

STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

2008 STATE EXAMINATIONS

113,800 Students Sit Exams This Year

Wednesday 4th JUNE 2008

(The Notes for Editors at end includes key logistics, details of non-curricular EU Language subjects and statistical tables including tables of entries by county. A detailed Examinations Information Pack has been published in the Press Office section of www.examinations.ie)

On Wednesday 4th June 2008, some 113,800 candidates will take their seats at 4,600 examination centres countywide to begin their Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations.

Mr. Richard Langford, Chairman of the State Examinations Commission, sends his best wishes and those of his fellow Commissioners on behalf of the Commission to all sitting the state examinations in 2008. In conveying his best wishes to candidates the Chairman recommends that they approach the examinations calmly and positively. He also added *“While these examinations are a demanding test of ability requiring dedication, focus and hard work, students can be assured that they are designed to allow them the maximum opportunity to demonstrate the levels of their achievement on completion of their junior and senior cycle studies.”*

Over the June bank holiday weekend, the 4,600 superintendents involved in supervising the written examinations took possession of the boxes containing the 3 million examination papers that are required by candidates over the 13-day examination period. Almost 4,000 examiners will be involved in examining the work presented by candidates in the written examinations. This is in addition to the some 2,100 examiners required to mark the oral and practical tests.

The state examinations system recognises the diversity in contemporary society by facilitating native speakers from across the European Union to sit examinations in their mother tongues at Leaving Certificate. The 2007 examinations saw the addition of Bulgarian and Romanian to the list of examinations in mother-tongue EU languages of fifteen subjects.

The examinations run until Thursday 19th June for Junior Certificate subjects and Friday 20th June for Leaving Certificate subjects. The written examinations in the Leaving Certificate Applied programme finish on Thursday 12th June. The results of the Leaving Certificate examinations will be available on Wednesday, the 13th August 2008. Results of the Junior Certificate will be available in mid-September 2008.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

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1. Key Logistics

Established in 2003, the State Examinations Commission assumed responsibility from the Department of Education and Science for the operation of the second-level examinations of the Irish state: the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate. The State Examinations Commission is based at Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

The SEC employs some 185 permanent staff; this number is supplemented by 90 temporary staff to assist in key seasonal functions such as the packing and distribution of examination material and the examination resulting process.

To give an idea of the scale of activities involved in conducting the state examinations it is worth noting that the 2007 examinations involved the following activities and outcomes

- Providing examinations to **111,181 candidates** across all examination programmes; **57,287** at Junior Certificate, **50,873** at Leaving Certificate, and **3,021** at Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
- Arranging for examinations in **89 curricular subjects** across the three examination programmes and **15 non-curricular subjects** at Leaving Certificate
- Engaging 692 **drafters**, setters and translators to develop **250** different test **components** – including oral tests, aural recordings, practical briefs, project briefs, portfolio and coursework items as well as the written examination papers
- Producing **3 million** examination papers made up of **34 million A4 pages**
- Arranging for the recording of some **90,187 oral tests**
- Engaging **4,600 superintendents** to superintend at **4,600 general examination centres**
- Providing **14,708 reasonable accommodations** to facilitate candidates with individual needs to access the certificate exams and establishing **6,752 special examination centres** as a result
- Engaging **6,061 examiners** to mark the examinations; **3,917 written examiners**, **1,075 oral examiners** and **1,069 practical examiners**
- Examining some **1.9 million individual test items** including written examination scripts, art and craftwork pieces, project and practical pieces in Leaving Certificate Construction Studies and Engineering and Junior Certificate Metalwork, Materials Technology (Wood) and Technology, oral tests, coursework journals, research reports and portfolios
- Generating **962,536 individual grades** leading to the award of **111,181 examination certificates**
- Returning **350,000 marked scripts** to schools for viewing
- Processing some **13,000 appeals**.

Please see our website, www.examinations.ie for further details including 2008 timetables, detailed

statistics on examination results, sample and past examination papers, and general information on the organisation and management of the examinations and the State Examinations Commission.

2. Non-Curricular EU Language Subjects

The list of curricular subjects for the Leaving Certificate examination includes the following language subjects: Irish, English, Ancient Greek, Arabic, French, German, Hebrew Studies, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Russian.

The State Examinations Commission also provides examinations in a range of subjects in the language area referred to as the non-curricular EU languages. These are languages which do not appear as part of the normal school curriculum but which students may opt to be examined in if they meet certain criteria. Chief among these conditions are the requirements that candidates for these examinations;

- Be from a member state of the European Union
- Speak the language in which they opt to be examined in as a mother tongue
- Have followed a programme of study leading to the Leaving Certificate Be taking Leaving Certificate English

Another condition is that candidates may undertake examination in one non-curricular language subject only.

For the 2008 Leaving Certificate examinations, candidates will be examined in the following fifteen non-curricular language subjects:

• Bulgarian	• Finnish	• Polish
• Czech	• Greek (Modern)	• Portuguese
• Dutch	• Hungarian	• Romanian
• Danish	• Latvian	• Slovakian
• Estonian	• Lithuanian	• Swedish

The following table compares the predicted candidate entries for these subjects in the 2008 Leaving Certificate to the number of candidates that sat these exams in 2007.

Subject	2007 (sits)	2008(entries)
Dutch	16	30
Portuguese	27	32
Polish	53	179
Latvian	32	54
Lithuanian	61	135
Romanian	25	72
Others*	40	69
Total	254	571

Non-Curricular Language Subjects 2007 V 2008

*Modern Greek, Danish, Swedish, Finnish, Czech, Hungarian, Estonian, Slovakian and Bulgarian.

