

Under Embargo until 6am on Wednesday 18th September, 2019

STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPEALS 2019

18th September 2019

Outcomes of the 2019 Leaving Certificate Appeals Process

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) has released the appeal results for the 2019 Leaving Certificate examination. The appeal results have also been transmitted electronically to the Central Applications Office and will be available to candidates through the Candidate Self Service Portal on the SEC's website, www.examinations.ie from 10am today.

In the processing of appeals, the marking of each candidate's work is fully reviewed question by question using the original marking scheme. The review is carried out by a different examiner to the one who originally marked the work.

In 2019, the Leaving Certificate examinations culminated in the issue of 395,117 grades to 56,071 candidates. Appeal applications were made by 9,049 candidates against 16,965 individual results. The number of individual subject appeals has increased by 87.5% from 9,087 in 2018.

The increase in the number of appeals follows significant changes to the timeline for the issue of the appeal results, which is a full three weeks earlier than in previous years. In order to achieve the new timeline, the SEC developed the Candidate Self Service Portal (an expansion of the SEC's Online Results Service) to support faster and more efficient services to candidates and faster communication between candidates, the SEC and schools in relation to the viewing of scripts and the appeals. The SEC also re-engineered the appeals process to achieve the new timeframe, including requiring appeal examiners to mark the appeal scripts on a fulltime basis, rather than just in the evenings after school has ended and at weekends, as was the case in previous years.

It is clear that the Leaving Certificate appeal process has been in focus since last year. The SEC has been very active in alerting examination candidates to the revised timelines this year which has heightened awareness of the viewing and appeals processes among candidates. The services were also more accessible to candidates as the viewing and appeals applications were provided online through the Portal. For the first time this year, candidates were provided with the marks that they achieved in all subjects including the individual component marks in multi component subjects. For example in Irish, Higher Level candidates got to see their marks for Paper 1, Paper 2 and the Oral. In another new development, in subjects which were marked through the SEC's new online marking system, candidates viewed digital images of their scripts through the Portal. In addition, the earlier issue date for these appeal results means that third level applicants will now have full visibility on their options very early in the

academic year rather than having to wait until mid-October as was the case previously. All of these factors go some way to explaining the increase in the number of appeals.

The appeals process has led to the award of 2,916 upgrades in respect of the 16,965 appeals received. The percentage of upgrades awarded as a proportion of the number of result appeals received is 17.2%. These upgrades represent 0.7% of all the Leaving Certificate grades awarded this year. There were 2 downgrades awarded in the appeals process this year.

Candidates may opt to view their remarked examination scripts (*Application details set out in Notes to the Editor below*). If still unhappy, candidates can refer their appeal to a panel of Independent Appeal Scrutineers, who are fully independent of the staff and management of the SEC and the marking teams. The candidates again have the option of raising any outstanding issues of concern regarding the marking of their work. The Scrutineers review the entire processing of the appeal so as to provide assurance to the candidate that it has been correctly carried out. They check that all issues raised by the candidate have been properly dealt with by the Chief Examiner, to whom the script will have been referred if there are any such outstanding issues. The SEC must implement all decisions of the Scrutineers. Application forms for an appeal review by the Independent Appeal Scrutineers have been provided to candidates with their appeal results. All decisions of the SEC, including appeals, are open to review by the Office of the Ombudsman, or in the case of candidates under 18 years of age, by the Ombudsman for Children.

Each year, the SEC uses the appeals process as a further quality assurance check on its processes underpinning the provisional results in August. On foot of an issue raised during the Leaving Certificate appeal process, a revision to the marking scheme for Leaving Certificate Higher Level Mathematics Paper 1 has been approved by the Chief Examiner (*details in Notes to Editor below*). As a result of the revision, the SEC has re-examined all Higher Level Mathematics examination Paper 1 scripts where the marks awarded could have made a difference to the grade achieved in the examination. In the case of candidates who appealed their examination results, this has been dealt with as part of the normal appeals process. The SEC has also reviewed an additional 30 Higher Level Mathematics scripts where candidates were within 1 mark of the next grade and this has led to 26 candidates who had not appealed their results now receiving an upgrade.

This necessary revision to the marking scheme for Higher Level Mathematics is part of the SEC's quality assurance of the examination process. In addition, the SEC quality assurance checks have resulted in 19 candidates, who had not appealed their result, receiving an upgrade. The changes in grades arising from these quality assurance measures are also being notified today to the candidates' schools and to the CAO, and updated on the SEC's On-Line Resulting service.

NUMBER AND OUTCOME OF APPEALS 2019

A total of 9,049 candidates made applications for appeals against 16,965 grades leading to 2,916 upgrades, which is 0.7% of all grades awarded.

