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 on 6th March 2003 under Section 54 of the Education Act, 1998 and is mandated in its functions under Statutory Instrument 373/2003, 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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It is a great pleasure for me as Chairperson of the State Examinations Commission to publish the Commission’s tenth Annual Report. This provides an overview of the Commission’s performance during 2012 and of progress made towards its stated mission of providing high quality examinations with the highest standards of openness, fairness and accountability. The Commissioners are satisfied that the high standards expected by the public in the administration and delivery of the State examinations have been maintained in 2012.

Running the examinations is an immense operation and the very nature of State examinations, particularly when dealing with almost 115,000 candidates and almost 23,000 contract staff, requires us to be able to communicate quickly and effectively with those affected by any issues which can arise in the course of the examinations. Improved communications to school authorities and superintendents now happen through the medium of email and text messaging which allows us to keep all those on the front line of examinations updated on matters in a prompt and user friendly way. These improved communications facilities worked very well in 2012 when contingency arrangements were put in place to replace the Leaving Certificate Irish Higher and Ordinary Paper 1 and CD because of a possible compromise of the original CD.

There are many challenges ahead with the introduction of Junior Cycle reform and the SEC is committed to working closely with the Department and the NCCA to support schools and teachers in the delivery of the new assessment model.

In achieving our organisational goals and objectives we continue to rely heavily on the excellent support we receive from the Education Partners and other stakeholders including the Department of Education and Skills and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. The successful conduct of the State examinations is hugely dependent on the professional men and women who continue to fulfil the essential roles of superintendent, examiner, examination aide, drafter, setter and translator with excellence, skill and dedication. I also want to acknowledge the contribution made by school principals, teachers and teaching associations, school authorities and management bodies, candidates, parents and parents’ representative bodies and all other personnel involved in the examinations.

I especially acknowledge the support of the Minister for Education and Skills and the staff of the Department, and all of the other state agencies involved in the examinations process. I also wish to thank the staff of the State Examinations Commission, under the leadership of the Chief Executive, Aidan Farrell, and his management team who have worked so hard over the past year.

I wish to pay tribute to my four colleague Commissioners for their greatly valued commitment, support and dedication and to record my thanks to the outgoing Commissioners, former Deputy Chairperson Ms Breda Nolan, Mr Tony Behan, Ms Eleanor Walsh and Mr Ivor Gleeson.

Richard Langford
Chairperson
I am pleased to present the State Examinations Commission 2012 Annual Report. This report details our activities in 2012, the Commission's tenth year in operation since its establishment in 2003.

This report sets out the details of the running of the 2012 State examinations including valuable statistical information.

In 2012 Project Maths was fully introduced at Leaving Certificate level with a complete change implemented to both Paper 1 and Paper 2 for the 24 initial Project Maths schools and a partial change to Paper 2 in non-Project Maths schools. For Junior Certificate there was partial implementation of a new Paper 1 and full change to Paper 2 for the 24 initial Project Maths schools with no change in non-Project Maths schools.

2012 also saw the full roll out to all Leaving Certificate candidates of the change to the examination of Leaving Certificate Irish with a greater focus on oral skills which now account for 40% of the overall mark (compared with the 25% previously available).

Contingency arrangements were put in place this year to replace the Leaving Certificate Irish Higher and Ordinary Level Paper 1 and CD because of a possible compromise of the original CD. The roll out of the contingency arrangements worked well to ensure the Irish examinations at all levels executed as rescheduled without disruption to the candidates.

In October this year the Minister for Education and Skills announced proposals for Junior Cycle Reform. Assessment in the reformed Junior Cycle will involve a mix of schoolwork assessment and a final examination. The reformed Junior Cycle will be introduced on a phased basis beginning with the subject English in September 2014 for first examination in June 2017. The SEC looks forward to working with the Department, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Education Partners on the implementation of these proposals. The SEC will work closely with the NCCA on the design and development of the assessment toolkit which will support schools and teachers in the delivery of the new assessment model. The SEC will play a critical role in supporting the change initiative while continuing to deliver the current Junior Certificate examinations. Crucially, the change at Junior Cycle presents an opportunity for a refocusing of efforts at senior cycle towards more varied forms of assessment across all examinations subjects.

As a result of a report following a joint conference held by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the NCCA entitled ‘Transition or Transaction? Moving from second to third level education in Ireland’ a series of actions was proposed to deal with the issues identified. Specifically in relation to the issue of predictability, the report recommended that the NCCA and the SEC will develop proposals to address any problematic predictability identified in an analysis of predictability in the Leaving Certificate examinations. This analysis of predictability continued during 2012 and a report is due to be completed next year.

On behalf of the management team I wish to thank staff at all levels in the Commission for their huge commitment and contribution to our work in 2012.

I also want to express my thanks to the Commissioners who worked on the examinations during 2012. The term of the previous Commission under the Chairmanship of Mr Dick Langford ended in March 2012. They gave outstanding and exemplary service as custodians of the state examinations. The current Commission was appointed from May 2012 and I want to express my sincere gratitude to the five Commissioners, under the continuing Chairmanship of Mr Langford, for their guidance, advice and unfailing support during 2012.

Aidan Farrell
Chief Executive Officer
Examination Statistics at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Junior Certificate</th>
<th>Leaving Certificate Applied</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Non-curricular subjects</td>
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<td>Test Instruments</td>
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<td>506</td>
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<td>Components Examined</td>
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<td>Grades</td>
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<td>999,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeals (Grades)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>12,679</td>
</tr>
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**NUMBER OF STATE EXAMINATIONS CANDIDATES**

**CATEGORY OF LEAVING CERTIFICATE CANDIDATES**

- Ordinary School Based
- Vocational Programme (LCVP) School Based
- Leaving Certificate Applied
- External
- Repeat
- VTOS/PLC

*The 2012 figures for Test Instruments are significantly different to those provided in earlier Annual Reports. The previously provided figures were subject to a detailed review in 2013. It was determined that the previous methodology for counting test instruments did not accurately account for individual test items and, critically, counted only live test instruments and omitted contingency items.
## Examination Statistics at a Glance

### Leaving Certificate (Established) Participation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position 2012</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of Cohort</th>
<th>Position 2011</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>51,453</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>51,990</td>
<td>95.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Irish</td>
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<td>44,398</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Biology</td>
<td>30,541</td>
<td>58.1%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30,349</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>25,977</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26,768</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Geography</td>
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<td>48.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27,306</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<td>22.6%</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>History</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Art</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>15.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Agricultural Science</td>
<td>6,889</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
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<td>6,472</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>German</td>
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<td>12.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6,955</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
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<td>Physics</td>
<td>6,373</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6,516</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
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### Junior Certificate Participation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position 2012</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of Cohort</th>
<th>Position 2011</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Percentage of Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>58,193</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56,208</td>
<td>98.9%</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>9,952</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
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## Leaving Certificate Candidature by Subject and Level

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<th>Position 2012</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Higher Level</th>
<th>Ordinary Level</th>
<th>Foundation Level</th>
<th>Common Level</th>
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<td>Arabic</td>
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<td>Latin</td>
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<td>Hebrew Studies</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Curricular subjects only*
## Examination Statistics at a Glance

### Junior Certificate Candidature by Subject and Level

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>2012 Candidates</th>
<th>Higher Level</th>
<th>Ordinary Level</th>
<th>Foundation Level</th>
<th>Common Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>CSPE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>57,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>54,029</td>
<td>44,509</td>
<td>9,520</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td>37,830</td>
<td>15,330</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>39,991</td>
<td>12,615</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>50,809</td>
<td>26,104</td>
<td>23,028</td>
<td>1,677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>34,757</td>
<td>25,700</td>
<td>9,057</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Business Studies</td>
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<td>24,998</td>
<td>8,386</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Religious Education</td>
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<td>5,755</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Art Craft &amp; Design</td>
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<td>15,716</td>
<td>6,226</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Home Economics</td>
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<td>16,984</td>
<td>4,558</td>
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</tr>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Materials Technology (Wood)</td>
<td>15,775</td>
<td>12,674</td>
<td>3,101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Technical Graphics</td>
<td>12,004</td>
<td>8,271</td>
<td>3,733</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>10,578</td>
<td>8,714</td>
<td>1,864</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>German</td>
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<td>7,047</td>
<td>2,423</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td>7,739</td>
<td>5,946</td>
<td>1,793</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>6,698</td>
<td>4,884</td>
<td>1,814</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Technology</td>
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<td>2,557</td>
<td>469</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Environ. &amp; Social Studies</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>523</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Classical Studies</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ancient Greek</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Hebrew Studies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The State Examinations Commission (SEC) is a statutory body established by Government in March 2003. The SEC assumed responsibility for the operation of the State certificate examinations from the Department of Education and Skills from 2003 onwards. It has been established as a public body staffed by civil servants. Its five non-executive Commissioners have been appointed through the Public Appointments Service and on the nomination of the Minister for Education and Skills. The permanent executive of 154 staff, led by a Chief Executive Officer, supports the Commission. The role of the SEC is the assessment and certification of the second-level examinations of the Irish State: the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate and of certain trade and professional examinations.

