



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit  
State Examinations Commission**

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

**S93/05**

**To: Management Authorities of Second-Level Schools**

**Re: Use of Calculators in the Certificate Examinations**

The use of scientific, non-programmable calculators is allowed in the certificate examinations in all subjects. (See Rule 74 in *Rules and Programme for Secondary Schools*.) Some recent advances in calculator technology have led to a possible lack of clarity regarding the features that are permissible in calculators for use in the examinations. Accordingly, the relevant rule is hereby amended in order to reflect the intention of the original rule in light of these more recent advances.

Hence, the following amended version of rule 74 will apply to all Certificate Examinations in June 2006 and thereafter, until further notice:

74. Each candidate presenting himself/herself for examination in Construction Studies, Technical Drawing, Engineering, Materials Technology (Wood) or in Technical Graphics is required to bring with him/her a drawing board, T-square, scales, set squares, protractor, compass, pencil, eraser and drawing clips or tape.

Candidates may use mathematical drawing instruments for all examinations. The use of science stencils is permitted for the examinations in the Science subjects. The use of string, thread, a magnifying glass and an opisometer is permitted for the examination in Geography.

Unless otherwise stated in the specific syllabus and on the specific examination paper, the use of calculators is allowed in all examinations and is subject to the following:

- (a) Neither the Department of Education and Science nor the State Examinations Commission will supply calculators to candidates. Examination centres will not be responsible for the provision of calculators or batteries.
- (b) The proper working condition of the calculator is the responsibility of the candidate. No allowance will be made for battery or other calculator failure during the examination.
- (c) Calculators must be silent and must not require the use of mains electricity supply.
- (d) Calculators may not be borrowed from other candidates during the examination.
- (e) Programmable calculators are prohibited. The term “programmable” includes any calculator that is capable of storing a sequence of keystrokes that can be retrieved after the calculator is turned off or powers itself off. Note that the capacity to recall, edit and replay previously executed calculations does not render a calculator programmable, provided that this replay memory is automatically cleared when the calculator is powered off. Also, the facility to store numbers in one or more memory locations does not render a calculator programmable.

- (f) Calculators with any of the following mathematical features are prohibited:
- graph plotting
  - equation solving
  - symbolic algebraic manipulation
  - numerical integration
  - numerical differentiation
  - matrix calculations
- (g) Calculators with any of the following general features are prohibited:
- data banks
  - dictionaries
  - language translators
  - text retrieval
  - capability of remote communication.
- (h) Candidates must indicate on their answerbooks the make and model of any calculator(s) used in the examination.
- (i) Candidates are not allowed to take an instruction manual into the examination hall. This includes instructions printed on the cover of the calculator. Any instructions printed on a casing that cannot be removed from the calculator must be securely covered.
- (j) Candidates may not turn on their calculators until the examination begins.

This rule does not allow a candidate to bring into the examination centre any device that would be otherwise prohibited. In particular, mobile phones, electronic organisers or similar devices are not permitted under any circumstances. (See rule 65.)

You are requested to bring this Circular Letter to the notice of the teachers and students concerned.

Authorities of second-level schools are requested to provide a copy of this circular to the parents' and teachers, representatives on the Board of Management, where such exists, or to the Parents Association/National Parents Council representatives or other appropriate representatives of the parents/teachers for transmission to individual parents and teachers.

Aidan Farrell  
Director of Operations

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