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S08/21

To: Management Authorities of Second Level Schools

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme 2021

The purpose of this circular is to notify school authorities of the following:

1. Arrangements for the submission of LCVP Link Modules, Portfolio of coursework, for 2021.
2. New arrangements for the marking procedures for LCVP Modules since 2019 and onwards.
3. Adjusted assessment arrangements for 2021 to take account of disrupted learning experienced by students during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 school years.

1. Arrangements for the Submission of LCVP Link Modules, Portfolio of Coursework, for 2021.

For the 2021 examinations, the Portfolio of coursework must be submitted to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) following the completion date. The instructions herein, supersede all previous instructions vis-à-vis coursework submission arrangements in respect of LCVP Link Modules.

The 2021 Portfolio of coursework must be submitted to the State Examinations Commission, immediately following its completion on March 12th 2021.

Details of the procedures for the submission of the Portfolio of Coursework will be provided to schools prior to the completion date.

2. Arrangements for the Marking Procedures of LCVP Link Modules for 2021.

Since the 2019 examinations, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) divided the marking of LCVP Link Modules into two individual sessions with two separate examining teams:

- (i) Portfolio of Coursework and
- (ii) Written examination marked on-line.

The SEC is seeking applications to mark both the Portfolio of coursework and the Written examination and to this end, the application form will be available shortly in the *Recruitment* section of our website at www.examinations.ie/recruitment.

Please bring these new marking and amended recruitment arrangements to the attention of the LCVP Coordinator, teachers of LCVP Link Modules and all teaching staff.

The Portfolio of Coursework

A one day marking conference for the marking of the Portfolio of coursework, will take place online Saturday March 27th and marking of this Portfolio of Coursework will commence then, for completion by the end of April.

The Written Examination

The Written Examination will be marked on-line and the timeline for the marking has been brought in line with the timeline for the marking of all Leaving Certificate written examinations. It will take place during the summer (usually commencing in late June and continuing into July). Details in relation to the marking conference date and the completion date of the marking will be confirmed in due course.

3. The syllabus for the Link Modules was reviewed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and their recommendations (LCVP Programme Statement) were accepted and published jointly by the Department of Education and Science and the NCCA in 2001. The revised programme was notified to schools in Circular M35/01 in August 2001 and the Programme Statement was distributed to schools in October, 2001.

As an aid to assessment for teachers and students, both bodies also prepared a further document, Link Modules Assessment Guidelines, to be read in conjunction with the above Programme Statement (particularly pages 45-54 of the Statement which deal with assessment).

These Assessment Guidelines were sent to schools in October 2002 and form the basis for the assessment processes from 2004 onwards.

WRITTEN PAPER – ADJUSTED ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2021

Information in relation to further adjustments to the written paper examination will issue shortly.

PORTFOLIO - ADJUSTED ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2021

Portfolio of Coursework:

The topics and weightings for the 240 marks available for Portfolio of Coursework are as follows:

Core Items:	Marks
Curriculum Vitae (compulsory)	40
Any two of the following:	
Career Investigation	65
Summary Report	65
Enterprise/Action Plan	65
Total	<u>170</u>
Optional Items:	
Any one of the four	70
Total	<u>240</u>

Guidelines for Portfolio

These guidelines outline important requirements for the Portfolio of Coursework in the Link Modules in 2021

Section 1 outlines the Core topics and recommendations for each.

Section 2 describes each Optional topic and its requirements.

Section 3 offers general advice on the content and framework of portfolios of Coursework.

Section 4 covers procedures relating to format, documentation, transport and backup of material presented on DVD / CD / USB flash drive.

Section 1: Core

1. Curriculum Vitae (Page 24 of Assessment Guidelines) – Compulsory (2021 adjustment)

This should be a word-processed document up to 2 A4 pages maximum.

ANY TWO OF THE FOLLOWING (2021 ADJUSTMENT)

2. Career Investigation (Page 38 of Assessment Guidelines)

This should be a word-processed document, between 300 and 600 words in length. Appendices are not recommended.

