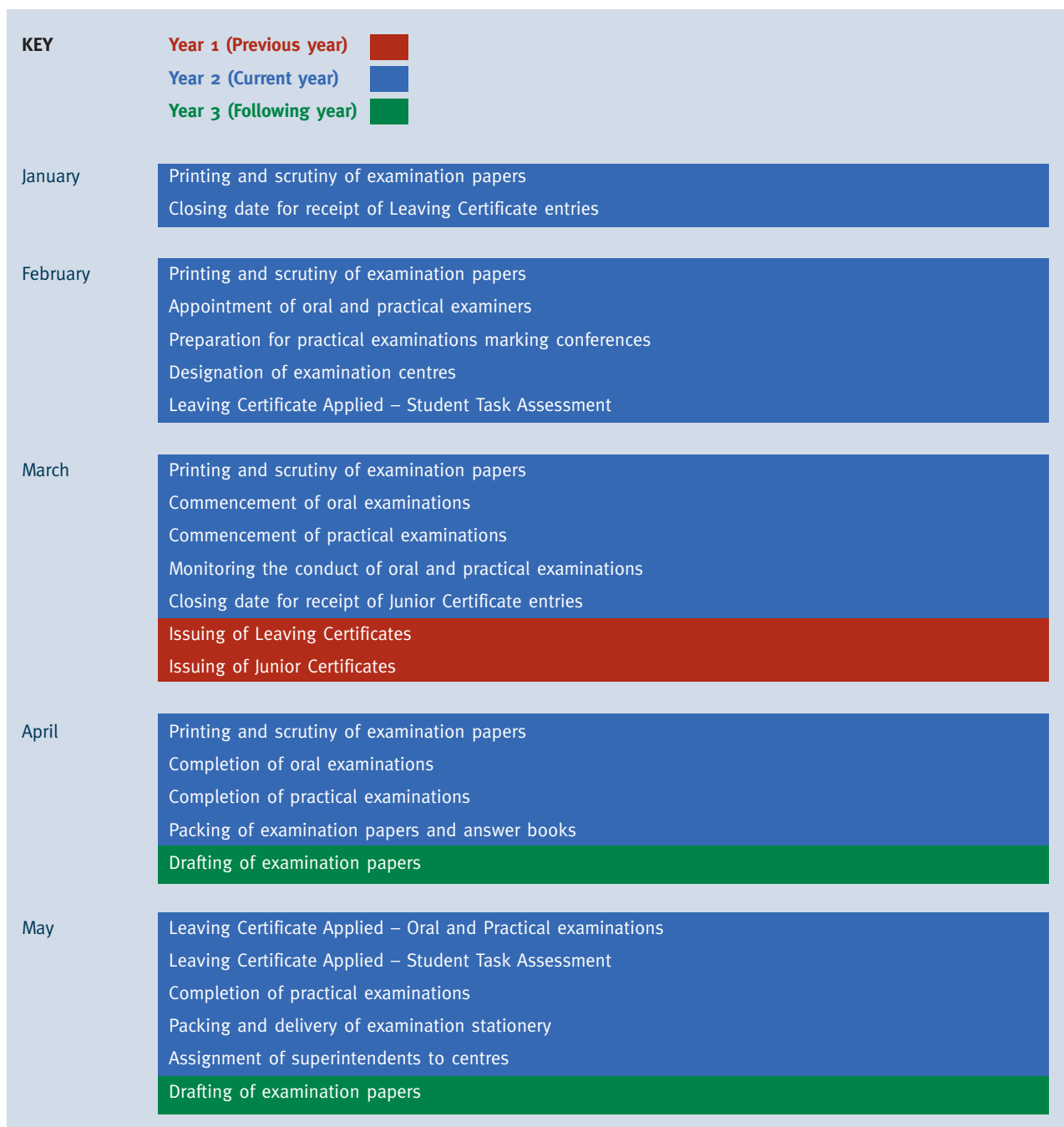
A new interim Leaving Certificate syllabus in Arabic, devised by a course committee of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, is also to be examined for the first time in 2004. The subject is available at Ordinary Level and at Higher Level. The SEC issued sample papers and a brief description of the format of the examination papers with a list of prescribed materials, to schools at the end of November 2003.

Chapter 3: Focus on Examinations and Assessment

A YEAR IN THE STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

Management of the state examinations requires detailed planning throughout the year. While the examining period in June and the issuing of results in August and September understandably occupy most public interest, the planning and management of the process requires significant levels of input throughout the year. The broad annual examinations cycle is illustrated here:

Figure 3.1: Broad Annual Examinations Cycle



June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of examination papers and answer-books HOLDING OF WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS Monitoring the conduct of the examinations Commencement of marking conferences Commencement of marking and monitoring process Drafting of examination papers
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holding of marking conferences Continuation of the marking and monitoring process Processing and inputting of results Drafting of examination papers
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processing and inputting of results ISSUING OF LEAVING CERTIFICATE PROVISIONAL RESULTS Viewing of marked Leaving Certificate scripts Monitoring of the viewing process Drafting of examination papers
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ISSUING OF JUNIOR CERTIFICATE PROVISIONAL RESULTS Closing date for Leaving Certificate appeals Closing date for Junior Certificate appeals Marking and monitoring of appeals
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuing of results of Leaving Certificate appeals Post-appeal viewing of Leaving Certificate scripts Setting and proofing of examination papers Recruitment and appointment of Examiners
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issuing of results of Junior Certificate appeals Recruitment and appointment of Superintendents Setting and proofing of examination papers
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting and proofing of examination papers



EQUITY AND FAIRNESS

The SEC is fully committed to providing an examinations and assessment system with the highest standards of equity and fairness which enables all candidates to display their achievements.

Reasonable Accommodations

Candidates with permanent or long-term conditions or specific learning difficulties, which may significantly impair their performance in the examinations, may apply to the SEC for a reasonable accommodation to be made to facilitate them in taking the examinations. The SEC's policy on Reasonable Accommodations is based on the findings of an Expert Advisory Group, which reported on these issues to the Minister for Education and Science in the year 2000.

Reasonable Accommodations are intended to diminish, as far as possible, the impact of a physical or learning difficulty on a candidate's performance and thus enable a candidate to demonstrate his or her level of attainment. They are not intended to compensate for lack of attainment.

In some instances, a candidate may be able to attain in most areas of a subject, but not in all. In such instances, the SEC may allow the candidate an exemption or waiver in a particular component of the examination. In the case of a candidate granted an exemption in a particular component, the certificate is annotated to indicate the component in which the exemption was granted. For example, in the case of a candidate granted an exemption from an aural component of a language examination, the certificate would state that, "all elements were assessed except for the aural component".

The SEC also provides a number of other measures to facilitate candidates. These include, where appropriate, the provision of readers and scribes, the production of modified papers, Braille papers and enlarged papers, the use of tape recorders and personal computers, and the provision of special examination centres.

Decisions in relation to the provision of reasonable accommodations are open to appeal to the Reasonable Accommodations Independent Appeals Panel.

In 2003, reasonable accommodations were made for almost 6,200 candidates in the certificate examinations.

Figure 3.2: Reasonable Accommodations

Type of Accommodation	2002	2003
Tape Recorder	695	907
Reading Assistance	1,364	1,938
Scribe	173	241
Word Processor	99	118
Visually Modified Papers	123	127
Component Exemption	39	44
Spelling/Grammar Waiver	1,945	2,761
TOTAL	4,438	6,136

Emergencies During the Examinations

The SEC endeavours to facilitate and enable all candidates to sit the examinations for which they have entered. Invariably, as a result of accident, bereavement or other trauma, some candidates or groups of candidates will require special arrangements to be put in place, usually at very short notice. These arrangements may include the provision of special centres in hospitals or the provision of an individual centre within a school.

In considering the need to preserve the integrity of the examinations, the SEC will always endeavour to facilitate the taking of the examination by a candidate on the day timetabled. For example, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate may be permitted to take the examination at a later time on the same day provided that the candidate has been supervised and has not been in contact with candidates who previously sat the paper or with others who are aware of the content of the paper.

Access to an around-the-clock telephone service is provided to schools and candidates during the examining period to cater for all such emergencies. The SEC is most appreciative of the assistance it receives from school authorities, from hospital staff and from superintendents in facilitating arrangements for special cases.

During the 2003 examinations the SEC made special provision and emergency arrangements for 50 candidates.

Lifelong Learning

The SEC supports the provision of lifelong learning. This includes, among other measures, the removal of financial barriers by providing exemption from examination fees to medical-card holders. There is open access to the certificate examinations, subject to candidates meeting the specific requirements of the various subjects and programmes. Every year, examination centres are established to accommodate candidates who enter for their examinations from outside mainstream schooling.

The SEC is pleased to support the work of the Department of Education and Science, the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, the Adult Literacy and Community Education Schemes, and the Department of Social and Family Affairs

in providing education services to adult learners and to those returning to education.

In 2003, of the 4,266 external Leaving Certificate candidates, almost 550 candidates were aged over 23. Almost 2,500 candidates were entered for the 2003 certificate examinations through the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

ASSURING THE QUALITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE EXAMINATIONS

One of the key objectives of the SEC is the provision of an examinations system of the highest possible quality. The aspiration of any examining body, including the SEC, is to preside over a system that is completely error free. However, it is recognised, in examining circles, that this will always be an aspiration rather than a completely achievable goal.

The SEC is committed to continuous refinement of its systems to minimise the potential for error, ensuring that adequate procedures are in place to detect errors and ensuring that no injustice is done to candidates when errors do occur.

The SEC has in place a range of procedures to enhance reliability and to minimise error. The implementation of rigorous quality assurance measures at every stage of the process: preparation, development and distribution of test instruments; training and instruction of contract staff; translation, marking, resulting; viewing of scripts and appeals; all remain critical to the ongoing maintenance of high standards.

Confidence in the state examinations is also assured through the close attention given to maintaining their security and integrity. This begins with the absolute confidentiality required at all stages of the setting of examination papers. It extends through the stages of printing, packing, distribution to centres and storage prior to the examinations. Steps are taken to ensure that security is maintained in the examination centre and throughout the entire examining process. It continues through the collection and collation of marks and the subsequent administrative processes leading to the issue of results. Appropriate procedures are in place to maintain the security and integrity of assessments, such as coursework and project work, which are not conducted through scheduled examination. The SEC ensures through site visits, checks and inspections that the necessary involvement of third parties, such as external confidential printers, does not in any way compromise the integrity of the examinations.

The SEC is to the forefront, internationally, in terms of the openness of the examination system and in the rigour of the quality assurance measures that it has established.

Examinations and Assessment Managers

The Examinations and Assessment Managers (EAMs) perform a key quality assurance role within the examination process. In their capacity as Chief Examiners, they have overall responsibility for the quality of the examinations, and for the management of the contract staff involved in the drafting and setting of examination papers, and for those involved in all stages of the examining process. They perform a monitoring role within the system and ensure that the regulations of the SEC for the preparation, conduct, marking and appeal processes of the examinations are complied with fully.

Research and development in assessment issues also forms an important element of the work of the EAMs.



Preparation and Development of Test Instruments

Figure 3.3: The Stages in the Preparation of an Examination Paper

Who?	What?
Chief Examiner	Briefs drafter on examination requirements and specification
Drafter	Produces draft paper to required specification
Chief Examiner and Setters	Finalise draft paper by review against syllabus, guidelines, circulars, past papers and marking schemes
Typesetter	Prepares 1st proof of examination paper
Chief Examiner	Submits 1st proof for university observations (Leaving Certificate only)
Chief Examiner and Setters	Review 1st proof and make necessary changes and corrections
Translator	Translates proof of paper into Irish
Typesetter	Prepares 2nd proof of English version of examination paper and 1st proof of Irish version
Chief Examiner and Setters	Review 2nd proof of English version and make necessary changes and corrections
Chief Examiner and Setters	Review 1st proof of Irish version and make necessary changes and corrections
Irish Editor	Provides quality assurance on Irish versions
Typesetter	Prepares 3rd and subsequent proofs of English version Prepares 2nd and subsequent proofs of Irish version
Irish Editor	Provides quality assurance on Irish versions
Chief Examiner and Setters	Review proofs of Irish and English versions
Chief Examiner and Setters	Complete pre-press scrutiny and sign-off
Printer	Prints examination papers
Chief Examiner and Setters	Complete post-press scrutiny process

The 2003 examinations involved the preparation of almost 250 distinct test instruments in 83 subjects. The production of reliable and valid assessment instruments is a core function of the SEC. As has been illustrated, an examination paper is processed through a number of stages from draft to press. At each stage, the proof is transmitted and transported securely and is subjected to rigorous checks. This process has recently been further strengthened through the introduction of both generic and subject-specific checklists, more formalised pre-press and post-press scrutiny processes and the implementation of a formal training programme for setters, assistant setters, drafters and translators.

