



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Guide to Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021

for

(a) Out-of-School Subjects, and

(b) Out-of-School Learners

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NB: The particulars of the arrangements and processes outlined in this Guide are subject to change on technical, policy or other appropriate grounds. It is the responsibility of the reader to ensure that they have the most up-to-date version of the Guide which will be available at www.gov.ie

1. Introduction

A Guide to State Examinations and Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021 (February 2021) sets out the overall context and decisions made with respect to Leaving Certificate 2021. In summary, Leaving Certificate 2021 results will be awarded on the basis of the better of

either

Students' performance 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 estimates of students' likely performance in the 2021 examination and a national standardisation process¹

There are two broad categories of out-of-school candidates for whom some special arrangements need to be provided.

- **Out-of-School Subjects** refers to students who are enrolled in, and studying in, a school on a full time basis but are also studying an extra subject, or subjects, entirely outside of school. Students who are studying a subject in school but getting some extra tuition outside of school are not included in this category: they can only get an estimated mark from their fulltime teacher.
- **Out-of-School Learners** refers to students who are entered for the examinations as external candidates and who are not attending for fulltime tuition at any school, or private college, recognised by the State Examinations Commission. This category includes students who are being home schooled.

Every effort will be made to provide Accredited Grades to as many students as possible, provided that there is evidence, on which an estimated percentage mark can be based. However, in the absence of such evidence, it may not be possible to provide an accredited grade. **If you have any concerns that you might fall into this category, then you are strongly urged to sit the June examinations as there is no guarantee that it will be possible to provide Accredited Grades to you.**

¹ Further information on the standardisation process will be provided in the *Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021: Guide for Schools on Providing Estimated Percentage Marks* (forthcoming)

The purpose of this guide is to set out the processes for those in either of the above categories to apply to be considered for Accredited Grades in a way which is fair to you and to all students and which does not undermine the integrity of the overall approach.

This Guide is primarily addressed to students in either of the above two categories.

In the interest of equity and fairness to all, it is essential that the principles underpinning the process of arriving at an Accredited Grade for students taking an extra subject, or subjects, out of school, and for out-of-school learners, mirrors as much as possible the process that applies to all other students entered for the 2021 Leaving Certificate examinations. To this end, a set of principles to underpin the Accredited Grades model for these particular groups of students has been developed.

Principles underpinning an Accredited Grades system

The system of Accredited Grades for out-of-school subjects and learners is underpinned by the following key principles, which mirror the principles underpinning the in-school process, as much as is feasible, given the different contexts of both groups of students.

Fairness and equity: The system for Accredited Grades for out-of-school subjects and learners must seek to ensure fairness and equity within these groups but also in relation to all other Leaving Certificate students. The arrangements must be as consistent as possible with the general system to ensure fairness and equity.

Objectivity: The mechanism for the provision of estimated marks must be objective in the assessment of a student's expected performance. In the case of out-of-school subjects and learners, there must be evidence as similar as possible to the evidence required for the in-school process in order to underpin and support the judgments that are made. All involved must ensure that no bias, unconscious or otherwise, influences the decisions made in relation to a student's expected performance.

Connection with formal education and teacher professionalism: The credibility and integrity of the system as it is articulated for the majority of students is based on the principles which are drawn from the professional code of practice of the Teaching Council. In no small measure, the integrity of the entire process is based on the premise that members of this regulated profession can be relied upon to uphold relevant professional standards. The in-school Accredited Grades process is assured through layers of oversight involving individual subject teachers, alignment meetings of teachers, and school/centre management. Consideration of out-of-school subjects and learners in this process requires reliance on alternative forms of oversight and assurance, chief

amongst which is a reliance on registered teachers/tutors² to use their professional judgement to arrive at an estimated mark.

Collaboration: In the case where more than one person is involved in the estimation process there will be a collaborative approach. In the case of out-of-school subjects and learners, collaboration of out-of-school teachers/tutors with in-school personnel will also be an essential part of the estimation process.

