



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit**  
State Examinations Commission

**Corr na Madadh, Baile Átha Luain, Co. na hIarmhí, N37 TP65.**  
Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. N37 TP65.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION IN RELATION TO ONLINE MARKING, EXAMINATION PAPER DESIGN AND STATIONERY DESIGN 2021**

**The purpose of this document is to provide information on:**

1. Roll out of Online Marking in certain Leaving Certificate subjects in 2021.
2. Examination Question Paper Design.
3. Related Examination Stationery Design.

### **1. Roll out of Online Marking in certain Leaving Certificate subjects 2021**

The State Examinations Commission (SEC) successfully used an online marking system to mark certain Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle subjects in 2019 and Leaving Certificate subjects in 2020. This followed a pilot in 2016 and 2017. Online marking facilitates high quality, reliable marking of candidates' examination responses. There are many advantages to online marking both for the examiners and for the examination system as a whole. In particular, marking online allows examiners to focus on the marking itself and not on the administration of the marking. As the calculation and transfer of marks are inherent in the system, online marking greatly reduces the possibility of mistakes being made in mark calculation and transcription.

The Leaving Certificate subjects that will be marked online in 2021 are listed below:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Level</b>
English	Higher
Mathematics	Higher and Ordinary
History (written examination paper and coursework)	Higher
Geography (written examination paper and coursework)	Higher
French	Higher
Biology	Higher and Ordinary
Chemistry	Higher and Ordinary
Physics	Higher and Ordinary
Home Economics (written examination paper)	Higher
LCVP Link Modules (written examination paper)	Common

For the 2022 examinations, the SEC intends to extend online marking to the majority of the remaining Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle subjects. Certain subjects may not be online marked due to low numbers of candidates or for technical reasons.

There is no significant change for candidates. They will still sit their examinations in the normal way. When the scripts are returned to the SEC, the scripts will be scanned, at which point they will become electronic scripts. The paper scripts will continue to be retained. The candidates' electronic scripts will

then be marked by examiners on screen using specially designed software. Before the examinations commence, candidates sitting any of the examinations in subjects which will be marked online should be made aware of the following:

- Candidates should complete their responses in **black or blue pen. Gel pens should not be used.**
- Pencils and coloured pencils may be used for completing diagrams and graphs.
- There are some changes to stationery to facilitate the scanning process, details of which are listed in Section 3 of this document.
- **Candidates should not use correction fluid (such as *Tippex*) on examination material.** Where a candidate makes an error, they should just cross out the error, and continue with their work. This is the case for all subjects, whether they are marked manually or online, as there is a possibility that the cancelled work may merit the award of marks. It should therefore be crossed out but left visible to the examiner.
- Candidates should complete their responses using the spaces provided on the examination paper or in the answerbook as appropriate to the subject to ensure that all of their responses are captured in the scanning process. Anything outside of these areas or in the margins may not be seen by the examiner.

## 2. Examination Question Paper Design

There is no material change to the content of examination papers as a result of them being marked online. The changes described here relate to formatting and appearance only.

Broadly speaking, there are three different formats of examination paper:

- examinations in which the question paper is separate from the generic answerbook or other stationery used.
- examinations consisting of a returnable question-and-answerbook that incorporates all the questions and the spaces for answering them.
- examinations consisting of a returnable question-and-answerbook that incorporates the short answer questions and the spaces for answering them, as well as the lined pages for answering the longer response questions. The longer response questions themselves are presented in a separate question paper.

In relation to the third format listed above, previously these examinations consisted of one part that was a returnable question-and-answerbook and another part that was answered in a separate answerbook. However, as online marking is rolled out in these subjects, this arrangement will change. The returnable question-and-answerbook in these cases will include lined pages for answering the portion that was previously answered in a separate answerbook. This changed arrangement applied to Leaving Certificate Geography, Biology, Business and Home Economics in 2020 and will again for these subjects in 2021. This will eliminate the need for separate stationery in these subjects for the vast majority of candidates, although supplementary 4-page answerbooks will continue to be available to any candidate who runs out of writing space in the book. Where relevant, graph pages and other specialised stationery will be incorporated into the returnable question-and-answerbook. Supplementary stationery will be available to candidates who have used up all such spaces in the returnable answerbook where necessary.

The effect of this change is that, in all cases, candidates will be handing up *either* a returnable question-and-answerbook, *or* an answerbook, but not both.

The following are the online marked subjects which will have a **returnable question-and-answerbook** in 2021:

<b>Leaving Certificate – Returnable Question-and-Answerbook</b>	
Mathematics	LCVP Link Modules
Geography	Biology
French	Home Economics

### **Leaving Certificate Music**

Music will not be marked online in 2021. It is expected to be marked online in 2022. However, the layout of the **Leaving Certificate Music Composing paper** has been changed for the 2021 examinations. Specimen documents have been prepared to illustrate this layout change and are available under Examination Question Paper Design section on the SEC’s webpage on [www.examinations.ie/online-marking](http://www.examinations.ie/online-marking).

