



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2011

HISTORY

**ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT
HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

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1. ORDINARY LEVEL

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The revised syllabus for Leaving Certificate History was introduced into schools in 2004 and examined for the first time in 2006. This report will treat of candidate performance at the Ordinary Level in 2011, the sixth year of the new examination.

It should be read in conjunction with the examination paper, the Marking Scheme 2011, and the Marking Indicators. These are available to download from the website of the State Examinations Commission at: www.examinations.ie

Examination candidates were asked to opt for one of two Fields of Study prescribed in the syllabus: Early Modern, 1492-1815 or Later Modern, 1815-1993. The format of the examination is the same for both Fields of Study. It consists of two components: the Research Study Report (RSR) and the terminal written examination paper.

The RSR, with an allocation of 100 marks (20%), was submitted by candidates to the examining authority in advance of the written examination. The written examination, with an allocation of 400 marks (80%) was held nationally on June 15, 2011. A total of 2 hours and 50 minutes was allowed for the written examination.

Component 1: The Research Study Report (100 marks)

The Research Study Report (RSR) is divided into three sections:

Outline Plan; Evaluation of the Sources; Extended Essay.

Outline Plan (15 marks)

Candidates are expected to define and justify their proposed subject of study, to identify their aims and intended approach, and to cite accurately two sources used in their research.

Evaluation of the Sources (25 marks)

Candidates are expected to comment on the strengths and/or weaknesses of the sources and indicate their relevance to the chosen subject.

Extended Essay (60 marks)

Candidates are expected to relate the results of the research in the form of a historical essay and to review how the research process has fulfilled the Outline Plan. The Essay, with 600-800 words as a recommended range of length, carries an allocation of 50 marks. A maximum of 10 marks is awarded for the review of the process.

Component 2: The Written Examination Paper (400 marks)

The written examination paper comprises three sections:

Section 1 (100 marks)

Documents-based questions are set on a Topic prescribed by the State Examinations Commission. Four questions are set on selected documents relating to one of the three Case Studies in the prescribed Topic. No choice is offered.

The questions are designed to test historical skills as follows:

1. Comprehension (40 marks)
2. Comparison (20 marks)
3. Criticism (20 marks)
4. Contextualisation (20 marks)

Section 2 (100 marks)

A set of questions is offered on each of the five remaining Topics from Irish history. Candidates are asked to answer on one Topic only.

The set of questions in each Topic comprises three parts, as follows:

- A (30 marks): A range of short questions (usually five) prompted by a stimulus document. No choice is offered.
- B (30 marks): Candidates are asked to write a short paragraph in response to one of four headings offered.
- C (40 marks): Candidates are asked to write an extended paragraph in response to one of four questions set.

Section 3 (200 marks)

A set of questions is offered on each of the six Topics from the history of Europe and the wider world. Candidates are asked to answer on two of the six Topics. The questions on each Topic are presented in the same format as those described above for Section 2.

1.2 PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 4,168 candidates sat the examination at Ordinary Level in 2011. Of those, 4,135 (99.2%) chose the Later Modern Field of Study and 33 (0.8%) chose the Early Modern Field of Study.

The following table shows the percentage breakdown of grades achieved by candidates at Ordinary Level in the years 2008-2011:

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2008	4,249	20.0	28.8	28.2	77.0	19.3	2.8	0.8	0.1	3.7
2009	4,141	18.9	29.2	29.3	77.4	19.3	2.6	0.7	0.1	3.4
2010	4,188	18.6	29.8	29.3	77.7	18.2	3.0	1.0	0.1	4.1
2011	4,168	17.0	27.5	29.9	74.4	21.1	3.1	1.2	0.1	4.4

This year's results show a decline in the A rate and in the B rate and, despite a marginal increase in the C rate, an overall decline in the ABC rate. The D rate has increased, while the EFNG rate has also shown a slight increase. While none of the increases or decreases has been particularly dramatic, it is still notable that the A rate, the B rate and the ABC rate are all at their lowest since the revised syllabus was first examined in 2006. The C rate has remained consistent with the rates recorded in 2009 and 2010. The D rate is at its highest since 2006.

1.3 ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

Fields of Study

Because a very small percentage of candidates opted for the Early Modern Field of Study, it is not possible to engage in any meaningful statistical analysis of candidate performance in that Field or in any meaningful statistical comparison with candidate performance in the Later Modern Field of Study. The data for the Early Modern candidature has been included with those of the Later Modern candidature in the overall figures for Ordinary Level.

The following commentary, on both the Research Study Report and the Written Examination, is based on an analysis of the Random Sample of 320 candidates.

Component 1: The Research Study Report (100 marks)

Selection of subject for the Research Study Report (RSR)

Most candidates for the Early Modern Field of Study sited their research in that same Field, though there were some from the Later Modern Field. Most candidates for the Later Modern Field of Study sited their RSR in that same Field, usually in the twentieth century. The 320 candidates (7.7% of total candidature) in the initial Random Sample 20 presented RSRs as follows:

Topic site	Attempts	Popularity	Average mark
European	216	67.5%	86 ex 100
Irish	72	22.5%	87 ex 100
Local	16	5%	87 ex 100
No RSR	16	5%	

There was a wide range of RSR topics chosen, with some very good research evidenced on local history topics. A considerable number continue to offer biographies of key personalities or to give summary accounts of prescribed Case Studies. Examiners' reports often expressed concern about the wisdom of these

choices, in view of the advice given in the *Guidelines for Teachers* (p. 14) which accompany the revised syllabus.

Examiners agreed that the RSRs made interesting reading and they were pleased to note that, while most topics were drawn from the historical mainstream of the syllabus, more candidates were opting for local history. As the table above shows, the average mark for the RSR continues to be very high at some 86%.

The Outline Plan

Many lost marks for not citing two sources completely and accurately. Some omitted the name of the author or publisher. The citing of internet sources proved the most problematic: some merely mentioned that they had used the internet as a source, which is as vague as saying that they had read a book. It appeared that many candidates had recourse to the internet as their first and only source.