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

The SEC includes among its education partners and stakeholders, the Department of Education and Skills, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, school principals, teachers and teaching associations, school authorities and management bodies, candidates, parents and parents' representative bodies. The SEC recognises that continued cooperation and consultation with all education partners and stakeholders is essential to the achievement of the organisation's objectives.

For comparative purposes we have retained a largely similar format in this report to that of previous years. All of the background information relating to how the SEC operates, our procedures and appeal processes are detailed in previous annual reports and available from our website www.examinations.ie. The additional reporting obligations for State Bodies, such as the SEC, under the revised Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies, first reported in our 2009 Annual Report, are also supplied in this report.
THE COMMISSIONERS

The Commissioners are mandated in their duties under the State Examinations Commission (Establishment) Order 2003. The Board of Commissioners appointed for a three year term until 3rd April, 2015 are:

Mr. Richard Langford  
Chairperson,  
Former Chief Executive Officer,  
City of Cork VEC

Mr. Joe Harrison  
Deputy Chairperson, former School Principal, Inspector & Co-ordinator for School Development.

Mr. Brian Fleming  
former Principal, Collinstown Park Community College, Clondalkin

Mr. Martin Carney  
former Principal of Scoil Muire agus Pádraig, Swinford, Co.Mayo

Dr. Caroline Hussey  
former Registrar and Deputy President University College Dublin

Mr. Richard Langford - Chairperson, former Chief Executive Officer, City of Cork VEC  
Ms. Breda Nolan - Deputy Chairperson, former Principal of Borris Vocational School, Carlow  
Mr. Tony Behan - Former Principal of Mercy Secondary School, Mount Hawk, Tralee  
Mr. Ivor Gleeson - Secretary to the Central Applications Office  
Ms. Eleanor Walsh - Businesswoman and former teacher.
Chapter 1

Senior Management Team

- Chief Executive Officer
  Aidan Farrell

  - Head of Examinations & Assessment Division
    Bríd Uí Riordáin

  - Director
    Operations & IT Division
    Andrea Feeney

  - Principal Officer
    HR, Finance & Corporate Affairs Division
    Michael Kiely

  - Assistant Head of Examination and Assessment Division
    Tim Desmond

  - Assistant Head of Examination and Assessment Division
    Hugh McManus
ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

At a strategic level, the SEC has adopted a set of collective values that will shape and facilitate organisational effectiveness and set the frame of reference for all activities.

These values are:

**INTEGRITY** encompassing the ideals of honesty, trustworthiness, impartiality, mutual respect, consistency, openness, fairness and transparency.

**EXCELLENCE** refers to striving for the best, being professional, continually seeking to improve and leading the way in the field in which we operate.

**PARTNERSHIP** refers to a way of working, which involves consultation with both internal and external stakeholders, seeking honest feedback and acting co-operatively towards shared objectives.

**ACCOUNTABILITY** refers to our responsibility to all stakeholders to provide an excellent product with the highest levels of service, that provides value for money to the community.

**ADAPTABILITY** involves being able to respond efficiently and effectively to changes brought about by internal and external forces, adopting a progressive approach to how we carry out our business functions and being open to new methods and suggestions for improvement.

HIGH LEVEL GOALS

The SEC works towards four core goals. They are:

1. To maintain and enhance the credibility of the Irish state examinations by providing a high quality examinations and assessment system and having a continual focus on quality assurance and performance excellence.

2. To underpin equity and fairness within the examinations system in order to enable all candidates to display their achievements.

3. To develop a capable, adaptable and efficient organisation.

4. To demonstrate responsiveness and accountability, with the highest standards of customer service to all of our stakeholders.

The 2012 annual report concentrates on the progress made by the organisation in the achievement of these goals.
Running the state examinations is an immense logistical operation. To demonstrate this point, it is worth noting the following activities and outcomes in 2012:

- Providing examinations to 114,614 candidates across all examination programmes; 58,798 at Junior Certificate, 52,588 at Leaving Certificate, and 3,228 at Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
- Arranging for examinations in 89 curricular and 15 non-curricular subjects
- Engaging 576 drafters, setters and translators to develop 506 exam papers and other test components – including oral tests, aural recordings, practical briefs, project briefs, portfolio and coursework items as well as the written examination papers
- Producing approx 4 million examination papers made up of approx 48 million A4 pages
- Arranging for the recording of some 90,000 Leaving and Leaving Certificate Applied oral tests
- Engaging 4,818 superintendents to superintend at ordinary examination centres
- Providing 19,397 reasonable accommodations to facilitate candidates with individual needs to access the certificate exams and establishing 9,782 special examination centres as a result
- Engaging 6,569 Examiners to mark the examinations, 4,226 written examiners, 1,100 oral examiners and 1,243 practical examiners
- Examining some 1.9 million individual test items including written examination scripts, art and craftwork pieces, project and practical pieces in Leaving Certificate Construction Studies and Engineering, and Junior Certificate Metalwork, Materials Technology (Wood) and Technology, oral tests, coursework journals, research reports and portfolios
- Generating 999,217 individual grades leading to the award of 114,614 examination results
- Returning approximately 360,000 marked scripts to schools for viewing
- Processing some 12,679 appeals.

REVIEW OF 2012

The written examinations in 2012 progressed smoothly and efficiently and the examination papers were generally welcomed for their style and content.
Project Maths

The SEC has been involved in planning for the implementation of this innovative curricular development project. The new development model involves a phased implementation of five syllabus strands, and the piloting of these strands in 24 schools. It also involves the simultaneous introduction of new Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes which is a significant challenge for assessment.

1) Leaving Certificate Project Maths

The timetable for the implementation of Project Maths for Leaving Certificate in both the 24 pilot schools and all other schools in the country is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project Maths School</th>
<th>Non Project Maths School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>New Paper 2 (partial change to paper)</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>New Papers 1 (Partial change to paper) &amp; 2 (full change to paper)</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>New Papers 1 (full change to paper) &amp; 2 (full change to paper)</td>
<td>New Paper 2 (partial change to paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>New Papers 1 &amp; 2 (as for 2012)</td>
<td>Paper 1 (partial change) &amp; Paper 2 (full change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>All schools to get new Project Maths papers</td>
<td>All schools to get new Project Maths papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Leaving Certificate Examination in Mathematics was affected by two very significant changes in 2012. Firstly, the Higher Education Institutions participating in the CAO scheme introduced, at the request of the Minister for Education & Skills, Ruairi Quinn TD, a measure to award 25 additional points for all grades from D3 to A1 in Higher-Level Mathematics. The intention is to encourage a greater number of students to take up and continue with the study of Higher Level Mathematics.

The second significant change is that this is the first year in which candidates from the main cohort of students have been examined in elements of the revised syllabus being introduced under the Government’s Project Maths initiative. These initiatives appear to have had the effect of increasing the number of candidates sitting higher level, rising from 15.5% in 2011 to 22.1% of the overall cohort in 2012. No distinction was made in the certification between the two groups of candidates, and all candidates were issued with a grade in the subject ‘Mathematics’.

2) Junior Certificate Project Maths

The timetable for the implementation of Project Maths for Junior Certificate in both the 24 pilot schools and all other schools in the country is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project Maths School</th>
<th>Non Project Maths School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>No change</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>New Paper 2 (partial change to paper)</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>New Papers 1 (partial change to paper) &amp; 2 (full change to paper)</td>
<td>No change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>New Papers 1 (full paper) &amp; 2 (full paper)</td>
<td>New paper 2 (partial change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>New Papers 1 &amp; 2 (as for 2013)</td>
<td>Paper 1 (partial change) and Paper 2 (full change to paper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>All schools to get new Project Maths papers</td>
<td>All schools to get new Project Maths papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The format of the Junior Certificate Project Maths examination papers represents a significant departure from the presentation of the traditional Mathematics examination papers. The number of questions on the examination papers is not pre-specified and may vary from year to year and from level to level. The type, length and difficulty of the questions on the paper are also not pre-specified and can vary within each paper.
Marks are not specifically pre-allocated to questions or sections of questions. In order that students can manage their time in the examination each question carries a “suggested maximum time” with a few minutes left over for a review of work.