### **3. Examination Stationery Design**

The SEC introduced some new stationery for Leaving Certificate examinations in 2020, and will do so again in 2021. Some of this stationery applies to subjects marked online only, and some is replacing existing stationery and is for use in all of the examinations. The new or amended stationery products that will be provided to SEC-appointed superintendents are:

- i. **One new type of generic barcoded answerbook for use in particular subjects:**
  - A new 36-page generic **answerbook** to be used in the examination for the following subjects (some of which are marked online):

<b>Leaving Certificate – Generic Barcoded Answerbook</b>	
Accounting	English
Applied Mathematics	History
Art	Physics
Chemistry	Religious Education
Engineering	

In addition to the front cover and some instructions on page 2, it will have 34 lined pages. Candidates will shade in the subject, level and language version on the front of the answerbook. Accuracy when completing this is vital to ensure that the script is routed to the correct examiners. Please see Appendix 1 for a sample cover.

- ii. **Three types of supplementary paper will replace the existing supplementary paper in all examinations, which are:**
  - A 4-page supplementary answerbook consisting of a cover page and three lined pages.
  - A 4-page supplementary graph paper answerbook consisting of a cover page and three pages of graph paper.
  - A 4-page Accounting stationery answerbook consisting of a cover page and three pages of accounting paper.

As is the case for the returnable question-and-answerbook, the 3 stationery products listed above have been designed to allow sufficient writing space for candidates. In line with the SEC's longstanding instructions in all examinations, Superintendents will not hand out supplementary paper at the start of the examination and are instructed to provide supplementary paper to candidates only when they have used the space in their question paper/main answerbook. However, in the subjects of Chemistry, Physics and Engineering, as the main answerbook does not contain any graph paper, supplementary graph paper will be made available upon request. Equally, the Accounting stationery book too will be made available upon request.

### **Other notable changes that apply to examinations marked online**

- Certain features that facilitate scanning and preparation of scripts for online marking will appear on all pages of all of the examination products that candidates hand up – that is, the returnable question-and-answerbooks, the new answerbooks, and the supplementary stationery. These features are: barcodes, L-shaped marks in the four corners, and 'hatching' along the central spines. Additionally, all of these products have clearly defined areas where candidates' answers are to be written. It is important that candidates confine their work to within these areas and do not stray beyond them into the margins, as this risks their work not being seen by the examiner.
- Candidates will also be required to provide their **Day and Month of Birth** on the front cover along with their examination number. This is to allow the SEC to carry out further reconciliation checks to ensure that candidates have submitted their correct examination number. It is vital that candidates pay particular attention when completing this information on the front of their returnable answerbook, generic answerbook or any other stationery products they use.
- On the new generic barcoded answerbook described in Section 3 above, candidates must also indicate the subject, level and language version (Irish or English) they are using the answer book for by fully shading in the relevant circles on the cover. This must be completed carefully to ensure that the script is presented to the correct examiner for marking.
- Candidates will be required to clearly mark each question number within the answerbook in the space provided and to begin each question on a new page.

To illustrate some of the above features, a sample of a front cover of the generic barcoded answerbook, as it might appear after completion by a candidate, is shown in Appendix 1.

If you have any queries in relation to any of the information contained in this document, please contact us on [onlinemark@examinations.ie](mailto:onlinemark@examinations.ie).


**All of the information detailed here, including samples of all new stationery products, can also be found on [www.examinations.ie/online-marking](http://www.examinations.ie/online-marking).**

Online Marking & Projects Section  
State Examinations Commission  
May 2021

## Appendix 1 – sample completed cover of generic barcoded answerbook

The example below shows a completed cover of a generic barcoded answerbook, used by a candidate with examination number 123456 and whose birthday is 29 April, to answer Leaving Certificate Higher Level History, through English.

Candidates should write their examination number and Day and Month of Birth in a clear and legible manner as demonstrated below.



9999X399X9XL

Leaving Certificate Examination 2021  
Answerbook for use in the subjects listed in  
the table below only.

Scrúdú Ardteistiméireachta 2021 Leabhar  
freagraí le húsáid sna hábhair atá liostaithe  
sa tábla thíos amháin.

Centre Stamp  
Stampa an Ionaid

Shade in fully the circle for the subject, the  
level, and the language (English or Irish) that  
you are answering through.

Scáthaigh an ciorcal go hiomlán le haghaidh an  
ábhair, an leibhéil, agus na teanga (Béarla nó  
Gaeilge) trína bhfreagróidh tú.

Subject <i>Ábhar</i>		Level <i>Leibhéal</i>
Accounting <i>Cuntasáiocht</i>	English Paper 1	Higher <i>Ardleibhéal</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/>
Applied Mathematics <i>Matamaitic Fheidhmeach</i>	English Paper 2	Ordinary <i>Gnáthleibhéal</i> <input type="radio"/>
Art <i>Ealaín</i>	History <i>Stair</i> <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Answered through <i>Freagraíodh trí</i>
Chemistry <i>Ceimic</i>	Physics <i>Fisic</i>	
Engineering <i>Innealtóireacht</i>	Religious Education <i>Diaceachas Reiligiúnach</i>	Gaeilge <input type="radio"/>

Examination Number  
*Scrúdúimhir*


1
2
3
4
5
6

Day and Month of Birth  
*Dáta agus Mí da Bhreithe*

2
9
0
4

For example, 3rd February is 0302  
*Mar shampla, 0302 is ea 3 Feabhra*

Make and model of calculator used  
*Déanamh agus múnla an áireamháin a úsáideadh*



9999X399X9XL0136

Note: Candidates often make a mistake when completing the “Day and Month of Birth” on the front cover of examination stationery. Instead of inserting their own Day and Month of Birth, they commonly insert either the example date provided (0302) or the date on which the examination is being sat. In order to ensure the accurate and speedy processing of results, great care should be taken by candidates when completing all sections on the cover of the examination stationery.