

Checklist



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A Guide to Calculated
Grades for Leaving
Certificate Students
2020



- ▶ A Calculated Grade is a grade that can be provided to students following the combination of school information about a student's expected performance in an examination and national data available in relation to the performance of students in examinations over a period of time.

What is a Calculated Grade?

A Calculated Grade Results from the combination of two data sets.

A **school-based** estimation of an overall percentage mark and ranking to be awarded to a student in a particular subject.

Data available from the **State Examinations Commission** – this includes data on past performance of students in each school and nationally.

Principles underpinning a system of calculated grades

- ▶ **Teacher Professionalism**
 - ▶ Integrity, Trust, Care & Respect
 - ▶ Objectivity
 - ▶ Fairness & Equity
 - ▶ Collaboration
 - ▶ Timeliness

Key Steps in
the process of
arriving at a
calculated
grade.

A School Based
Phase



A National
Standardisation
Phase

The Role of the School

An estimation of the percentage mark in each subject that each candidate is likely to have achieved if they had sat the Leaving Certificate examination in 2020 under normal conditions

- A class ranking for each student in each subject - i.e. a list of all the candidates for a particular subject in a class in the order of their estimated level of achievement.

The Four Main School- Based Steps

The teacher's estimation of student marks and rankings

School alignment of marks for a subject through a subject alignment group comprising teachers who are teaching the subject to Leaving Certificate students this year

Oversight of the alignment process by the school principal

Transmission of the marks and rankings for national standardisation.

Teacher's Estimation

In this step of the process, the teacher of each Leaving Certificate class will be asked to provide:

1 His/her estimate of the **percentage mark** for his/her subject that each candidate is most likely to have achieved, had he/she sat a Leaving Certificate examination in 2020 as normal

2 A **class rank order** - that is, a list of all the candidates in a class for his/her particular class group in the subject in order of the predicted level of achievement of each candidate.

What informs the teacher's estimated marks and rankings?

Records of each student's performance over the course of study including for example, classwork and homework

Performance on any class assessments for example, house exams, Christmas exams, summer examinations and (with caveats) mock examinations taken over the course of study

Performance on any coursework component, even if this has not been fully completed

Previous results in the school in this subject

The level of performance the teacher has observed in this year's students compared to those in previous years

Any other relevant information related to student performance.

Are Additional Assessment required?

- ▶ The teacher's judgement will be based on evidence of learning and achievement such as that indicated above **up until the point of school closure**. Teachers will **not** set additional assessments for the purposes of determining an estimated percentage mark.

What about work done or not done by students since schools closed in March?

Where additional work has been completed after schools were closed on 13th March, **teachers will be advised to exercise due caution where that work suggests a change in performance.**


In many cases, this is likely to reflect the circumstances and context in which the work is done rather than what might have happened if everything had been normal.

Some Subject Specific Issues

- ▶ Most subjects have more than one examination component –for example, coursework, two written papers, an oral or practical examination.
- ▶ Teachers should give each component its usual weighting for the Leaving Certificate examination and provide a single overall mark for the subject as a whole, not a separate mark for each component.

Languages & Music

When making estimates for language subjects, teachers should base them on the assumption that the oral examination component would have proceeded as usual. Likewise, for Music, teachers should base the estimate on the assumption that the performance test would have proceeded and the candidate performed to their expected standard.



The earlier arrangement (communicated in March) that full marks would be awarded in respect of the orals and music performance tests was predicated on the written examinations proceeding this summer. As the examinations will not proceed that arrangement will not apply.

Subjects with Coursework

- ▶ In the case of coursework that has already been completed, a teacher's overall estimate should incorporate the mark they think that this coursework would have achieved if it had been marked in the usual way.

Fairness & Equity

- ▶ For instance, research shows that teacher estimates of student performance may be affected by the teacher's experience and perceptions of the student's classroom behaviour, or their knowledge about a student's socio-economic or family background.
- ▶ By being alert to this source of unconscious bias, teachers can focus objectively on information that is clearly about attainment in the subject and not about other factors.

Reasonable Accommodation for students with Special Needs.

- ▶ Where any reasonable accommodation has been approved for any student (such as a reader or scribe), the teacher will base the estimate of the student's likely performance on the assumption that this accommodation would have been available.