Changes to the typesetting for the 2003 examination papers resulted in enhanced quality assurance and more efficient drafting and proofing processes as papers can move electronically, and consequently faster, between the Question Paper Unit, the Chief Examiners, the drafters and setters. Electronic availability of examination papers also facilitated same day publication on the SEC's website during the examination period. This process has been further refined for the 2004 examinations with the introduction of a portable display format (PDF) standard for all typesetting and proofing.

Packing and Distribution

The packing and distribution of the examination papers must be completed in time for the written examinations, which, this year commenced on Wednesday, 4th June.

The examination paper packing process contains an inbuilt system of controls to safeguard against possible error.

A number of other measures contribute to quality assurance of the process. Papers are packed in tamper-evident colour coded envelopes indicating whether the paper is for a morning or afternoon session. Two candidates, in each examination centre, are required to sign the label prior to opening in order to verify that the packet has not been interfered with and that the packet label indicates the correct examination papers for the session. Examination centre superintendents are then required to ensure that the correct question papers are distributed to candidates.

Tracking the progress of the 2 million items that pass through the system every year is essential. The SEC has in place an advanced track and trace system, using

barcodes, that enables monitoring of items through the postal system. Track and trace is also used to monitor the return of examination scripts from examination centres to the SEC and the subsequent movement of examination scripts during the marking, viewing of marked scripts and appeals processes.

Examination Superintendents and Centres

In 2003, a total of 4,623 people were employed as superintendents at 4,614 examination centres. During examination periods much of the integrity of the examination process depends on the manner in which superintendents perform their assigned tasks. It is a vital role and one that has been performed with excellence, skill and dedication by thousands of superintendents over the years. Superintendents, on appointment, receive an *Instructions to Superintendents* booklet, which outlines the duties and procedures involved, and a *Day-to-Day Instructions* booklet, which provides detailed instructions for each examination session.

The SEC has produced a training video for new superintendents outlining the role and responsibilities of a superintendent. During the examinations, Examination and Assessment Managers visit the examination centres in order to monitor the conduct of the examinations and to ensure compliance with the regulations.

The Marking Process

The examinations are marked by assistant examiners, (generally experienced teachers in the subject), who work under the overall direction and management of an Examinations and Assessment Manager. A team, consisting of a Chief Advising Examiner and a number of Advising Examiners, is appointed for the purpose of monitoring and advising the assistant examiners in their work.

The Chief Examiner and the advisory team test the draft marking scheme at a two day pre-conference. During the pre-conference, the draft marking scheme is also considered in the light of commentary and correspondence from teachers, professional bodies and other interested parties, before being applied to exemplar material of candidates' work.

In the case of the Leaving Certificate, assistant examiners attend at a two-day training conference prior to commencing the marking. Junior Certificate conferences are generally held over one day. The training process involves the use of



exemplars of candidates' work both for standardising purposes and for purposes of training Assistant Examiners in the consistent application of the marking scheme.

Random sampling is conducted in the early stages of the marking and this has both a predictive and diagnostic function. The process involves the marking of between 20 and 40 randomly chosen scripts from each assistant examiner. Following the marking of the sample, a post-marking conference is held, at which the advisory team, under the direction of the Chief Examiner, analyses the outcome of the marking of the random sample. This analysis may result in changes or clarifications to the marking scheme. Once the marking scheme has been finalised, the marking proceeds, subject to rigorous ongoing monitoring of the process.

The marking schemes in each Leaving Certificate subject are published shortly after the issue of the examination results and in advance of the viewing of their scripts by candidates. These are issued to all schools and are available to download from the SEC's website. The Junior Certificate marking schemes are published on the website.

The 2003 examinations required 6,033 examiners for the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate examinations. Of these, just over 1,000 examined practical and project work at both Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate and 1,229 examined the oral component of the Leaving Certificate language subjects.

Monitoring the Marking Process

Ongoing and systematic monitoring is a critical element of the marking process. The monitoring is designed to enable each Assistant Examiner to apply the agreed marking scheme consistently and accurately to all scripts.

A minimum of 5% of the scripts, marked by each Assistant Examiner, is monitored by Advising Examiners during the course of the marking. Advising Examiners are also available to the Assistant Examiners for consultation and advice throughout the marking period.

Operational Activities

There is a continual focus on simplifying and refining procedures, forms and other information being supplied to, and gathered from, our customers. The procedure for identifying candidates' subject levels for the 2003 examination was enhanced in order to provide more accurate information about the numbers of examination papers required.

Certain operational activities previously carried out by the IT unit have been moved into operational areas. This has given the staff in these areas immediate control over operating and scheduling these activities.

The ethos of flexibility and team working is embedded within the examinations system. As in other years, the organisation adapted itself in the lead-up to and during the examination period in June to cope with increased demands.

The Resulting Process

The resulting process takes place in a very short period of time between the completion of the marking and the issue of the results. The process involves collating the marks for all components of a subject in order to arrive at a grade, and in turn collating the grades for all subjects in order to produce a set of examination results for each candidate. The SEC uses advanced information technology systems to ensure that the resulting process is comprehensively checked. Links within the IT system ensure that a mark is expected for each component of an examination for which a candidate has been entered. Error detection is enhanced through a double keying of all examination marks. A supplementary or extra statement is provided with a candidate's provisional results in any case where a particular result in a multi-component subject does not contain credit for an essential component. This allows the candidate and their school to satisfy themselves that all examination components taken by the candidate have been taken into account in determining his/her final grade.

The 2003 examinations required 1.8 million component marks to be recorded leading to the issue of just over 1 million grades. The provisional results of this year's Leaving

Certificate examination were issued on Wednesday, 18th August 2003 while Junior Certificate provisional results were issued on Wednesday, 13th September 2003.

Viewing of Scripts

Candidates in the Leaving Certificate examination are afforded an opportunity to view their own marked scripts after the initial marking process. The viewing allows candidates to satisfy themselves that the marking scheme has been applied correctly to their work and, in addition to enhancing transparency, is designed to assist candidates in making a decision to appeal a result in a subject or subjects.

The Irish state examinations was one of the first national examinations systems to see the introduction of this measure, and taken in conjunction with the publication of the marking schemes, places the SEC at the forefront internationally in terms of the openness, transparency and accountability of the examination system.

Examination and Assessment Managers monitor the viewing centres to ensure that the viewing process conforms to the strict regulations that apply. To protect the integrity of the process only the organising superintendent is allowed to bring writing material or instruments into the viewing centre, or to remove scripts from the centre.

The implementation of this service, which is offered to candidates free of charge, is a significant logistical exercise. Following the issue of the results of the 2003 Leaving Certificate Examination, 270,000 marked scripts were returned to examination centres for the viewing which was held on the 29th and 30th August, 2003.

The Appeals Process

Procedures put in place for the marking process are designed to eliminate marking error and to ensure maximum reliability in assessment. Despite these procedures, however, there is no absolute guarantee that the correct mark/grade is awarded during the marking process in *all* instances. The existence of the viewing process and the appeals process are, in themselves, further quality assurance checks to rectify any perceived injustice and actual errors.

Following the 2003 examinations, appeals were made against 12,000 of the 1,005,800 provisional results issued to candidates. Of these, just over 2,700 results were upgraded.

It should be noted that the grading system applying to the Leaving Certificate examination differs significantly from grading systems used for examinations in other jurisdictions. Whereas grading in other jurisdictions generally involves major grades only, the grading system in place for Leaving Certificate allows division of the major grades into sub-grades. Thus, instead of grading into five major grades as is the case for example, in A Levels in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the SEC grades into 14 sub-divisions (A1, A2, B1, B2, B3 etc.) for the Leaving Certificate. While the sub-divisions provide more detail and information to candidates and users of the certificates, this grade structure does increase the potential for error. However, given the rigorous quality assurance measures in place, the opportunity for candidates to view their marked scripts, the publication of marking schemes and the appeals process, the SEC is confident in the validity and reliability of the examination outcomes.

The basic principle underpinning appeal marking is that every appealed script receives a full re-marking by a different examiner in accordance with the agreed marking scheme. In doing this, the Appeal Examiner's primary duty is to assess the validity of the judgement made in the initial marking to ensure that the marking scheme has been applied consistently and fairly to the candidate's work. Consequently appeal examiners are not searching for additional marks "to bring a candidate to the next grade".

In all instances where a revised mark is awarded, the reasons are recorded. This facilitates the monitoring of the appeals process and is also available to the candidate at the post-appeal viewing stage.

The procedures applying at the appeals stage include the following:

- The facility for candidates to view their scripts and to bring aspects of the initial marking to the attention of the Appeal Examiner
- The provision of further training to all examiners involved in the appeals process



- The appointment of Appeal Advisers to monitor a minimum of 20% of the work of each Appeal Examiner
- The appointment of a Chief Appeal Examiner in subjects with more than 300 appeals
- The careful tracking of correspondence relating to appeals, by the Chief Examiner
- Random sampling and the eventual re-marking of the entire work of particular examiners when concerns arise and are substantiated by evidence from the appeal marking

The SEC is committed to the maintenance of the highest standards at each stage. Where the appeal gives rise to concerns regarding the consistency of the marking of an original examiner, further measures are in place to ensure that scripts of the candidates concerned are graded accurately. All scripts allocated to a particular assistant examiner may be re-marked. If such marking results in higher grades for candidates, these grades are awarded, whether or not those candidates had appealed in the first instance.

Independent Appeals Scrutineers

A further element in the suite of improvements made in recent years has been the introduction of Independent Appeals Scrutineers. These are independent of the SEC and their function is to ensure that due process has been followed in the case of each appeal. An Appeals Scrutineer has the power to request all documentation in relation to an appeal to establish that procedures were properly carried out. In making an application to an Appeals Scrutineer, a candidate may opt to view a re-marked script and following such viewing may make observations on any matter in the script as part of the application process to the Appeals Scrutineers. Finally, a candidate can of course raise any matter relating to the administration of the appeal process with the Office of the Ombudsman.

Breaches of Regulation

Given the scale of the state examinations, it is inevitable that alleged irregularities will occasionally arise. These could involve, for example, allegations of copying, issues of authenticity, verification or impersonation, non-compliance with regulations or the use of inappropriate source material in portfolio work.

In the interest of inter-candidate equity, the SEC must be satisfied that marks awarded to candidates have been gained fairly. The increasing element of coursework, including projects and portfolios submitted for assessment, has reinforced the need for appropriate measures to ensure the authenticity of work submitted. Circulars have issued to schools on this matter and specific measures have been introduced to detect irregularities.

The SEC will investigate thoroughly any suggestion, suspicion or allegation of impropriety in relation to the examinations. A number of sanctions may be applied in the event of proven allegations. These may include the withholding of a result in the subject concerned, or the withholding of the result of the entire examination from a candidate, or debarring a candidate from entering for any of the state examinations for a specified period.

Following this year's Leaving Certificate, it was necessary to withhold 30 grades in eight subject areas: Geography, Mathematics, French, History, Irish, Biology, Links Modules and LCA. In addition, 7 results of individual Junior Certificate examinations were withheld in four subject areas: History, Irish, Maths and Civic, Social and Political Education. Grades were only withheld following thorough investigation, including contact with the schools and candidates concerned. This afforded candidates the opportunity to respond to the issues. The withholding of results is open to appeal.

The Education Act, 1998 introduced criminal offences, which relate to the state examinations. A copy of the relevant provisions is reproduced here.

EDUCATION ACT, 1998: PART VIII, OFFENCES

Section 52 –

(1) A person who-

- (a) knowingly and without lawful authority publishes an examination paper or part of such paper to any other person prior to the holding of the examination concerned,
- (b) has in his or her possession without lawful authority an examination paper or part of such paper prior to the holding of the examination concerned,
- (c) carries out any duties relating to the preparation of examination papers and knowingly and without lawful authority provides a candidate for an examination or any other person with information concerning the material prepared by him or her in the course of those duties with the intention of conferring an advantage upon a candidate over other candidates,
- (d) knowingly and wilfully credits a candidate with higher marks than the marks to which that candidate was entitled with the intention of conferring an advantage on that candidate over other candidates,

- (e) knowingly and maliciously credits a candidate with lower marks than the marks to which that candidate was entitled,
- (f) personates a candidate at an examination or knowingly allows or assists a person to personate a candidate at an examination,
- (g) knowingly and maliciously destroys or damages any material relating to an examination,
- (h) knowingly and maliciously obstructs any candidate or a person engaged in the conduct of an examination or otherwise interferes with the general conduct of an examination,

(i) knowingly and without lawful authority alters any certificate or any other record, including a record in machine-readable form, containing the results of an examination or,

(j) knowingly issues or makes use of any certificate or other document which purports to be a document issued by the person or body under whose authority the examination was conducted and to contain the results of an examination knowing that those results are false,

shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) A person who knowingly aids, abets, counsels or procures another person to commit any offence under subsection (1) or conspires with another person for the commission of any such offence shall be guilty of an offence.