No distinction is made in the certification between the two groups of candidates, and all candidates are issued with a grade in the subject “Mathematics”.

In 2012, there has been a movement upwards in participation levels in the non Project Maths schools. In these schools a significantly higher proportion presented at Higher Level, and a lower proportion took Ordinary and Foundation Levels than in previous years. In the Project Maths schools there has been a slight reduction in the numbers taking Higher Level than in 2011, although the proportion still remains higher than in Mathematics generally.

As increasing the uptake of Maths at Higher Level is one of the explicit aims of Project Maths, this indication of a greater uptake is to be welcomed.

RE-WEIGHTING OF COMPONENTS IN THE IRISH EXAMINATIONS

This year’s examinations in Irish involved the implementation of a major policy change which significantly increased the proportion of marks assigned to the oral component in the State examinations, with the oral examination now worth 40% of the total marks at Leaving Certificate. The Aural element of the examination which now carries 10% of the total marks forms an integral part of Papers 1 at Higher and Ordinary Levels and of the written paper at Foundation Level. There was no change to the Junior Certificate syllabus.

In the Leaving Certificate Applied programme candidates can take the Irish examination either at the end of Year 1 or Year 2. From 2012 onwards the examination components for both Year 1 and Year 2 cohorts reflect the new policy of 40% towards oral tests.

BACKGROUND

At the 2012 examinations the SEC provided a replacement paper and CD for Leaving Certificate Irish Paper 1 Higher and Ordinary Levels. This action was deemed necessary as Leaving Certificate Irish Aural CDs had been discovered in a small number of packets that were to have contained Junior Certificate CDs. The Junior Certificate Irish Paper 1 examination is on the first Thursday of the examinations while the Leaving Certificate examination is on the following Monday. Believing that the content of the Leaving Certificate CDs may have been compromised the SEC deemed it prudent that contingency arrangements be implemented.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR LEAVING CERTIFICATE IRISH PAPER 1 IN 2012

Following the reschedule of Leaving Certificate English Paper 2 in 2009 the SEC developed a more robust contingency model to allow it to respond to significant events over the course of the written examinations and to increase its ability to arrange for an alternative paper to be supplied in time for a scheduled examination to start on time. Using this enhanced plan the SEC issued the replacement Leaving Certificate Irish papers and CDs on Friday 8 June, 2012. All schools then took delivery of the replacement materials in time for the scheduled start time for the examination on Monday 11th June, 2012, which took place without any impact on candidates. The SEC is very grateful for the support and assistance received from school principals and their staff, superintendents and school management.
bodies which enabled these contingency arrangements to be rolled out so seamlessly.

**CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE**

In response to the incident the SEC conducted a full internal review of the issues leading to the incorrect packing of the Leaving Certificate CDs in Junior Certificate packets. This is the normal practice when significant incidents occur and in this instance the focus was on the process for supplementary packing of CDs for additional centres with special needs candidates, as this was the source of the packing error in 2012. Typically this supplementary packing happens after the end of the main examination paper packing and reflects late changes to the entries for the examinations following the completion of the main packing process, primarily caused by changes required to meet the needs of candidates for whom late applications for reasonable accommodations have been received and granted.

For the 2013 examinations the SEC reviewed its protocols and procedures and has introduced a number of additional Quality Assurance (QA) improvements including:

- Enhanced protocols for supplementary packing
- Redesigned CD wallets with clearer details across all subjects
- Use of barcode scanning in the packing of CDs
- Increase in the basic number of CDs provided to each centre to minimise the need for additional CDs to be packed

The focus of these changes has been on putting in place measures to minimise the risk of a reoccurrence of a similar incident in the future.

**DELIVERY OF THE 2012 LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS IN LIBYA**

Due to the ongoing difficult political situation in Libya in 2012 the SEC, again on the advice of the Department of Foreign Affairs, decided not to travel to Libya to offer the Leaving Certificate examination there. Instead the SEC, with the kind assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Maltese Examinations Service, offered the examinations in Malta. On this occasion the Maltese authorities granted visas to candidates, and 34 candidates from the ISM Tripoli travelled there to sit their examinations and one candidate travelled to Ireland. The SEC sent two superintendents to oversee the examinations in Malta which went very smoothly. All additional costs associated with these measures have been met by the school. The SEC will continue to monitor this situation and to liaise with the Departments of Education & Skills and Foreign Affairs in this regard.

**EXAMINATION OUTCOMES 2012**

The overall number of candidates who sat the Leaving Certificate examination was down on 2011 figures - from 54,344 to 52,588 candidates. Of the total Leaving Certificate cohort, 3,228 followed the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme, 15,848 candidates followed the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme while 36,740 candidates followed the established Leaving Certificate Programme. The number of candidates repeating the examination has increased this year to 2,484 candidates.

A summary of information is presented at page 4 to 7 and a detailed statistical report on the examination outcomes in all subjects in the 2012 examinations is presented at Appendix D. These statistics, taken in conjunction with the published Chief Examiners' Reports in a range of subjects, provide a comprehensive analysis of the outcomes in the 2012 examinations.

**VIEWING OF MARKED SCRIPTS AND APPEALS**

A detailed explanation of the policies and processes which underpin the viewing of marked scripts and appeals can be found in previous annual reports which are available on the SEC website [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).
Allowing students to view their marked scripts is a significant logistical exercise. Following the issue of the results of the 2012 Leaving Certificate Examination, some 360,000 marked scripts were returned to examination centres for the viewing which was held on 31st August and 1st September 2012.

APPEAL OUTCOMES
As in previous years, the proportion of appeals lodged against grades issued remained low at approximately 2.4% in the Leaving Certificate. In 2012, the Leaving Certificate (Established and LCVP) examinations culminated in the issue of more than 367,681 grades to 52,588 candidates. A total of 5,140 candidates made applications for appeals against 8,779 grades leading to 1,684 upgrades which is 0.5% of grades awarded. Over 3,881 appeals were lodged against grades issued in the Junior Certificate while a small number of appeals were processed in subjects in the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme. Table 21 at Appendix D presents the detailed appeal statistics in all programmes.

BREACHES OF REGULATIONS
The SEC investigates allegations of impropriety in relation to the examinations. A number of sanctions may be applied where initial suspicions or allegations are proven. These include the withholding of a result in the subject concerned, 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 of time. A detailed description of the SEC policy in relation to breaches of regulations including details of the legislation underpinning this policy is contained in the SEC inaugural report in 2003 which is available on www.examinations.ie.

Following the 2012 Leaving Certificate examination 75 grades were withheld in a number of subjects and programmes including Accounting, Irish, English, Business Studies, Music, History and Science. 9 Junior Certificate grades were withheld in a number of subjects including Irish, English, Business Studies, Music, History and Science.

PERSONATION CASE
Following the 2008 Leaving Certificate Physics examination, two candidates were alleged to have swapped examination numbers. As this is an offence under the Education Act 1998 the SEC informed the Gardaí. The candidates were arrested and charged in December 2010. The case was heard in the Dublin Circuit Court on July 3rd 2012. The candidates pleaded guilty to the offence and the Judge determined that the candidates be fined €200 under Section 52 of the Education Act.

CHIEF EXAMINER REPORTS
Chief Examiners' Reports provide a review of the performance of candidates in the examinations and contain detailed analysis of all aspects of the examining process. They also contain recommendations for teachers and students. Reports are published in a selected number of subjects and programmes each year. Following the 2012 examinations, Chief Examiners' Reports have been prepared in the following subjects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNIOR CERTIFICATE</th>
<th>LEAVING CERTIFICATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>Applied Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Studies</td>
<td>Gaeilge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Economics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NON WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS
The certificate examinations, and in particular the Leaving Certificate, are generally considered to be terminal written examinations. However multi-component examinations are now a regular feature of the examinations. 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 oral, aural and practical tests; and coursework including journals, reports, investigations, portfolios, interviews, project work and tasks.

