

STATE EXAMINATIONS COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Final Certificates of Examination Results 2006-2012

10th April 2013

All examination candidates who sat Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate or Leaving Certificate Applied examinations from 2006 to 2012 will now be able to receive their final certificates of examination results. From today (Wednesday 10th April) the SEC has put in place arrangements so that 790,000 candidates can access their final examination certificates.

Since 2006, candidates at the examinations have received their provisional statements of results but not their final certificates. The last occasion the SEC issued the final certificates to candidates was in 2005. The delay in issuing final certificates occurred as a result of a legal challenge, taken under the Equal Status Act, to the practice of annotating certificates for candidates granted certain exemptions in the examinations. An initial decision of the Equality Tribunal, in November 2006, against annotation of certificates was subsequently overturned on appeal in two higher courts thereby clearing the way for resuming the practice of providing candidates with their final examination certificates.

Speaking on behalf of the Commission, the Chairman, Dick Langford, today said "I regret this unavoidable delay in issuing final certificates to examination candidates due to legal challenges. I am aware that the SEC has issued certified statements of results to the individual candidates who needed them over the past 6 years and am happy that it is possible for all candidates to now receive their final certificates. I would like to thank the staff of the SEC for their significant work in devising these arrangements and school management and leadership bodies for their support in enabling the issue of final certificates to candidates"

From today, Wednesday 10th April, students who sat their Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate or Leaving Certificate Applied in the years 2006 – 2012 can access their final certificates under the following arrangements:

A. Automatic Issue of all 2012 Examination Certificates and 2010 & 2011 Junior Certificates

Certificates for the 2012 Leaving Certificate and the 2010, 2011 and 2012 Junior Certificate examinations have been issued to schools. School authorities, who have always had a role in the provision of final certificates to candidates, have been asked to arrange for onward transmission of the certificates for these three years to their current and former students.

External candidates (i.e. those who were not entered through a recognised second level school) at the 2012 Leaving Certificate have had their certificates issued to their postal addresses.

A total of 227,000 certificates will be issued automatically.

B. On-Demand Issue of all Other Certificates

All other former candidates (i.e. candidates at Leaving Certificates 2006-2011 and Junior Certificate 2006-2009) can apply for their certificates using a new free on-line Certificate Ordering Service on www.examinations.ie. Identity details will be verified through a series of security questions and certificates ordered on-line will be issued by post. Just over 562,000 former candidates are entitled to access their certificates using the free on-line Certificate Ordering Service.

From the 2013 examinations the SEC will be resuming its previous practice for the issue of final certificates, which was to issue the certificates for the preceding year's examinations to schools and external candidates in the first quarter each year.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn, T.D. said, "This is a welcome if overdue development following lengthy legal proceedings and I want to thank the SEC for the work they have done to ensure that nearly 800,000 certificates can now be issued to students to mark the completion of their State Examinations. I'm very glad that from now on, it will be business as usual with students issued with their final certificates of exam results in the first quarter of the following year."

Notes for Editors

Background to the Delayed Issue of Certificates 2006-2012.

In November 2006 the Equality Tribunal delivered its findings in respect of a case against the Minister for Education and Skills concerning two Leaving Certificate candidates who were granted reasonable accommodations exempting them from testing in spelling and grammar in the Leaving Certificate in 2001 and whose Leaving Certificates (language subjects only) were subsequently annotated to reflect that not all elements of the examination had been assessed. The students claimed that the Department had discriminated against them on grounds of their disability contrary to the Equal Status Act and the Equality Tribunal upheld their complaint.

Following this ruling the SEC decided, on legal advice, not to issue examination certificates to candidates pending the outcome of the legal proceedings. The High Court confirmed an earlier judgement of an appeal to the Circuit Court that the actions of the Department of Education and the SEC in annotating certificates where a core element of a subject is not assessed, is permissible under Irish law and is not discriminatory. While a further appeal to the Supreme Court has been lodged, the SEC has obtained legal advice to the effect that, in light of two judicial decisions in favour of the SEC's approach to annotating certificates, it is acceptable to arrange for the issue of examination certificates, including those that have not been issued since the 2006 examinations, and to recommence the arrangements for the routine issue of certificates following the conclusion of each year's examinations.

Throughout the period 2006 to date the SEC has, on request, issued certified statements of results to individual candidates who needed final certification in order to access certain courses of study abroad or for employment.

ENDS

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