Evaluation of the Sources

This was generally well done, with most candidates competently assessing the historical value of their chosen sources. However, a small number of candidates, who had not properly cited their sources, wrote only in vague and general terms about the merits of the “book” or the “website” which they had used.

The Extended Essay

In the vast majority of cases the extended essay was well written and well structured. It showed evidence of research and it earned very high marks. However, some candidates wrote far in excess of the recommended range of length, 600-800 words, as set out in the SEC Circular S60/05 and in the “Guidelines for Candidates” on the RSR booklet. A small number of candidates fell short of the recommended range of length.

A minority of candidates failed to present an appropriate introduction and/or conclusion to the essay. These same candidates tended to offer transcriptions from textbook history rather than the product of original research. A considerable number of candidates failed to include the required review of the research process with their essay. Where reviews were presented, there was often evidence of formulaic or generic answers, based perhaps on “model answers”, rather than on the candidate’s

individual response to his/her own research experience. This problem also arose with the Outline Plan and the Evaluation of Sources.

A significant number of candidates, as many as 5-6%, failed to present any RSR. Where no RSR was presented, it was not unusual for that candidate not to achieve grade D. There is no doubt but that the non-submission of RSRs has contributed to the increase seen this year at grades E and F.

With an average mark of some 90%, the RSR has helped many candidates towards an enhanced grade. Examiners consider that it has contributed in no small measure to the increased CD rate. They are also of the opinion that the research experience must have led to greater engagement in and enjoyment of the study of history.

Component 2: The Written Examination Paper (400 marks)

Section 1: Documents-based Question (100 marks)

The Documents-based question (DBQ) in the Early Modern Field of Study was based on the Case Study, *The Bardic Schools* from Topic 1 in Irish history, *Reform and Reformation in Tudor Ireland, 1494-1558*. In the Later Modern Field of Study, it was based on the Case Study, *The Apprentice Boys of Derry* from Topic 5 in Irish history, *Politics and society in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993*.

In the Early Modern Field of Study, the documents presented few difficulties to candidates, with most of them answering this section very well. It was considered that candidates' competence in document-handling enhanced their overall score in the examination. In the Later Modern Field of Study, the DBQ was also very well answered, with an average score of some 79%.

The following were the average marks for candidates in the Random Sample 20:

Comprehension	38 ex 40	95%
Comparison	16 ex 20	80%
Criticism	13 ex 20	65%
Contextualisation	12 ex 20	60%
Overall	79 ex 100	79%

These average marks reflect the ascending degree of difficulty traditionally associated with answering the four parts of the DBQ. Of the few difficulties noted by examiners, the most notable was the use of the word “nature” in 2(b). It appeared that some candidates had difficulty in grasping the meaning of the word in the context of the question or in articulating their understanding of it in their answer.

Question 4 was well answered. While some candidates spent excessive time writing on the early history of the Apprentice Boys, most candidates took their cue from the sources to address the set question regarding that organisation as a source of tension in the Derry of the late twentieth century.

Examiners agreed that this question was an attractive and accessible introduction to the written paper. As with the RSR, good performances in the DBQ – and, in particular, good performances in both the RSR and the DBQ – boosted candidates’ overall scores. A combination of the average score for the DBQ (79 marks) and the average mark for the RSR (86 marks) gives 165, which is only 35 marks short of the mark for grade D. This meant that a decent attempt at Section A in the three Topics could earn enough marks to bring a candidate into grade D.

Section 2: Topics from Irish history (100 marks)

In the Early Modern Field of Study, Topic 2, *Rebellion and conquest in Elizabethan Ireland, 1558-1603*, proved to be by far the most popular choice from the remaining five Irish Topics. Most candidates understood clearly what was being asked of them and thus scored well in their overall answering of Topic 2. As in previous years, the very small number of candidates who did not elect to answer Topic 2 seemed to be unprepared for the examination, choosing questions in a seemingly random manner from across the whole range of Topics.

In the Later Modern Field of Study, Topic 3, *The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912-1949* continues to be the most popular of the remaining Later Modern Irish (LMI) Topics, with some 63% opting for it. While 17% chose Topic 2, the take-up rate was very low (5-7%) for the remaining Topics and these less-popular topics resulted in the lowest average achievement scores.

LMI Topic 1: Ireland and the Union, 1815-1870

Topic 1 was chosen by 7% of candidates and the average mark of 48% was the lowest of all the Topics on the examination. Section A was answered comfortably by most candidates with the exception of question A5, which asked how successful O’Connell’s campaign for Repeal had been. Most candidates wrongly concluded that it was successful, apparently because of the size of the crowds at the monster meetings. Of the short paragraphs, B1 (Irish countryside in 1815) was the popular choice, but candidates scored poorly because their answers were often vague or referred to a much later historical period. In Section C, question C2 (help for Famine victims) was by far the most popular, but most candidates had very little to offer in their responses.

LMI Topic 2: Movements for political and social reform, 1870-1914

This was the second most popular Topic to be answered on Ireland (17%) and it was also the second-highest scoring (average 68%). Section A was answered comfortably by most candidates with the exception of question A5, which asked about Cusack’s contribution to the GAA. This is surprising, considering that the early years of the GAA is a prescribed Case Study. Question B1 (Davitt) was a popular choice and it was usually well answered. Question B2 (Gaelic League) also proved to be very popular, with many excellent answers, but also many candidates earning no marks by writing instead about the GAA. Question B3 (educational reforms) was quite popular, but many candidates scored poorly because their answers were vague or referred to a much later historical period.

In Section C, question C4 (1913 strike and lockout) was by far the most popular and, although some candidates concentrated on the course of events during 1913, most answered the question as set (the causes and the outcome of the strike and lockout) and answered it very well. There were also some good answers to C2, especially on the life of Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington.