Students who are new to the class or school

- ▶ If a student has joined the class from another class in the school, the teacher will consult with the previous teacher and get whatever relevant records they have. If the student has joined the class from another school, and if the length of time is such that the teacher considers he/she does not have enough evidence to make a sound judgement, he/she should consult with school management about acquiring additional information from the student's previous school.

- ▶ In this step of the process, subject teachers together review the teachers' estimated scores for students who are taking that subject.
- ▶ Following this element of the alignment process, each teacher will finalise the estimated scores and the rank order of their students in the class.
- ▶ If there is only one teacher of the subject in the school, the subject teacher conducts the in-school alignment process with the Deputy Principal of the school.

School Alignment of Marks.

The purpose of school alignment of marks is to ensure that:



The process of estimating scores and rank ordering students within a class is correctly applied by each teacher



The estimated mark awarded by a teacher and the class rank order correspond exactly with each other

How is the school alignment process organised?

- ▶ Prior to the alignment process, each subject teacher drafts the initial estimated scores and class rank order for each of their students and class groups.
- ▶ A separate rank order will be required for higher, ordinary and foundation levels where relevant.

What happens during the alignment process?

- ▶ A consultative engagement that is inclusive of all the relevant teachers is put in place.
- ▶ The alignment process should be designed in a way that enables group reflection and discussion by the teachers of a particular subject (the subject alignment group) with a focus on ensuring that the process of arriving at estimated marks and rank ordering has been correctly applied and that marks have been properly aligned.

What is the next step in the Alignment Process?

- ▶ Following the consultative engagement, each teacher reviews his/her class group data sets (i.e. estimated marks and rankings), adjusts if necessary, and finalises a completed estimated mark form for each student in the class group.
- ▶ These individual student forms and the completed rank order form for the class group are submitted to the school principal through the subject alignment group as the product of the subject alignment process.

It should be noted that in the course of the process only the class teacher can change the estimated mark or rank order for a class group.

Oversight of the marks/ranking process by the school principal.

- ▶ The third school-based step in the provision of marks and rankings is the oversight of the marks and ranking process by the school principal.
- ▶ In line with the principles of fairness, equity and objectivity, the principal reviews the process applied to the collection of data to assure the fair treatment of individual students and to ensure that a uniformity of standard is applied within the school and in situations where more than one class group is entered for a subject.
- ▶ In this regard, the principal will ensure that different teachers of the same subject within the school are applying similar standards.

Steps taken by Principal in overseeing marks/ranking process:

- ▶ Reviews the data sets submitted to him/her by the subject alignment groups
- ▶ Assures himself/herself of the fairness of the processes to that point
- ▶ Where it appears that an anomaly or error has arisen, returns a data set for further review to the subject alignment group.
- ▶ In such circumstances, the principal does not have a role in altering a student's estimated mark or rank; his/her role is to return the queried marks/rankings to the subject alignment group for further review.

What are the grounds on which a principal may return data sets for further review?



There was a procedural flaw in the process up to this point - for example a misalignment between the estimated mark and the rank order for a class group



There were unexplained inconsistencies in the data sets submitted following the subject alignment stage



There is persuasive evidence that a student's estimated mark is inconsistent with the school's information on the student's achievement from a range of sources



There is evidence of lack of objectivity (bias, discrimination) in the procedures as applied.

Transmission of
estimated
marks and
rankings for
national
standardisation

- ▶ The finalised data sets are submitted to the DES by the principal (ideally by end May 2020).

How will the State Examination Commission data be used in the process?

The school-sourced data will be combined with historical data available from the SEC through a process called standardisation in order to generate the calculated grade for the students in the subject.



This standardisation process will bring the two data sets into alignment with each other and will be used to ensure the calculated grades reflect standards that are properly aligned across schools and with a common national standard.

What happens to the school data in this process?

The rank order within the class group is preserved in the statistical process. However, the teachers' estimated marks from each school will be adjusted to bring them into line with the expected distribution for the school.

Each school's expected distributions will be arrived at from the statistical analysis of all the historic SEC datasets.

The relevant State Examinations Commission data sets that support the process include mark data at:



Processing the school level data

- ▶ In advance of receiving the estimated marks from schools, a detailed analysis on a subject-by-subject and school-by-school basis as to how students from each school have performed in that subject in the recent years will be completed as part of the national standardisation process.
- ▶ Estimated marks and class rank orders will be collected from schools. The preliminary calculated expected distribution of marks for the school will be used to adjust the estimated marks submitted by the school, in the standardisation process. In arriving at this distribution account will be taken of prior performance data for the school and candidates in the 2020 cohort.

