



9th March 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope this letter finds you well. Many thanks for your ongoing support and for your cooperation with the HPSC Declaration forms last week. We are delighted to have the students back in class for the remaining nine weeks of school!

The main purpose of this letter is to inform parents/guardians about the award of the *Leaving Certificate* in 2021.

As you are aware, the DE has come up with a dual system of awarding LC Grades in each subject this year. LC Grades will be awarded in each subject on the basis of *either*:

- ✓ Student's performances in Leaving Certificate examinations in any subject taken by them, including, where appropriate, their performance in the completion of additional components (coursework, orals, etc.)

Or

- ✓ SEC Accredited Grades awarded to students in each subject based on schools' estimates of students' likely performance in the 2021 LC examinations and a national standardisation process.

When a student receives their LC results later this year, there will be no distinction between the grades awarded for completion of exams and those awarded for SEC Accredited Grades. The results sheet will look exactly like it has done in previous years. The best combination of results will be transmitted to CAO for processing of offers for third level.

All LC students will have to register their intention to sit the LC exams and/or accept SEC Accredited Grades (on a subject by subject basis) on the *SEC Candidate Self-Service Portal (CSSP)*. The Candidate Self Service Portal (CSSP) will open for this purpose on **Wednesday 10 March at 12 noon and will remain open until 6 pm on Tuesday 16 March**. Candidates will also have to confirm the levels that they intend to take each subject at (regardless of whether they register to sit exams or take Accredited Grades). The portal will reopen at the end of April/beginning of May for candidates to review their choices/levels.

At that time, candidates can also withdraw their intention to take the written examination but they will not be able to indicate their intention to sit examinations after the 16 March 2021.

We strongly advise that all LC students select **BOTH** LC exams and SEC Accredited Grades at this stage i.e. when the portal opens this week. The reason for this advice is as follows:

1. **Students cannot opt in to LC exams at a later date, but they can withdraw!**
2. Further clarification from the Department of Education is expected regarding changes to written exam papers. We expect that these adjustments will make the papers more manageable for many students, e.g. reduction in the number of questions...etc. This guidance is expected the week beginning 22nd March 2021.....after the portal closes for the first time
3. Each year, student understanding of various subjects intensifies at the end of the course.....students generally feel more confident about exams as courses are completed and learning is consolidated
4. By registering for both LC exams and SEC Accredited Grades at this stage, students are keeping their option open!



Please ensure that you discuss the advantages of students keeping their options open for now and please assist your son/daughter with the registration process on the portal. The school has no access to same.

We also advise that all students take the LC Oral exam in Gaeilge and French/Spanish regardless of whether they intend to sit the exam or not. The reason for this advice is as follows:

- ✓ Students who opt for the LC exam must complete the Oral component (this cannot be taken at a later date)
- ✓ The content of the usual Oral exam has been simplified for this year, e.g. only half the number of picture sequences in Irish...etc.
- ✓ Students who opt for SEC Accredited Grades will still need to be assessed in the Oral component. Taking the Oral exams allows the student another opportunity to demonstrate their learning and it provides the teacher with additional, up-to-date data to partly inform the estimated mark that they award.

At present, we are finalising arrangements for the LC Oral exams. We are currently considering the first week of the Easter holidays for Gaeilge orals and the mornings/afternoons/evenings of the first week back after Easter for French/Spanish orals. This is in accordance with DE and union guidance. We will communicate final details to students soon.

The DES has also adjusted closing dates for LC projects/coursework 2021. Please see a list of the revised closing dates below:

Coursework Completion Dates:

Coursework Leaving Certificate 2021	Category	Completion Date	Submission/Marking arrangements
Home Economics	1	Completed	Already submitted and marked.
History	1	April 23	Retained in school. Returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Geography	1	April 23	Retained in school. Returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Agricultural Science	1	April 23	Retained in school. Printed and returned to SEC together with the written script in June
Art	2	May 20	Retained in schools for marking
Construction Studies (project)	2	May 28	Retained in schools for marking
Home Economics (Textile Studies Elective)	2	May 28	Retained in schools for marking

All LC students have received a presentation regarding the LC 2021 options. Further information is also available on examinations.ie and gov.ie. Once again we urge you to discuss LC options with your son/daughter and to assist them in the registration process on the portal so that you are informed about their choices.

Kind regards,

Janice Uí Bhéoláin & Barry O'Higgins