LMI Topic 3: The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912-1949

At 63% this Topic was the most popular choice and at an average score of 68% it was also the best-answered of the Irish Topics. Section A, including A5, was answered correctly by almost all candidates. Of the short paragraphs, B1 (Home Rule Bill 1912-

1914) and B2 (Pearse) were the most popular choices and both elicited many very good and sometimes excellent answers. In Section C, question C1 (Collins) was by far the most popular and, although some candidates lost marks by not addressing the question as set, there were many reasonably good answers. C2 (Eucharistic Congress) was also popular, with many candidates comprehensively addressing the question. Answers to C3 often dealt with pre-war Anglo-Irish relations and not the wartime period as asked.

LMI Topic 4: The Irish diaspora, 1840-1966

Topic 4, at 5% of the Random Sample, was the least attempted Irish Topic and the average mark was 55%. Section A, including A5, was answered correctly by almost all candidates. Of the short paragraphs, B2 (Emigration 1920-1966) was the popular choice, but candidates often scored poorly because their answers were vague or referred to the emigration of the much earlier Famine period. Not all candidates completed Section C and, of those who did, C3 was the popular choice. Most candidates offered reasonable answers on de Valera's impact on Irish America.

LMI Topic 6: Government, economy and society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989

Topic 6, at 6% of the Random Sample, was not a popular choice and the average mark here was 59%. Section A was answered comfortably by most candidates with the exception of question A5, which asked them to identify the Northern Ireland leader with whom Lemass exchanged visits in 1965. This is surprising, considering that Terence O'Neill is a key personality in the prescribed Topic *Ireland 5*. Quite a lot of candidates did not attempt Section B. B2 was the most popular choice but the answers were mostly disappointing, with little or no emphasis on the keyword "changes". The most popular questions in Section C were C1, which elicited much worthwhile material on Gay Byrne and the "Late Late Show", and C3 which produced either very good answers or very limited answers.

Section 3: Topics from the history of Europe and the wider world (200 marks)

Candidates were asked to answer on two of the six Topics from the history of Europe and the wider world. In the Early Modern Field of Study, the candidates' preferences continue to be both Topic 1, *Europe from Renaissance to Reformation, 1492-1567* and Topic 2, *Religion and power: politics in the later 16th century, 1567-1609*. Those who were well prepared did well and those who were less well prepared or who appeared to plot a seemingly random path through the examination fared less well.

Choices made by candidates in the Later Modern Field of Study ranged more widely across the six available Topics. Of the Later Modern history of Europe and the wider world (LME) topics, Topic 3 proved to be the favourite, with some 42% taking it as one of their two options. Next came Topic 6 with 34%, followed by Topic 2 at 10%. The remaining three options attracted 5% or less of the candidature.

LME Topic 1: Nationalism and state formation in Europe, 1815-1871

As few as 1% of candidates selected Topic 1, scoring an average mark of 54%. Of these, most merely attempted Section A and did not venture further. A small number offered reasonably good answers to C1 (Karl Marx).

LME Topic 2: Nation states and international tensions, 1871-1920

10% of candidates opted for this Topic, scoring a high average mark of 72%. Section A, including A5, was answered correctly by almost all candidates. Of the short paragraphs, the most popular question was B3 (women in the workforce during World War I) and this was answered extremely well. There were also some good answers to B1 (Krupp family). From Section C, questions C1 (Bismarck) and C2 (the motor car) were the most popular. C1 elicited reasonably good answers on foreign policy. C2 attracted answers that were either brimming with relevant detail or were vague and unhistorical.

LME Topic 3: Dictatorship and democracy in Europe, 1920-1945

42% of candidates opted for this Topic, scoring a high average mark of 73%. Section A, including A5, was answered correctly by almost all candidates. Of the short paragraphs, B3 (Vichy France) was not a popular choice but there were takers in equal

measure for the other three options. There was good, but often incomplete, answering to B1 (Lenin) and B2 (Mussolini). However, some answers to B4 (technology of warfare) scored poorly because they were vague or referred to a much later historical period. Quite a number of candidates did not attempt Section B. From Section C, the most popular options were C1 (Stalin's show trials) and C4 (Chaplin and/or Crosby) and both were generally well done. There were also some good answers to C2 (Hitler's foreign policy), although many candidates strayed beyond the remit of the question.

LME Topic 4: Division and realignment in Europe, 1945-1992

5% of candidates opted for this Topic, scoring an average mark of 75%, the highest scoring of any Topic on the examination. Section A, but not always A5, was answered correctly by almost all candidates. Of the short paragraphs, the most popular question was B4 (John Lennon) and this was answered extremely well. B1 (Berlin Airlift) was also popular and was answered reasonably well. From Section C, question C2 (Oil Crisis) was the most popular choice but answers varied as to quality. There were also some good answers to C4 (Vatican Council). Very few attempted C1 or C3. Exceptionally good answering in Sections A and B contributed to the high-scoring average for this Topic.

LME Topic 5: European retreat from empire and the aftermath, 1945-1990

Only 2% of candidates attempted this Topic and the average mark was 52%. Most attempts on this Topic came from candidates who only answered the stimulus-based questions from Section A. A small number of well-prepared candidates acquitted themselves very well here.

LME Topic 6: The United States and the world, 1945-1989

Topic 6 attracted one in three of the candidates and was notably well answered with an average score of 73%. Section A was answered comfortably by most candidates with the exception of question A5, which asked them to identify Johnson's successor as US President. B1 (Joe McCarthy and the "red scare") was the most popular question in its section and also the best answered. B2 (Cuban Missile Crisis) was also popular and also well answered. Answers to B3 (Détente, SALT, Star Wars) were mostly poor, often vague or inaccurate. C2 (Moon landing), a Case Study, was very

popular and very well answered, addressing the question as asked. C3 elicited detailed accounts of the lives of both Marilyn Monroe and Muhammad Ali, indicating a high candidate interest in these key personalities.