Timeliness: It is important to ensure that the arrangements for the Accredited Grades system for all students is completed on time to issue results at the same time as for all other students.

² For the purposes of the Accredited Grades system for Leaving Certificate 2021, the term 'registered teacher/tutor' is taken to mean a person who must be

- Currently registered as a teacher with the Teaching Council of Ireland, or
- Have previously been registered with the Teaching Council of Ireland and not have been removed from the register for cause such as professional misconduct, or
- Teaching in a centre for education recognised by the Minister for Education
- Teaching in a centre recognised by the SEC for examination purposes.

2. Roles and responsibilities

This Section describes the roles and responsibilities which must be carried out by

1. Panel of registered teachers/tutors
2. Principal/manager/coordinator
3. Teacher/tutor
4. Student
5. Accredited Grades Aide

2.1 Panel of registered teachers/tutors from school³ staff (who agree to review the evidence provided either by a student or an external teacher/tutor)

- A panel of three registered teachers/tutors will be appointed by the school principal. The panel shall include two core members (e.g. the deputy principal and year head for sixth year) who will be involved in the review of all cases. The third member of the panel should be chosen so as to provide a balance of expertise across the curriculum. Normally, panel members will be serving teachers/tutors in the school but if necessary a panel member may be sourced elsewhere (e.g. from former staff, or staff from other schools). The principal of the school, or the coordinator/manager of the centre, shall not be a member of the panel. Participation on the panel is voluntary.
- Be familiar with all guidelines, training materials, etc., provided to support the provision of estimated marks
- Cooperate with the principal and Accredited Grades (AG) Aide in implementing necessary procedures
- Review the evidence provided by either the student or a nominated external teacher/tutor
- Collaborate in professional dialogue, including with external teachers/tutors if necessary, regarding the evidence reviewed and the estimated marks assigned to candidates.
- Use their professional judgement, drawing on the evidence provided by the student or external teacher/tutor to arrive at an estimated mark which will be provided to the principal/coordinator/manager
- Implement any protocols required to cross-check clerical work in order to safeguard against numerical and transfer errors.

³ Throughout this Guide, the term “school” includes: a recognised school or centre for education, recognised by the Minister for Education under the provisions of the Education Act, 1998, and a centre recognised by the SEC for examination purposes.

2.2 Principal/manager/coordinator (of a recognised school or centre for education or centre recognised by SEC for purposes of holding examinations)

- Provide overall oversight of the process by which estimated marks are submitted for students studying subjects out of school and out-of-school learners
- Where required⁴, as set out above, shall establish a panel of three registered teachers to provide professional judgements regarding estimated marks for students studying subjects out of school or out-of-school learners
- Support the implementation of those procedures which students studying subjects outside of school and students who are out-of-school learners will be required to follow in order to be considered for an estimated mark in the Accredited Grades process
- Facilitate external candidates who are out-of-school learners to connect with and use the school as a host school/centre for the purposes of receiving Accredited Grades
- Review the process applied to the collection of data for individual students to assure that the appropriate procedures were followed
- When satisfied that correct procedures have been followed, oversee the submission of data.

⁴ A panel will be required if there are any students in the school studying a subject outside of school and/or if any out-of-school learners have applied to use the school as a host school.

2.3 Teacher/tutor providing tuition to students studying subjects out of school or to out-of-school learners

- Cooperate with the school/centre which is implementing the processes for the submission of estimated marks on behalf of his/her students
- Share details of their own qualifications and experience including proof of their registration status with the school/centre (e.g. e-cert from Teaching Council or letter from manager/coordinator if working in a centre for education recognised by the Minister for Education)
 - If a registered teacher/tutor, use their professional judgement, drawing on existing records and available evidence, to put forward an estimated mark following all of the guidance and requirements set out by the Department/SEC; and cooperate, if required, at the discretion of the panel of registered teachers, in professional discussions and review of such evidence and estimated mark
 - If not a registered teacher/tutor, provide evidence of the relevant student's learning, suggest an estimated mark, and cooperate, if necessary, in professional discussions and review of the evidence being put forward to support the provision of an estimated mark

(Note: further guidance on the provision of evidence is provided in Section 7)

2.4 Student

Note: If you have any concerns regarding your ability to engage in the steps set out in this Guide, you are strongly advised to sit the June examinations.