The student may present a 3 - 5 minute interview on CD/USB flash drive. The interview should be carefully structured so as to ensure that students have the opportunity to fulfil all the assessment criteria for the career investigation. Students presenting an interview may not submit additional textual material for this portfolio item.

3. Summary Report (Page 47 of Assessment Guidelines)

This should be a word-processed document up to a maximum of 600 words in length. The terms of reference of the report, or the aims of the activity, should be clearly stated. The document may contain information in tabular form but no appendices are required.

4. Enterprise/Action Plan (Page 58 of Assessment Guidelines)

A word-processed document between 300 and 600 words in length is required. While the plan will be written in the future tense, the student should show evidence that he/she has selected and conducted the relevant research and carried out some analysis of that research.

Section 2: Optional Items

(Any ONE topic required from the following four) – 2021 Adjustment

1. Diary of Work Experience (Page 70/71 of Assessment Guidelines)

This should be a word-processed or handwritten document between 1000 and 1500 words in length, in a diary structure, with at least 3 dated entries, arranged in chronological order with the relevant month and year recorded. If no date is shown marks will be deducted. A maximum of 2 appendices is permitted.

2. Enterprise Report (Page 93/95 of Assessment Guidelines)

This should be a word-processed document between 1000 and 1500 words in length, (not including a title page, contents page and appendices (maximum of 2)). Candidates should include at least one relevant illustration (such as a table, graph or photograph) to support the main findings of the report.

The focus of Unit 4 - An Enterprise Activity - is 'to facilitate groups of students to plan, set up and run their own enterprise activities' (Page 44 of the Programme Statement). Candidates presenting an Enterprise Report need to have experienced personal exposure to, and involvement in, enterprise activity: where this is not the case the subject matter described cannot attract marks as it does not meet the requirements of the programme. Relevant presentation marks will, however, be awarded: normally Presentation/layout, Title/table of contents and Author's name/signature, up to a maximum of 8 marks.

3. Recorded Interview/Presentation (Page of 119/120 of Assessment Guidelines)

DVD/USB flash drive - 5 minutes maximum per candidate:

'Interviewers' are encouraged to:

- Plan questions to provide structure and direction to the interview.
- Avoid complex or ambiguous questions.
- Ask the candidate questions which are open-ended, thus allowing candidates the opportunity to communicate their opinions clearly and in logical sequence.
- Give opportunity to candidate to discuss a variety of activities he/she has engaged in as part of the Link Modules.

4. Report on 'My Own Place' (Page 121/123 of Assessment Guidelines)

This should be a word-processed document between 1000 and 1500 words in length (not including title page, contents page, and any appendices (maximum of 2)). The document should be the student's unique record of a local investigation in which he/she participated as part of the Link Modules programme.

Section 3: Portfolios

Content of Portfolios

- Portfolios presented for assessment must be the candidate's own work (verified by the candidate and the class teacher).
- Candidates should submit only material generated as a result of Link Modules activities in which they participated. Examiners reported that presenting non LCVP material lost some candidates marks. Projects developed during other programmes and subjects such as Transition Year and Home Economics are not acceptable.

- Portfolio work should be produced mainly during class time and under the supervision of the class teacher.
- The role of the teacher in portfolio preparation should be to guide, support and provide direction.
- Candidates may present material which arises from group work; however, in the portfolio item the candidate's **individual contribution** must be clearly identified. It is the responsibility of **each** candidate in the group to ensure that her/his work is clearly presented.
- In the context of the 2021 adjustments, no more than a total of ***four*** items are to be presented in the portfolio.
- Portfolio items must relate to a number of different LCVP activities. There should be no duplication in the content of the material submitted within the different items.
- In the Career Investigation Component, candidates may include specific career requirements downloaded from relevant websites or taken directly from appropriate publications in their portfolio. This is only permitted in this area because the information is normally very specific, precise and semi-legal and is not amenable to accurate re-writing. **In all other areas obvious or direct copying of material from other sources and other candidates is not acceptable and will be penalised.**
- Before submitting the portfolio, each candidate should check her/his work for errors of spelling and grammar.