1.4 CONCLUSIONS

- Examiners reported that the examination papers were fair and appropriate to Ordinary Level
- Examiners reported that candidates coped very well with the demands of the examination and praised their efforts and those of their teachers in this regard
- The following points are made in relation to the Research Study Report:
 - Some subjects were chosen for research without due regard to the advice given in the *Guidelines for Teachers*
 - Sources were sometimes incompletely or inaccurately cited, especially material from the internet
 - When evaluating their sources, some candidates failed to identify specific strengths and/or weaknesses particular to their own individual research
 - Some candidates exceeded the recommended word length (600-800 words) for their Extended Essay
 - Some candidates gave insufficient attention to the structure of their Extended Essay
 - Some candidates failed to include a review of the research process with their Extended Essay
 - The Extended Essays were often interesting and impressive and the work of candidates and teachers was often complimented
 - Some candidates failed to submit an RSR.
- The following points are made in relation to the Documents-based question:
 - Most candidates coped very well with this question, showing both familiarity with the historical content of the Case Study and with the practice of documents-based study
 - Some candidates gave insufficient support from the documents for their answers to questions 2 and 3.

- The following points are made in relation to the Topic questions:
 - Most candidates understood and fulfilled the expectations of examiners in the answering of the Topic questions
 - Some candidates showed over-reliance on their knowledge of the Case Studies as part of an answer-production strategy for Section C
 - Some candidates ignored the date parameters of the question or of the Topic
 - Question A5 was not always answered by all candidates
 - The introductory caption above the historical source in Section A, which can contain valuable information, was overlooked by some candidates
 - Some candidates gave excessive background information in answers to Sections B and C, thus leaving themselves short on time to deal with the core elements of the question
 - Some candidates gave general narrative accounts of historical events rather than specific answers to the particular question
 - Many candidates respond very well to biographical questions on key personalities.

- The most popular Topics in this examination were as follows:
 - *Early Modern Field of Study*
 - Ireland: EMI 1
 - Europe and the wider world: EME 1 and EME 2
 - *Later Modern Field of Study*
 - Ireland: LMI 3 and LMI 2
 - Europe and the wider world: LME 3, LME 6 and LME 2

All other Topics had a response rate of less than 10%.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

- Prepare and submit an RSR as required by the syllabus
- Choose subjects for research with care. Consult the *Guidelines for Teachers*, page 14
- Students should be advised not to exceed the recommended word length for their RSR essay and to include a review of the research process as required
- While Case Studies are indeed key features of the syllabus, they should not become the exclusive basis for a candidate's answering of Section C
- Teachers and students should adopt strategies to avoid the various shortcomings alluded to in the Conclusions
- Continue the good work which was evident among the Ordinary Level candidature of 2011 and which was the subject of praise from many examiners.

2. HIGHER LEVEL

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The revised syllabus for Leaving Certificate History was introduced into schools in 2004 and examined for the first time in 2006. This report will treat of candidate performance at the Higher Level in this, the sixth year of the new examination.

It should be read in conjunction with the examination paper, the Marking Scheme 2011, and the Marking Indicators. These are available to download from the website of the State Examinations Commission at: www.examinations.ie

Examination candidates were asked to opt for one of two Fields of Study prescribed in the syllabus: Early Modern, 1492-1815 or Later Modern, 1815-1993. The format of the examination is the same for both Fields of Study. It consists of two components: the Research Study Report (RSR) and the terminal written examination paper.

The RSR, with an allocation of 100 marks (20%), was submitted by candidates to the examining authority in advance of the written examination. The written examination, with an allocation of 400 marks (80%) was held nationally on June 15, 2011. A total of 2 hours and 50 minutes was allowed for the written examination.

Component 1: The Research Study Report (100 marks)

The Research Study Report (RSR) is divided into three sections:
Outline Plan; Evaluation of the Sources; Extended Essay.

Outline Plan (15 marks)

Candidates are expected to define and justify their proposed subject of study, to identify their aims and intended approach, and to cite accurately three sources used in their research.

Evaluation of the Sources (25 marks)

Candidates are expected to comment on the strengths and/or weaknesses of the sources and indicate their relevance to the chosen subject.

Extended Essay (60 marks)

Candidates are expected to relate the results of the research in the form of a historical essay and to review how the research process has fulfilled the Outline Plan. The Essay, with 1200-1500 words as a recommended range of length, carries an allocation of 50 marks. A maximum of 10 marks is awarded for the review of the process.

Component 2: The Written Examination Paper (400 marks)

The written examination paper comprises three sections:

Section 1 (100 marks)

Documents-based questions are set on a Topic prescribed by the State Examinations Commission. Four questions are set on selected documents relating to one of the three Case Studies in the prescribed Topic. No choice is offered.

The questions are designed to test historical skills as follows:

1. Comprehension (20 marks)
2. Comparison (20 marks)
3. Criticism (20 marks)
4. Contextualisation (40 marks)

Section 2 (100 marks)

A choice of four questions is offered on each of the five remaining Topics from Irish history. Candidates are asked to answer one question on one Topic only.

Each Topic in the syllabus is presented via three perspectives:

- Politics and administration

- Society and economy
- Culture, religion and science

The *Guidelines for Teachers* (p. 61) specify that, in the case of each Topic, at least two of the three perspectives will be examined each year.

Detailed advice about examiners' expectations of candidates, using examples of questions from the official sample paper, appears in the Marking Indicators (see www.examinations.ie).

Section 3 (200 marks)

A choice of four questions is offered on each of the six Topics from the history of Europe and the wider world. Candidates are asked to answer one question on each of two of the six Topics.

The questions on each Topic are presented in the same format as those described above for Section 2.

2.2 PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 7,938 candidates sat the examination at Higher Level in 2011. Of those, 7,894 (99.5%) chose the Later Modern Field of Study and 44 (0.5%) chose the Early Modern Field of Study.