SUBJECT	LEVEL#	CANDIDATURE	APPEALS	UPGRADES	AS % OF GRADES
ACCOUNTING	A	6,095	350	72	1.2%
AGRCULTURAL SCIENCE	A	6,605	568	120	1.8%
APPLIED MATHEMATICS	A	1,988	119	16	0.8%
ART	A	7,624	517	85	1.1%
BIOLOGY	A	27,063	2091	392	1.4%
BIOLOGY	G	7,046	21	4	0.1%
BUSINESS	A	13,805	842	114	0.8%
CHEMISTRY	A	8,243	513	105	1.3%
CLASSICAL STUDIES	A	442	48	5	1.1%
CONSTRUCTION STUDIES	A	7,896	204	11	0.1%
DESIGN & COMMUNICATION	A	4,567	298	20	0.4%
ECONOMICS	A	4,990	337	53	1.1%
ENGINEERING	A	4,765	106	11	0.2%
ENGLISH	A	40,217	1,911	240	0.6%
ENGLISH	G	14,477	48	8	0.1%
FRENCH	A	15,654	956	205	1.3%
FRENCH	G	7,707	65	8	0.1%
GEOGRAPHY	A	19,983	687	158	0.8%
GERMAN	A	6,246	438	81	1.3%
HISTORY	A	8,825	383	62	0.7%
HOME ECONOMICS S&S	A	9,730	546	99	1.0%
IRISH	A	23,176	1925	256	1.1%
IRISH	G	22,322	112	15	0.1%
ITALIAN	A	361	21	11	0.3%
JAPANESE	A	208	13	5	2.4%
LINK MODULES	C	13,128	270	84	0.6%
MATHEMATICS	A	18,150	1410	325	1.8%

MATHEMATICS	G	31,472	559	111	0.4%
MATHEMATICS	B	5,467	34	4	0.1%
MUSIC	A	6,234	476	48	0.8%
PHYSICS	A	6,583	396	35	0.5%
PHYSICS & CHEMISTRY	A	464	11	0	.0%
POLISH	A	780	16	7	.9%
POLITICS AND SOCIETY	A	676	33	3	0.4%
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	A	1,164	36	5	0.4%
SPANISH	A	5,646	452	108	1.9%
SPANISH	G	2,065	13	5	.2%
TECHNOLOGY	A	1,695	55	10	0.6%
TOTALS*		395,117	16,965	2,916	0.7%

Level: A = Ard (Higher), G = Gnath (Ordinary), B = Bonn (Foundation), C = Common

* Subjects where there were 10 or less candidates who appealed their result are outlined below.

Higher Level: Agricultural Economics, Ancient Greek, Arabic, Latin, Lithuanian, Latvian, Romanian and Russian.

Ordinary Level: Accounting, Agricultural Science, Applied Maths, Business, Chemistry, Construction Studies, Design and Communication, Engineering, Geography, German, Hebrew Studies, History, Home Economics and Physics.

Foundation Level: Irish

Notes for Editors

Arrangements for Further Viewing of Appeal Scripts

Candidates may opt to view their remarked examination scripts. Candidates are required to complete the application form which is available with the appeal results online and to return it directly to the SEC by email before 5.00pm on Monday 23rd September 2019. The viewing will be held in the Athlone offices of the SEC on Saturday 28th September between 9.00am and 4.30pm.

Scripts marked in paper format or online will be accessible to view in Athlone only. For technical reasons, the SEC is unable to provide an online service to view post-appeal marked scripts this year. This is because the SEC does not yet have a way to record the Appeal Examiner's responses to the specific issues raised in the Candidate Observation Forms. For this reason, an online viewing service for scripts post-appeal would be incomplete as candidates could not assure themselves that the issues raised had been addressed through the appeal. The only way to provide this opportunity is for candidates to come to Athlone to access their scripts and the appeal examiner's comments.

Revision to Leaving Certificate Mathematics Paper 1 Marking Scheme

Each year, the SEC uses the appeals process as a further quality assurance check on its processes underpinning the provisional results in August. On foot of an issue raised during the Leaving Certificate appeal process, a revision to the marking scheme for

Leaving Certificate Higher Level Mathematics has been approved by the Chief Examiner. This revision involves awarding 1 mark to candidates who had been penalised 1 mark out of 10 in respect of Question 3(b) on Paper 1. When candidates solve certain types of equation, the method of solution sometimes generates an ‘extraneous solution’ – a value that arises from the algebraic manipulation but is not a solution to the original equation. Candidates should test all solutions in these circumstances to rule out such extraneous solutions. The penalty had been applied for failing to do this in the case of a solution that had been considered extraneous. However, it became apparent during the appeals that the solution could, from the perspective of more advanced mathematics involving complex numbers (and beyond the scope of the syllabus), be considered not to have been extraneous after all. Accordingly, the penalty for not checking and ruling it out was cancelled and the mark restored. As a result of the revision, the SEC has re-examined all Higher Level Mathematics Paper 1 examination scripts where the overall marks awarded could have made a difference to the grade achieved in the examination. In the case of candidates who appealed their examination results, this has been dealt with as part of the normal appeals process. The SEC has also reviewed an additional 30 Higher Level Mathematics Paper 1 scripts where the candidates were within 1 mark of the next grade and this has led to 26 candidates who had not appealed their results now receiving an upgrade.

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