Of the 35 curricular Leaving Certificate subjects 16 are examined solely by means of written examinations while the remaining 19 subjects are multi-component. Assessment of curricular Leaving Certificate languages, for example, involves written, oral and aural components, while the assessment of music involves written, aural and practical performance tests.

**ORAL TESTS**
The oral tests in Leaving Certificate language subjects were held in the period 16th to 27th April 2012 and required 1,100 oral examiners.

**PRACTICAL TESTS AND PRACTICAL COURSEWORK**
Practical tests, in which candidates are required to produce an artefact at a specific date and time, or, as in the case of Music, to perform a piece of music, are features of the examinations in Leaving Certificate Art, Engineering, Construction Studies, Design and Communication Graphics, Technology and Music; Junior Certificate Art, Craft & Design, Home Economics, Music and Metalwork.

While the written examinations and the oral, aural and practical tests take place at a specific date and time, practical coursework is characterised by being completed over a period of time to a specified deadline under the supervision of the class teacher. Practical coursework includes all components of examinations other than written exams, oral and aural tests and practical tests including practical performance tests.

The rules and regulations governing the conduct of the examinations apply equally to all work presented and not just to the work presented in the written examination. In order to maintain the integrity of the examinations process and ensure inter-candidate equity, the SEC, in co-operation with school authorities, has procedures in place to determine the authenticity of practical coursework submitted by candidates for assessment.

In 2012, approximately 1,243 examiners were required to examine practical tests and project coursework at both Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate. Other practical coursework including the History Research Study Report, the Geography Investigation Report and the Journals in Religious Education and Home Economics.

**THE SCHEME OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**
The SEC is fully committed to providing an examination and assessment system with the highest possible standards of inclusiveness, equity and fairness and which enables all candidates to display their achievements.

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. The SEC’s policy on Reasonable Accommodations is based on the findings of the Expert Advisory Group on the Certificate Examinations which reported on these issues in the year 2000. All applications for reasonable accommodations are considered in light of the Framework of Principles drawn up by the group.

In line with the framework the SEC provides a range of measures to facilitate candidates with particular needs. These include the provision of readers and scribes; the production of modified papers; Brailled and enlarged papers; the use of tape recorders and personal computers; and exemption or waivers in respect of particular elements or components. The scheme also
provides certain measures to accommodate students who experience accidents, illness or other traumatic events at examination time. In the case of a candidate granted an exemption or waiver in a particular component, or where the method of examining is significantly altered, the examination certificate is annotated. For example, in the case of a candidate granted an exemption from the aural component of a language examination, the certificate would state that, “All elements were assessed except for the aural component”.

In keeping with the SEC’s commitment to transparency in its decision-making, all decisions made by the SEC in relation to the provision of reasonable accommodations are open to appeal to a Reasonable Accommodations Independent Appeals Committee.

In 2012, some 19,397 reasonable accommodations were made for candidates in the certificate examinations. Some of the measures required the establishment of special examination centres. The following tables illustrate the significant increases in the provision of reasonable accommodations and special centres in recent years.

### Reasonable Accommodations 2009-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Accommodation</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tape Recorder</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Assistance</td>
<td>5,369</td>
<td>5,952</td>
<td>6,378</td>
<td>6,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>1,077</td>
<td>1,423</td>
<td>1,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Processor</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visually Modified Papers</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component/Subject Exemption</td>
<td>2,423</td>
<td>2,104</td>
<td>1,085</td>
<td>2,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling/Grammar Waiver</td>
<td>7,157</td>
<td>7,658</td>
<td>7,918</td>
<td>7,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>17,233</td>
<td>18,121</td>
<td>18,156</td>
<td>19,397</td>
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</table>

### Special Centres 2009-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Centres</td>
<td>7587</td>
<td>8,475</td>
<td>8,860</td>
<td>9,782</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**EMERGENCIES DURING THE EXAMINATIONS**

Each year brings a number of events which impact in significant ways on individual candidates or on groups of candidates as they prepare for and take their examinations. Events such as serious illness, accidents and death are deeply upsetting when they involve a close relative or friend and can be felt with particular intensity at the time of an examination - itself a stressful event for most. During the 2012 examinations emergency arrangements were made by the SEC in order to facilitate approximately 80 candidates in taking their examinations in hospitals.

**USE OF DICTIONARIES IN THE CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS**

Candidates whose first language is not English or Irish are allowed to use bi-lingual translation dictionaries in certain examinations. In 2012, a total of 3,526 candidates applied to use bi-lingual dictionaries in the state examinations.

**IRISH LANGUAGE SERVICE**

All candidates taking state examinations have the option of answering in either Irish or English. With the exception of the subjects Irish and English and certain questions in other language subjects, the SEC provides Irish and English versions of all test items. In addition, the SEC has specific responsibilities in relation to providing services through Irish under the Official Languages Act 2003.

Following a finding by An Coimisineír Teanga in 2007 the SEC made available through Irish one third of the marking schemes for Leaving Certificate subjects in 2008, two thirds in 2009 and in 2010 the SEC provided Irish translations of marking schemes for all Leaving Certificate subjects in which candidates answered through Irish. This continued to be provided in 2012.

Following a further finding by An Coimisineír Teanga in 2012, the State Examinations Commission provided the marking scheme for Junior Certificate Civil Social and Political Education which had over 57,500 candidates. This is one of the subjects which had the largest
The SEC is committed to providing Irish translations of marking schemes for all the final examinations in the revised Junior Cycle programme.

**NON-CURRICULAR LANGUAGE SUBJECTS**

The list of subjects for the Leaving Certificate examination includes the following language subjects: Irish, English, Latin, Ancient Greek, Arabic, French, German, Hebrew Studies, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Russian.

The SEC also provides examinations in a range of subjects in the language area referred to as the non-curricular EU languages. These are languages which do not appear as part of the normal school curriculum but in which students may opt to be examined if they meet certain criteria. Chief among these conditions are the requirements that candidates for these examinations:

- Be from a member state of the European Union
- Speak the language in which they opt to be examined as a mother tongue
- Have followed a programme of study leading to the Leaving Certificate
- Be taking Leaving Certificate English

Another condition is that candidates may undertake examination in one non-curricular language subject only.

For the 2012 Leaving Certificate examinations, 1,370 candidates sat examinations in 15 noncurricular language subjects. In order to simplify the administration of these examinations all non-curricular EU language subjects were scheduled for a single examination session this year. It is intended to continue this practice in future years. The non-curricular languages are:

- Czech
- Dutch
- Danish
- Estonian
- Finnish
- Greek (Modern)
- Hungarian
- Latvian
- Lithuanian
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Slovakian
- Swedish
- Romanian
- Bulgarian

**STATEMENT OF EXAMINATION RESULTS**

Examination candidates are provided with a statement of provisional examination results at the time of the issue of results in August and September and again, as necessary, following the issue of the appeal results in October and November. The final examination certificates are not issued until all of the appeal processes have been completed. A certificate, once issued, cannot be reissued. Former candidates who require their examination results after their certificate has been issued are provided with a certified statement of examinations results. These statements are sought by former candidates for a variety of reasons including employment, access to further study or simply as a memento. The SEC holds records of the following examination results:

- Intermediate Education Board for Ireland 1879-1924
  - Junior Grade, Middle Grade and Senior Grade examinations
- Department of Education 1925-2002
  - Inter Certificate 1925-1991
  - Leaving Certificate 1924-2002
- State Examinations Commission 2003 onwards
  - Leaving Certificate
  - Junior Certificate
  - Leaving Certificate Applied

The cost of a certified statement of examination results was €14.50 in 2012. Each year the SEC issues some 5,000 certified statements of examination results. The SEC provide an on-line service for former candidates to order and pay for a certified statement of their examination results.

**ISSUE OF FINAL CERTIFICATES 2006 TO 2012**

The State Examinations Commission last arranged for the issue of final examination certificates to candidates at the 2005 examinations. A decision to withhold issue
for subsequent years was taken on legal advice following an Equality Authority finding in relation to the policy of annotating certificates for certain candidates in receipt of reasonable accommodations in the examinations. That finding has been overturned following appeals in the Circuit and High Courts, and is currently awaiting an appeal hearing at the behest of the Equality Authority in the Supreme Court.