The following table shows the percentage breakdown of grades achieved by candidates at Higher Level in the years 2008-2011:

Year	Total	A	B	C	ABC	D	E	F	NG	EFNG
2008	7,601	12.1	32.6	32.6	77.3	19.1	3.0	0.5	0.1	3.6
2009	7,852	13.0	30.6	33.7	77.3	19.8	2.6	0.2	0.1	2.9
2010	7,722	13.2	30.3	32.5	76.0	20.0	3.5	0.4	0.1	4.0
2011	7,938	11.4	31.6	34.9	77.9	19.1	2.5	0.4	0.1	3.0

- The A rate this year at 11.4% was the lowest achieved since 2006, when the first examination in the revised syllabus returned 12.2%, but this year's combined ABC rate of almost 78% is the highest yet reached. The EFNG rate was also low this year at 3%
- These figures are not exceptional and are within the normal variation that might be expected in any given year
- It appears that the new syllabus has proved attractive to Leaving Certificate students. In the last three years of the previous syllabus the number of candidates attempting the Higher Level paper had fallen from 7,334 in 2003 to 6,381 in 2005. Since then the number has increased in every year with the exception of 2010. The 2011 candidature of 7,938 represents an increase of 24.4% on the 2005 figure.

2.3 ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

Fields of Study

Because a very small percentage of candidates opted for the Early Modern Field of Study, it is not possible to engage in any meaningful statistical analysis of candidate performance in that Field or in any meaningful statistical comparison with candidate performance in the Later Modern Field of Study. The data for the Early Modern candidature has been included with those of the Later Modern candidature in the overall figures for Higher Level.

The Random Sample

In analysing the performance of candidates all statistical detail is taken from the revised Random Sample of 650 scripts (8.19% of the total number of scripts) provided by the assistant examiners. This Random Sample covers the full range of scripts issued to the examiners. The figures may be taken as accurately reflecting the overall quality of the answering where a significant number of candidates have attempted the question. Where only a small number of candidates have attempted a question, then the figures carry less weight. The following commentary is drawn from the reports of the examiners and their advisers and is based on an analysis of the Random Sample.

Component 1: The Research Study Report (100 marks)

Research Study Report: Analysis of results 2006 - 2011							
Question	% Attempts 2011	Average Marks					
		2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
RSR	99.7	91.5	90.85	88.68	90.38	87.54	89.00

Examiners reported favourably on the standard of the Research Study Reports (RSR) presented this year and this is reflected in the statistics above and in the analysis of the sample scripts below. As in previous years, many candidates have been well prepared by their teachers and have adhered to the guidelines for presenting their report. As a

result, many have scored full marks and this has raised the average mark for this element of the examination to 91.5%.

Selection of subject for the RSR

The range of topics chosen was diverse and covered the time span from classical Greece to the 1980s. Many chose old favourites such as Kilmichael, Michael Collins or the Holocaust, but there was also a refreshing number of new topics such as rock-and-roll and teenage life as a 1950s American sociological phenomenon, the second Anglo-Afghan war and the fate of the Sioux Indians in America. Local history was also popular, as seen in such topics as the West Clare Railway and the Battle of Clonmult.

The Outline Plan

Most candidates were well prepared and adhered to the guidelines in the RSR booklet. A few still seemed to lack this guidance and consequently lost marks. Aims and intended approach were sometimes intermixed or even absent. A common failing was to offer generic aims such as “I intend to develop my skill as a historian” instead of specific aims related to the particular topic being studied. In naming their sources, some did not give a full website address or an extra item of validating information for their source. Some examiners noted that they were unable to locate the websites quoted from the URLs given by the candidates.

Evaluation of the Sources

The evaluation of the sources was, in most cases, very well attempted and displayed a genuine interaction between the candidate and the source material. Most candidates noted and described the strengths and weaknesses of the sources used. Efforts were made by some to interview local historians and in some cases people involved in particular events such as the Irish UN mission to the Congo and to evaluate their views.

Where some lost marks was through imbalance in their evaluations, one source being considered in depth while another receiving only cursory attention. Some examiners expressed concerns that a number of candidates had based their evaluations on

reviews of the books found on book-selling websites rather than on their own reading of the source.

The Extended Essay

The extended essays were generally well written and many candidates achieved full marks. However, too many candidates continued to ignore the recommended range of length, 1200-1500 words, as set out in the SEC Circular S60/05 and in the “Guidelines for Candidates” on the RSR booklet.

There was, also, concern that a small number of candidates are plagiarising their RSRs. This year several RSRs were found to have been copied verbatim from articles in online encyclopaedias and the candidates in question had not even listed those sites as their source. The SEC regulations require that the candidate and his/her teacher authenticate that the RSR is the candidate’s own individual work. All candidates should be aware that the onus is on them to present original research. In 2011 five candidates had their History result withheld because there was a case of plagiarism to answer.

On a more positive note, many candidates used their sources well, sourcing information and quotations from them and including validating footnotes at the end of their essays. Examiners consider that the research experience must have led to a greater engagement in and enjoyment of the study of history.

Review of the Process

Most candidates now include this as a separate account at the end of their essay. In the best answers, the candidates clearly reflected on the process, commenting on problems they had in finding their sources and in making necessary adaptations to their practice as the work progressed. Other reviews were often overly long and a common problem was the inclusion of material which was generic and which failed to refer to the aims in the outline plan.

Component 2: The Written Examination Paper (400 marks)

Section 1: Documents-based Question (100 marks)

The Documents-based question in the Early Modern Field of Study was based on the Case Study, *The Bardic Schools* from Topic 1 in Irish history, *Reform and Reformation in Tudor Ireland, 1494-1558*. In the Later Modern Field of Study, it was based on the Case Study, *The Apprentice Boys of Derry* from Topic 5 in Irish history, *Politics and society in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993*.

Over the six examination years of the revised syllabus there has been considerable variation in the average marks for the Document-based question (DBQ). The Random Sample average mark ranged from a high of 78.74% in 2008 to a low of 68.9% in 2009. This year the figure was again low at 69.9%.