- Continue to engage with the usual study and preparations for Leaving Certificate 2021
- If you are enrolled as a student in a recognised second-level school or in a recognised centre for education, and are studying an additional subject or subjects entirely out of school, you should inform your school that you are studying some subjects outside of school and that you will require the school to provide oversight of the submission of estimated marks on your behalf
- If you are an out-of-school learner, you must connect with a recognised school/centre which will provide oversight of the submission of estimated marks on your behalf
- As you study, keep examples of your work in each subject so that you will have evidence of your learning to support the provision of an estimated mark for the Accredited Grades process
- Cooperate with the school/centre when requested to provide information on, or evidence of, your learning

- If engaged in tuition, you will have to provide the contact details of the relevant teachers/tutors to the school/centre
- If not engaged in tuition, you will have to provide evidence of your learning⁵ to the school/centre.

(Note: further guidance on the provision of evidence is provided in Section 7)

2.5 Accredited Grades Aide *(the duties of the Accredited Grades Aide will be elaborated further in a circular, similar to the 2020 Circular 0039/2020)*

- Assist with the administration of the required procedures including liaising with:
 - students with respect to submission of information and evidence for consideration by the panel of registered teachers
 - external teachers/tutors with respect to submission of evidence and suggested estimated marks for consideration by the panel of registered teachers
 - the panel of registered teachers, with respect to the sharing of information and evidence provided by students and external teachers/tutors
 - the principal/coordinator/manager, with respect to the submission of estimated marks.

⁵ Evidence can only be provided in written format and at the candidate's own expense. Schools will retain the evidence submitted by candidates.

3. How do I get an accredited grade if I am studying subjects entirely outside of school? (Out-of-School Subjects)

Step-by-step guide for all subjects other than non-curricular languages.

(For students studying non-curricular languages, see section 5)

If you have any concerns regarding your ability to engage in the these steps, you are strongly advised to sit the June examinations.

1. You will have already registered on the Leaving Certificate Candidate Self Service Portal (CSSP) 2021 and applied to receive an accredited grade in your chosen subjects.
2. Let your school principal/coordinator know in writing⁶ that you are studying some subjects entirely outside of school as soon as possible. You should look for written confirmation from the school that your notification that you are studying some subjects outside of school has been received.
3. Your school will appoint an Accredited Grades (AG) Aide who will administer the Accredited Grades process. The school will also appoint a panel of registered teachers who will use their professional judgement to reach estimated marks for you by reviewing whatever evidence is available, and liaising with external teachers/tutors if necessary. The school principal/coordinator will provide oversight to ensure that all processes have been followed as per the guidelines.
4. The AG Aide will contact you in early May and request you to provide certain information on, or evidence of, your learning in the subjects that you are studying outside of school before 14 May 2021. An essential element of such evidence gathering will be the details of any person providing you with tuition outside of school.
5. If you are engaged in tuition outside of school, you will be asked to provide the contact details of the person providing you with tuition outside of school. You should seek the permission of the person providing you with tuition outside of school to pass on their contact details and you should inform them that they will be required to cooperate with the school in the process of reaching an estimated mark for you in the relevant subject.