Issuing of calculated grades

- ▶ After the standardisation process, the calculated marks will be converted into calculated grades, and these grades will be issued to candidates. The calculated grades will be expressed in the same manner as currently applies to Leaving Certificate grades – H1 etc.
- ▶ The provisional results will issue in early September (date to be confirmed closer to the time), will be transmitted to the CAO system and certification will issue in due course.

No Discussion of Grades

The mark assigned by the school is not necessarily the final mark that the student will receive and it would therefore be misleading for the student to receive that mark before the calculated grade processes are complete

- Allowing access to and discussion of estimated grades before the calculated grades process is complete would interfere with the process being carried out properly and fairly. If teachers discussed the marks with some students but not others, or if some teachers did this and others did not, these discussions might actually influence (consciously or unconsciously) or be represented or construed as influencing the mark the teacher submits to the subject alignment group.

Appeals - to appeal his/her calculated grades.



The appeal process will include a three-stage process involving:



A series of checks that data was correctly entered at school level and correctly transferred to the DES



A review that the data was correctly received and processed by the DES

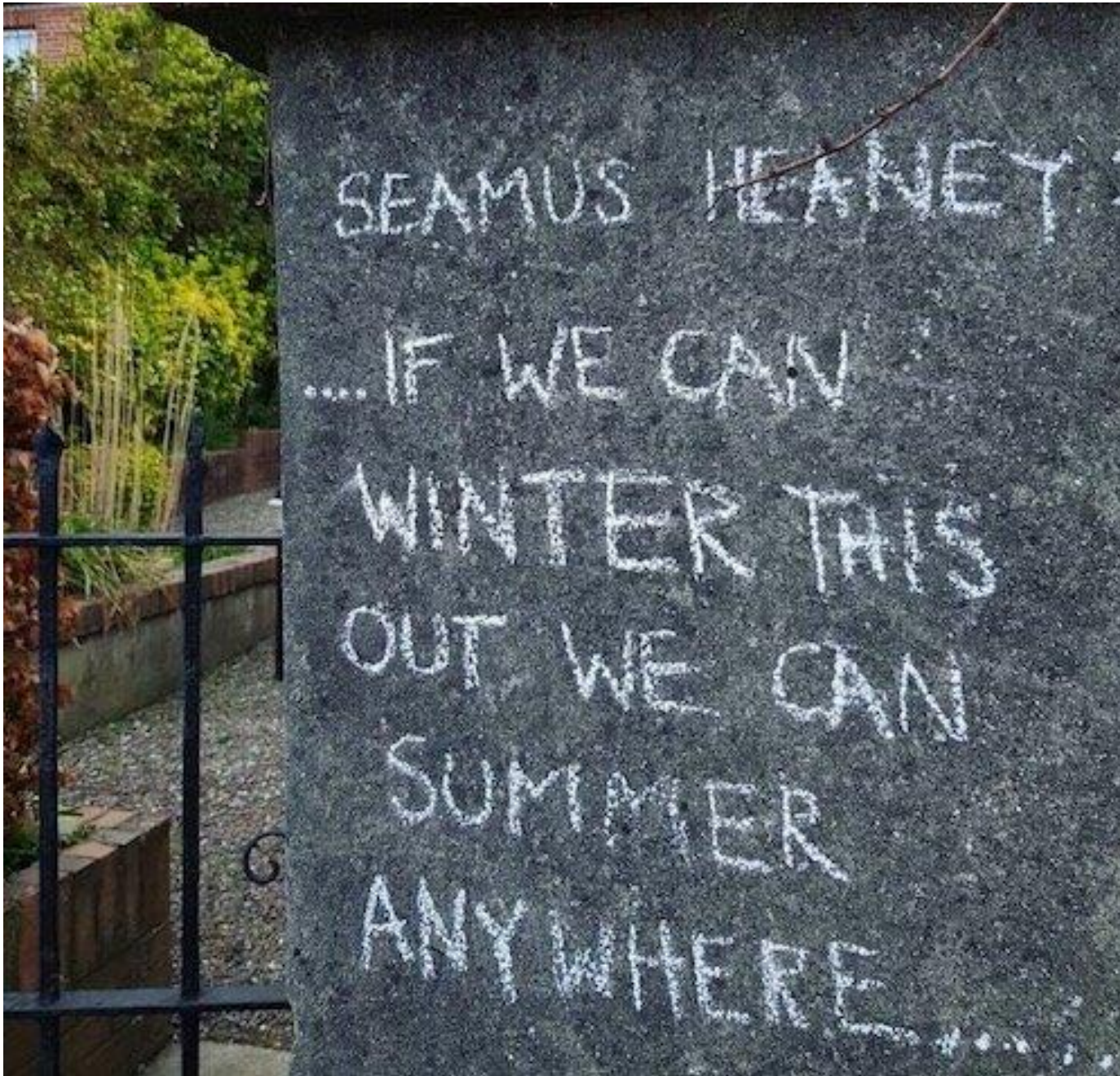


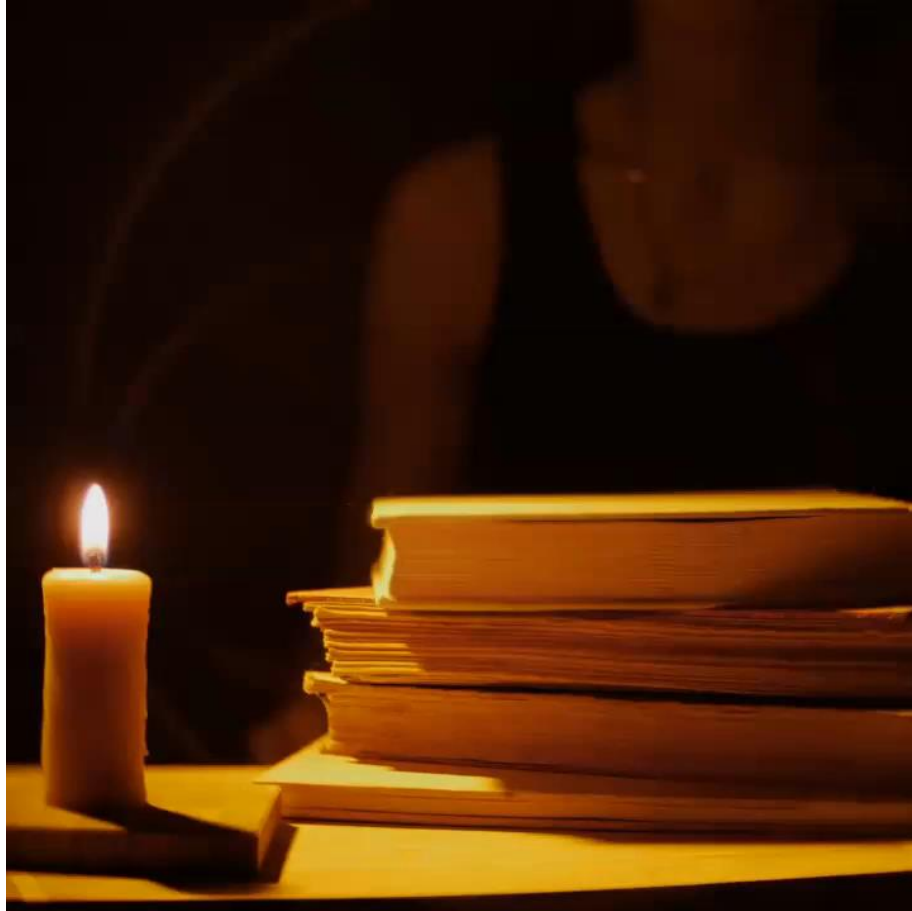
If a candidate remains dissatisfied after notification of outcome of the above two stages, verification of the DES processes by independent appeal scrutineers

Sitting the Leaving Certificate at a later stage

Finally, candidates who remained unhappy with the outcome of the calculated grade awarded would have the opportunity to sit a normal Leaving Certificate written examination in the subject(s) when the holding of conventional examinations becomes possible. If a candidate sat such an examination and achieved a higher grade than his/her calculated grade:

- ▶ the stated results provided to the candidate would be amended
- ▶ if the improvement in the candidate's grade meant that he/she would have been entitled to a higher offer of a CAO course, he/she would be facilitated in taking up that place as soon as practicable.





Message from
Chantelle
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