Following the outcome of the appeals at the Circuit and High Courts which affirmed the policy of annotation of certificates, the SEC has received legal advice that it can resume the issuing of final certificates, including those that had been withheld during the various legal proceedings. The Commission decided in 2012 to recommence the routine issue of certificates and the legacy certificates from 2006 onwards.

The arrangements for the issue of these certificates will firstly involve sending those for candidates who took their Leaving Certificate examination in 2012 and Junior Certificate in 2010, 2011 and 2012 directly to schools for distribution to candidates. Candidates who took their examinations in earlier years will be provided with a free on-line service to order their final certificate from the SEC. These arrangements will be put in place in early 2013.

**JUNIOR CYCLE REFORM**

In October, 2012, the Minister for Education & Skills, Mr. Ruairi Quinn, TD announced that the Junior Certificate Examination will be replaced with a school-based model of assessment. Plans unveiled will see students rather than examinations at the centre of the new approach to assessment. The terminal Junior Certificate Examinations will be replaced with a school based model of assessment with an emphasis on the quality of students’ learning experience. This will be done on a phased basis with English being the first subject to be introduced to First Year students in 2014 for first examination in June 2017. Certification of Junior Cycle results will be undertaken by schools from 2017 onwards, with the SEC providing the results of the examinations it marks for inclusion in the School Certificate.

For assessment and certification purposes each subject will have a schoolwork element, worth 40% of the marks, and a final examination worth 60%. In the initial years the SEC will set and mark the final examinations in Irish, English and Mathematics in light of the central role those subjects play in literacy and numeracy. The SEC will also set the final examinations in all other subjects in the initial years. All work submitted for assessment in the revised Junior Certificate by students will be marked by their teachers, other than the final examinations in Irish, English and Mathematics. These 3 subjects will be examined at higher and ordinary level, while all other subjects will be assessed at common level. The SEC and the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) will also provide materials to schools to assist in on-going assessment of students’ progress and achievement.

The SEC looks forward to working with the Department, the NCCA and education partners on the implementation of these proposals. We will work closely with the NCCA on the design and development of the assessment toolkit which will support schools and teachers in the delivery of the new assessment model. The SEC will play a critical role in supporting the change initiative while continuing to deliver the current Junior Certificate examinations. Crucially, the change at junior cycle presents an opportunity for a refocusing of efforts at senior cycle towards more varied forms of assessment across all examination subjects.

**PREDICTABILITY IN THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

In September 2011, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) held a joint conference entitled *Transition or Transaction? Moving from second to third level education in Ireland*. The purpose of the
conference was to interrogate issues relating to the interface between second and third level education. Strengths and weaknesses of current practices in relation to assessment at senior cycle were raised at the conference, and concerns regarding the negative impact of assessment on learning, including assertions of predictability and rote learning in the Leaving Certificate examination, were highlighted.

The report emanating from the conference proposed a series of actions to be taken in dealing with the issues identified.

The SEC has been engaged over the past number of months in a working group under the chairmanship of the Secretary General of the DES with the NCCA, HEA, Irish Universities Association and Institutes of Technology, Ireland. This group has been addressing a number of key recommendations arising from the report. The particular recommendations which have been focussed on over the past few months relate to the following 3 themes:

1. Addressing problematic predictability in Leaving Certificate examinations;
2. Reducing the number of grade bands in the Leaving Certificate; and
3. A move to review and introduce broader entry routes through a reduction in programme offerings through the CAO system for level 8 qualifications in the arts, science, engineering and business domains.

The SEC will have direct input in items 1 and 2 above. In relation to the issue of predictability, the report recommended that

**The NCCA and the State Examination Commission (SEC) will develop proposals to address any problematic predictability identified in an analysis of predictability in the Leaving Certificate examinations.**

In response to this recommendation, the Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn, T.D., has requested that the analysis and development of proposals to address the issue of problematic predictability be based on an independent external evaluation of the examinations.

As a first step in supporting and facilitating the independent evaluation, the SEC established an internal working group to carry out some preliminary scoping of the issues surrounding problematic predictability in the Leaving Certificate examinations.

A predictable examination is defined as one in which the nature of the examination paper can be sufficiently accurately predicted to mean either that the examination was not testing the full range of content expected or that it would not be accessing the assessment objectives as defined in the syllabus. In particular, a highly predictable examination would tend to reward recall of knowledge even where it was ostensibly assessing analysis or evaluation.

The draft report from this working group has been provided to the Department and NCCA. The SEC is currently commissioning the University of Oxford to undertake the external review of the issue of predictability in the Leaving Certificate examination, which is expected to report in late 2013.

In relation to the issue of reducing the 14 point grading system (A1, A2, B1, B2 etc) used in the Leaving Certificate examination, the Minister asked that this be reviewed by the NCCA and SEC. The NCCA is taking the lead role in this review.
High Level Goal 4:
To demonstrate responsiveness and accountability with the highest standards of customer service to all of our stakeholders.

FUNDING

The SEC continues to receive most of its funding through the Vote of the Department of Education and Skills. The remainder is collected in fees from candidates. As is the case for all public bodies, the SEC is operating with reduced resources, both human and financial, as a consequence of the ongoing pressure on the State finances. The SEC has implemented a range of cost saving and efficiency measures in order to live within the available resources. The overall cost of running the examinations, including staff salaries and administration costs, in the period 1st January, 2012 to 31st December, 2012 was €61 million, of which €8.99 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 tests, marking schemes, etc., are provided free of charge to schools and candidates in a variety of different formats including paper, cd/cd-rom and on our website.

KEY COSTS IN 2012

Fees paid to Examiners, Superintendents and other Contract Personnel 33.89
Staff Salaries 9.69
Travel & Subsistence (Contract & Staff) 9.87
Overheads 7.14

EXAMINATION FEES

Fees are charged for sitting the examinations and appealing the results of examinations. Successful appellants have their appeal fees refunded. Fees are also charged for supplying additional certified statements of examination results.

The rates of fees in 2012 were:

ENTRY FEES
Leaving Certificate (all programmes) €116
Repeat Leaving Certificate €301
Junior Certificate €109

APPEAL FEES (per subject)
Leaving Certificate €40
Leaving Certificate Applied €15.50
Junior Certificate €32

OTHER FEES
Additional Certified Statement of Results €14.50

Table 3.2
Lower rates of examination fees apply to candidates who are sitting only one or two subjects in the examination and who are entered for the examination through the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), the Back to Education Initiative (BTEI) or other similar schemes.

A fee increase of 6% was sanctioned by the Minister for Education and Skills and applied to all examination entry fees in 2012. There was no change to the appeal fees.

Candidates are exempt from paying examination entry fees if they, or their parents or guardians, hold a full medical card. In 2012, a total of 42,177 candidates, about 37% of the total examination cohort, were exempt from paying examination fees.

The viewing of marked scripts service to Leaving Certificate candidates is provided 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 SKILLS

The SEC is obliged to present an annual report to the Minister for Education and Skills on its activities during the preceding year. The 2011 Annual Report was presented to the Minister in December 2012.

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. A copy of the 2011 accounts was made available to the C&AG for audit in May 2012.

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

The SEC is a public body for the purposes of the Acts.

INTERNAL AUDIT

As a statutory State agency the SEC is required to have a properly constituted internal audit function. Mazars, a Dublin based firm, were appointed in 2009 for a three year period to provide the Commission’s internal audit function. Further progress was made in 2012 in the implementation of the audit programme. The Commission’s Audit Committee, which is chaired by the Deputy Chairperson and has a representative from outside the organisation, provides oversight of work in this area.

FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING SYSTEMS

Payments to SEC staff in respect of salary, travel expenses and subsistence are paid on an agency basis through the Department of Education & Skills. All other payments are made directly by the SEC. The SEC is committed to the development and implementation of an integrated financial management system, which will aid financial management and reporting. Significant progress on the working of this project was made in 2012.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF STATE BODIES

The Code of Practice provides a framework for the application of best practice in corporate governance by both commercial and non commercial state bodies. The Code outlines compliance requirements for non commercial bodies such as the SEC in a number of areas including:
REports & Accounts
System of Internal Financial Control
Conduct of Directors & Employees
Remuneration
Procurement
Travel & Subsistence
Risk & Management
Output Statement

REPORTS & ACCOUNTS
Details of the SEC Annual Report and Annual Account of Income and Expenditure were outlined earlier in this chapter. In particular, the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies also requires that the Annual Report now includes details of fees and expenses paid to directors, salary of CEO and confirmation of compliance with Government travel policy. Further information on these issues is contained in this chapter. In addition each year the SEC provides reports to the Minister for Education & Skills on the Leaving Certificate results, Junior Certificate results, appeals processes and any other operational issues as may arise.