⁶ Standard forms will be provided to assist in this process

6. If the person providing you with tuition outside of school is a registered teacher/tutor, they will be asked to review, and share, the evidence of your learning available to them and to provide an estimated mark on your likely performance in the subject. They will be required to cooperate with the panel of registered teachers in the school who may contact them to discuss the basis for the estimate that they have provided. The final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school. The external teacher/tutor will also be expected to provide proof of their registration status, where applicable. Following completion of these steps, the panel of registered teachers will provide your estimated mark to the principal/coordinator.
7. If the person providing you with tuition outside of school is a not a registered teacher/tutor, they will be asked to review, and share, the evidence of your learning available to them and to cooperate with the panel of registered teachers from the school in reaching their estimation of your likely performance in the subject. The external teacher/tutor will be asked to suggest an estimated mark on your likely performance in the subject but the final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school. Following completion of these steps, the panel of registered teachers will provide your estimated mark to the principal/coordinator.
8. If you are not engaged in tuition outside of school, you will be asked to provide written evidence of your learning to the relevant AG Aide, for review by a panel of registered teachers from the school. You should not make direct contact with the panel of registered teachers yourself. The final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school. Following completion of these steps, the panel of registered teachers will provide your estimated mark to the principal/coordinator.
9. If for some reason, the external teacher/tutor does not engage with the panel of registered teachers you will be informed of this by the AG Aide and given an opportunity to submit written evidence.
10. You will be notified by the school if the panel of registered teachers determines for some reason that it is not possible to submit an estimated mark for you.

If you have any concerns regarding your ability to engage in the above steps, you are strongly advised to sit the June examinations.

4. How do I get Accredited Grades if I am not attending any school or centre of learning? (Out-of-School Learners)

Step-by-step guide for Out-of-School Learners (For students studying non-curricular languages, see section 5)

If you have any concerns regarding your ability to engage in the these steps, you are strongly advised to sit the June examinations.

1. You will have already registered on the Leaving Certificate Candidate Self Service Portal (CSSP) 2021 and applied to receive an accredited grade in your chosen subjects.
2. You must find a host school, or host centre of learning, recognised by the SEC for the purpose of holding examinations, to oversee the submission of estimated marks on your behalf⁷. The host school/centre will be the school, or centre of learning, where you had arranged to sit the written examinations in June.⁸
3. Your host school/centre will appoint an Accredited Grades (AG) Aide who will administer the Accredited Grades process. The school will also appoint a panel of registered teachers who will use their professional judgement to reach estimated marks for you by reviewing whatever evidence is available, and liaising with external teachers/tutors if necessary. The school principal/coordinator will provide oversight to ensure that all processes have been followed as per the guidelines.

⁷ Out-of-school learners should notify their host school in writing that they wish to be considered for accredited grades: they should also inform the host school of their examination number and the subjects they are entered for in the examinations. The host school will require proof of their identity. Standard forms will be provided to assist in this process

⁸ A small number of students have been assigned to take their examinations in June at either Overend Hall or Marino Centre of Education in Dublin as they do not have a host school for the written examinations. This is sufficient for the examinations. However, if you are one of these students and wish to receive Accredited Grades, you should contact a recognised school/centre and ask them to accept you for the Accredited Grades process set out in this Guide. The Department of Education will contact you for details of this school in due course. Please do not contact the SEC as they do not have a role in finding schools for this purpose.

4. The AG Aide will contact you in early May and request you to provide certain information on, or evidence of, your learning in the subjects that you are studying outside of school before 14 May 2021. An essential element of such evidence gathering will be the details of any person providing you with tuition outside of school.
5. If you are receiving tuition, you will be asked to provide the contact details of the person/s providing you with that tuition. You should seek the permission of the person/s providing you with tuition to pass on their contact details and you should inform them that they will be required to cooperate with the host school in the process of reaching estimated marks for you in the relevant subjects.
6. If the person providing you with tuition outside of school is a registered teacher/tutor, they will be asked to review, and share, the evidence of your learning available to them and to provide an estimated mark on your likely performance in the subject/s. They will be required to cooperate with the panel of registered teachers in the school who may contact them to discuss the basis for the estimate that they have provided. The final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school. The external teacher/tutor will also be expected to provide proof of their registration status, where applicable. Following completion of these steps, the panel of registered teachers will provide your estimated mark to the principal/coordinator.
7. If the person providing you with tuition outside of school is a not a registered teacher/tutor, they will be asked to review, and share, the evidence of your learning available to them and to cooperate with the panel of registered teachers from the school in reaching their estimation of your likely performance in the subject. The external teacher/tutor will be asked to suggest an estimated mark on your likely performance in the subject/s but the final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school. Following completion of these steps, the panel of registered teachers will provide your estimated mark to the principal/coordinator.
8. If you are not engaged in tuition outside of school, you will be asked to provide written evidence of your learning to the relevant AG Aide, for review by a panel of registered teachers from the school. You should not make direct contact with the panel of registered teachers yourself. The final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school. Following completion of these steps, the panel of registered teachers will provide your estimated mark to the principal/coordinator.
9. If for some reason, the external teacher/tutor does not engage with the panel of registered teachers you will be informed of this by the AG Aide and given an opportunity to submit written evidence.

