


**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit,
Corr na Madadh,
Baile Átha Luain,
Co. na hIarmhí.**

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**State Examinations Commission,
Cornamaddy,
Athlone,
Co. Westmeath.**

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To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Second Level Schools involved in Phase 1 of the introduction of Leaving Certificate Computer Science, and CEOs of relevant ETBs

Leaving Certificate Computer Science, 2020 – information on the arrangements for a trial examination

The first Leaving Certificate Computer Science examination is scheduled to take place in May 2020. The final examination component of Leaving Certificate Computer Science will be a combined practical and written examination. The examination will comprise of the following, in order:

- A.** 1 hour 30 minutes paper-based element
- B.** 1 hour computer-based element

The paper-based element will take place in a room that the school will set up as a standard examination centre, similar to the arrangement that currently applies to the LCVP link modules examination. The computer-based element can take place in the same centre using portable electronic devices or alternatively in a computer room.

A 30 minute break is scheduled between the two elements. This will allow for movement of candidates to a computer room if required or for set up of the portable electronic devices in the same centre. It will also give candidates time to ensure that their portable electronic device is powered on and working in advance of the computer-based element.

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) is conducting a trial of the examination procedures with the Phase 1 schools. The purpose of the trial is to familiarise schools with the proposed arrangements and to identify and resolve any issues that may arise. The trial will also allow us to determine the effectiveness of the examination in assessing the learning outcomes in the subject specification. It is important to appreciate that the trial is **not** as a test of the candidates or the teachers.

For the purposes of this trial, the sample papers will be used. The sample papers and detailed instructions for the trial will be issued to schools during the week commencing Monday 14th October. It is recommended that these sample papers **not** be shared with the candidates before they sit the trial examination. Schools are requested to conduct the trial examination on Wednesday 23rd October from 9:30 to 12:30.

An information note, including details about the trial, is included for candidates and parents. This note can be issued in advance of the trial to inform and reassure candidates and parents about the purpose of the trial.

Three further documents are enclosed: **Instructions for Computer Science Teachers**, **Instructions for Superintendents** and **Instructions for Candidates**. These documents are currently in draft form. We will seek feedback on these documents in order to ensure that adequate procedures are in place for the actual examination.

As students will not have been assigned their SEC candidate number in advance of the trial, schools are asked to refer to **Appendix 1**, attached to this letter, in order to assign a temporary candidate number to each student solely for the purposes of the trial.

Candidates will not be provided with results from the trial examination, as the purpose of the trial is to evaluate the examination itself, but schools should nevertheless follow all procedures as laid out, as they would for a live examination, including return of the examinations to us in the envelopes provided.

1. External Storage Device and Examination Paper Delivery Arrangements

For the purposes of the trial, we will provide schools with an external storage device containing files relating to both Higher level and Ordinary level Computer Science along with the sample papers. For the actual examination in May, the device will be provided at least three days in advance of the examination. Instructions on pre-loading these files onto candidate devices are provided in the **Instructions for Computer Science Teachers** document.

The sample examination papers to be used for the trial will arrive in the school during the week commencing Monday, 14th October. Any delays in the receipt of the expected papers should be confirmed with the local post office in advance of contacting us.

2. Conducting the Examinations

While it is permissible in the case of the trial for the Computer Science teacher to act as the superintendent, this will not be allowed for the live examination. Accordingly, it is recommended that schools appoint a superintendent for the trial in order for that superintendent to become familiar with the examination procedures in advance of May 2020. Any superintendent that is appointed should be provided with the **Instructions for Superintendents** document in advance of the trial examination. Attendants will not be appointed for the trial as the Computer Science teacher is expected to be available for the duration of the exam. However, attendants can be appointed for the May examination.

It is accepted that candidates will not have completed their study of the Computer Science specification in advance of the trial. Computer Science teachers are asked to use their discretion in deciding whether there are questions on the paper-based element of the sample papers that the candidates in their class should be told not to engage with. In such a case, the time allocated to complete the exam should be altered accordingly. It is anticipated that candidates will be in a position to attempt all of the computer-based element and the timing for this element should therefore remain as instructed.

Further details and instructions on implementing the trial examination will be provided with the sample examination papers.