SYSTEM OF INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROL
The SEC has an appropriate system of internal financial control in place which is reviewed each year by the Internal Auditors for the SEC.

CONDUCT OF DIRECTORS AND EMPLOYEES
The SEC has a Code of Business Conduct for Commissioners which has been formally adopted and approved. Employees of the SEC are civil servants and are required to comply with the requirements of the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour and the Official Secrets Act. In addition staff in the SEC must comply with the sections of the Education Act 1998 relating to secrecy and security of the examination process.

REMUNERATION
All employees of the SEC, including the Chief Executive Officer, are civil servants and as such are subject to civil service conditions of service and remuneration. The SEC is fully compliant in this regard.

FEES & EXPENSES PAID IN RESPECT OF 2012 TO SEC COMMISSIONERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Fee €</th>
<th>Expenses €</th>
<th>Total €</th>
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<td>Martin Carney</td>
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*There is no fee payable to the SEC Commissioners appointed in May 2012. Travel and subsistence expenses are paid in accordance with Government guidelines.

FEES AND EXPENSES PAID IN RESPECT OF 2012 TO SEC OUTGOING COMMISSIONERS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
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<td>Eleanor Walsh</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SALARY OF CEO
The salary scale for this post is €127,796 to €146,191. In 2012, Aidan Farrell moved to point three of the scale.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE SEC COMMISSIONERS IN 2012
The Commissioners of the State Examinations Commission held 9 meetings in 2012. Of these meetings 1 was held with the outgoing Commissioners while the newly appointed Commissioners held a total of 8 meetings.
Serving Commissioners attendance - Eight meetings in total
- Richard Langford (Chairperson) attended eight meetings
- Joe Harrison (Deputy Chairperson) attended seven meetings
- Dr. Caroline Hussey attended seven meetings
- Brian Fleming attended seven meetings
- Martin Carney attended seven meetings

Outgoing Commissioners - One meeting in total
Richard Langford (Chairperson), Breda Nolan (Deputy Chairperson), Ivor Gleeson, Eleanor Walsh and Tony Behan attended one meeting in 2012, which was their last meeting as serving Commissioners.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE IN 2012
The Audit Committee held three meetings in 2012. Of these 1 meeting was held with the outgoing Audit Committee members while 2 meetings were held with the current Audit Committee members.

Serving Audit Committee Members attendance - 2 meetings in total
- Joe Harrison (Chairperson) attended two meetings
- Brian Fleming attended two meetings
- Pat Ryan (Independent member) attended two meetings

Outgoing Audit Committee Members attendance - 1 meeting in total
Brian Nolan (Chairperson), Ivor Gleeson and Pat Ryan (Independent member) all attended one meeting as outgoing members of the Audit Committee.

PROCUREMENT
Procurement in the SEC is generally conducted by a dedicated Procurement Section within the organisation that ensures procurement is in line with EU guidelines and Government directives on the matter. Many of the generic goods used by the SEC are secured through the NPS (National Procurement Service) in the Office of Public Works (OPW).

RISK MANAGEMENT
The SEC under the direction of the Audit Committee has put in place a robust audit programme for the period 2012 to 2014 with a particular focus on the management of risk. The SEC remains firmly focused to mitigate priority risk facing the SEC and to identify areas of potential performance improvement. The SEC has an overall Risk Management Policy and a Chief Risk Officer who is a member of the SEC senior management team.

OUTPUT STATEMENT 2012
The SEC arranged examinations in 89 curricular and 15 non-curricular subjects. The SEC engaged 4,818 superintendents to superintendent at ordinary examination centres and 6,569 examiners to correct the examinations. We produced approximately 4 million examination papers made up of 48 A4 pages. The SEC prepared 477 test items and examined approximately 1.9 million individual items of candidates work. 19,397 reasonable accommodations were made on behalf of 14,633 candidates who had special needs in the examinations. We generated 999,217 individual grades leading to the award of 114,614 results. We returned approximately 360,000 marked Leaving Certificate scripts to schools for viewing by candidates and processed some 12,679 appeals. The Junior and Leaving Certificate results and appeal outcomes were issued within the pre-specified timeframes.
High Level Goal 3:  
To develop a capable, adaptable and efficient organisation.

High Level Goal 4:  
To demonstrate responsiveness and accountability with the highest standards of customer service to all of our stakeholders.

PERSONNEL AND ACCOMMODATION

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
The primary objective in the area of Human Resource Management of the SEC as an organisation is to develop a highly skilled, adaptable and efficient organisation. The organisation recognises that the development of appropriate Human Resource (HR) strategies will benefit the organisation, by building a highly skilled and responsive workforce, and staff, by aiding in their personal development and career progression which in turn leads to greater satisfaction within the work environment.

STAFF NUMBERS
The permanent numbers employed by the SEC is 154. In line with all public service bodies the SEC has seen a reduction of 15% in permanent staff numbers as a consequence of government policy on public sector numbers. This number was supplemented by 80 temporary staff to assist in key seasonal functions such as the packing and distribution of examination material, the processing and issue of examination results, and the appeals process.

EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS
The SEC operates a number of atypical employment patterns. These patterns facilitate both the staff of the organisation, through work-life balance schemes such as flexi-time, work sharing and term-time, and the needs of the organisation through temporary and part-time employment.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT
During 2012, 46 different courses were provided to staff, including training to all staff on the effective management of sick leave. Payroll update courses were provided to staff in the Financial Section and Personnel Section. Other training courses which were identified through PMDS were also provided. The SEC continued to provide a number of other in career development supports such as schemes for the refund of professional membership fees and educational fees.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS
The SEC continued its efforts to keep abreast of international best practice through its involvement with relevant international professional organizations and through direct links with other examination authorities. In 2012 the Examination and Assessment Division of the SEC was represented at a conference in Cambridge on the Principles of Assessment and also at the Association of Educational Assessment – Europe conference in Berlin.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
The SEC has a Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) who represents the organisation at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform’s Disability Liaison Officers Network. The SEC is an equal opportunities employer.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
The SEC continues to implement the integrated PMDS model in line with Government policy. The revised model agreed to by all parties to General Council provides for the integration of PMDS with wider HR policy and processes, including assessment systems for increments, promotion and higher scale posts.

OFFICES OF THE SEC
Most of the Commission’s staff are Athlone based with those from the Examination and Assessment Division based at other regional location. The main regional offices are located in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY
The State examinations benefit hugely from the high quality information and communication technology systems in place. Benefits to the organisation and its customers arising from these developments include reduced costs, service efficiencies and better information. The SEC has a continual focus on achieving service enhancement and efficiencies through the use of ICT.

WEBSITE www.examinations.ie
As an organisation the SEC is very proud of its record of providing high-quality, innovative information technology based services. The website and associated on-line services have been hugely important in the delivery of quality customer services.

Through the website www.examinations.ie the SEC provides extensive examination information and services to candidates, parents, teachers, school personnel and anyone with an interest in the Irish State examinations system. The site is extensively referenced in other education websites as an essential source of examination material and enjoys widespread appreciation by teachers, candidates and other users.

The services provided through the website include:
- On-line access to the results of the current year’s Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations. In 2012 this service was used by 26,115 candidates in over 53 different countries to access their examination results.
- On-line facility for the payment of examination appeal fees
- On-line facility for ordering and payment of Statements
- On-line examination application and fee payment facility for candidates who are not school-based
- Free downloads of examinations papers and marking schemes for the past eleven years and Chief Examiners’ reports for the past thirteen years in the Examination Material Archive
- Free downloads of sample papers for all new and revised syllabuses
- All examination timetables, schedules of significant dates and schedules of examination fees in the Examination Information section
- A recruitment section used for the recruitment of contract and temporary staff such as examiners and superintendents and also to advertise permanent posts in the Commission as they arise
- Detailed examination statistics for the past eleven years
- A directory of all current circulars and forms that issue to the state’s 750 post-primary schools
- Each day’s examination papers uploaded to the website on the day the written examination is complete.
QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE PROGRAMME

Details of the development of the QCS services in the SEC have been outlined in previous annual reports available on the SEC website www.examinations.ie.