10. You will be notified by the school if the panel of registered teachers determines for some reason that it is not possible to submit an estimated mark for you.

If you have any concerns regarding your ability to engage in the above steps, you are strongly advised to sit the June examinations.

5. How do I get Accredited Grades if I am studying a non-curricular language?

The Leaving Certificate non-curricular languages are:

Bulgarian	Finnish	Polish
Croatian	Hungarian	Portuguese
Czech	Latvian	Romanian
Danish	Lithuanian	Slovakian
Dutch	Maltese	Slovenian
Estonian	Modern Greek	Swedish

If you are studying one of these languages outside of school, then special arrangements have been made to enable you to request and receive an Accredited Grade for these subjects in Leaving Certificate 2021. These arrangements recognise:

- that the Leaving Certificate examinations in these subjects are primarily designed for students for whom these languages are heritage/home languages
- that students taking the examinations are not required to study any prescribed curriculum but instead rely on their general competence in their heritage/home language
- that students taking these subjects are unlikely to, or may not, have any consistent records or evidence of their learning on which Accredited Grades could be based
- that very few registered teachers of these languages are available in the Irish educational system
- that Accredited Grades for these subjects should be made available to as many students as possible, based on reliable evidence

Step-by-step guide:

If you have any concerns regarding your ability to engage in these steps, you are strongly advised to sit the June examinations.

1. In order to give students an opportunity to provide evidence of their learning in a non-curricular language, the Department of Education will arrange for a written proficiency assessment in the language to be held on a date in early May in schools throughout the country. This assessment will be open to all students of non-curricular languages who are registered for that language in the Leaving Certificate 2021. There will only be one opportunity to complete the proficiency assessment: if you are unable to take this assessment for any reason, you will be unable to receive an Accredited Grade in the subject and you must sit the June examination to ensure that you obtain a grade for your non-curricular language in Leaving Certificate 2021.
2. The written proficiency assessment is intended to be similar in format to in-class assessments that teachers might use in other subjects to inform their estimated marks for students. The assessment will likely be 1 to 1½ hours in duration, but, further information and clarification on the format and duration of the proficiency assessment will be provided later.
3. The completed proficiency assessments will be returned to a central location, organised by the Department of Education, and arrangements made for them to be marked. The marks achieved in the proficiency assessments will be used to inform an Accredited Grade for you for in your non-curricular language.
4. If you complete the written proficiency assessment in May, you will be eligible to receive an Accredited Grade. If you sit the written examination in June, you will be eligible to receive a grade in the Examination. When Leaving Certificate results are issued, your results will be based on the better of:
 - Your Accredited Grade (only available if you take the proficiency assessment in May)OR
 - Your Examination Grade (only available if you sit the written examination in June)

6. Accredited Grades: comparison of process for in-school and out-of-school students



7. What evidence might be required for consideration in estimating marks?

7.1 If you are providing tuition to a student

Teachers/tutors providing tuition to students studying subjects out-of-school and to out-of-school learners will be required to review the evidence of students' learning available to them and to either provide, or suggest, an estimated mark on their likely performance in the relevant subject/s. They will also be required to share that evidence if required and cooperate with the panel of registered teachers in the school who may contact them to discuss the basis for the estimate that they have provided. The final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school.