Format of Portfolios

- The candidate will be required to include his/her examination number on the cover of the portfolio. It is acceptable practice for a candidate to include his/her name on portfolio items.
- As the requirements of the 2021 Portfolio of Coursework have been adjusted a new Marking Scheme will apply. This new marking scheme can only be finalised when there is the added information of how candidates actually engaged with and responded to questions. Consequently, the marking scheme for the Portfolio will not issue in advance of the submission of the Portfolio 2021.
- Each portfolio presented for examination must include a **Contents Page** with a list of the items submitted for assessment.
- Each item of the portfolio must be clearly titled i.e. Curriculum Vitae; Enterprise/Action Plan; Career Investigation; Summary Report; Record/Log/Diary; Enterprise Report; My Own Place; Recorded Interview/Presentation.
- Portfolio work should be presented on A4 paper in a soft covered folder e.g. soft covers bound with a spiral or plastic spine.
- Margins of 1-1.5 inches (2.5 – 3.75 cms) should be used.
- Individual pages should **not** be placed in plastic covers.

- It is recommended that students use a regular font size (12 pts is recommended) in the body of portfolio items submitted for assessment.

Retention of Portfolios and other material

Portfolios or any material submitted for examination e.g. CD's, DVDs, USB flash drives, References, etc. will not be returned to candidates.

Section 4: Material for Assessment presented on DVD or CD or USB flash drive

- The **disc/USB flash drive and Audio Sequence Sheet(s)** available [here](#) must be completed and returned with the discs/USB flash drives. There is now a space on this specifically for the School Roll Number. This sheet should list, in the same order as recorded on the disc/USB flash drive, the names of the candidates with their examination numbers. When a candidate has been recorded on the disc/USB flash drive but has not presented a portfolio or did not sit the written examination the school should indicate the up to date situation on the sequence sheet beside the candidate's name. The software programme used to burn the disc/USB flash drive should be stated on the sequence sheet. This sheet should be signed and dated by the teacher in the space provided.
- The names of the candidates and their examination numbers must be clearly stated and visible at the start and throughout each interview/presentation. (If co-ordinators have already organised recording of candidates for the 2021 Links Modules assessment, particular efforts should be made to ensure the names and examination numbers on the Audio Sequence Sheet are in the order of the candidates on the submitted disc/USB flash drive).
- Interviews/presentations may be 'burned' onto DVDs which must be 'region free' and finalised to play on ordinary domestic DVD players. DVD - R format is the most compatible medium when burning DVDs.
- **All discs / USB flash drives should be forwarded in protective sleeves/cases/padded envelopes to safeguard the recorded data.**
- If camcorders are used by the school, these tapes must be converted to DVD format before submission to the State Examinations Commission. Camcorder tapes are not acceptable and will be returned to the school unmarked.
- Every year discs/USB flash drives prove inaccessible to the examiners: some are recorded incorrectly or in a non-standard format; others are damaged in transit to the Commission. In such cases in 2014 and thereafter the defective material will be returned to the school/college as it cannot be marked. In such instances School Authorities are requested to forward a copy of the backup disc/USB flash drive to the SEC immediately. The onus is therefore on the school to check that the media is readable and accessible. It is also essential that discs/USB flash drives are protected and packaged securely in the first place.
- Schools are requested to use new discs/USB flash drives for recording the candidates' interviews/presentations. This will ensure that previous recordings cannot distort any candidate's interview/presentation.
- Schools should include the interviews/presentations of as many candidates as possible on each disc/USB flash drive.