(3) A person who is guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable-

(a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding £1,500 or (at the discretion of the court) to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or to both such fine and such imprisonment, or

(b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine not exceeding £5,000 or (at the discretion of the court) to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both such a fine and such imprisonment.

(4) No action shall lie against an examiner in respect of anything done by him or her in good faith and in pursuance of his or her functions as an examiner.

Chapter 4: Funding and Accountability

FUNDING

The greater part of the funding for the SEC comes through the Vote of the Department of Education and Science. The remainder is collected in fees from candidates. The overall cost of running the examinations, including staff salaries and administration costs, in the period 1st January, 2003 to 31st December, 2003 was €47 million, of which €7.3 million was collected in fees.

The main running costs associated with the examinations are the fees paid to superintendents, examiners, drafters and setters, and their associated travel and subsistence costs. The cost of printing, packing and posting examination materials is also significant. Examination materials; past papers, aural tapes, marking schemes, etc; are provided free of charge to schools and candidates in a variety of different formats including paper, tape, CD-ROM and on our website.

Examination Fees

Fees are charged for sitting the examinations and appealing the results of examinations. Successful appellants have their appeal fees refunded.

The fees for the 2003 examinations were:	
Leaving Certificate (all programmes)	€76.00
Repeat Leaving Certificate	€199.00
Junior Certificate	€72.00
Appeal Fees (per subject)	
Leaving Certificate	€33.00
Leaving Certificate Applied	€13.00
Junior Certificate	€26.50

Lower rates of examination fees apply to external or VTOS candidates who are sitting two subjects or less in the examination. A fee of €12.50 is charged for the provision of an additional certified statement of examination results.

Candidates are exempt from paying examination fees if they, or their parents or guardians, hold a valid medical card. In 2003, a total of 29,628 candidates, almost 25% of the total examination cohort, were exempt from paying examination fees.

The viewing of marked scripts service is offered to candidates free of charge.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The SEC espouses the highest standards of openness and accountability. In addition, the SEC has responsibility to ensure that the best possible use is made of public funds and the fees collected, and to provide value for money in all aspects of its operation.

The SEC accounts for its performance as follows:

The Minister for Education and Science

The SEC is obliged to present an annual report to the Minister for Education and Science on its activities during the preceding year. Also, to make such other reports to the Minister as the Minister may require.

The Comptroller and Auditor General

A copy of the annual accounts of income and expenditure, kept in pursuance of Article 28 of the State Examinations Commission (Establishment) Order, 2003 are required to be submitted within six-months of the end of the accounting period to which they relate, to the C&AG for audit. The first such report is due to be made no later than June 2004.

The Committee of Public Accounts

The Chief Executive Officer of the SEC is the Accounting Officer for the appropriation accounts of the service for the purposes of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Acts, 1866 and 1921, and the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993. The Accounting Officer may be asked to appear before the Committee of Public Accounts to deal with issues raised by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001

All officials at Principal Officer level and above, as well as certain other officials, involved, for example, in procurement decisions, are required to make an annual Statement of Interest under these Acts.

Internal Audit

As already stated, the SEC receives the greater part of its funding through the Vote of the Department of Education and Science. For the present, the Department's Internal Audit Unit includes in its remit responsibility for the internal audit function of the SEC. In due course, the SEC will be able to assume responsibility for its own independent internal audit function.

Procurement

Competitive tendering is the normal procedure in the procurement process of the SEC. The detailed procurement procedures in respect of competitive tendering, as set out in the Public Procurement Booklet (1994) and the relevant EU directives, are applied.

OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

The SEC is committed to an open and transparent examination system. To this end, it has put in place a number of measures, which have been described in some detail in previous chapters. In addition, candidates have the right to appeal decisions of the SEC to a number of independent bodies.

The measures in place which underpin this commitment to an open and transparent examinations system are:

- The opportunity for university representatives to make observations on the Leaving Certificate examination papers prior to finalisation
- The opportunity for professional bodies, such as subject associations and others, to comment on the examination papers prior to the finalisation of the marking schemes
- The publication of marking schemes
- The publication of the Chief Examiners' Reports
- The internet publication of examination papers on the day of the examination
- The opportunity for all Leaving Certificate candidates to view their marked examination scripts
- The opportunity for all candidates to appeal their results
- The opportunity for all Leaving Certificate candidates to view their marked appealed scripts

- The opportunity for all candidates to appeal to the Independent Appeals Scrutineers, whose function it is to verify that due process was followed
- The opportunity for a candidate to make an appeal to the Reasonable Accommodations Independent Appeals Panel if they are dissatisfied with a decision of the SEC relating to the provision of reasonable accommodations
- The right of all candidates to make representations to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Chapter 5: The Role of the SEC in the Development of Assessment Modalities

The SEC has statutory responsibility for the management and operation of the state examinations. In conducting its work, the SEC engages with a broad spectrum of organisations and representative bodies. These include the Department of Education and Science, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the Central Applications Office, the third level sector, school management bodies, teacher unions, principals, teachers, parents, candidates, the media and the general public.

Interaction between the SEC, the Department of Education and Science and the NCCA is particularly significant given the respective statutory roles and responsibilities of each organisation. The Department is responsible for policy formulation relating to education and assessment nationally, while the NCCA has a statutory function to advise the Minister on all matters pertaining to curriculum and assessment.

The SEC is represented on the Council of the NCCA and on the various course committees. Further information on the operation of these committees and the process of syllabus and curriculum development is available from the NCCA.

It is essential for the SEC to keep abreast of new and emerging developments in examinations and assessment and to make recommendations on the value of these developments in the Irish examinations context. The development of in-house research and development capacities is therefore a priority for the SEC. A working group has been set-up with responsibility for the establishment of the appropriate internal structures. It is envisaged that the research and development programme will be implemented on a phased basis.

The SEC will also have a role in the review and analysis of published research papers and discussion documents such as, for example, *Grading in the Leaving Certificate* published by the Educational Research Centre. This paper, by Dr Thomas Kellaghan and Dr David Millar, contextualises the issues associated with grading in the Leaving Certificate. A review of *Grading in the Leaving Certificate*, by an internal focus group, is currently underway. The group is due to report on its findings in mid-2004.

In keeping with the need to remain focused on contemporary research in educational assessment, members of staff represented the SEC at a number of national and international conferences and seminars in 2003. These included the annual conferences of the International Association for Educational Assessment, where the conference theme was *Assessment Challenges for Democratic Societies*, and the Association for Assessment in Europe. The papers presented at these conferences included a review of the use of sophisticated item formats in computer-based assessment and the use of portfolios in educational assessment.

The SEC was also represented at a seminar on *Languages in the Post-Primary Curriculum*, organised by the NCCA, and at various other seminars and conferences organised by other subject associations.



Chapter 6: Corporate Activities – Supporting the Key Business Functions

The crucial issue for both the Department of Education and Science and the SEC at the time of the SEC's establishment was ensuring that there was a seamless transition to the new organisation. At an organisational level, this meant that almost all available resources, within the new organisation, were dedicated to ensuring that the 2003 State Examinations were held with no diminution in service to customers. The critical success factor in the first year of establishment of the new organisation was running the examinations within the established timeframes and to the expected quality standards. This was achieved.

However, it was also crucial to put in place the services, structures and personnel to support the organisation in its delivery of the key business activities and to progress the modernisation agenda under the Strategic Management Initiative. Significant progress has been made in this regard.

The key business functions of the SEC remain the same as the functions of the former Examinations Branch of the Department of Education and Science. During the transition to the new organisation, the SEC has had due regard to the quality customer service standards, business plans and strategic plans which were in place for the former Examinations Branch of the Department.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Personnel Service

A new Personnel Unit was established to meet the personnel requirements of the 185 permanent and 80 temporary staff.

Recruitment and Promotion

The SEC engaged in a recruitment process for Examination and Assessment Managers with the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners. Internal promotion competitions were held to select a new Head of the Examinations and Assessment Division as well as a number of other grades, including Executive Officer and Higher Executive Officer. The SEC is an equal opportunities employer.

Employment Patterns

The SEC operates a number of atypical employment patterns. These patterns facilitate both the staff of the organisation, through family-friendly initiatives such as flexi-time, work sharing and term-time, and the needs of the organisation through temporary and part-time employment.

Staff Training and Development

A wide variety of training was provided in 2003 in areas such as Management Skills, Customer Service, Freedom of Information and specialist IT skills. Personnel from the SEC participated in international examination conferences. In November, personnel from the Examinations and Assessment Division developed and delivered a comprehensive training seminar on question paper setting to 150 contract personnel engaged in this activity. The need to provide enhanced training for this group was identified following training needs analysis conducted in April 2003.

Performance Management and Development System

The Commission is on target to meet the commitment, under the Sustaining Progress Social Partnership Agreement, to have PMDS fully operational by 1st January 2005. A PMDS Evaluation exercise was commenced in 2003 to review the implementation of PMDS and to identify areas for improvement in the current implementation strategy.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Corporate Affairs Division

The SEC established its own Corporate Affairs Division with a range of functions. These include providing a Press and Public Relations office; delivering the modernisation agenda under the Strategic Management Initiative; developing Business Plans, Statements of Strategy, Quality Customer Service Action Plans and the Customer Charter; providing a secretariat to the Commissioners; co-ordinating information requests; developing the website and producing annual reports and other corporate publications.



Corporate Identity

A new corporate identity comprising a brand name logo and colour scheme was developed and launched. A staff consultation forum and selection committee was set-up to agree the logo and corporate identity.



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit *State Examinations Commission*

Partnership Structures

The main Partnership Committee, comprising representatives of unions, management and staff and chaired by the Chief Executive Officer was established in October 2003. The Committee agreed the Action Plan for the SEC to meet its objectives under the Sustaining Progress Social Partnership Agreement. The Committee has set out a very ambitious programme of work for 2004 including developing an Internal Communications Strategy, Training and Development Strategy, Quality Customer Service Action Plans and Customer Charter, and the Statement of Strategy 2004-2006.

Sustaining Progress Social Partnership Agreement

The SEC submitted its Action Plan and Progress Report to meet the commitments on modernisation and change set out in the Sustaining Progress Agreement to the performance verification group in the Department of Education and Science. The Department has approved the Action Plan and is satisfied that the SEC has made significant progress towards achieving the targets set out in the plan.

Quality Customer Service

The SEC is committed to applying the 12 principles of quality customer service laid down by Government. The Commission continues to abide by the Quality Customer Service standards

of the Department of Education and Science. A sub-committee of Partnership has been established in order to develop the QCS agenda and to put in place a QCS Action Plan, QCS Standards and the Customer Charter.

Key staff have received training in the Customer Consultation phase of the Customer Charter development process. The consultation phase commenced with the establishment of an IT Consultation Group. The group, which first met in December 2003, is composed of representatives from the SEC and principals from secondary, vocational and community and comprehensive schools. Further customer consultation forums will be established in the first quarter of 2004.

Accommodation and Services

An accommodation restructuring programme commenced at our headquarters in Athlone in November 2003 in order to accommodate additional sections and staff. This programme is due for completion in March 2004.

Operational Activities and Regulatory Reform

There is a continual focus on simplifying and refining procedures, forms and other information being supplied to and gathered from our customers. The procedure for identifying candidates' subject levels for the 2003 examination was enhanced in order to provide more accurate information about the numbers of examination papers required.

Certain operational activities previously carried out by the IT unit have been moved into operational areas. This has given the staff in these areas immediate control over operating and scheduling these activities.

The ethos of flexibility and team working is embedded within the examinations system. As in other years, the organisation adapted, in the lead-up to and during the examination period in June, to cope with increased demands.

Information and Communications Technology Development

Resources have been put in place to begin the process of setting up an independent IT network and to assume

responsibility for database administration from the Department of Education and Science.

The work of the IT Unit was reorganised in order to target ICT development work and to move away from purely operational activities. Improvements to the security and structure of the examinations database made in 2003 would not have been possible without this re-organisation.

The SEC is committed to optimising the Internet and other ICT tools in order to produce efficiencies and savings for the organisation, to safeguard the security of the examinations system and to provide an enhanced service to customers. Among the services currently under review is a facility that will allow customers to order and pay for certified statements of examination results over the Internet.

WEBSITE AND ON-LINE SERVICES

Results Service

The SEC provides a range of on-line services to candidates through its website www.examinations.ie. In 2003, the on-line results service was used by 24,000 candidates in 40 different countries to access results of both the Leaving Certificate and the Junior Certificate examinations. In order to access the service the user must have their examination number and a unique candidate Personal Identification Number. This is the third year that the on-line examination results service has been in operation. Use of this service has increased from 10,000 users in 2001, its first year of operation, to 24,000 users this year.