When considering what evidence might be required for consideration in estimating marks, teachers/tutors are asked to read and familiarise themselves with the guidance documents relating to SEC Accredited Grades 2021, of particular importance and support will be:

- *A Guide to State Examinations and Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021 (February 2021): Section 6*
- *Supporting Teaching, Learning and Assessment in the Context of Accredited Grades 2021* (publication forthcoming)
- *Accredited Grades for Leaving Certificate 2021: Guide for Schools on Providing Estimated Percentage Marks* (publication forthcoming)

Teachers/tutors are asked to use their professional judgement, drawing on available evidence, to arrive at an estimated percentage mark for each student seeking an Accredited Grade. The assessment of students' learning should reflect the aims and learning outcomes of specifications and syllabuses as relevant.

In reaching their estimate in subjects with more than one assessment component, teacher/tutors will have regard to the written examination and the additional component. The estimation will also take into consideration the appropriate weightings for all of the components. Teachers'/tutors' knowledge and experience of the curriculum and the examination are essential to this process of arriving at the estimated mark.

Teachers/tutors should use a range of evidence to support their judgment-making when estimating students' marks. It may include both formative and summative assessment activities undertaken during the course of study. When considering what evidence to use, it is very important that it is only evidence that relates to student performance that is considered.

When trying to decide whether or not a particular form of supporting evidence should be considered, ask yourself:

- Does the evidence relate specifically to the student's performance and achievement?
- Can the evidence be accessed?
- Is it feasible to consider this evidence in the time available?
- Is this evidence likely to improve the quality of the professional judgment made?

The following should be considered:

- The estimation of students' marks should be based on the assumption that students had continued their programme of learning, and that students had finished out any relevant coursework components, oral assessments and practical examinations, and had taken their 2021 examinations in the adjusted formats devised for 2021. More details on the adjustments made to the 2021 examinations are available at www.gov.ie
- Estimation should take account of evidence about student performance from both summative and formative assessment activities. The knowledge and experience that teachers/tutors have of the curriculum and the examination are essential to this process. Judgments should draw on existing documentation and other available evidence, and should have regard to any reasonable accommodations that apply in the case of particular students.

Professional judgment may be informed by:

Records of performance over the course of study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of evidence • May vary from subject to subject • Extended assignments, projects, and experiments completed as part of normal learning activities
Performance on assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic tests, end-of-topic test, previous exam questions, extended essay questions, etc. • Take into account the quality of each test, the level of difficulty and the purpose that it was designed to serve

<p>Appropriately weight all components (written, oral, practical, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The estimated mark is a single combined mark for all components of the examination (written, oral, aural, practical, and coursework), with each component contributing its normal weighting
<p>Performance on coursework components, even if not complete</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to subjects that include a coursework component • Consider quality of engagement and quality of any work done
<p>Any other relevant information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects or activities a particular student did that enhanced his/her knowledge and understanding of the subject, improving likely performance

Teachers'/tutors' knowledge and experience of the curriculum and the examination are essential to this process of arriving at the estimated mark. The range of evidence that teachers will draw on may include both formative and summative assessment activities undertaken. In coming to their judgements, teachers/tutors should draw on existing records and available evidence. It is important that the judgements are objective, and they should only take account of information about individual student's performance up to the 14 May.

Relevant evidence may include course work and/or notes which represent engagement with the subject syllabus or specification by the student. Other evidence could include project work; portfolio work; or other written assignments/tasks that were completed by the student. This list of evidential items is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, but merely serves to exemplify some of the evidence base which can be used to support the determination of an estimated mark.

Teachers/tutors should reach an "on-balance" judgement in relation to a student's expected performance and an occasional dip or peak in a student's performance should not be treated as indicative of overall performance.

7.2 If you are a member of the Panel of Registered Teachers

The panel of registered teachers will consider all marks suggested by external teachers/tutors and will review all evidence brought before it when deciding on an estimated mark. The final estimated mark will be determined by the panel of registered teachers in the school. The estimated mark will be presented in the form of a percentage

score and may range from 0% to 100% depending on the evidence presented. Standard forms will be provided to maintain a record of the work of the panel.

