

## **CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS**

### **Audio Visual Tests – Use of Digital Video Disks (DVDs) in 2008 and in the future**

#### **TO: THE AUTHORITIES OF POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Each year the State Examinations Commission provides audio visual tests in the subjects Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (Links Modules), Leaving Certificate Applied – English and Communication and An Chúrsa Gaeilge agus Cumarsáid.

In making arrangements for these tests the Commission's objective is to ensure that the best possible sound and picture quality is available to candidates.

The advice from the media industry and feedback from schools, teachers and candidates is that the use of Digital Video Disks (DVDs) as opposed to VHS cassettes will both improve sound and picture quality for candidates and also alleviate possible operational and procurement difficulties associated with cassette players. Each individual DVD produced for use in examinations can provide the examination material in four versions, ie English version, English version with subtitles, Irish version and Irish version with subtitles, in order to meet the varying needs of candidates. In addition, examination DVDs have been designed to be played on a wide variety of software available on personal computers, which may be of assistance to schools when setting up special centres approved by the Commission for candidates for special needs.

Accordingly, and as a further initiative towards improved quality service, the Commission will provide all audio visual examination material on DVD in 2008 and in the future. It is important to note that the Commission will be offering all audio visual tests in DVD format only and not on video cassette in the 2008 State Examinations and in the future.

I am enclosing two copies of a sample DVD containing a copy of the audio visual element of the 2007 LCVP Links Module examination and accompanying copies of the audio visual section of the corresponding written paper to assist schools with simulation tests of examination conditions. I hope the guidelines accompanying this letter and the sample DVD will be of assistance as you plan for this year's examinations.

In making arrangements for the examination sessions containing audio visual elements the overriding objective is to ensure that all candidates can see and hear the film clearly. The attached guidelines restate what already constitutes good practice in most schools.

In addition, superintendents will as heretofore receive instructions regarding the conduct of the audio visual tests. In the case of the Links Module examination in May it is also recommended that school authorities make available the enclosed sample DVD to superintendents, who are appointed by school authorities, to enable them to familiarise themselves in advance with the DVD player and television set to be used in the individual audio visual test. In the case of the Leaving Certificate Applied written examinations in June, the Commission will provide a copy of the sample DVD to superintendents, appointed by the Commission, for this purpose. It is particularly important that the sample DVD be tested in advance on any personal computer proposed for use in a special centre for a candidate with special needs.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your co-operation and assistance in relation to these matters in the past and I trust that the following guidelines, which have been drawn up on the basis of using a DVD player and television set, will assist in ensuring the satisfactory execution of the audio visual tests in your school.

Aidan Farrell  
Director of Operations

February 2008.

## **GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines are intended to assist the satisfactory execution of an audio visual examination component where a television set and a DVD player are used.

### **Equipment**

Ensure that the DVD player, and accompanying remote control, to be used for the Audio Visual component of the examination have the following features in good operational order:

- The **PLAY** and **OK** keys
- All **ARROW** keys
- The **MENU** key
- The **TITLE (TOP MENU)** key
- The **SHUTTLE (FAST FORWARD and REWIND)** keys
- The **PAUSE** key

**It is advisable to insert new batteries in the remote control before the examination commences.**

### **Equipment Use**

1. An advance check or simulation should help to establish the suitability of any room for examination purposes and that the DVD player and television set are in good working order.
2. Very large rooms, halls and gymnasias should not be used unless quality picture and sound is ensured for all candidates.
3. Each candidate should be able to see and hear the Audio Visual presentation clearly.
4. Only one television set should be used per room. We are advised that it is virtually impossible from a technical perspective to attempt to satisfactorily synchronise the playing of two sets. The alternative is to use a second room for a large group.
5. In some instances, schools may decide to augment the sound through the use of amplification. In such cases you should ensure the equipment used is of good quality. It would also be helpful if this equipment was available to you when carrying out a sound check in advance of the tests.
6. In testing sound levels it is recommended that the television volume control should be operated below the maximum sound level possible.
7. External noise should be eliminated to the greatest degree possible for the duration of the Audio Visual test.
8. Every effort should be made to eliminate glare from external and internal sources of light on the television screen.

### **Playing the DVD**

When you insert the DVD the following **TITLE / TOP MENU** will be displayed.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ENGLISH VERSION</b> <b>ENGLISH VERSION with SUBTITLES</b> <b>IRISH VERSION</b> <b>IRISH VERSION with SUBTITLES</b></p>
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This allows you to select the version of the film you require by using the **ARROW** keys and pressing the **OK** key on the remote control.

To assist the efficient administration of the test, each film has been broken down into a number of scenes to allow a superintendent replay, or restart the test from a particular point, should a difficulty arise during the test. Accordingly a **SCENE SELECT** menu, as displayed below, will appear on screen when the version of the test you require has been chosen.



The select button automatically defaults to the **PLAY** button when this menu is opened.

To commence playing of the film in its entirety, press **OK** on the remote control.

If a difficulty arises during the playing of the film which requires a scene to be replayed, you can return to the **SCENE SELECT** menu by pressing the **MENU** key on the remote control.

Use the **ARROW** keys to select the scene you wish to replay and press **OK** on the remote control. The film will play from the start of the selected scene and continue to the end of the test.

If it is necessary to return to the **TITLE / TOP MENU** after the playing of the film has commenced you may do so by pressing the **TITLE / TOP MENU** key on the remote control.

At the end of the examination press the **STOP** key on the remote control.

**N.B. DO NOT PRESS THE STOP KEY WHILE THE FILM IS PLAYING – IF YOU NEED TO PAUSE THE PLAYING FOR ANY REASON PRESS THE “PAUSE” KEY AND THEN “PLAY” WHEN YOU WISH TO RESUME**