External Candidate Application Service

Candidates in the Leaving Certificate Examination can either be school based or external (non-school based). School based candidates apply for the examinations through their school. External candidates have traditionally applied and paid for their examinations by submitting forms and cheque or giro payments. For the 2003 examinations, the SEC piloted an on-line application and payment facility for external candidates. This facility will be rolled out to all external candidates for the 2004 examinations.

Appeal Payment Service

Candidate can pay their appeal fees by credit card using this service.

Website

The website was enhanced in 2003 and provided:

- Candidate information on the conduct of the certificate examinations and the appeals process in question and answer format
- A directory of contacts in the SEC
- Examination materials including all of the 2003 examination papers and marking schemes. During this year's examinations, the examination papers were published on the site at the end of each day
- Examination timetables

The website is undergoing further redevelopment. The new site, which went live in February 2004, is more customer focused and information is laid out in a more accessible format. The new website will contain an archive of examination material containing examination papers, marking schemes and Chief Examiners' Reports for the past three years and will also contain other sections specifically targeted at schools, candidates and potential contract personnel.

Appendix A: State Examinations Commission (Establishment) Order 2003

To be made by the Minister for Education and Science.

I, Noel Dempsey, Minister for Education and Science in exercise of the functions conferred on me by section 54 of the Education Act 1998 (No. 51 of 1998), with the concurrence of the Government, and having caused a draft to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas and a resolution approving of the draft having been passed by each such House, hereby order as follows:

1. This Order may be cited as the State Examinations Commission (Establishment) Order 2003.
2. (1) In this Order, unless the context otherwise requires -
 - “Act” means the Education Act 1998 (No. 51 of 1998);
 - “Chief Executive” means that person appointed in accordance with Article 19;
 - “Commission” means the State Examinations Commission established under this Order; and
 - “examinations” means any examination standing specified for the time being in schedule 2 to the Act.(2) In this Order a reference to -
 - (a) an article is a reference to an Article of this Order unless it is indicated that reference to some other enactment is intended,
 - a paragraph is a reference to a paragraph of the provision in which the reference occurs unless it is indicated that reference to some other provision is intended, and
 - A subparagraph is a reference to a subparagraph of the provision in which the reference occurs unless it is indicated that reference to some other provision is intended.
3. There shall stand established on the establishment day a body to be known as the State Examinations Commission, which shall perform the functions conferred on it by or under this Order.
4. The 6th day of March 2003 is appointed to be the establishment day for the purposes of Article 3.
5. The seal of the Commission shall be authenticated by the signature of
 - (a) the chairperson of the Commission or another member of the Commission authorised by it to act in that behalf, or
 - (b) the Chief Executive of the Commission authorised by the Commission to act in that behalf.
6. (1) The functions of the Commission shall be to -
 - (a) organise the holding of examinations,
 - (b) ensure the preparation of examination papers and other examination materials,
 - (c) determine procedures in places where examinations are conducted including the supervision of examinations,
 - (d) make arrangements for the marking of work presented for examination,
 - (e) issue the results of examinations,
 - (f) determine procedures to enable the review and appeal of results of examinations at the request of candidates, charge and collect fees for examinations and apply such monies to the carrying out of its functions, anddesignate places where examinations may be held.
- (2) The Commission shall have all such powers as are necessary for or are incidental to the performance of its functions under this Order.
7. (1) The Commission shall have 5 members.
- (2) The members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Government on the nomination of the Minister.
- (3) The Government, on the nomination of the Minister, shall designate one member of the Commission as

chairperson and one member of the Commission as deputy chairperson of the Commission.

(4) The Minister shall have regard to the desirability of a gender balance in the membership of the Commission as the Minister considers appropriate and determines, from time to time, when making nominations for the Commission.

8. (1) A person shall not be eligible to be a member of the Commission at a particular time if that person -
- (a) is at that time entitled under the Standing Orders of either House of the Oireachtas to sit therein,
 - (b) is at that time a representative in the European Parliament,
 - (c) is at that time an undischarged bankrupt,
 - (d) within the 3 years preceding that time made a composition or arrangement with creditors, or
 - (e) within the 5 years preceding that time has served a term of imprisonment imposed by a court of competent jurisdiction.

(2) Where a member of the Commission -

- (a) is nominated as a member of Seanad Éireann,
- (b) is elected as a member of either House of the Oireachtas or to be a representative in the European Parliament,
- (c) is regarded pursuant to Part XIII of the Second Schedule to the European Parliament Elections Act 1997 (No. 2 of 1997) as having been elected to the European Parliament to fill a vacancy,
- (d) is adjudicated bankrupt or makes a composition or arrangement with creditors, or
- (e) is sentenced to a term of imprisonment by a court of competent jurisdiction,

that member shall thereupon cease to be a member of the Commission.

9. The quorum for a meeting of the Commission shall be 3.
10. The term of office of a member of the Commission shall be such period not exceeding 5 years as may be specified by the Government when appointing that member and the member shall hold office for the period for which he or she is appointed unless he or she sooner dies, resigns by letter addressed to the Minister or ceases to be a member in accordance with Article 8 or 11.
11. (1) The Government may, at any time, remove a member of the Commission from office if he or she has committed stated misbehaviour or if his or her removal appears necessary to the Government for the effective performance by the Commission of its functions.
- (2) The Government may, at any time, for reasons stated in writing to the members of the Commission, remove all such members from office.
- (3) A member of the Commission may, at any time, resign from office as such member by letter addressed to the Minister and the resignation shall take effect from the date on which the letter is received.
- (4) A member of the Commission who is absent from all meetings of the Commission for a period of six consecutive months, unless such absence was due to illness or was approved by the Commission, shall be disqualified at the expiry of such period from continuing to be a member of the Commission for the remainder of that person's term of office.
- (5) A member of the Commission whose term of office expires by effluxion of time shall be eligible for re-appointment.
12. The members of the Commission may be paid such remuneration and allowances for expenses incurred by them as the Minister, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, may determine.
13. The Commission shall hold at least 6 meetings in each year and subject to Article 15, such and so many other meetings as the chairperson deems necessary.

14. The Commission may act notwithstanding any vacancy or vacancies among its members.
15. The chairperson shall convene a meeting of the Commission whenever requested to do so by not less than 3 members.
16. At a meeting of the Commission –
- (a) the chairperson shall, if present, be the chairperson of the meeting,
 - (b) if and so long as the chairperson is not present or if the office of chairperson is vacant, the deputy-chairperson shall be chairperson of the meeting,
 - (c) if and so long as the chairperson is not present or the office of chairperson is vacant, and the deputy-chairperson is not present or the office of deputy-chairperson is vacant, the members of the Commission who are present shall choose one of their number to be chairperson of the meeting.
17. Every question at a meeting of the Commission shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members present and voting on the question and, in the case of an equal division of votes, the chairperson of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote.
18. Subject to this Order and the Act, the Commission shall regulate, by standing orders or otherwise, its procedure and business.
19. (1) Subject to paragraph (3), the Commission shall from time to time appoint a person as chief executive officer of the Commission in a whole-time capacity who shall be known as and is referred to in this Order as the “Chief Executive”.
- (2) The Minister shall appoint a person to be the first Chief Executive.
 - (3) The Chief Executive shall be an employee of the Commission.
 - (4) The Chief Executive shall carry on, manage and generally control the administration of the Commission and shall manage and control the staff of the Commission.
20. (1) The Chief Executive may delegate any of his or her functions to another employee of the Commission, and the employee concerned shall be accountable to the Chief Executive for the performance of the functions so delegated.
- (2) The Chief Executive shall, notwithstanding any delegations made by him or her in accordance with paragraph (1), at all times remain accountable to the Commission for the performance of any functions so delegated.
21. The Chief Executive shall not hold any other office or position without the consent of the Commission and the Minister.
22. The Chief Executive shall hold office subject to such terms and conditions which may include secondment from another office or employment, and receive such remuneration as the Minister, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, from time to time determines.
23. The Chief Executive shall not be a member of the Commission but shall, in accordance with procedures established by the Commission, attend meetings of the Commission and shall be entitled to speak at and advise such meetings.
24. (1) The Commission, with the consent of the Minister and the Minister for Finance, may appoint such and so many persons to be employees of the Commission as the Commission thinks appropriate.
- (2) Each employee of the Commission appointed under paragraph (1) shall perform such duties as the Commission or the Chief Executive may, from time to time, assign.
25. (1) The Civil Service Commissioners Act, 1956, and the Civil Service Regulation Acts, 1956 to 1996, shall apply to –
- (a) persons transferred into the employment of the Commission from the Civil Service of the State on the establishment day, and

- (b) such other employees of the Commission as the Minister, with the consent of the Minister for Finance, may, from time to time, determine.
26. (1) Save in accordance with a collective agreement negotiated with any recognised trade union or staff association, a person seconded to the Commission shall not, while in the service of the Commission, receive a lesser scale of pay or be made subject to less beneficial terms and conditions of service (including those relating to tenure of office) than the scale of pay to which he or she was entitled and the terms and conditions of service (including conditions relating to tenure of office) to which he or she was subject immediately before becoming an employee of the Commission.
- (2) Save in accordance with a collective agreement negotiated with any recognised trade union or staff association, an employee of the Commission who was a civil servant in the Civil Service of the State immediately before being an employee of the Commission, shall not, while in the service of the Commission be brought to less beneficial conditions of service (including conditions in relation to tenure of office) or of remuneration than the conditions of service (including conditions in relation to tenure of office) or remuneration to which he or she was subject immediately before the becoming an employee of the Commission.
27. Subject to Article 26, the Commission, with the consent of the Minister and the Minister for Finance, shall determine the remuneration and conditions of service of employees of the Commission.
28. The Commission shall cause to be kept proper accounts of all income and expenditure of the Commission, and of the sources of such income and the subject matter of such expenditure, and of the property, credits and liabilities of the Commission.
29. The financial year of the Commission shall be the period of 12 months ending on the 31st day of December in any year and for the purposes of this provision the period commencing on the establishment day specified in Article 4 and ending on the 31st day of December 2003 shall be deemed to be a financial year.
30. (1) A statement of accounts of the Commission for each financial year shall be prepared, as soon as may be, but in any event not more than 6 months, after the end of such financial year.
- (2) A copy of the accounts kept in pursuance of Article 28 shall be submitted as soon as practicable following the accounting period to which they relate by the Commission to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.
- (3) Immediately after the audit, a copy of the accounts, and of such other (if any) accounts kept pursuant to Article 28 as the Minister, after consultation with the Minister for Finance, may direct and a copy of the Comptroller and Auditor General's report on the accounts shall be presented to the members of the Commission and the Minister, and the Minister shall as soon as may be cause copies thereof to be laid before each House of the Oireachtas.
31. The Chief Executive shall be the accounting officer for the appropriation accounts of the Service for the purposes of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Acts 1866 and 1921, and the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 (no. 8 of 1993).
32. The Commission shall, in each year, not later than such day as the Minister shall direct, make a report to the Minister of its activities during the preceding year and make such other reports to the Minister as the Minister may require.
33. The Commission shall submit to the Minister, at such time as the Minister may direct, such information regarding the performance of its functions as the Minister may from time to time require.

The Government concurs with the making of the forgoing Order.