CUSTOMER CHARTER

The SEC’s Customer Charter defines the levels of service that customers can expect in their dealings with the organisation and outlines in clear terms how customers can make a complaint if they are not satisfied with the level of service they receive. The Charter development process sets a requirement to periodically evaluate performance against the standards set out in the Charter and to report on the results in the Annual Report.

The Customer Charter is available in leaflet form at SEC offices, on the website and is presented at Appendix A to this report.

CUSTOMER ACTION PLAN

The Customer Service Action Plan underpins the commitments made and standards set in the Customer Charter and sets out the steps that will be taken by the organisation to provide high quality services in line with the twelve principles of quality customer service. The Action Plan has been published on our website www.examinations.ie.

ACHIEVEMENT OF SERVICE STANDARDS

The Customer Charter makes a commitment to providing a telephone service through the main Athlone telephone number from 9.15AM to 5.30PM Monday to Friday. An extended telephone service is provided to schools and candidates during the written examining period in June.

The QCS target is to answer 90% of telephone calls within 30 seconds and to answer 90% of all correspondence within 15 working days. In 2012 these commitments have been complied with over the monitoring period.

In order to improve the service provided by way of written correspondence, the SEC provides two general e-mail addresses as well as personal e-mail addresses. All business areas now have their own dedicated e-mail addresses which are widely publicised on the website, in various publications and on correspondence.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA & INFORMATION SERVICES

The State examinations attract immense media and public interest. Through the Press and Information Office the SEC endeavours to provide a proactive and responsive information service to the media and the general public throughout the year. As in other years the media were provided with a detailed information pack in advance of the written examinations in June. In addition, early access to examination papers was provided, on a request basis, through a secure access section on the website.
The mission of the SEC is “to provide a high quality state examinations and assessment system incorporating the highest standards of openness, fairness and accountability”.

The Commission has a wide range of customers including examination candidates and their parents, school principals, teachers, school authorities, other Government Departments and offices, representative bodies, and many other national and international organisations. We are committed to providing a quality service to all our customers in every aspect of our operation. This Charter sets out the standards of service we aim to provide to our customers.

OUR SERVICE COMMITMENTS

TELEPHONE SERVICE
- We will provide a telephone service through our main Athlone number, 090-644 2700, from 9.15 AM to 5.30 PM, Monday to Friday excluding public holidays. These hours will be extended to cover morning, evening and weekend times over the period of the written examinations in June
- We will answer your call promptly. Our aim is to answer 90% of calls within 30 seconds
- We will identify ourselves and/or our area of work and will be courteous and helpful in our dealings with you
- If we cannot answer your enquiry immediately we will take your contact details and let you know when you can expect to hear from us
- If we need to transfer your call to a colleague we will explain why. We will give you that person’s name and number and ensure that your call is properly transferred.

WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCE
- We aim to answer 90% of all correspondence within 15 working days
- We will acknowledge correspondence, including emails, within 5 working days where an immediate comprehensive reply is not possible
- If it is not possible to give a comprehensive reply within 15 working days we will send you an interim reply, explaining the position and indicating when you can expect a definitive response
- In certain circumstances, for example on receipt of comments and observations on particular examinations, the Commission may avail of its website to provide general information
- We will include a contact name, telephone number and an e-mail address on all correspondence
- We will use clear, simple language in our correspondence with you as well as in our application forms and information leaflets.
PROVIDING INFORMATION

- We will provide you with clear, timely, accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date information on our policies, schemes and services
- We will arrange that this information is readily available through a variety of methods
- We will do our best to simplify rules, regulations and procedures
- We will maintain our website, www.examinations.ie, as a comprehensive source of information about all aspects of the examinations service and will continue to provide a range of on-line services through the website
- We will arrange that our website continues to be up-to-date, user-friendly and accessible to our customers.

SERVICES THROUGH IRISH

- We will operate measures to comply with our obligations under the Official Languages Act, 2003
- We will continue to provide candidates with the choice of taking their examinations through Irish or English
- We will publish key documents, including our Annual Report, in Irish and English.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- We are committed to providing a service to our customers that upholds their rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation
- We will deal with you in a fair and open manner
- We will endeavour to make our information available in formats which meet the requirements of customers with special needs
- If you have particular requirements regarding access to our offices, please telephone in advance of your visit and a member of staff will meet you and assist you in every way possible.

PRIVACY

We will respect your privacy and will only use your personal information for SEC purposes, as permitted by law.

COMPLAINTS

We aim to deliver a high standard of service to all our customers. However, if you are unhappy with the quality of service you have received please bring it to our attention. If it is not possible to resolve the complaint with the staff member or manager with whom you have been dealing you can contact the Customer Service Manager (see details below), who will review the matter. All complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly and impartially.

Customer Service Manager
State Examinations Commission, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
Telephone: 090 - 644 2770
Fax: 090 - 644 2896
E-mail: customerservice.manager@examinations.ie

If, having used the complaints procedure within the State Examinations Commission in relation to the issue of your examination results or an application for reasonable accommodations and you are still dissatisfied you can avail of our formal appeal process. Full details are available on our website www.examinations.ie.
HELP US TO HELP YOU
You can help us to provide you with a high quality customer service if you:

- Have information relevant to your enquiry available when you contact us
- Treat our staff and other customers with courtesy and respect
- Complete and return any customer survey questionnaire that we send you
- Make comments or suggestions about the service you receive. We welcome your feedback - positive or negative. If you would like to comment or make a suggestion please contact the Customer Service Manager (see details above) or use the contact form on our website.

MONITORING OUR PERFORMANCE
We will evaluate our performance in line with the standards described in this Customer Charter and will report on our compliance with these standards in our Annual Report. Copies of the report may be obtained from our website, www.examinations.ie

CONTACT DETAILS
Postal Address:
State Examinations Commission,
Cornamaddy, Athlone,
Co. Westmeath.
Main Phone Number: 090-644 2700
Main Fax Number: 090-644 2744
Website: www.examinations.ie
E-mail: info@examinations.ie

Full contact details for individual sections in the Commission are available in Appendix C and in the Contact Directory on our website or in the State Directory (Green Pages) of any Eircom phone book.
State Examinations Commission,
Cornamaddy,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath.

Main Phone Number: 090-644 2700
Main Fax Number: 090-644 2744
Web: www.examinations.ie
E-mail: info@examinations.ie

The general format for e-mail to the SEC is
firstname.surname@examinations.ie
Otherwise, e-mails can be sent to the section e-mail
addresses that follow.

Candidate Entries Section
E-mail: entries@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2702, 644 2703, 644 2706
Fax: 090-644 2709

Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
E-mail: lca@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2725, 644 2726
Fax: 090-644 2740

Reasonable Accommodations
E-mail: sec.specialneeds@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2781, 644 2783
Fax: 090-644 2744

Examination Superintendents
E-mail: user.super@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2791, 644 2792
Fax: 090-644 2794

Examiners
E-mail: examiners@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2734, 644 2735
Fax: 090-644 2740

Oral Examinations
E-mail: orals@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2741, 644 2742
Fax: 090-644 2753

Practical Examinations including Leaving
Certificate Vocational Programme
E-mail: practicals@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2749, 644 2750
Fax: 090-644 2753

Finance Unit
E-mail: financial@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2802, 644 2799
Fax: 090-644 2807

Statements of Examination Results
E-mail: statements@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2810, 644 2808
Fax: 090-644 2811

Press Office
E-mail: sec.pressoffice@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2770, 644 2851

Customer Service Enquiries
E-mail: customerservice.manager@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2770, 644 2851

Official Languages Act Enquiries
E-mail: acht.teangacha@examinations.ie
Phone: 090-644 2851, 090-644 2778
### TABLE 1 - Number of Examination Candidates in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29,314</td>
<td>28,484</td>
<td>57,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=1+2</td>
<td><strong>Total Junior Certificate</strong></td>
<td>29,907</td>
<td>28,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23,221</td>
<td>23,015</td>
<td>46,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>1,134</td>
<td>2,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6=4+5</td>
<td><strong>Total Leaving Certificate school candidates (excluding VTOS)</strong></td>
<td>24,571</td>
<td>24,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,711</td>
<td>1,517</td>
<td>3,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,329</td>
<td>1,523</td>
<td>2,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11=6+8+9+10</td>
<td><strong>Overall Leaving Certificate candidates</strong></td>
<td>26,480</td>
<td>26,108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NOTES

