

STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

PRESS STATEMENT

REPEAT EXAMINATIONS

3rd JUNE 2005

The current timetables for the state examinations takes account of a number of priorities; the most important being the ability of the State Examinations Commission to issue examination results within a tight timeframe. The timetable is finalised following consultation with the Education Partners, including representatives of teacher groups, school management bodies and parents. The State examinations currently operate within the tightest of timeframes and to maximum capacity. Any change to the current scheduling would impact on the ability of the SEC to issue results by the expected date.

The deadline for the issue of the Leaving Certificate results is seven and half weeks from the end of the examinations in June. Releasing the results at this time meets the expectations of examination candidates and also feeds into the college entry process conducted by the Central Applications Office and the college admissions offices. In order to meet the results deadline it is necessary to hold the more popular subjects at the start of the examination schedule. This allows sufficient time to collect and process the examination scripts in these high-volume subjects.

Another issue that is considered is minimising the potential for clashes between subjects in order to allow candidates the best possible curriculum choice. The existing timetable allows the best possible subject choice within the two and a half week examining period. The current schedule also ensures that the majority of students complete their examination at, or before, the end of the second week of the examination period.

As would be expected, the examination schedule must also take account of budgetary considerations. The existing timetable allows for consolidation of examination centres towards the end of the examination period and ensures that examination superintendents are not contracted for longer than necessary.

The SEC values the observations of the TUI on exam related matters and will consider proposals for changes to the timetable that would meet the dual challenge of alleviating the burden, on candidates, of the high-volume examinations at the beginning of the examining period and meeting the expectations of candidates, parents and others that the examination results will be released in sufficient time to facilitate the college entry process.

While every effort is made to minimise the impact of clashes between the timetable and a candidate's choice of subjects, the inevitable consequence of having to schedule examinations in 34 Leaving Certificate subjects in a 13 day examining period is that a small number of candidates will have to spend an extended period under examination in a single day. Alternative arrangements will be made to facilitate the twenty eight

candidates who will be sitting both Applied Mathematics and Agricultural Science on Friday 24th June and this will involve an extended period in the examination centre on that day.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

See our website, www.examinations.ie for further information including 2005 timetables, detailed statistics on examination results for 2001-2004, sample and past examination papers and general information on the organisation and management of the examinations and the State Examinations Commission.

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