GIVEN under the Official Seal of the Government,

8th April 2003

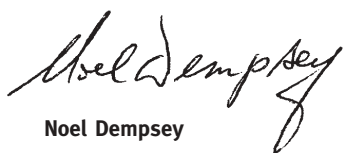


Bertie Ahern

Taoiseach

GIVEN under my Official Seal,

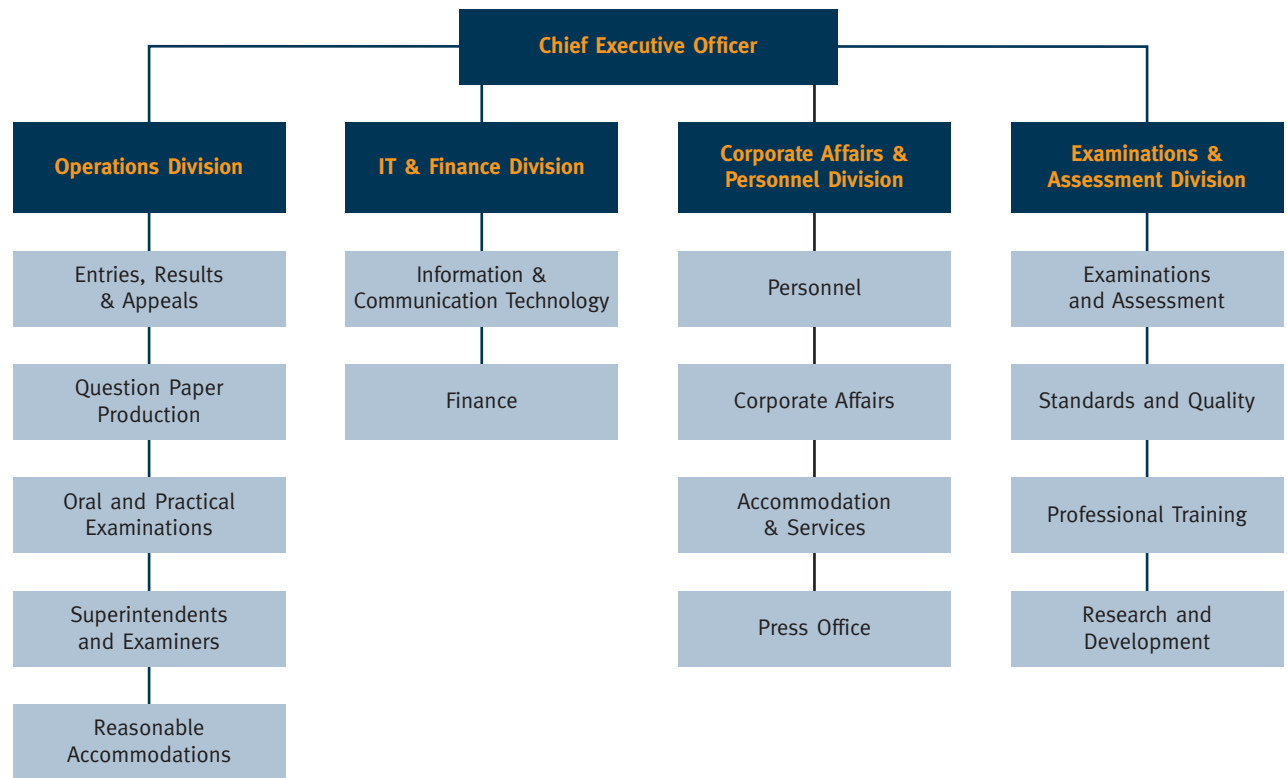
6th March 2003



Noel Dempsey

Minister for Education and Science

Appendix B: State Examinations Commission Organisation of Functions



Appendix C: Contact Directory

State Examinations Commission

Cornamaddy
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Main Phone Number: 090-6442700
Main Fax Number: 090-6442744
Web: www.examinations.ie

The general format for e-mail to the SEC is
firstname_surname@education.gov.ie

Otherwise, e-mails can be sent to the section e-mail addresses that follow.

Examination Entries and Applications

E-mail: entries@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442702, 6442703, 6442706
Fax: 090-6442709

Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

E-mail: lca@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442725, 6442726
Fax: 090-6442740

Reasonable Accommodations

E-mail: sec_specialneeds@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442781, 6442783
Fax: 090-6442744

Examination Superintendents

E-mail: user_super@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442791, 6442792
Fax: 090-6442794

Examiners

E-mail: examiners@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442734, 6442735
Fax: 090-6442740

Oral Examinations

E-mail: orals@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442741, 6442742,
Fax: 090-6442753

Practical Examinations including Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

E-mail: practicals@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442749, 6442750
Fax: 90-6442753

Finance Unit

E-mail: financial@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442802, 6442799
Fax: 090-6442807

Statements of Examination Results

E-mail: statements@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442810, 6442808
Fax: 090-6442811

Press Office

E-mail: sec_pressoffice@education.gov.ie
Phone: 090-6442777, 6442851

Appendix D: 2003 Statistics

TABLE 1 – NUMBER OF EXAMINATION CANDIDATES IN 2003

		Male	Female	Total
1	Junior Certificate (Excluding VTOS)	29,087	28,795	57,882
2	Junior Certificate (VTOS candidates)	768	690	1,458
3=1+2	Total Junior Certificate	29,855	29,485	59,340
4	Leaving Certificate School Candidates (excluding VTOS and repeats)	23,098	24,842	47,940
5	Leaving Certificate school repeats	1,547	1,568	3,115
6=4+5	Total Leaving Certificate school candidates (excluding VTOS)	24,645	26,410	51,055
7	Leaving Certificate Applied Programme	1,630	1,669	3,299
8	External Candidates	1,926	2,340	4,266
9	VTOS candidates	318	554	872
10	PLC Candidates	13	31	44
11=6+7+8+9+10	Overall Leaving Certificate candidates	28,532	31,004	59,536

Notes:

The numbers for Junior Certificate exclude 293 Leaving Certificate candidates who sat language subjects *ab-initio*.

VTOS candidates are examination candidates sitting the examinations as participants in the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme. These may be either school candidates who have studied in a second level school, or they may be candidates who have studied in special centres outside a second level school.

Leaving Certificate external candidates comprise candidates who have studied outside the second level school system. These exclude VTOS candidates. In some cases, external candidates may have sat only one or two subjects in the Leaving Certificate.

The total of Leaving Certificate school candidates in line 6 excludes VTOS candidates. It is not possible to disaggregate the total of VTOS candidates shown in line 9 between school candidates and other types of candidates.

Since 1975, each candidate in the leaving Certificate or Junior Certificate (Intermediate Certificate prior to 1992) has been awarded a Certificate showing the grades obtained without any overall result corresponding to failure, pass or honours.

In 2003, there were 4,614 public examination centres to which 4,623 superintendents were appointed.

There were 6,033 examiners for all Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate examinations. Of these, 1057 examined practical and project work at both Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate, and 1,229 examined the oral component of the Leaving Certificate language subjects.

TABLE 2 – LEAVING CERTIFICATE 2003 – AGGREGATE RESULTS

		Male	Female	Total
(i)	Total Number of Candidates	26,902	29,335	56,237
(ii)	Number of Candidates who sat a minimum of 5 subjects	25,881	27,977	53,858
(iii)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 5 grade D3's at any level	24,272	26,767	51,039
(iv)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade D3s at any level, of which a minimum of 2 were at grade C3 or higher grades, on higher papers	14,561	17,679	32,240
(v)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade D3s at any level, of which a minimum of 4 were at grade C3 or higher grades, on higher papers	8,533	12,167	20,700
(vi)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C3s, or higher grades, on higher papers	3,927	6,273	10,200
(vii)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grades C3s on higher papers, of which a minimum of 3 were at grade B3 or higher	3,497	5,574	9,071
(viii)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C3s on higher papers, of which a minimum of 3 were at grade A2 or higher	1,212	1,820	3,032

Notes:

The above data excludes candidates in the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. School candidates, Repeat candidates, External candidates, VTOS and PLC candidates are included in the above table.

Results of the Leaving Certificate are shown in the form of grades, each grade representing a percentage range of marks as follows:

Grade	Percentage Range	Grade	Percentage Range
A1	90+	C3	55 > 60
A2	85 > 90	D1	50 > 55
B1	80 > 85	D2	45 > 50
B2	75 > 80	D3	40 > 45
B3	70 > 75	E	25 > 40
C1	65 > 70	F	10 > 25
C2	60 > 65	No Grade	0 > 10

TABLE 3 – LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED RESULTS 2003

		Male	Female	Total
(i)	Total Number of Candidates	1,630	1,669	3,299
(ii)	Number of Candidates who received Distinctions	217	42	642
(iii)	Number of Candidates who received Merits	846	778	1,624
(iv)	Number of Candidates who received Passes	315	250	565
(v)	Number of Candidates who received Records of Credit	252	216	468

Note on Grading Structure

The Leaving Certificate Applied programme consists of a range of courses each designed on a modular basis. The number of modules depends on the course. Each year of the two year programme is divided into two sessions; September to January, and February to June. A module within a given course is usually completed within one session. Over the two year duration of the programme, participants complete 44 modules. Credits towards the final award are accumulated throughout the two years of the programme through:

1. Satisfactory completion of modules. (Maximum of 62 credits)
2. Performance of students tasks. (Maximum of 70 credits)
3. Performance in the final examinations. (Maximum of 68 credits)

This LCA Certificate is awarded at three levels. Each level represents a percentage range of marks as follows:

Level	Percentage Range	Credits
Distinction	85+	170-200 credits
Merit	70 > 85	140-169 credits
Pass	60 > 70	120-139 credits

Candidates who acquire less than 120 credits or who leave before the end of the programme receive a Record of Credits.

TABLE 4 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE 2003 – AGGREGATE RESULTS

		Male	Female	Total
(i)	Total Number of Candidates	29,855	29,485	59,340
(ii)	Number of Candidates who sat a minimum of 5 subjects	29,159	28,757	57,916
(iii)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 5 grade D at any level	28,800	28,581	57,381
(iv)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade D at any level, of which a minimum of 2 were at grade C or higher grades, on higher and common papers	21,785	23,455	45,240
(v)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade D at any level, of which a minimum of 4 were at grade C or higher grades, on higher and common papers	15,697	19,048	34,735
(vi)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C, or higher grades, on higher and common papers	11,664	15,521	27,185
(vii)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grades C on higher and common papers, of which a minimum of 3 were at grade B or higher	9,622	13,341	22,963
(viii)	Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C on higher and common papers, of which a minimum of 3 were at grade A.	2,580	4,321	6,901

Notes:

The above data includes school candidates and VTOS candidates.

Results of the Junior Certificate are shown in the form of grades, each grade representing a percentage range of marks as follows:

Grade	Percentage Range
A	85+
B	70 > 85
C	55 > 70
D	40 > 55
E	25 > 40
F	10 > 25
No Grade	0 > 10

TABLE 5 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – ORDINARY LEVEL PAPERS – MALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving							Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	
Irish	683	4,943	5,277	3,192	501	89	9	14,694
Irish (Foundation)	416	1,052	1,019	594	103	25	2	3,211
English	612	2,956	4,827	2,714	143	22	3	11,277
English (Foundation)	174	524	659	280	50	13	2	1,702
Mathematics	1,045	3,937	4,427	3,125	933	301	13	13,781
Mathematics (Foundation)	714	1,629	1,216	587	133	17	2	4,298
History	1,271	3,292	3,377	1,646	269	63	9	9,927
Geography	668	2,778	2,262	1,164	209	47	0	7,128
Latin	1	11	7	8	5	3	1	36
Ancient Greek	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Classical Studies	3	14	16	35	23	13	7	111
Hebrew Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	217	1,552	2,295	2,053	818	195	10	7,140
German	84	799	662	308	84	43	6	1,986
Spanish	23	133	157	123	45	15	0	496
Italian	3	12	36	27	3	1	0	82
Art, Craft & Design	404	1,078	1,472	761	277	108	11	4,111
Music	7	80	200	176	38	20	2	523
Science	684	3,511	4,288	2,141	327	49	7	11,007
Home Economics	10	357	656	273	59	14	10	1,379
Materials Technology (Wood)	259	1,288	1,335	599	121	150	36	3,788
Metalwork	185	938	653	243	74	90	18	2,201
Technical Graphics	665	1,704	1,217	984	285	233	22	5,110
Technology	34	159	198	123	45	14	0	573
Business Studies	353	2,215	2,067	1,141	363	170	8	6,317
Typewriting	3	9	20	24	2	3	1	62
Environmental & Social Studies	19	94	75	46	17	6	4	261
Religious Education	90	300	234	174	35	29	5	867
C.S.P.E. (Common Course)	5,384	10,626	7,984	3,561	794	421	89	28,859

Notes on Tables 5-12 inclusive:

1. Science includes Science with Local Studies
2. Religious Education was examined for the first time in 2003
3. C.S.P.E: Civic, Social and Political Education

TABLE 6 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – ORDINARY LEVEL PAPERS – FEMALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving							Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	
Irish	1,237	5,425	3,882	1,524	198	17	0	12,283
Irish (Foundation)	385	641	424	178	24	3	0	1,655
English	1,060	2,977	2,839	880	33	5	1	7,795
English (Foundation)	154	365	294	92	13	0	1	919
Mathematics	1,475	4,552	4,144	2,578	664	181	8	13,602
Mathematics (Foundation)	415	1,143	946	412	98	12	0	3,026
History	1,670	3,020	2,660	1,421	249	45	4	9,069
Geography	605	2,247	1,928	1,050	208	56	1	6,095
Latin	1	8	5	5	0	0	1	20
Ancient Greek	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Classical Studies	2	2	4	15	8	4	1	36
Hebrew Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	235	1,716	2,055	1,344	433	63	0	5,846
German	85	645	439	143	21	7	0	1,340
Spanish	21	140	149	94	23	1	2	430
Italian	5	13	18	14	2	1	0	53
Art, Craft & Design	817	1,445	1,359	543	137	81	2	4,384
Music	27	312	573	323	37	34	1	1,307
Science	504	2,506	2,786	1,366	229	25	0	7,416
Home Economics	101	1,483	1,516	401	79	58	20	3,658
Materials Technology (Wood)	52	268	297	148	19	35	5	824
Metalwork	11	121	122	34	11	22	13	334
Technical Graphics	95	211	195	173	41	28	4	747
Technology	27	86	86	52	17	8	1	277
Business Studies	537	2,728	2,071	854	197	74	2	6,463
Typewriting	42	102	51	27	10	1	0	233
Environmental & Social Studies	11	73	90	37	10	3	3	227
Religious Education	140	302	194	90	9	17	4	756
C.S.P.E. (Common Course)	8,623	11,509	5,938	1,992	353	220	32	28,667