Documents-based question: Analysis of Results 2006 - 2011							
Question	% Attempts in 2011	Average Marks					
		2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
DBQ	100	69.9	70.61	68.9	78.74	76.45	73.00

In the Early Modern Field of Study, the documents presented few difficulties to candidates, with many answering this section very well. Although the sources on the Early Modern examination are necessarily couched in more antiquated language, nevertheless candidates' competence in document-handling enhanced their overall score in the examination.

In the Later Modern Field of Study, question 1 (comprehension) was very well answered with almost all candidates achieving the full twenty marks. The other questions proved more daunting.

Both parts of question 2 (comparison) were challenging. 2(a) "*Document B describes the Apprentice Boys' march as 'a solemn procession'. Does document A support or contradict that description? Give reasons for your answer.*" While it should have been obvious that the answer was 'contradict', many candidates said 'support'. It appears that these candidates may not have understood the word 'solemn'.

2(b) “*From the evidence of the documents, would you agree that religion was important both to Apprentice Boys and to Bogsidiers? Give reasons for your answer.*”

The difficulty here was that while there was ample reference in the sources to the importance of religion to the Apprentice Boys, there was only scant reference to the importance of their religion to the Bogsidiers.

Both parts of question 3 (criticism) also posed particular challenges. 3(a) “*How does document B show the tensions that had arisen in Northern Ireland between the dates of the two marches, 1967 and 1969? Refer to both documents in your answer.*” Many candidates did not adequately refer to both documents, presumably because the question appears to have been premised on document B. 3(b) “*How do the given documents illustrate strengths and weaknesses of the work of journalists as historical source material?*” Some candidates may have been put off by the fact that Document B was an extract from a book rather than a newspaper report but, for whatever reason, many candidates struggled to adequately identify strengths and weaknesses of the work of journalists. They jumped to conclusions about the issue of bias – immediately assuming that an Irish newspaper was Nationalist and the British newspaper was Unionist. Very few were able to use quotations from the documents to show the strengths and weaknesses of the work of journalists.

Question 4 (contextualisation) elicited answers which ranged across the spectrum of quality from a basic rehash of the documents to excellent historical accounts. Most candidates concentrated on the early history and iconography of the Apprentice Boys as opposed to the significance of the activities of the organisation for both communities in Northern Ireland in the late twentieth century. This imbalance in the answering of question 4 is considered responsible for the low average score in this year’s DBQ.

Section 2: Topics from Irish history (100 marks)

In the Early Modern Field of Study, most candidates chose questions from Topic 2, *Rebellion and conquest in Elizabethan Ireland, 1558-1603*. Most candidates were very well prepared and reached a very high standard of answering. However, there

were some candidates who would have been better served taking the Ordinary Level paper.

In the Later Modern Field of Study, Topic 3 was the most popular choice for candidates, with smaller numbers opting for Topics 2 and 6. Topics 1 and 4 appear to have been attempted by very few candidates. The commentary below refers to Topics 2, 3 and 6 from the Later Modern Irish (LMI) history.

LMI Topic 2: Movements for political and social reform, 1870-1914

IRELAND TOPIC 2 -<i>Movements for political and social reform</i>	Attempt Rate (%)	Average Mark
1. What attempts were made to gain Home Rule, 1870-1886, and why were those attempts unsuccessful?	4.6	53.13
2. How did Unionism develop during the period 1886-1914?	1.7	57.18
3. What did Douglas Hyde and/or W.B. Yeats contribute to cultural life in Ireland?	1.2	30.50
4. How effectively did James Larkin seek improvements for workers?	4.0	60.73
Total for Topic	11.5	53.95

Almost 12% of candidates attempted this Topic. Question 1 was the most popular. There were some good answers dealing with both Butt and Parnell. A common fault was the narrative approach taken by many candidates, with not enough emphasis being given to explaining why the attempts to gain Home Rule were unsuccessful. Many candidates continued their narrative beyond the question's date parameter of 1886. Question 4 was second in popularity and scored highly on the sample. Examiners reported an over-reliance here on the Case Study and, once again, a narrative approach with little attempt to judge the 'effectiveness' of Larkin's efforts to improve the workers' lot. Questions 2 and 3 were attempted by fewer candidates. Those who chose question 2 were often well prepared and scored highly, but the attempts at question 3 were generally poor, with candidates proving unable to develop detailed answers.

LMI Topic 3: The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912-49

IRELAND TOPIC 3 - <i>The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition</i>	Attempt Rate (%)	Average Mark
1. What did one or more of the following contribute to Irish affairs: Patrick Pearse; Arthur Griffith; Countess Markievicz?	15.4	51.38
2. How did the Irish government contribute to the consolidation of democracy, 1922-1932?	22.0	60.56
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of Éamon de Valera as a political leader?	26.8	52.1
4. What was the impact on Northern Ireland of international developments during the period 1932-1945?	15.5	51.9
Total for Topic	79.7	54.26

Almost 80% of candidates attempted this Topic. All four questions were popular. Attempts at question 1 tended to focus on Arthur Griffith and drew most of the material from the case study on the Treaty Negotiations. Very few attempted to write on Countess Markievicz and, where they did, the content was thin and the overall marks awarded were low.

Question 2 was the second most popular question and the one which attracted the highest marks. Some candidates attempted to broaden the question from consolidating democracy into the role of Cumann na nGaedheal in establishing the state and developing the economy. Others ignored the date parameters and went on to discuss de Valera and the 1937 Constitution.

Question 3 was the most popular in the Topic and, with no date parameters, gave great scope to those attempting it. Unfortunately, many of the answers were of poor quality. Some dealt largely with the rise of Sinn Féin and the Treaty Negotiations. Others featured imbalanced and jaundiced accounts of de Valera's role in the Treaty Negotiations and Civil War. It may be that the very openness of the question was, in itself, a challenge. It is notable that many candidates used Griffith or de Valera as the hook on which to hang the story of the Treaty Negotiations and is a good example of how over-reliance on Case Studies can militate against good answering in the examination.