3. Role of the Computer Science Teacher

The Computer Science teacher(s) in the school should assist in preparing for the examination and should also be present in the school throughout the examination, so that they are available to be called on if there is a technical difficulty that the superintendent cannot resolve. A copy of the **Instructions for Computer Science Teachers** is enclosed. It is essential that the Computer Science teacher reads and follows this document in preparation for the examination.

4. Role of Candidates

Candidates should be instructed to be present in the examination centre not later than fifteen minutes prior to the starting time of the paper-based element.

Candidates should be instructed to move directly from the paper-based element to the computer-based element. The time between the two elements is not intended as a rest break but should be used to ensure that the candidate can access their device and the necessary files, or to move to a computer room if necessary.

Candidates must not bring any mobile phone, camera or any other digital technology into the Examination Centre, other than the device being used for the examination itself.

Candidates will be provided with a **Python Reference Guide**. A copy of this document is included with this letter.

Candidates must comply with the instructions of the Superintendent.

Candidates should be provided with a copy of **Instructions to Candidates** in advance of the examination.

5. Trial Feedback

In order to identify any potential issues or difficulties for schools in conducting the examination the Computer Science teacher is asked to complete the feedback form that will be included with the sample papers and return to us in the envelope provided.

6. Payment of Superintendents

A fee of €115.43 per day should be paid to the Superintendent by the school and a refund claimed from the Commission. It should be noted that fees paid to Superintendents are subject to income tax, universal social charge, and social insurance (P.R.S.I.) deductions. The appointment of superintendents is covered under Class J PRSI. The rate of employer PRSI under this class is 0.5%. The SEC will refund to schools/VEC's the employer PRSI at the appropriate rate in respect of superintendents. A claim form for this purpose will issue to schools and this should be completed and forwarded to the State Examinations Commission. In the case of V.E.C/E.T.B. schools, refunds must be claimed from the relevant V.E.C/E.T.B.

7. Recruitment of Examiners

We are seeking to recruit some teachers involved in Leaving Certificate Computer Science to act as examiners in the marking of work produced by candidates in the trialling exercise. This should be brought to the attention of the relevant teachers in your school and a supply of application forms are enclosed which should be returned by Monday 14 October, 2019 to Examiners Section, SEC, Cornamaddy, Athlone. These examiners will not be involved in marking the work of candidates from their own school.

Appendix 1

As candidates will not have been issued their SEC candidate number in advance of the trial schools are asked to use the following system for providing candidate numbers:

Candidate numbers will be five-digit numbers and are to consist of a two-digit school code followed by a unique three-digit number. The school codes are listed in the table below and should be followed by an incremental numbering system starting with 001. For example, the first candidate from Rice College would have the candidate number 18001 and the twelfth candidate from Castleblayney College would have the candidate number 31012.

School Code	School Name	Roll Number
01	Dominican College Sion Hill	60070K
02	Coláiste Bríde	60122D
03	Colaiste Phadraig	60264A
04	St Joseph's Secondary School	60343T
05	Synge St CBS	60470D
06	Terenure College	60570H
07	Loreto College Swords	60810B
08	Stratford College	61020A
09	Clongowes Wood College	61720F
10	Sacred Heart Secondary School	62170B
11	Gaelcholaiste Mhuire AG	62531H
12	Christ King Girls Secondary School	62692I
13	Saint Eunan's College	62830R
14	St Brigids Mercy Secondary School Tuam	63160D
15	Coláiste Mhuire	63270K
16	St Mary's CBS	63560T
17	St Vincent's Secondary School	63900R
18	Rice College	64700O
19	Mount Sion CBS	64930I
20	Presentation Secondary school	65340P
21	Le Chéile Secondary School	86083N
22	St. Finian's Community College, Swords	70120F
23	Breifne College	70380I
24	Coláiste na Ríochta	70500P
25	Ennistymon Vocational School	70840Q
26	Colaiste an Chraoibhin	70990M
27	Coláiste Choilm	71103K
28	Abbey Vocational School	71180F
29	Bush Post Primary	71750U
30	Coláiste Chiaráin	71840V
31	Castleblayney College	72190N

32	Adamstown Community College	76097U
33	Coláiste Pobail Setanta	76098W
34	Creagh College	76127D
35	Luttrellstown Community College	76130P
36	Mount Temple Comprehensive	81002K
37	St Aidan's Comprehensive School	81005Q
38	Carrigaline Community School	91388S
39	Mayfield Community School	91400F
40	Moate Community School	91501L