TABLE 7 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – ORDINARY LEVEL PAPERS – MALE & FEMALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving							Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	
Irish	1,920	10,368	9,159	4,716	699	106	9	26,977
Irish (Foundation)	801	1,693	1,443	772	127	28	2	4,866
English	1,672	5,933	7,666	3,594	176	27	4	19,072
English (Foundation)	328	889	953	372	63	13	3	2,621
Mathematics	2,520	8,489	8,571	5,703	1,597	482	21	27,383
Mathematics (Foundation)	1,129	2,772	2,162	999	231	29	2	7,324
History	2,941	6,312	6,037	3,067	518	108	13	18,996
Geography	1,273	5,025	4,190	2,214	417	103	1	13,223
Latin	2	19	12	13	5	3	2	56
Ancient Greek	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Classical Studies	5	16	20	50	31	17	8	147
Hebrew Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	452	3,268	4,350	3,397	1,251	258	10	12,986
German	169	1,444	1,101	451	105	50	6	3,326
Spanish	44	273	306	217	68	16	2	926
Italian	8	25	54	41	5	2	0	135
Art, Craft & Design	1,221	2,523	2,831	1,304	414	189	13	8,495
Music	34	392	773	499	75	54	3	1,830
Science	1,188	6,017	7,074	3,507	556	74	7	18,423
Home Economics	111	1,840	2,172	674	138	72	30	5,037
Materials Technology (Wood)	311	1,556	1,632	747	140	185	41	4,612
Metalwork	196	1,059	775	277	85	112	31	2,535
Technical Graphics	760	1,915	1,412	1,157	326	261	26	5,857
Technology	61	245	284	175	62	22	1	850
Business Studies	890	4,943	4,138	1,995	560	244	10	12,780
Typewriting	45	111	71	51	12	4	1	295
Environmental & Social Studies	30	167	165	83	27	9	7	488
Religious Education	230	602	428	264	44	46	9	1,623
C.S.P.E.	14,007	22,135	13,922	5,553	1,147	641	121	57,526

TABLE 8 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF CANDIDATES BY GRADE AWARDED IN EACH SUBJECT – ORDINARY LEVEL PAPERS – MALE & FEMALE

Subject	Total No. of Candidates	Percentage of Candidates Receiving						
		Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade
Irish	26,977	7.1	38.4	34.0	17.5	2.6	0.4	0.0
Irish (Foundation)	4,866	16.5	34.8	29.7	15.9	2.6	0.6	0.0
English	19,072	8.8	31.1	40.2	18.8	0.9	0.1	0.0
English (Foundation)	2,621	12.5	33.9	36.4	14.2	2.4	0.5	0.1
Mathematics	27,383	9.2	31.0	31.3	20.8	5.8	1.8	0.1
Mathematics (Foundation)	7,324	15.4	37.8	29.5	13.6	3.2	0.4	0.0
History	18,996	15.5	33.2	31.8	16.1	2.7	0.6	0.1
Geography	13,223	9.6	38.0	31.7	16.7	3.2	0.8	0.0
Latin	56	3.6	33.9	21.4	23.2	8.9	5.4	3.6
Ancient Greek	3	0.0	0.0	33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Classical Studies	147	3.4	10.9	13.6	34.0	21.1	11.6	5.4
Hebrew Studies	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	12,986	3.5	25.2	33.5	26.2	9.6	2.0	0.1
German	3,326	5.1	43.4	33.1	13.6	3.2	1.5	0.2
Spanish	926	4.8	29.5	33.0	23.4	7.3	1.7	0.2
Italian	135	5.9	18.5	40.0	30.4	3.7	1.5	0.0
Art, Craft & Design	8,495	14.4	29.7	33.3	15.4	4.9	2.2	0.2
Music	1,830	1.9	21.4	42.2	27.3	4.1	3.0	0.2
Science	18,423	6.4	32.7	38.4	19.0	3.0	0.4	0.0
Home Economics	5,037	2.2	36.5	43.1	13.4	2.7	1.4	0.6
Materials Technology (Wood)	4,612	6.7	33.7	35.4	16.2	3.0	4.0	0.9
Metalwork	2,535	7.7	41.8	30.6	10.9	3.4	4.4	1.2
Technical Graphics	5,857	13.0	32.7	24.1	19.8	5.6	4.5	0.4
Technology	850	7.2	28.8	33.4	20.6	7.3	2.6	0.1
Business Studies	12,780	7.0	38.7	32.4	15.6	4.4	1.9	0.1
Typewriting	295	15.3	37.6	24.1	17.3	4.1	1.4	0.3
Environmental & Social Studies	488	6.1	34.2	33.8	17.0	5.5	1.8	1.4
Religious Education	1,623	14.2	37.1	26.4	16.3	2.7	2.8	0.6
C.S.P.E.	57,526	24.3	38.5	24.2	9.7	2.0	1.1	0.2

TABLE 9 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – HIGHER LEVEL PAPERS – MALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving							Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	
Irish	721	2,513	3,347	2,022	252	29	2	8,886
English	828	3,844	7,014	4,453	385	25	2	16,551
Mathematics	1,891	3,602	3,290	2,086	411	69	3	11,352
History	2,086	4,580	5,054	3,475	992	242	31	16,460
Geography	1,370	6,458	7,267	3,881	494	67	0	19,537
Latin	72	110	88	43	12	4	2	331
Ancient Greek	3	6	7	10	5	3	1	35
Classical Studies	30	68	80	63	12	7	0	260
Hebrew Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	801	2,357	3,651	3,431	690	85	4	11,019
German	267	868	1,225	963	221	33	2	3,579
Spanish	74	155	171	147	39	5	0	591
Italian	7	7	9	10	5	0	0	38
Art, Craft & Design	738	1,149	1,659	703	111	12	0	4,372
Music	134	485	518	230	20	6	0	1,393
Science	1,953	4,376	5,210	3,489	758	109	10	15,905
Home Economics	34	344	525	203	20	3	3	1,132
Materials Technology (Wood)	957	4,307	3,515	1,145	138	71	14	10,147
Metalwork	791	2,889	1,369	245	63	23	7	5,387
Technical Graphics	1,003	2,087	2,115	1,178	244	51	6	6,684
Technology	137	555	669	332	48	16	1	1,758
Business Studies	1,041	3,847	4,199	1,615	116	21	4	10,843
Typewriting	1	9	2	2	0	0	0	14
Environmental & Social Studies	6	29	21	3	0	0	0	59
Religious Education	124	465	691	335	47	21	2	1,685

TABLE 10 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – HIGHER LEVEL PAPERS – FEMALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving							Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	
Irish	1,727	4,750	4,592	1,982	185	14	0	13,250
English	2,132	6,920	8,146	3,102	159	13	0	20,472
Mathematics	2,197	4,364	3,503	1,942	317	55	4	12,382
History	2,649	5,478	5,338	3,360	935	223	14	17,997
Geography	2,281	7,792	7,080	3,382	454	37	0	21,026
Latin	40	47	22	6	1	0	0	116
Ancient Greek	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Classical Studies	43	46	50	27	4	2	1	173
Hebrew Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	1,857	4,140	5,134	3,532	598	57	0	15,318
German	754	1,443	1,328	783	163	9	0	4,480
Spanish	215	424	396	162	31	5	0	1,233
Italian	23	52	49	31	6	0	0	161
Art, Craft & Design	2,517	2,889	2,622	631	57	9	0	8,725
Music	668	2,191	1,672	574	50	24	0	5,179
Science	2,884	5,187	5,204	2,856	562	66	3	16,762
Home Economics	1,644	6,779	4,644	912	58	11	7	14,055
Materials Technology (Wood)	91	445	428	144	19	11	5	1,143
Metalwork	37	198	117	30	9	1	3	395
Technical Graphics	135	284	280	127	18	2	0	846
Technology	65	208	220	75	10	1	1	580
Business Studies	1,774	5,267	4,865	1,647	130	9	0	13,692
Typewriting	24	69	31	7	0	0	0	131
Environmental & Social Studies	3	12	19	6	1	0	0	41
Religious Education	450	967	783	241	19	18	1	2,479

TABLE 11 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – HIGHER LEVEL PAPERS – MALE & FEMALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving							Total
	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	
Irish	2,448	7,263	7,939	4,004	437	43	2	22,136
English	2,960	10,764	15,160	7,555	544	38	2	37,023
Mathematics	4,088	7,966	6,793	4,028	728	124	7	23,734
History	4,735	10,058	10,392	6,835	1,927	465	45	34,457
Geography	3,651	14,250	14,347	7,263	948	104	0	40,563
Latin	112	157	110	49	13	4	2	447
Ancient Greek	4	6	7	10	5	3	1	36
Classical Studies	73	114	130	90	16	9	1	433
Hebrew Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	2,658	6,497	8,785	6,963	1,288	142	4	26,337
German	1,021	2,311	2,553	1,746	384	42	2	8,059
Spanish	289	579	567	309	70	10	0	1,824
Italian	30	59	58	41	11	0	0	199
Art, Craft & Design	3,255	4,038	4,281	1,334	168	21	0	13,097
Music	802	2,676	2,190	804	70	30	0	6,572
Science	4,837	9,563	10,414	6,345	1,320	175	13	32,667
Home Economics	1,678	7,123	5,169	1,115	78	14	10	15,187
Materials Technology (Wood)	1,048	4,752	3,943	1,289	157	82	19	11,290
Metalwork	828	3,087	1,486	275	72	24	10	5,782
Technical Graphics	1,138	2,371	2,395	1,305	262	53	6	7,530
Technology	202	763	889	407	58	17	2	2,338
Business Studies	2,815	9,114	9,064	3,262	246	30	4	24,535
Typewriting	25	78	33	9	0	0	0	145
Environmental & Social Studies	9	41	40	9	1	0	0	100
Religious Education	574	1,432	1,474	576	66	39	3	4,164

TABLE 12 – JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF CANDIDATES BY GRADE AWARDED IN EACH SUBJECT – HIGHER LEVEL PAPERS – MALE & FEMALE

Subject	Total No. of Candidates	Percentage of Candidates Receiving						
		Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade
Irish	22,136	11.1	32.8	35.9	18.1	2.0	0.2	0.0
English	37,023	8.0	29.1	40.9	20.4	1.5	0.1	0.0
Mathematics	23,734	17.2	33.6	28.6	17.0	3.1	0.5	0.0
History	34,457	13.7	29.2	30.2	19.8	5.6	1.3	0.1
Geography	40,563	9.0	35.1	35.4	17.9	2.3	0.3	0.0
Latin	447	25.1	35.1	24.6	11.0	2.9	0.9	0.4
Ancient Greek	36	11.1	16.7	19.4	27.8	13.9	8.3	2.8
Classical Studies	433	16.9	26.3	30.0	20.8	3.7	2.1	0.2
Hebrew Studies	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	26,337	10.1	24.7	33.4	26.4	4.9	0.5	0.0
German	8,059	12.7	28.7	31.7	21.7	4.8	0.5	0.0
Spanish	1,824	15.8	31.7	31.1	16.9	3.8	0.5	0.0
Italian	199	15.1	29.6	29.1	20.6	5.5	0.0	0.0
Art, Craft & Design	13,097	24.9	30.8	32.7	10.2	1.3	0.2	0.0
Music	6,572	12.2	40.7	33.3	12.2	1.1	0.5	0.0
Science	32,667	14.8	29.3	31.9	19.4	4.0	0.5	0.0
Home Economics	15,187	11.0	46.9	34.0	7.3	0.5	0.1	0.1
Materials Technology (Wood)	11,290	9.3	42.1	34.9	11.4	1.4	0.7	0.2
Metalwork	5,782	14.3	53.4	25.7	4.8	1.2	0.4	0.2
Technical Graphics	7,530	15.1	31.5	31.8	17.3	3.5	0.7	0.1
Technology	2,338	8.6	32.6	38.0	17.4	2.5	0.7	0.1
Business Studies	24,535	11.5	37.1	36.9	13.3	1.0	0.1	0.0
Typewriting	145	17.2	53.8	22.8	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Environmental & Social Studies	100	9.0	41.0	40.0	9.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Religious Education	4,164	13.8	34.4	35.4	13.8	1.6	0.9	0.1

