

Important information from the SEC in light of the recently announced period of school closures until 31 January

Key points

1. Coursework

In light of the recent school closure the following should be noted by reference to Circular S64/20:

In relation to Category 1 coursework, which can be completed by candidates at home, subject to appropriate oversight, it is in schools' and candidates' best interests to seek to make progress with the completion of this work over the period of the school closure. While the SEC will allow some additional time for the completion of this work generally by candidates, which will be reflected in the formal completion dates, the SEC believes that it should not be necessary to extend the completion dates to fully take account of the closure period, and indeed it would not be in candidates' best interests, in terms of managing their time for completing the course, to seek to push out these dates many of which do not arise until late March/April.

2. RACE Applications

The closing date for the submission of Junior Cycle RACE applications is 22 January. To enable school authorities to complete the application process including any necessary testing with students, this date is being extended to Friday 26 February. Queries related to RACE Applications should be directed to race@examinations.ie or by phone to 090 644 2781.

3. Entries 2021.

As part of its digital strategy, for the 2021 examinations, the SEC will be asking candidates to confirm their own entry data online through the Candidate Self Service Portal. It is intended that the portal will open for this purpose in mid-February. Candidates will be asked to create their own account and will need their examination number in this process.

4. Planning for examinations

Planning for the 2021 examinations is underway by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and the Department of Education with this work being assisted by an advisory group of key stakeholders including representatives of students, parents, teachers, school leadership and management bodies, the SEC, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education, including the National Educational Psychological Service. The advisory group has been considering the possible arrangements for completion of the various components of the 2021 examinations in the context of the challenges presented by Covid-19. The advisory group will consider all of the various issues arising in relation to the holding of the 2021 examinations, including public health considerations and appropriate contingency measures. As this work is continuing, the SEC is not yet in a position to issue the detailed timetables and schedules of key dates for the forthcoming examinations.

Further information on all of these matters will issue in due course.

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