Background to the Development of the Non-Curricular Language Subjects

The development of the examinations in these languages has evolved over time. From time to time the SEC, and prior to 2003 the Department of Education and Science, have received requests to provide examinations for native speakers in their mother tongue. The policy has been to accede to these requests in the case of the national languages of EU states in line with the commitment made by member states under Article 149 of the Treaty of Nice. This states that "Community action shall be aimed at developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States."

The model for the non-curricular language examination papers is based on the First Foreign Language final written paper of the European Baccalaureate and the syllabus on which it is based. Although no national syllabi have been developed for these subjects the SEC is satisfied as to the rigour of the standard that applies.

The European Baccalaureate model has been developed by the European Schools taking into account the educational standards of all member states including Ireland. The State Examinations Commission is satisfied with the very high academic standard of this qualification and indeed the European Baccalaureate is recognised by all Irish universities.

The structure of these examinations has been agreed between the State Examinations Commissions and the Academic Board and the Board of Inspectors of the European Schools. The delivery of these examinations is overseen by a senior Examinations and Assessment Manager of the State Examinations Commission. This official meets regularly with the college of examiners in order to provide training and to ensure standardisation between all of the non-curricular language subjects. The examinations are set and marked by highly qualified subject experts and experienced practitioners in the relevant subject areas. The benefit of this arrangement for the SEC is the link to an accredited syllabus in a high calibre, well recognised examination and access to a range of expertise that would be difficult to find elsewhere.

3. STATISTICAL TABLES

A. Number of Candidates Entered for the Certificate Examinations 2005-2008

B. Number of Candidates Sitting the Certificate Examinations 2005-2007

C. Predicted Leaving Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2008

D. Predicted Leaving Certificate Applied Entries by County and Gender 2008

E. Predicted Junior Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2008

A. Number of Candidates Entered for the Certificate Examinations 2005-2008

This table compares the numbers of candidates who were entered for the examinations immediately prior to the commencement of the written examinations in June this year and in each of the previous three years.

	Established Leaving Certificate (including LCVP*)	Leaving Certificate Applied	Junior Certificate	Total
2005	55,467	3,404	57,104	115,975
2006	52,050	3,282	58,212	113,544
2007	52,021	3,132	57,883	113,036
2008	53,345	3,475	57,006	113,826

* LCVP = Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

B. Number of Candidates Sitting the Certificate Examinations 2005-2007

This table compares the numbers of candidates who, ultimately, sat the examinations in 2005, 2006 and 2007

	Established Leaving Certificate(incl. LCVP)	Leaving Certificate Applied	Junior Certificate	Total
2005	54,073	3,318	56,640	114,031
2006	50,955	3,155	57,782	111,892
2007	50,873	3,021	57,287	111,181

C. 2. Predicted Leaving Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2008

County	Female	Male	Total
Carlow	418	392	810
Cavan	351	344	695
Clare	653	580	1,233
Cork	3,169	2,858	6,027
Donegal	1,115	894	2,009
Dublin	6,972	6,510	13,482
Galway	1,613	1,615	3,228
Kerry	938	999	1,937
Kildare	1,098	1,171	2,269
Kilkenny	501	474	975
Laois	437	393	830
Leitrim	233	224	457
Limerick	1,295	1,258	2,553
Longford	304	305	609
Louth	849	795	1,644
Mayo	910	782	1,692
Meath	899	846	1,745
Monaghan	411	325	736
Offaly	470	402	872
Roscommon	281	272	553
Sligo	443	399	842
Tipperary N.R	540	535	1,075
Tipperary S.R	481	547	1,028
Waterford	771	731	1,502
Westmeath	700	680	1,380
Wexford	910	806	1,716
Wicklow	702	672	1,374
Counties Total			53,273
Libya	42	30	72
TOTAL			53,345

D. Predicted Leaving Certificate Applied Entries by County and Gender 2008

County	Female	Male	Total
Carlow	7	15	22
Cavan	17	32	49
Clare	45	48	93
Cork	160	183	343
Donegal	47	84	131
Dublin	495	469	964
Galway	84	88	172
Kerry	42	49	91
Kildare	79	83	162
Kilkenny	31	6	37
Laois	18	9	27
Leitrim	3	13	16
Limerick	100	87	187
Longford	6	27	33
Louth	61	51	112
Mayo	51	92	143
Meath	66	74	140
Monaghan	10	31	41
Offaly	52	53	105
Roscommon	16	15	31
Sligo	17	13	30
Tipperary N.R	21	36	57
Tipperary S.R	43	52	95
Waterford	61	46	107
Westmeath	34	25	59
Wexford	54	91	145
Wicklow	45	38	83
Total			3,475

E. Predicted Junior Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2008

County	Female	Male	Total
Carlow	415	434	849
Cavan	390	440	830
Clare	661	727	1388
Cork	3174	3283	6457
Donegal	1128	1123	2251
Dublin	7048	7315	14363
Galway	1609	1582	3191
Kerry	931	975	1906
Kildare	1232	1393	2625
Kilkenny	524	544	1068
Laois	386	416	802
Leitrim	205	228	433
Limerick	1343	1351	2694
Longford	327	289	616
Louth	854	907	1761
Mayo	966	914	1880
Meath	897	981	1878
Monaghan	466	422	888
Offaly	503	497	1000
Roscommon	304	272	576
Sligo	427	429	856
Tipperary N.R	531	613	1144
Tipperary S.R	551	609	1160
Waterford	736	724	1460
Westmeath	691	696	1387
Wexford	960	961	1921
Wicklow	735	887	1622
Total			57006