Question 4 was also attempted by many candidates. Most answers focussed on the Case Study (Belfast during World War II) but some were able to write at length on the economy and the preparations for war.

LMI Topic 6: Government, economy and society in Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989

IRELAND TOPIC 6 -Government, economy and society in the Republic of Ireland	Attempt Rate (%)	Average Mark
1. During the period 1949-1989, what were the main developments in one or more of the following: education; health; social welfare?	1.7	39.45
2. Which affected the Republic of Ireland more, membership of the UN or membership of the EEC? Argue your case, referring to both.	0.9	50.83
3. What was the contribution to Irish affairs of Charles Haughey and/or Garret FitzGerald?	0.1	96
4. What did one or more of the following contribute to changing attitudes in the Republic of Ireland: T.K. Whitaker; Gay Byrne; Mary Robinson?	0.8	65.8
Total for Topic	3.5	50.61

Less than 4% of candidates attempted this section, making the statistical analysis above largely irrelevant. The commentary is drawn from the small number of examiners who encountered scripts answering these questions. Question 1, “*During the period 1949-1989, what were the main developments in one or more of the following: education; health; social welfare?*”, appears to have been the most popular choice here, but examiners noted that the quality of answering was poor with an over-emphasis on the actions of the first Inter-Party government and the role of Noel Browne. Many candidates wrote descriptive answers without getting to the kernel of the question. Questions 2 and 4 were next in popularity. Question 2 was typically well answered, but the answering to question 4 was more mixed. T.K. Whitaker was the most popular choice here. Of the very few candidates who attempted question 3, most chose to focus exclusively on the achievements of Haughey and FitzGerald in their time as Taoiseach.

Section 3: Topics from the history of Europe and the wider world (200 marks)

Candidates were asked to answer on two of the six Topics from the history of Europe and the wider world. In the Early Modern Field of Study, most candidates chose questions from Topic 1, *Europe from Renaissance to Reformation, 1492-1567*, and Topic 2, *Religion and power: politics in the later 16th century, 1567-1609*. Many of the candidates were well prepared and scored highly on their chosen questions, but, as in the answering of the Irish section, a number of candidates were less well prepared and would have been better advised to have attempted the Ordinary Level paper.

In the Later Modern history of Europe and the Wider World (LME), Topic 3, *Dictatorship and democracy in Europe, 1920-1945*, was most popular, closely followed by Topic 6, *The United States and the world, 1945-1989*. Topic 2, *Nation states and international tensions, 1871-1920*, and Topic 4, *Division and realignment in Europe, 1945-1992*, were also attempted by a substantial percentage of candidates. Topic 1, *Nationalism and state formation in Europe, 1815-1871*, and Topic 5, *European retreat from empire and the aftermath, 1945-1990*, were not attempted by any candidates in the Random Sample.

LME Topic 2: Nation states and international tensions, 1871-1920

EUROPE TOPIC 2 -<i>Nation states and international tensions, 1871-1920</i>	Attempt Rate (%)	Average Mark
1. What were the main international tensions in Europe, 1871-1914?	9.2	68.6
2. What problems were posed by Church-State relations in Germany and/or Anti-Semitism in France?	2.2	58
3. How did the literature of World War I reflect both the conduct of war and changing attitudes towards it?	0.1	14
4. What did you learn about science/ technology/ medicine from your study of one or more of the following: the Krupp family; the invention and early history of the motor car; Marie Curie?	2.2	50.65
Total for Topic	13.7	63.49

Almost 14% of candidates attempted this Topic. Question 1 was by far the most commonly answered question here. With an average mark of 68.6%, it was the

second-best mark achieved on the sample. Most candidates treated the question from the German perspective, giving equal coverage to the foreign policies of both Bismarck and Wilhelm II. Candidates showed detailed knowledge on the various treaties and on Anglo-German naval rivalry. There was less emphasis on the problems in the Balkans or on imperial rivalry.

Question 2 was also popular and well answered. Question 3 was chosen by only one of the 89 candidates who attempted this Topic in the sample. Question 4 did attract answers but the overall quality of the answering was poorer here. The average mark from the Random Sample for this Topic was 63.49%, the highest achieved by any of the Topics.

LME Topic 3: Dictatorship and democracy in Europe, 1920-1945

EUROPE TOPIC 3 - Dictatorship and democracy in Europe, 1920-1945	Attempt rate (%)	Average Mark
1. To what extent did Lenin and/or Stalin bring about social and economic change?	27.2	61.18
2. How effective were the internal and external policies of Benito Mussolini?	9.1	69.71
3. What were the main characteristics of the Nazi state in Germany, 1933-1939?	43.4	59.18
4. What did one or more of the following achieve in Britain during the period 1920-1945: J.M. Keynes; those who took part in the Jarrow March, October 1936; Winston Churchill?	15.5	53.24
Total for Topic	95.2	59.79

At over 95%, this was by far the most popular Topic on the paper. Question 1 ranked second in popularity here and the average mark on the Random Sample (61%) indicates a good standard of answering. Most answered on Stalin, but a significant minority answered in great detail on Lenin. The candidates who did best were those who dealt with both Lenin and Stalin. A small number dealt only with the Show Trials, a Case Study, without making any link to the set question.

Question 2 was the least popular in the section but the answers were excellent and this question achieved the highest average mark of all on the sample. Some candidates put

too much time and effort into Mussolini's rise to power, but most were well prepared and were able to deal with both elements of the question in great detail.

Question 3 was the most popular question in the Topic. Many of the answers were excellent, with full and detailed coverage of Nazi Germany. However, for whatever reason, a significant number of candidates chose to write exclusively about Hitler's foreign policy.

Others wrote excessively on the Case Study, the Nuremberg Rallies, reflecting an increasingly common trend among some candidates to over-rely on their knowledge of the Case Study during examination preparation. Answers to question 4 were also dominated by the Case Study. Candidates often plainly told the story of the Jarrow March with no real reference to the question of what, if anything, it had achieved. In terms of solid achievement, Churchill appeared a more attractive option here, but some candidates had difficulty in making his international achievements relevant in their answer. J.M. Keynes was largely ignored in the answering of this question.