In 2012, there were 4,780 public examination Centres to which 4,818 Superintendents were appointed. There were 6,719 examiners for all Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate examinations, of which 1,393 corrected practical and project work at both Leaving and Junior Certificate and 1,100 were Oral Examiners in the Leaving Certificate Examinations.
### TABLE 2 - Leaving Certificate 2012 - Aggregate Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total Number of Candidates</td>
<td>26,480</td>
<td>26,108</td>
<td>52,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number of Candidates who sat a minimum of 5 subjects</td>
<td>24,543</td>
<td>24,125</td>
<td>48,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 5 grade D3's at any level</td>
<td>23,134</td>
<td>23,256</td>
<td>46,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade D3's at any level, of which a minimum of 2 were at grade C3 or higher grades, on higher papers</td>
<td>15,831</td>
<td>17,030</td>
<td>32,861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade D3's at any level, of which a minimum of 4 were at grade C3 or higher grades, on higher papers</td>
<td>10,490</td>
<td>12,736</td>
<td>23,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C3's, or higher grades, on higher papers</td>
<td>4,935</td>
<td>6,764</td>
<td>11,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C3's on higher papers, of which a minimum of 3 were at B3 or higher</td>
<td>4,718</td>
<td>6,441</td>
<td>11,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C3's on higher papers, of which a minimum of 3 were at grade A2 or higher</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>2,176</td>
<td>3,756</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NOTES

The above data excludes Applied Leaving Certificate Candidates in the Leaving Certificate Examination. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>90+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>85&gt;90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>80&gt;85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>75&gt;80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>70&gt;75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>65&gt;70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>60&gt;65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>55&gt;60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>50&gt;55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>45&gt;50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>40&gt;45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>25&gt;40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>10&gt;25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Grade</td>
<td>0&gt;10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 3 - Leaving Certificate Applied Results 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Total Number of Candidates</td>
<td>1,711</td>
<td>1,517</td>
<td>3,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Number of Candidates who received Distinctions</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Number of Candidates who received Merits</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Number of Candidates who received Passes</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Number of Candidates who received Record of Credits</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note on Grading Structure

The Leaving Certificate 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 student 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>85%+</td>
<td>170 - 200 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>70&gt;85%</td>
<td>140 - 169 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>60&gt;70%</td>
<td>120 - 139 credits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candidates who acquire less than 120 credits or who leave before the end of the programme receive a Record of Credits.
TABLE 3A – Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme - Link Modules Results 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Total Number of Candidates</td>
<td>7,397</td>
<td>8,451</td>
<td>15,848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Number of Candidates who received Distinctions</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>1,447</td>
<td>1,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Number of Candidates who received Merits</td>
<td>3,456</td>
<td>4,697</td>
<td>8,153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Number of Candidates who received Passes</td>
<td>2,628</td>
<td>1,926</td>
<td>4,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) Unsuccessful</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>1,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note on Grading Structure

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) is an optional, 2 year, academic and experience-based programme, available in 2 out of 3 post-primary schools. Candidates following the LCVP take a specified range of Leaving Certificate (established) subjects as well as a formal and practical programme called the Link Modules. The Link Modules consists of compulsory work experience and enterprise activity together with personal vocational exploration and substantial use of information technology.

The formal assessment of the Link Modules has two components:
• A centrally set written examination (160 marks), with video, case study and syllabus sections, taken nationally by all candidates normally on the first Wednesday in May.
• A portfolio (240 marks) prepared by each candidate using agreed and published guidelines.

LCVP students are awarded the same certification as is used in the Leaving Certificate (established). An additional statement of the grade received for the Link Modules is included in that certification. Grades for the Link Modules are presented in the following categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>80 - 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit</td>
<td>65 - 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>50 - 64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 4 – Junior Certificate 2012 – Aggregate Results for School Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes:</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Total Number of Candidates</td>
<td>29,907</td>
<td>28,891</td>
<td>58,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Number of Candidates who sat a minimum of 5 Subjects</td>
<td>29,343</td>
<td>28,403</td>
<td>57,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 5 grade D at any level</td>
<td>28,946</td>
<td>28,216</td>
<td>57,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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</td>
<td>23,711</td>
<td>24,670</td>
<td>48,381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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</td>
<td>18,478</td>
<td>20,843</td>
<td>39,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C, or higher grades, on higher and common papers</td>
<td>14,382</td>
<td>17,518</td>
<td>31,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) Number of Candidates who received a minimum of 6 grade C on higher and common papers, of which a minimum of 3 were at B or higher</td>
<td>11,583</td>
<td>15,218</td>
<td>26,801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(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.</td>
<td>2,918</td>
<td>4,923</td>
<td>7,841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70&gt;85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>55&gt;70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>40&gt;55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>25&gt;40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>10&gt;25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Grade</td>
<td>0&gt;10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5 - 2012 Junior Certificate Results - Ordinary Level Papers - Male

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>Grade A</th>
<th>Grade B</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grade D</th>
<th>Grade E</th>
<th>Grade F</th>
<th>No Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Greek</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Craft Design</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>1,166</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Studies</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>1,629</td>
<td>1,341</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPE (Common Level)</td>
<td>4,197</td>
<td>11,748</td>
<td>8,967</td>
<td>3,291</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>2,431</td>
<td>3,964</td>
<td>2,066</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English (Foundation)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environ &amp; Social Studies</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>1,115</td>
<td>1,636</td>
<td>1,522</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>1,836</td>
<td>1,687</td>
<td>877</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5,079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>2,582</td>
<td>2,634</td>
<td>1,596</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>3,465</td>
<td>5,351</td>
<td>3,301</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish (Foundation)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Technology (Wood)</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>1,645</td>
<td>4,349</td>
<td>3,827</td>
<td>2,494</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics (Foundation)</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalwork</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>10</td>
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TABLE 11 - 2012 Junior Certificate Results - Higher Level Papers - Male and Female

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## TABLE 12 – 2012 Junior Certificate Results - Percentage Breakdown of Candidates by Grade Awarded in each Subject - Higher Level Male and Female

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**TABLE 15 - 2012 Leaving Certificate Results - Ordinary Level Papers - Male and Female**
## Table 16 - 2012 Leaving Certificate Results - Percentage Breakdown Of Candidates by grade awarded in each subject - Ordinary Level Male and Female

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Note: Grades are represented in descending order of achievement.
## TABLE 17 - 2012 Leaving Certificate Results - Higher Level Papers - Male

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<td>Downgrades</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### 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 to 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.
The role of the State Examinations Commission (SEC) is to provide a high-quality state examinations and assessment system incorporating the highest standards of openness and transparency, fairness and accountability. In providing this system, the SEC endeavours to ensure that the test items used in the state certificate examinations are prepared to the highest standard possible. These test items include examination questions, briefs for practical examinations, topics for coursework, and other materials used in the assessment of candidates.

The preparation of test items of the highest standard and the maintenance of an examination system providing valid and reliable certification requires rigorous quality assurance measures based on sound principles articulated through a comprehensive protocol.

The principles that underpin and inform the preparation of test items used by the SEC are as follows:

**VALIDITY**
Validity refers to the accuracy with which an examination measures what it is intended to measure.

**RELIABILITY**
Reliability refers to the consistency of the results produced by an examination.

**FREEDOM FROM BIAS**
Freedom from bias refers to the elimination, as far as possible of bias from examination. Bias is the presence of some characteristic of an examination that results in different levels of performance by candidates of the same level of achievement, but from different groups, such as ethnic or gender.

**INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUITY**
Inclusiveness and Equity refer to the extent to which examinations should reflect an inclusive view of society and a respect for diversity.

**DISCRIMINATION**
Discrimination refers to the extent to which an individual test item, or an examination as a whole, effectively distinguishes between candidates of different underlying levels of achievement.

**ACCESSIBILITY**
The accessibility of an examination refers to the extent to which all candidates are facilitated in demonstrating their achievements, in the context of the need to preserve the integrity, fairness and standards of the examination.

For further information on these principles along with the protocol through which the principles are articulated please see the booklet: *The Preparation of Test Items - Principles and Protocol*. The booklet is available directly from the SEC or can be viewed/downloaded from the About Us/Publications section of [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie).