



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

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

S100/18

JUNIOR CYCLE SCIENCE ASSESSMENT TASK

**TO THE BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT/AUTHORITIES OF SECOND-LEVEL SCHOOLS
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVES of ETBs**

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) is enclosing the following information and materials to facilitate the completion of the Assessment Task (AT) in Junior Cycle Science in your school:

1. Details of online resources for the Task, Stimulus Materials and instructions.
2. A supply of AT Booklets for Science, instructions for completion and completion dates.
3. An Authentication form (Form P2) for completion by the candidates, class- teacher(s) and the Principal, and a pre-addressed return envelope to facilitate return of the Form P2.
4. A tamper evident envelope for the retention of AT booklets in the school.
5. Instructions on completing the Assessment Task for students with special educational needs.

Important Information for 2019 process

- **ATs must be retained in schools until the day of the written examination in June.**
- **Form P2 must be completed and returned in the pre-addressed envelope provided.**
- **Please note that the list of Examination numbers were enclosed with the English AT booklets. No further supply of examination numbers will issue.**

1. Details of online resources for the Task, Stimulus Materials and Instructions

Guidelines for the Classroom-Based Assessments and the Assessment Task, Online resources, Stimulus Material and instructions can be found <https://curriculumonline.ie/Junior-cycle/Junior-Cycle-Subjects/Science>

2. A supply of AT Booklets, instructions for completion and completion dates

The supply of AT Booklets enclosed is to cover all candidates in your school. The AT booklets for each subject will issue separately.

- English AT booklets were issued on 29th November.
- Business Studies booklets were issued in early December.
- Science AT booklets are now enclosed.

In line with the The Department of Education and Skills Circular 79/2018 that issued to schools last week, please note changes to the date for the completion of the AT booklets, please also note the latest date for the return of Form P2.

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| Latest date for completion of the Assessment Task | 22 nd March 2019 |
| Latest date for receipt in SEC of completed Form P2 | 29 th March 2019 |

- The Assessment Task should be completed in schools as outlined in the table above
- In line *Guidelines for the Classroom Based Assessment and the Assessment Task* (www.curriculumonline.ie), where an individual student is absent for the completion of all or part of the Task, schools should make local arrangements in the school to allow the student to complete the task as close as possible to the timeframe scheduled for completion.
- These official bar-coded AT Booklets must be used by all candidates completing the task in handwriting.
- An electronic version of the AT Booklet, for use by students with special educational needs, is available. See Section 7 below.
- Care should be taken to correctly record each candidate's examination number, as provided by the SEC, in the space provided on the cover of the AT Booklet.
- Care should also be taken to ensure that there is no writing or other marks in or on any of the barcodes in the booklet.
- Students should be instructed to complete the AT booklet using **blue or black pen only**. The booklet must **not** be completed using pencils or coloured pens.
- Students should be instructed to write within the boundaries of the boxes in the AT Booklets in order to receive credit for work completed.
- **AT booklets should be retained securely in the school in the envelope provided, until the written examinations in June and given to the Superintendents on the day of examinations to be associated with the written examination script.**

3. Form P2 for completion by the candidates, class- teacher(s) and the Principal

Responsibility for ensuring that the AT Booklet has been completed by each individual student in accordance with the instructions and that the completed booklet is submitted to the SEC with the written examination script for marking rests with the school. The class-teacher(s) and the Principal are required to confirm that the work presented was completed under the supervision of the class teacher in class-time and is the candidate's own individual work. The class-teacher and Principal are also asked to confirm that the conduct of all other aspects of CBA2, including the award of descriptors and the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR), will be completed in accordance with the guidelines and instructions. Form P2 should be completed by the class teacher(s) and Principal as soon as possible following the completion of the Assessment Task by students and returned by the date outlined above.

The SEC will not follow up the absence of an AT Booklet with a school. Final examination grades which do not include the marks from the AT Booklet will be flagged by the SEC on the statements of provisional results in September. The presence of such an indicator will allow schools to engage with the SEC on any missing ATs at that time. The records provided to the SEC by the school when submitting the Form P2 will be of particular importance in seeking to resolve issues later.