In situations where no evidence is provided, (e.g. the student and/or the external teacher/tutor does not engage with the process) the panel will be unable to submit any mark on behalf of the student. In these cases, the AG Aide should inform the student so that they have an opportunity to present evidence in advance of the completion of the process. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that evidence is provided to the panel of registered teachers before the process is completed.

7.3 If you are a student

Most students studying subjects outside of school or who are out-of-school learners will have a person providing tuition to them. Those persons will be requested to provide evidence for review by the panel of registered teachers.

However, some students may not have a teacher/tutor outside of school. In other cases, their teacher/tutor may not engage with the Accredited Grades process. In these cases, students will be required to provide written evidence of their learning for review by the panel of registered teachers. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that evidence is provided to the panel of registered teachers in a timely manner. When submitting such evidence, students should be mindful of the guidance provided to teachers (see section 7.1 above) and seek to provide similar evidence to the panel. The evidence that students choose to submit should illustrate their learning with respect to the aims and learning outcomes of specifications (curriculums) and syllabuses as relevant. The evidence submitted will be retained by the school.

8. Other General Issues

Registered teacher/tutor

A key element of the process by which students can access Accredited Grades is the role of the registered teacher. Involvement of a registered teacher ensures the involvement of a person with appropriate qualifications, who has signed up to a code of professional conduct applicable to the profession. The involvement of the registered teacher/tutor ensures that the estimated mark has been arrived at through the professional judgement of someone who has knowledge of the education and examination systems as a result of their experience as a teacher.

The requirement for the involvement of a registered teacher/tutor is common to both the in-school processes and those applied to out-of-school subjects and out-of-school learners. This commonality provides an assurance of equity to all candidates no matter which route they follow. It also avoids the unfairness which would arise from estimating marks based on unreasonably different ranges of evidence.

Teachers providing estimated marks for students studying subjects outside of school, or to out-of-school learners, will be required to provide proof of their registration details to the school submitting the estimated marks as part of the Accredited Grades process. Teachers in recognised centres of learning such as VTOS or Youthreach will simply need to provide proof of their employment in such centres.

Conflict of Interest

To uphold the integrity of the process, it will not be possible, under any circumstances, to accept an estimated mark from a teacher or tutor who is closely related to a candidate (including a brother, sister, parent, spouse, etc.). This would be a direct conflict of interest and accepting estimated marks from a family member would undermine the credibility of the process. In this situation, the student will have to submit written evidence of their learning to the AG Aide, for review by the panel of registered teachers from the school. A Conflict of Interest declaration must be completed by all those submitting an estimated mark.

Timelines

Designated timeframes have been set for the in-school processes associated with the estimation and alignment of estimated marks for candidates studying subjects out of school and students studying entirely out of school:

- ❖ Phase 1:
 - Submission of information/evidence to the school – no later than 14 May 2021
 - teachers/tutors provide information about the learning of students (studying subjects out of school and those studying entirely outside of school to the school) OR

- students who do not have a teacher/tutor, or whose teacher/tutor does not engage in the Accredited Grades process, provide evidence of their learning to the school
- Note: If required as part of the deliberative process, more evidence or information can be sought from students and/or teachers/tutors between 14 - 28 May 2021

❖ Phase 2:

- 14 May to 28 May 2021
 - Panel of registered teachers/tutors considers the evidence presented and engages in discussion with teachers/tutors as necessary
 - Panel of registered teachers/tutors may request and receive additional evidence from candidates and/or teachers/tutors if necessary
 - The panel of registered teachers finalises estimated marks

- 31 May to 3 June 2021
 - Submission of estimated marks to principal
 - Preparation of estimated marks for transmission by the school on or before 3 June 2021.

Further clarification will be provided as soon as possible of the timelines for students applying for Accredited Grades in non-curricular languages.