TABLE 14 – LEAVING CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – ORDINARY LEVEL PAPERS – FEMALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving													Total	
	Grade A1	Grade A2	Grade B1	Grade B2	Grade B3	Grade C1	Grade C2	Grade C3	Grade D1	Grade D2	Grade D3	Grade E	Grade F		No Grade
Irish	83	572	1,578	2,333	2,587	2,251	1,830	1,342	815	575	418	258	36	4	14,682
Irish (Foundation)	29	99	163	226	310	277	218	178	119	72	47	14	0	0	1,752
English	308	722	449	1,042	1,837	1,035	1,276	1,176	593	439	320	101	11	3	9,312
Mathematics	953	1,545	1,954	1,992	2,043	1,962	1,817	1,735	1,608	1,478	1,694	1,545	563	36	20,925
Mathematics (Foundation)	138	212	269	342	404	355	309	202	208	128	121	88	27	3	2,806
History	257	143	111	117	115	79	109	115	73	94	188	119	174	52	1,746
Geography	77	134	246	307	339	403	351	315	244	190	199	138	51	4	2,998
Latin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ancient Greek	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Classical Studies	0	1	1	2	4	2	0	3	0	4	4	7	5	3	36
French	8	81	378	754	1,201	1,427	1,354	1,325	1,085	838	713	447	37	0	9,648
German	14	71	173	256	268	228	185	156	136	126	99	92	35	0	1,839
Spanish	0	5	22	21	62	43	65	53	31	25	21	22	5	1	376
Italian	1	0	0	5	2	5	3	6	3	4	6	3	1	0	39
Art	5	23	47	119	203	254	262	257	160	105	60	43	22	4	1,564
Applied Mathematics	1	1	2	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11
Physics	22	39	35	40	50	27	34	38	15	22	21	23	15	5	386
Chemistry	37	40	42	54	41	33	32	28	19	11	12	13	2	1	365
Physics & Chemistry	1	3	2	3	4	2	5	6	3	6	6	6	1	1	49
Agricultural Science	0	1	0	4	2	4	29	27	21	32	44	28	5	2	199
Biology	115	324	363	417	559	508	535	475	437	371	427	603	371	66	5,571
Agricultural Economics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering	0	0	2	4	5	10	11	9	16	7	7	10	2	1	84
Technical Drawing	9	10	9	12	8	10	13	15	14	15	17	11	5	1	149
Construction Studies	0	0	1	3	6	17	32	37	24	23	16	10	0	0	169
Home Economics (S & S)	46	122	226	387	479	495	536	533	339	347	469	300	101	15	4,395
Home Economics (General)	0	0	0	3	1	2	5	6	0	6	4	5	0	0	32
Accounting	143	116	111	111	133	80	75	65	49	35	73	48	55	17	1,111
Business	235	350	255	393	529	334	379	451	219	248	329	152	82	8	3,964
Economics	6	33	26	44	54	40	35	28	22	24	12	13	7	1	345
Economic History	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	7
Arabic	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	8
Music	9	30	60	63	48	37	27	21	8	4	4	3	0	0	314
Russian	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

TABLE 16 – LEAVING CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF CANDIDATES BY GRADE AWARDED IN EACH SUBJECT – ORDINARY LEVEL PAPERS – MALE & FEMALE

Subject	Total No. of Candidates	Number of Candidates Receiving													
		Grade A1	Grade A2	Grade B1	Grade B2	Grade B3	Grade C1	Grade C2	Grade C3	Grade D1	Grade D2	Grade D3	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade
Irish	29,464	0.4	3.1	9.0	13.9	16.1	15.4	12.8	10.1	6.9	4.9	4.0	2.8	0.6	0.1
Irish (Foundation)	5,262	1.0	3.6	6.9	10.9	14.1	15.5	14.3	11.8	9.1	6.0	4.2	2.2	0.2	0.0
English	21,084	2.6	6.5	4.4	10.1	17.4	10.7	14.2	13.7	7.4	6.0	4.9	1.8	0.3	0.1
Mathematics	39,101	4.0	6.9	8.2	9.0	9.3	9.1	8.9	8.7	8.1	7.5	8.8	8.1	3.1	0.3
Mathematics (Foundation)	5,702	4.8	7.4	9.8	11.8	13.3	12.3	10.6	7.5	7.1	4.8	4.7	4.3	1.2	0.2
History	4,508	15.6	9.0	6.1	7.4	7.8	4.4	6.0	6.9	3.7	5.0	9.9	6.9	8.3	3.1
Geography	7,174	2.3	4.6	7.6	10.6	11.6	13.7	12.1	10.3	8.3	6.9	5.9	4.5	1.4	0.2
Latin	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ancient Greek	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Classical Studies	84	1.2	1.2	2.4	3.6	7.1	3.6	2.4	8.3	2.4	7.1	14.3	13.1	16.7	16.7
French	17,437	0.1	0.7	3.4	7.3	11.7	14.4	14.5	13.8	11.5	8.8	8.1	5.3	0.6	0.0
German	3,618	0.6	3.4	7.7	12.0	13.9	12.7	10.8	9.5	7.7	6.6	6.3	6.5	2.2	0.2
Spanish	643	0.0	1.1	4.7	5.3	16.8	13.2	14.9	13.5	9.3	7.3	7.0	5.1	1.4	0.3
Italian	71	2.8	1.4	2.8	12.7	4.2	9.9	5.6	14.1	9.9	9.9	19.7	5.6	1.4	0.0
Art	2,836	0.2	1.2	2.7	6.5	11.4	15.2	16.0	16.9	12.2	8.0	5.0	3.0	1.3	0.4
Applied Mathematics	108	12.0	7.4	7.4	7.4	14.8	9.3	11.1	8.3	3.7	7.4	3.7	6.5	0.0	0.9
Physics	2,631	3.8	8.4	6.8	10.1	14.0	7.4	9.0	10.2	4.9	5.5	8.9	6.2	3.3	1.4
Chemistry	967	5.9	9.2	10.8	12.4	12.4	9.7	9.8	8.5	6.7	3.7	4.2	5.1	1.4	0.1
Physics & Chemistry	247	2.4	2.4	2.0	6.5	8.5	7.3	8.9	14.2	3.6	12.1	12.6	10.5	6.1	2.8
Agricultural Science	938	0.0	0.1	0.4	1.8	2.9	6.6	12.9	13.9	13.1	16.1	14.7	13.4	3.5	0.5
Biology	8,888	2.0	5.2	6.1	7.7	9.6	8.9	9.5	8.6	7.6	6.9	7.7	11.3	7.5	1.6
Agricultural Economics	2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Engineering	1,469	0.7	2.3	4.7	6.1	9.9	12.7	13.1	13.9	10.9	9.5	8.0	6.4	1.6	0.2
Technical Drawing	3,079	6.4	8.3	8.5	8.5	9.8	9.8	9.4	6.9	7.4	7.3	8.1	7.0	2.4	0.4
Construction Studies	2,329	0.3	1.0	3.0	6.7	11.5	13.5	16.6	13.7	11.0	8.4	6.7	6.1	1.3	0.1
Home Economics	5,321	0.9	2.6	4.7	8.4	10.6	11.0	11.9	12.0	8.1	8.2	10.8	7.6	2.8	0.5
Home Economics (General)	34	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.8	2.9	5.9	14.7	17.6	2.9	17.6	14.7	14.7	0.0	0.0
Accounting	2,005	11.5	10.1	9.8	9.0	11.2	7.0	6.2	6.5	4.2	3.7	6.4	5.3	6.2	2.8
Business	7,504	5.1	8.4	6.6	9.7	13.7	8.7	9.9	11.5	5.5	6.2	8.3	4.0	2.0	0.3
Economics	1,090	3.3	8.2	5.8	12.4	15.7	11.8	10.3	9.5	6.9	5.0	5.5	3.6	1.8	0.3
Economic History	22	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	13.6	13.6	18.2	18.2	9.1	4.5	13.6	0.0	4.5	0.0
Arabic	11	0.0	9.1	9.1	18.2	0.0	0.0	18.2	9.1	9.1	0.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	0.0
Music	407	2.2	8.4	17.9	19.2	17.4	13.3	8.4	6.4	2.7	1.5	1.5	1.0	0.0	0.2
Russian	3	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

TABLE 18 – LEAVING CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – HIGHER LEVEL PAPERS – FEMALE

Subject	Number of Candidates Receiving														Total
	Grade A1	Grade A2	Grade B1	Grade B2	Grade B3	Grade C1	Grade C2	Grade C3	Grade D1	Grade D2	Grade D3	Grade E	Grade F	No Grade	
Irish	500	708	916	1,138	1,224	1,255	1,231	1,092	814	576	299	111	3	0	9,867
English	902	1,086	1,074	1,840	2,333	2,287	2,599	2,485	1,861	1,176	699	166	14	2	18,524
Mathematics	197	302	432	450	535	507	493	445	379	234	193	111	21	4	4,303
History	304	278	306	359	356	300	316	316	221	176	206	175	69	19	3,401
Geography	368	640	701	1,226	1,491	1,348	1,283	1,293	864	654	581	359	41	10	10,859
Latin	7	10	9	5	6	2	3	2	0	2	2	2	0	1	51
Ancient Greek	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Classical Studies	3	27	16	35	51	27	34	52	24	21	30	20	6	1	347
French	322	520	699	945	1,001	1,171	1,307	1,266	992	700	500	152	5	0	9,580
German	186	267	312	344	410	382	385	313	246	144	101	41	2	0	3,133
Spanish	65	64	55	55	61	71	64	60	57	34	16	10	0	0	612
Italian	15	9	5	7	5	6	4	3	8	4	2	1	0	0	69
Art	120	309	549	692	805	687	629	468	232	152	60	21	2	1	4,727
Applied Mathematics	43	26	28	37	32	25	18	19	19	12	9	8	8	1	285
Physics	219	179	163	153	183	160	152	123	121	98	108	82	35	7	1,783
Chemistry	498	380	339	343	349	250	228	229	171	147	153	117	39	5	3,248
Physics & Chemistry	36	28	14	31	31	24	26	23	11	6	16	7	2	0	255
Agricultural Science	15	30	50	53	61	55	57	52	47	32	38	32	7	0	529
Biology	1,052	889	840	969	980	849	806	911	592	542	691	623	175	15	9,934
Agricultural Economics	1	0	2	3	2	1	5	3	5	0	3	9	0	0	34
Engineering	6	2	7	19	15	17	19	17	14	10	10	8	4	0	148
Technical Drawing	5	23	21	27	21	28	22	22	20	16	14	14	2	1	236
Construction Studies	2	14	51	53	52	58	50	47	28	10	15	5	2	0	387
Home Economics (S & S)	241	478	626	1,040	1,461	1,280	1,426	1,438	1,078	841	680	519	71	7	11,186
Home Economics (General)	0	0	0	2	4	3	8	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	19
Accounting	227	279	285	298	266	189	187	170	121	116	132	94	32	8	2,404
Business	320	664	714	970	1,116	879	966	995	616	563	659	427	89	4	8,982
Economics	40	133	88	152	156	155	151	140	100	84	131	69	23	3	1,425
Economic History	0	5	7	6	21	7	13	15	11	8	8	4	4	0	109
Arabic	10	10	4	2	5	2	2	3	1	2	1	1	0	0	43
Music	115	387	523	559	448	326	199	112	35	16	12	1	0	0	2,733
Russian	12	15	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
Japanese	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

TABLE 20 – LEAVING CERTIFICATE RESULTS 2003 – PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF CANDIDATES BY GRADE AWARDED IN EACH SUBJECT – HIGHER LEVEL PAPERS – MALE & FEMALE