LME Topic 4: Division and realignment in Europe, 1945-1992

EUROPE TOPIC 4 - Division and realignment in Europe, 1945-1992	Attempt Rate (%)	Average Mark
1. How successful was Soviet Russia in controlling Eastern Europe, 1945-1992?	4.6	53
2. What were the social and economic effects of the growth in European unity, 1945-1992?	2.3	61.6
3. What was the impact of Margaret Thatcher on Britain's internal and external affairs?	0	
4. What was the historical importance of the Second Vatican Council and/or Pope John Paul II?	2.3	52.53
Total for Topic	9.2	55.03

Question 1 was the most popular in this Topic. Answers were reasonably well prepared and detailed but there was overemphasis on the Case Study, the Hungarian Uprising, by many candidates. In general, the coverage of the period of Soviet expansion, 1945-61, was handled better than the years leading up to the fall of communism.

Question 2 was constructed around the social and economic perspective, but most candidates wrote instead about the political developments on the road to European Unity. Question 4 was attempted, with most answers based on the Vatican Council Case Study. The quality of answering was moderate here.

LME Topic 6: The United States and the world, 1945-1989

EUROPE TOPIC 6 - <i>The United States and the world, 1945-1989</i>	Attempt Rate (%)	Average Mark
1. How did the US Presidency develop from Roosevelt to Reagan?	3.7	62.38
2. What was the contribution of Martin Luther King to US affairs?	36.6	58.22
3. Why did the US lose the Vietnam War and/or what was the significance of the Moon landing?	33.5	59.04
4. What did one or more of the following contribute to American culture: Marilyn Monroe; Muhammad Ali; Billy Graham?	2.3	41.93
Total for Topic	76.1	58.29

More than 75% of candidates attempted this Topic, with most opting for questions 2 and 3. Question 1 was not often well answered. Candidates tended to focus on the achievements of individual presidents rather than on the particular demand of the question, how the role of the presidency developed over this period. Question 2 was popular and well answered. Many answers dwelt on King’s involvement in the case study, the Montgomery bus boycott, but most candidates did go beyond the case study and dealt with his later career also.

Question 3 featured two of the Topic’s Case Studies, Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam and the Moon landing. Candidates could write on either one or both elements of the question. Most opted for Vietnam. Some did Vietnam with a couple of concluding paragraphs on the Moon landing. Very few opted exclusively for the Moon landing. The general standard of answering was good on Vietnam, although many candidates took the narrative route of unnecessarily describing the background to and the main campaigns of the war. The reasons for the American defeat were then added almost as an afterthought or left to be inferred by the examiner. Question 4 was taken by a

small number of candidates. Billy Graham was largely ignored but there were some good answers on Marilyn Monroe and Muhammad Ali.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

- Examiners reported that the examination papers were fair and appropriate to Higher Level
- Examiners reported that candidates coped well with the demands of the examination and praised their efforts and those of their teachers in this regard
- The following points are made in relation to the Research Study Report:
 - Some candidates inadequately outlined their aims and intended approach in the Outline Plan
 - Most candidates cited their research sources fully and accurately, and evaluated their sources in a clear and confident manner
 - Some candidates exceeded the recommended word length for their Extended Essay
 - Some candidates failed to include a review of the research process with their Extended Essay while others produced generic reviews which might have applied to any RSR
 - The Extended Essays were often interesting and impressive and the work of candidates and teachers was often complimented
 - There was concern that some candidates have plagiarised part or all of their RSRs from articles on on-line encyclopaedias. In 2011 five candidates had their History result withheld because there was a case of plagiarism to answer.
- The following points are made in relation to the Documents-based question:
 - Many candidates struggled with question 2(a), showing lack of comprehension of key words like ‘solemn’
 - Many candidates had difficulty with question 2(b) as there was scant evidence in the sources of the importance of their religion to the Bogsidiers.

- Many candidates had difficulty in articulating the strengths and weaknesses of the work of journalists as historical source material for question 3(b)
- The contextualisation question was poorly answered. It appeared that many candidates were unprepared for this particular Case Study. Answers focussed on the early history and iconography of the Apprentice Boys rather than on their modern-day significance.
- The following points are made in relation to the Topic questions:
 - Most candidates understood and fulfilled the expectations of examiners in the answering of the Topic questions
 - Too many candidates showed over-reliance on their knowledge of the Case Studies in answering questions which were partly related to a Case Study. This applied particularly on the Irish section to Topic 2, questions 3 and 4 and Topic 3, questions 1,3 and 4. In the section on Europe and the wider world the same problem surfaced in Topic 3, questions 1, 3 and 4, Topic 4, questions 1 and 4 and Topic 6, questions 2 and 3.
 - Some candidates ignored the date parameters of the question or of the Topic
 - Some candidates offered historical content which was irrelevant to the set question. This was most evident in LME 3, question 3, where many wrote about Hitler's foreign policy rather than on the main characteristics of the Nazi state
 - Questions which examined the perspective, *Culture, Religion and Science* proved to be the least popular and earned a low average mark.

2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

- Students should be advised not to exceed the recommended word length for their RSR essay and to include a review of the research process which will assess how their individual research process fulfilled their original Outline Plan
- Students should adopt time-management strategies to ensure full, but not excessive, coverage of the Documents-based question in the examination
- Students should take care not to over-rely on their knowledge of the Case Studies as part of their examination preparation
- Students should learn to be aware from what perspective(s) a question is asked and what narrative and/or analytical demands the question is making
- Students should be prepared to engage in historical argument as part of their engagement with examination questions
- Students' learning experience and examination options will be optimised if they are exposed to history from the perspective of *Culture, religion and science*
- Teachers and students should adopt strategies to avoid the various shortcomings alluded to in the Conclusions
- Continue the good work which was evident among the Higher Level candidature of 2011 and which was the subject of praise from examiners.