- Each disc/USB flash drive should be numbered and labelled with the school roll number and school name. The relevant Sequence Sheet should be included with the appropriate disc/USB flash drive.
- Before submitting the disc/USB flash drive the teacher/co-ordinator should check that each interview/presentation has been clearly recorded and that documentation is complete and accurate.
- **If a candidate presents a recorded interview but does not sit the LCVP written examination or present a full portfolio, an unsuccessful result will be recorded and received.**
- **It is recommended that each school should make four copies of the disc/USB flash drive, two of which should be submitted to the State Examinations Commission in March and two should be retained by the school as a backup one of which must be readily obtainable if required by the State Examinations Commission during the month of June and the remaining disc/USB flash drive should be transmitted to the State Examinations Commission in the event of an appeal in September.**

NOTE: This year only material presented on disc or USB flash drive will accepted.

2. Integrity Issues

Please note that portfolios presented for assessment **must** be the candidate's own individual work.

Particular care must be taken to ensure that the integrity of the examination process is protected where candidates work jointly on the preparation of some aspect of a portfolio e.g. the Summary Report. It is essential that the material included in the portfolio represents that candidate's individual effort. In this regard, exemplar material in the Assessment Guidelines and elsewhere should be regarded as a guide to style but not to content.

During the marking process in *2019*, examiners identified a number of centres where the work presented was so similar as to give rise to suspicions of copying. After investigation the results of a number of students were withheld. In most of these instances, candidates produced answers that were similar to one, some, or all of the others in the centre, sometimes duplicating spelling and grammatical errors. In some cases, material presented in the portfolio was too closely based on exemplars published in the Assessment Guidelines.

The Assessment Guidelines offer the following general advice (Page 21/22).

- Each portfolio item presented must be the student's **original work**.
- The inclusion of material directly downloaded from websites or copied from other sources is not acceptable.

In addition, the Guidelines offer the following more specific guidance.

'Group Work': Students may work as part of a group to develop a plan for an activity. In such cases, however, each member of the group must submit his/her own original plan. The student's **individual contribution** to different aspects of the plan should be clearly defined (Page 58).

'Enterprise Report': Describe and evaluate personal contribution to the activity. (Page 93) **Evaluation:** This should include an evaluation of the group performance and, if not dealt with separately, an evaluation of personal performance' (Page 95).

‘Report on ‘My Own Place’: The report may be based on a single investigation which the student and his/her class or group has engaged in over a period of time, or a number of events which have taken place at intervals over the two years of the Link Modules. Assessment Criteria: Describe and evaluate personal contribution to the investigation’ (Page 121).

3. Examination Procedures

It is also very important that candidates adhere to the enclosed guidelines regarding preparation and transmission of portfolios, CDs/DVDs/and USB flash drives.

Details of procedures for submitting the Portfolio to the State Examinations Commission will issue to schools prior to the completion date.

4. Certification

Candidates for the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme are awarded the same certificates as other Leaving Certificate Candidates.

A statement indicating the achievement in the Link Modules is included in the results section of the Leaving Certificate.

Grading for the Link Modules remains as follows:

Pass	50% - 64%
Pass with Merit	65% - 79%
Pass with Distinction	80% - 100%

5. Repeat Candidates

The Link Modules within the LCVP involve two full years of study, activity and portfolio preparation. Accordingly, the portfolio element cannot be completed within one year. Candidates repeating the established Leaving Certificate in 2021 cannot therefore take the Link Modules for the first time.

A link to a separate entry form is [here](#) to be completed for those candidates who are repeating LCVP, and should be returned to the State Examinations Commission by 16th March 2021.

New or revised portfolios will not be required or accepted.

Candidates repeating the LCVP in 2021 will be required to **sit the written examination** (again, if sat in November 2020): the marks obtained in respect of a portfolio completed in 2020 will be carried forward and aggregated with the mark from the **written component obtained in 2021.**

Candidates who are repeating year 1 of the established Leaving Certificate programme are permitted to take the LCVP, provided that they fulfil the normal 2 year programme conditions.

6. Circulation

School authorities are requested to bring this information to the attention of candidates, teachers and parent's representatives and to the school LCVP co-ordinator(s).

Any queries on the content of this circular or any other aspect of LCVP administration, should be made to Practical's Section, State Examinations Commission, Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

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Higher Executive Officer
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