Subject	Total No. of Candidates	Number of Candidates Receiving														No Grade
		Grade A1	Grade A2	Grade A3	Grade B1	Grade B2	Grade B3	Grade C1	Grade C2	Grade C3	Grade D1	Grade D2	Grade D3	Grade E	Grade F	
Irish	15,102	4.4	6.8	8.7	11.2	12.3	12.6	12.9	11.4	8.8	6.1	3.4	1.3	0.0	0.0	
English	32,376	4.3	5.6	5.4	9.2	12.0	12.2	14.1	13.5	10.8	7.0	4.6	1.2	0.1	0.0	
Mathematics	9,453	6.1	7.2	9.1	9.7	11.3	11.1	10.9	10.9	8.3	5.8	5.4	3.5	0.6	0.1	
History	7,334	8.2	7.2	8.7	9.7	10.5	9.9	9.5	9.3	7.0	5.7	6.5	4.8	2.1	0.8	
Geography	21,777	2.7	5.0	5.8	10.4	12.8	12.3	12.4	11.9	9.1	6.8	6.2	3.9	0.6	0.1	
Latin	113	16.8	15.9	17.7	12.4	12.4	6.2	2.7	6.2	1.8	2.7	1.8	1.8	0.9	0.9	
Ancient Greek	14	7.1	7.1	28.6	21.4	0.0	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Classical Studies	785	1.3	5.7	4.2	10.4	12.2	9.7	8.7	14.9	6.1	7.4	8.5	7.0	3.1	0.8	
French	15,054	3.2	5.3	6.7	9.2	10.2	12.0	13.9	13.1	11.0	7.8	5.6	1.8	0.1	0.0	
German	5,074	4.8	7.1	8.6	10.1	12.3	12.4	12.7	11.2	9.1	5.9	4.0	1.6	0.1	0.0	
Spanish	908	9.8	10.2	9.4	8.8	9.5	11.0	11.3	9.5	8.9	6.2	3.6	1.7	0.1	0.0	
Italian	96	18.8	11.5	9.4	10.4	7.3	8.3	6.3	5.2	10.4	6.3	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.0	
Art	7,012	2.2	5.5	9.7	13.3	15.5	15.1	14.0	11.5	6.7	3.9	1.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	
Applied Mathematics	1,286	19.1	9.7	9.8	10.7	10.1	6.9	7.4	5.8	4.4	3.3	3.8	4.4	3.0	1.4	
Physics	6,175	9.7	8.2	7.9	7.8	8.7	8.3	7.9	7.7	7.7	6.3	8.7	7.6	2.9	0.6	
Chemistry	5,731	15.1	10.9	10.2	10.0	9.8	7.8	7.8	7.2	5.2	4.9	5.1	4.2	1.2	0.4	
Physics & Chemistry	686	10.2	8.9	6.1	11.4	8.5	9.3	10.5	8.0	7.1	5.2	7.1	5.0	2.2	0.4	
Agricultural Science	2,034	3.5	5.8	9.6	9.8	10.7	11.6	10.8	10.2	9.2	5.6	6.7	5.3	1.0	0.2	
Biology	13,783	10.4	8.6	8.1	9.5	9.6	8.5	8.3	9.1	6.1	5.7	7.1	6.7	2.0	0.2	
Agricultural Economics	115	3.5	4.3	8.7	7.0	8.7	8.7	12.2	7.8	12.2	1.7	9.6	13.9	1.7	0.0	
Engineering	3,520	3.0	5.9	8.6	11.3	11.5	11.9	12.8	11.5	8.6	6.6	4.6	3.4	0.5	0.0	
Technical Drawing	3,392	6.4	7.7	9.3	11.0	10.2	11.2	10.0	9.1	8.5	5.9	5.7	4.2	0.8	0.1	
Construction Studies	6,569	1.7	4.6	9.3	12.7	14.9	14.2	13.8	11.1	7.6	5.0	3.4	1.5	0.2	0.0	
Home Economics (S & S)	12,734	2.1	4.1	5.4	8.8	12.7	11.3	12.8	12.9	9.8	7.6	6.5	5.1	0.7	0.1	
Home Economics (General)	24	0.0	0.0	4.2	8.3	16.7	12.5	37.5	4.2	4.2	4.2	0.0	4.2	0.0	4.2	
Accounting	4,694	9.1	11.9	12.2	12.0	10.6	7.6	7.8	6.3	4.8	4.8	5.6	4.6	1.9	0.7	
Business	16,027	3.2	6.5	7.2	10.1	12.4	9.6	10.9	11.5	7.6	6.8	8.0	5.0	1.2	0.0	
Economics	3,753	3.4	8.9	6.8	11.0	11.6	10.1	9.7	9.9	7.1	6.2	9.3	4.3	1.6	0.2	
Economic History	302	0.3	7.3	4.3	6.0	16.2	8.6	10.9	12.6	7.6	8.9	6.3	5.3	4.6	1.0	
Arabic	123	16.3	19.5	11.4	11.4	13.8	5.7	4.1	4.9	0.8	6.5	0.8	3.3	0.0	1.6	
Music	3,529	4.3	13.8	19.7	19.9	16.6	12.2	7.5	3.7	1.3	0.7	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Russian	55	36.4	47.3	7.3	5.5	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Japanese	8	75.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

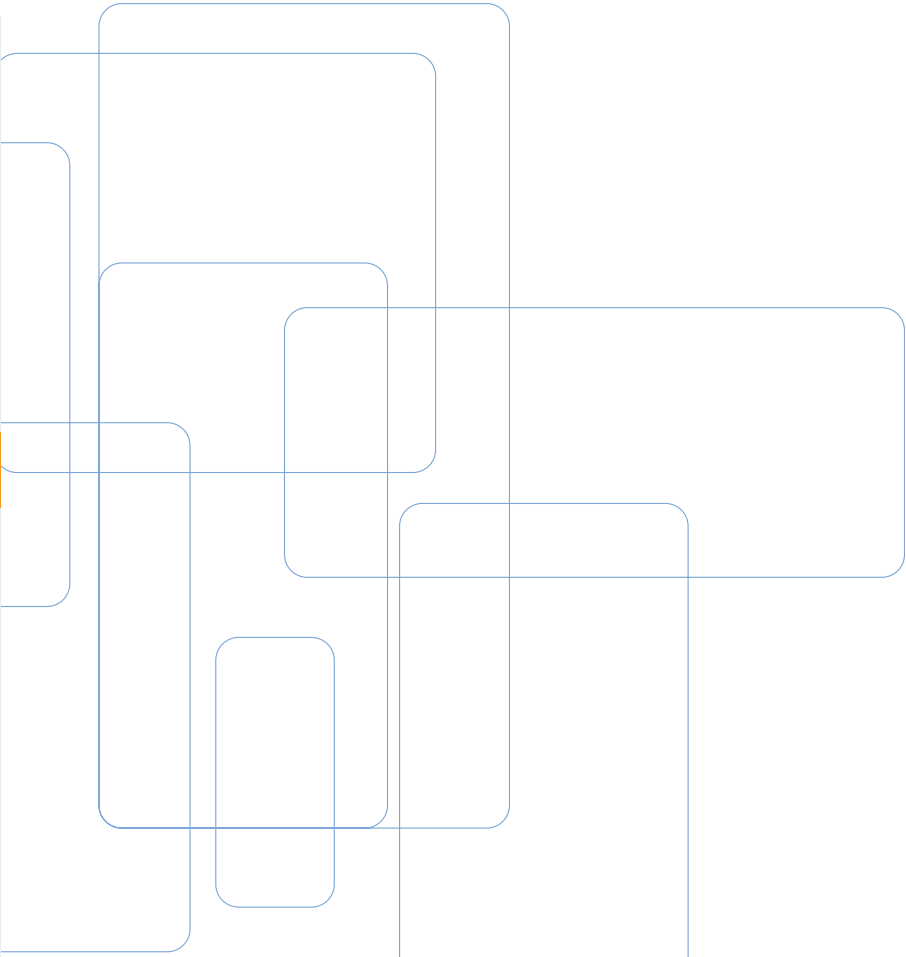
TABLE 21 – APPEALS OF PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION RESULTS 2003

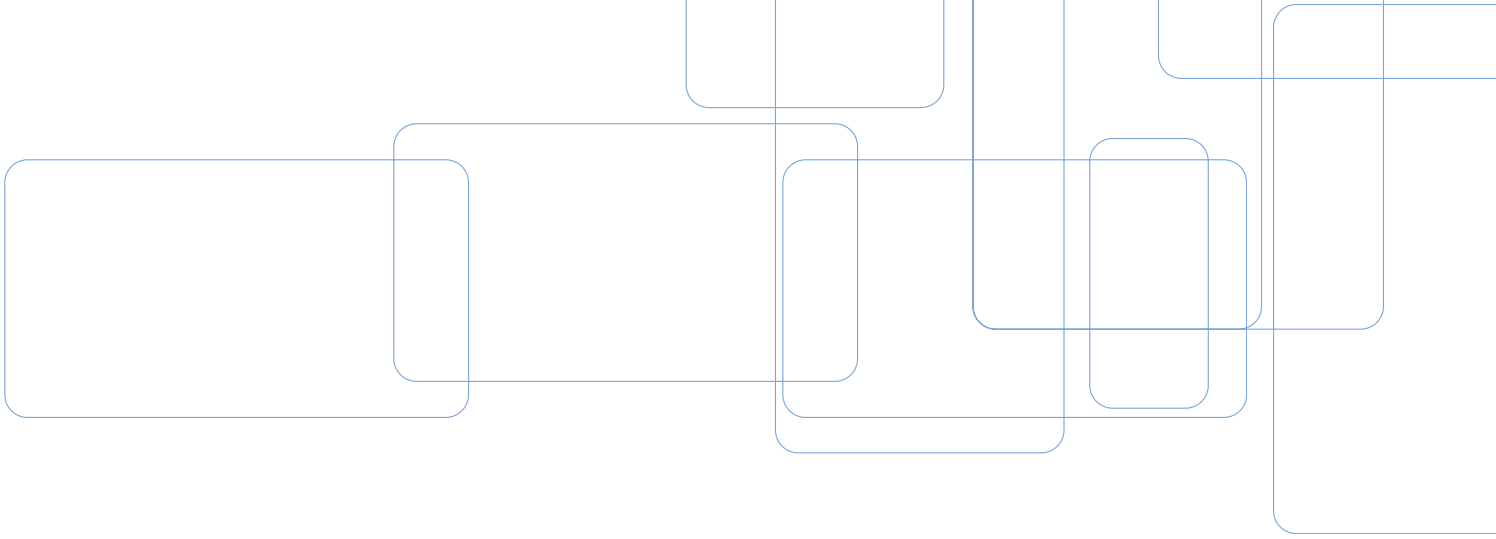
	Leaving Certificate	Leaving Certificate Applied	Junior Certificate	Total
Grades	387,749	40,998	577,053	1,005,800
Grades Appealed	10,299	65	1,659	12,023
Upgrades	2,192	10	530	2,732
Downgrades	5	0	–	5

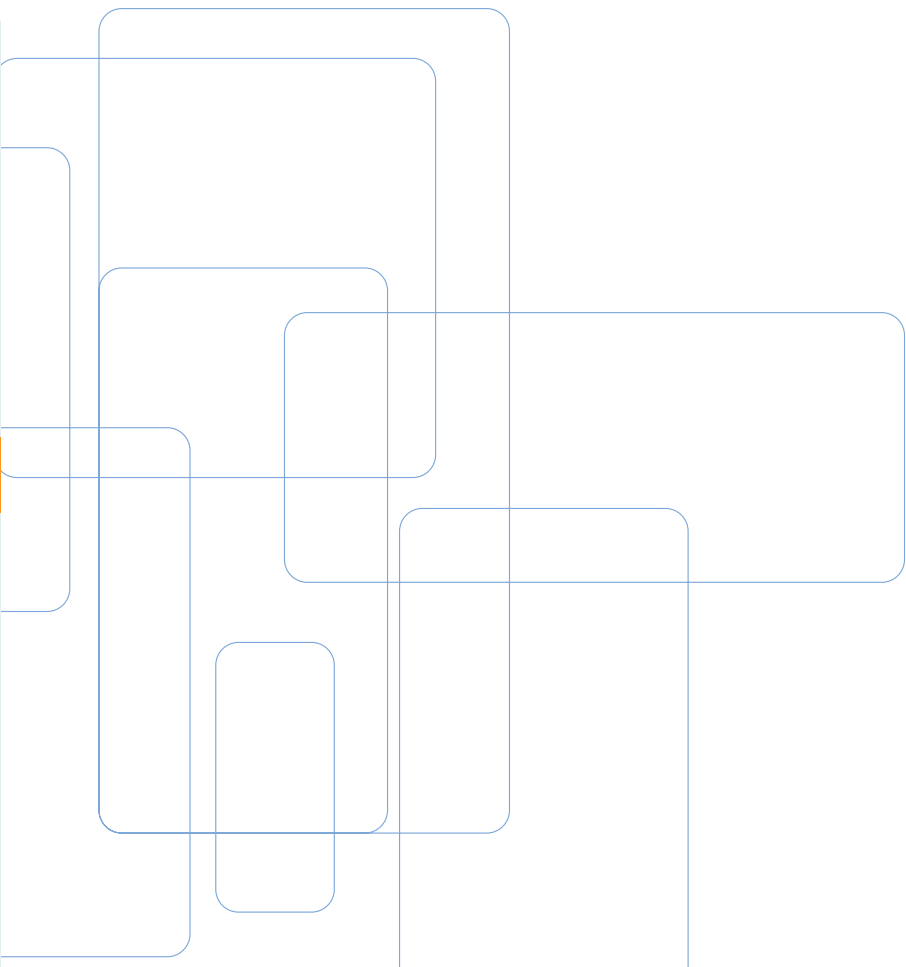
Note:

Since 1998, all Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied candidates have the opportunity to view their marked examination scripts in advance of the appeals. The viewing facility provides candidates with the opportunity to see how the marking scheme was applied to their work and thus make an informed judgement on the merit or otherwise of making an appeal against the grade awarded.

Candidates in the Junior Certificate do not have the opportunity to view their marked scripts. Appeals against grades awarded in the Junior Certificate examination do not give rise to downgrades. This practice recognises that the appeals process exists to ensure that the marking scheme was fully and properly applied to the work produced at the examination, and that Junior Certificate candidates do not have the opportunity see the application of the marking scheme to their work. This was also the practice in the Leaving Certificate examination prior to the introduction of the viewing of scripts in 1998.









Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission

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