- (i) All candidates submitting AT Booklets for each subject must sign the relevant Form P2 in the space opposite their name. It is not acceptable for Form P2 to be handed around the class for signing as the class teacher must ensure the candidates only sign the form at the point of handing up their finished AT Booklet. The signing of the Form P2 and submission of completed ATs must be witnessed by the class teacher.
- (ii) Where a candidate listed on Form P2 does not present an AT Booklet for examination, enter a record of **"No Work Presented"** in the space provided for the candidate's signature.
- (iii) If a candidate who is not listed on the Form P2 submits an AT Booklet for examination, enter the details of the candidate manually on the Form P2 and arrange for the candidate to sign opposite his/her name. In this case, please ensure the candidate adds the subject to their E8 form when they receive it in March.
- (iv) Record the number of candidates submitting AT Booklets in the space provided on each page of the Form P2. This number should be reconciled against a count of the physical number of AT's that have been handed up.
- (v) The completed Form P2 must be signed by the relevant class teacher(s) and countersigned by the School Principal to confirm all details.
- (vi) Return the top Copy of the Form P2 to the SEC in the envelope provided as soon as the AT is completed but no later than the dates specified in Section 3 of this circular. The school authority should retain the bottom copy of the Form P2 for its own records.
- (vii) S68/08 and S69/04 (available from www.examinations.ie) set out the arrangements for authentication of coursework which includes AT Booklets. Where the AT cannot be authenticated by a teacher as being the candidate's own individual work, a separate

report form (Form P20) must be completed and returned to the SEC. A supply of P20s in booklet form has already issued to schools and additional copies are available on request. Schools are requested to provide as much detail as possible in providing their reason for not being able to authenticate the work. The SEC may follow-up with schools if the reason for non-authentication is considered insufficiently detailed. The top copy of the Form P20 should be returned to The State Examinations Commission, Cornamaddy, Athlone, in the enclosed pre-addressed envelope. The carbon copy should be retained in the school.

Full compliance with these procedures will assist the SEC in processing the Junior Cycle results for these subjects for the candidates in your school.

4. A tamper evident envelope per subject for the retention of AT Booklets in the school.

At the end of the session the completed AT Booklets must be collected by the class teacher and retained securely in the envelope provided to the school authorities until the day of the written examination/s for each of the subjects in June. They must then be given to the superintendents to associate with the written script. **DO NOT SEND COMPLETED AT BOOKLETS TO THE SEC AS THESE WILL BE RETURNED TO SCHOOLS.**

If a candidate transfers from your school to another school following the completion of an AT Booklet, you should retain the AT and give it to the Superintendent in June. The SEC will then reconcile it with the written script submitted by the candidate.

Similarly, if a candidate transfers into your school following completion of the booklet it is not your responsibility to obtain the AT booklet.

The tamper evident envelope should not be opened until the date of examination.

5. Instructions on completing the Assessment Task Booklets by students with special educational needs

In line with the Diversity and Accessibility statement in the Framework for Junior Cycle, the greater degree of flexibility afforded by the Framework allows schools to ensure that, within the school's programme, there is sufficient flexibility to cater for the individual learning needs of all students, including those with special educational needs.

With the exception of the Spelling/Grammar waiver, the SEC's Scheme of Reasonable Accommodations at the Certificate Examinations (RACE Scheme) does not apply to the Assessment Task for Junior Cycle subjects, which is undertaken as part of normal classroom activity. Nonetheless, appropriate arrangements should be made at local level to facilitate students with special educational needs in accessing the Tasks. Schools will be aware of a student's normal way of working when making such access arrangements. If the student's special needs mean that they exclusively use a word processor or a lap-top in class (as opposed to for homework) or that they have access to reading assistance or other supports in their day-to-day teaching and learning activities then a similar provision seems in order, provided such support was warranted in the first instance and already in place for normal class activities and does not undermine the validity of the test instrument.

School authorities will need to be sure that any arrangements that they make are merely enabling the student to access the assessment, rather than providing them with assistance in the responses, as the process needs to be fair to all of the students in the class. Schools must also be sure that the support arrangements are actually required by the student to access the task and are not just their preferred way of working. It would not be appropriate, for example, to allow a student who uses a word-processor by choice in the classroom but who is capable of writing, to use the word-processor for the Task.

Any logistical issues arising from the provision of access arrangements are matters to be resolved at school level, as is the case for all classroom activities linked to the state examinations.

The SEC will, on request, provide a digital version of the AT booklet for completion by candidates approved for the use of a Word Processor in the certificate examinations. Schools should e-mail dcb@examinations.ie providing the candidate's details, name PPSN, date of birth and reasons for requesting the digital version. Once the SEC is satisfied as to the eligibility of the candidate, the digital version will issue by e-mail. The digital version is for use by eligible candidates only and its use by ineligible candidates will constitute a breach of regulations.

Please ensure that this important information and documentation is brought to the immediate attention of teachers teaching the new Junior Cycle specification to third year students and any other interested personnel. The information in this circular should also be brought to the notice of students, parents and guardians.

Any queries regarding the AT Booklets other than requests for electronic versions should be submitted to onlinemark@examinations.ie

Andrea Feeney
Director, State Examinations Commission.
December 2018.