Appeals

(a) Appealing a decision to not submit an estimated mark

There may be some circumstances where a decision is made that it is not possible to submit estimated mark/s on behalf of a student. For example, this could occur if no evidence is provided to the panel of registered teachers. In this event, candidates will be notified that a decision has been made that it has not been possible to submit estimated mark/s on their behalf.

It will be open to a student to appeal the decision not to submit an estimated mark. The appeal process will involve a review of the processes and procedures followed. The appeal may uphold the decision to not submit an estimated mark or it may direct the panel to reconsider the available evidence.

(b) Appealing Accredited Grades or Leaving Certificate results

Procedures for appealing Accredited Grades or Leaving Certificate results will be open to all students. Further details will be provided when the Leaving Certificate results are issued.

Standardisation process

The estimated marks for out-of-school subjects and for out-of-school learners will be processed separately to those submitted by the school for candidates who are studying subjects in the school. This means that estimated marks for out-of-school learners and subjects studied out of school will not be included among the estimated marks arising from the school's classes for standardisation purposes.

Legal Indemnity

As teachers/tutors and school leaders and educational professionals working in education centres and other settings will be implementing the Accredited Grades process as part of the arrangements for Leaving Certificate 2021, arrangements are being put in place to extend a State indemnity to them, to the relevant boards of management, patrons/trustees and owner/managers. The indemnity could be invoked where someone is sued in their own capacity (i.e. named in civil proceedings as an individual teacher, principal or board of management/ETB or other patron).

This indemnity will be subject to conditions concerning notification and cooperation with the State in defending any legal cases should they arise and will only be capable of being invoked where a person has acted bona fide, i.e. has made every reasonable effort to carry out their role in accordance with the guidance provided in this Guide and the relevant circular(s) of the State Examinations Commission and the Department of Education.

Student-teacher contact and the awarding of estimated marks

The principal, deputy principal(s), teachers/tutors, Accredited Grade Aide or other members of school staff will follow the specified procedures for Accredited Grades and must not under any circumstances discuss with or disclose to any student or parent or guardian of any student the estimated marks that the school is submitting.

Conversely, parents/guardians and students must not under any circumstances contact, either formally or informally, directly or indirectly, a teacher or other member of staff at any stage to discuss, or with a view to influencing the decision-making process relating to the estimated marks to be assigned to a student in any subject or which may confer an undue advantage to a particular student.

Teachers/tutors and school personnel, the employees of the SEC and the Department of Education must not be subjected to any type of influence, inducement (including gifts), pressure or coercion by a parent/guardian, student or any other person in relation to a student's mark either before or after it has been assigned. This includes any financial, economic or other personal interest which might be perceived to compromise the impartiality and independence of the teacher or principal in the context of the decision-making process.

Such contact would be inappropriate, as it could objectively be viewed as an attempt to interfere with the fairness, equality of treatment and objectivity required of teachers and schools in the assigning of estimated marks for the individual student concerned, and for the students in the school as a whole. This would in turn undermine the integrity of the Accredited Grades model. Where a person seeks to improperly influence the estimation process, this may lead to withholding of results or more serious consequences.

Administration of the processes for Out-of-School Subjects and Out-of-School Learners

In order to support the administration of the processes set out in this guide, standard forms will be provided to support the recording and transfer of information at key stages throughout the relevant processes.

Resources

Details of payments to the AG Aide, members of the panel of registered teachers and the principal, which will be provided to schools for the purpose of implementing Leaving Certificate 2021, will be published separately.

Further Information

The most current information on all matters relating to Leaving Certificate examinations and the Accredited Grades process will be available on an ongoing basis on gov.ie/LeavingCertificate.

If you have a query, please read this source of information in the first instance. If you cannot find the response to your query, please submit a request for an update to gov.ie to this email address: LCinfo@education.gov.ie

This mailbox will be monitored and queries that raise issues not already addressed in the information already published will be used to update the information on gov.ie so that it is available to all candidates. Queries to this email address will not be responded to individually.