

STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

2009 STATE EXAMINATIONS

115,165 Students Sit Exams This Year

Wednesday 3rd June 2009

(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 3rd June 2009, some 115,165 candidates will take their seats at 4,500 examination centres countywide to begin their Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations.

Mr. Dick 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 2009. He said ***“The examinations are an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the range and level of knowledge, skills and competencies they have acquired during their many years of study. I believe that a calm and positive approach together with the support of families, schools and the wider community will help students at this very important time in their lives. I am also confident that the student centred changes to the written timetable which began in 2008 and which will continue this year will help candidates to achieve their full potential. I wish all those sitting State Examinations in 2009 every success.”***

Over the June bank holiday weekend, the 4,500 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 2,000 examiners required to mark the oral and practical tests.

2009 is the second year of a revised written timetable for the Leaving Certificate Examinations. The focus of the changes has been to lessen demand on candidates, particularly in the early days of the examinations with a better balance of papers in subjects with a strong writing requirement and others with a mathematical and scientific basis. The changes to the timetable in 2008 were broadly welcomed by students, teachers, schools and the education partners with most candidates benefiting from a free half day in the first three days of exams. The changes to the 2009 timetable are intended to continue to place the needs of the student at the centre of the examination process.

Another significant development in this year's exams is the first examinations at Leaving Certificate for *Design & Communication Graphics* (which replaces Technical Drawing) and *Technology*. Design & Communication Graphics will be examined on Friday 12th June 2009 with the examination in Technology being held on Friday 19th June 2009. These subjects were introduced to schools for the first time in September 2007 and are part of ongoing curricular developments in technology subjects at senior level.

The examinations run until Thursday 18th June for Junior Certificate subjects and Friday 19th June for Leaving Certificate subjects. The written examinations in the Leaving Certificate Applied programme finish on Thursday 11th June. The results of the Leaving Certificate examinations will be available on Wednesday, the 12th August 2009. Results of the Junior Certificate will be available in mid-September 2009.

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 179 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 2008 examinations involved the following activities and outcomes:

- Providing examinations to **111,483 candidates** across all examination programmes; **55,940** at Junior Certificate, **52,143** at Leaving Certificate, and **3,400** at Leaving Certificate Applied Programme
- Arranging for **examinations** in **89** curricular and **15** non-curricular subjects examination subjects
- Engaging **664 drafters**, setters and translators to develop **254** different test **instruments** – including oral tests, aural recordings, practical briefs, project briefs, portfolio and coursework items as well as the written examination papers
- Producing **3,082,000** examination **papers** made up of **37,106,500** A4 **pages**
- Arranging for the recording of some **89,541** **oral** tests
- Engaging **4,683** **superintendents** to superintend at **4,683** **ordinary examination centres**
- Providing **15,522** **reasonable accommodations** to facilitate candidates with individual needs to access the certificate exams and establishing **7,129** **special examination centres** as a result
- Engaging **6,264** **examiners** to mark the examinations; **4,002** **written** examiners, **1,099** **oral** examiners and **1,163** **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 **961,237** **individual grades** leading to the award of **111,483** **examination certificates**
- Returning **433,212** **marked scripts** to schools for viewing
- Processing some **14,321** **appeals**

Please see our website, www.examinations.ie for further details including 2009 timetables, detailed statistics on examination results for 2001-2009, 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 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 2009 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 2009 Leaving Certificate to the number of candidates that sat these exams in 2008.

Subject	2008 (sits)	2009(entries)
Dutch	28	31
Portuguese	29	56
Polish	171	343
Latvian	50	56
Lithuanian	131	183
Romanian	67	96
Others*	65	101
Total	541	886

Non-Curricular Language Subjects 2008 V 2009

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 2006-2009

B. Number of Candidates Sitting the Certificate Examinations 2006-2008

C. Predicted Leaving Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2009

D. Predicted Leaving Certificate Applied Entries by County and Gender 2009

E. Predicted Junior Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2009

A. Number of Candidates Entered for the Certificate Examinations 2006-2009

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
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
2009	55,383	3,269	56,513	115,165

* LCVP = Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

B. Number of Candidates Sitting the Certificate Examinations 2006-2008

This table compares the numbers of candidates who, ultimately, sat the examinations in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

	Established Leaving Certificate(incl. LCVP)	Leaving Certificate Applied	Junior Certificate	Total
2006	50,955	3,155	57,782	111,892
2007	50,873	3,021	57,287	111,181
2008	52,143	3,400	55,940	111,483

C. Predicted Leaving Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2009

County	Female	Male	Total
Carlow	426	432	858
Cavan	394	359	753
Clare	653	637	1290
Cork	3,267	3,008	6,275
Donegal	1,056	957	2,013
Dublin	7,276	6,933	14,209
Galway	1,651	1,523	3,174
Kerry	976	992	1,968
Kildare	1,132	1,126	2,258
Kilkenny	498	485	983
Laois	382	391	773
Leitrim	260	226	486
Limerick	1,284	1,296	2,580
Longford	288	303	591
Louth	855	907	1,762
Mayo	998	882	1,880
Meath	896	940	1836
Monaghan	438	380	818
Offaly	424	439	863
Roscommon	275	296	571
Sligo	439	441	880
Tipperary N.R	558	511	1,069
Tipperary S.R	577	516	1,093
Waterford	792	821	1,613
Westmeath	782	760	1,542
Wexford	911	854	1,765
Wicklow	693	726	1,419
Counties Total			55,322
Libya	25	36	61
TOTAL	28,206	27,177	55,383

D. Predicted Leaving Certificate Applied Entries by County and Gender 2009

County	Female	Male	Total
Carlow	21	8	29
Cavan	11	19	30
Clare	46	40	86
Cork	162	192	354
Donegal	72	81	153
Dublin	410	417	827
Galway	56	73	129
Kerry	38	44	82
Kildare	69	69	138
Kilkenny	25	9	34
Laois	19	15	34
Leitrim	2	11	13
Limerick	103	76	179
Longford	18	21	39
Louth	64	57	121
Mayo	45	62	107
Meath	51	75	126
Monaghan	21	49	70
Offaly	56	42	98
Roscommon	10	22	32
Sligo	18	23	41
Tipperary N.R	41	46	87
Tipperary S.R	48	38	86
Waterford	44	50	94
Westmeath	29	27	56
Wexford	52	92	144
Wicklow	25	55	80
Total	1,556	1,713	3,269

E. Predicted Junior Certificate Entries by County and Gender 2009

County	Female	Male	Total
Carlow	406	405	811
Cavan	413	408	821
Clare	692	741	1,433
Cork	3,104	3,248	6,352
Donegal	1,093	1,143	2,236
Dublin	7,092	7,437	14,525
Galway	1,402	1,590	2,992
Kerry	866	907	1,773
Kildare	1,237	1,335	2,572
Kilkenny	532	517	1,049
Laois	440	442	882
Leitrim	199	210	409
Limerick	1,286	1,278	2,564
Longford	324	313	637
Louth	908	950	1,858
Mayo	836	953	1,789
Meath	921	930	1,851
Monaghan	410	458	868
Offaly	467	491	958
Roscommon	291	280	571
Sligo	366	438	804
Tipperary N.R	569	569	1,138
Tipperary S.R	495	640	1,135
Waterford	704	815	1,519
Westmeath	697	669	1,366
Wexford	979	984	1,963
Wicklow	786	847	1,633
Total	27,515	28,998	56,513