An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Calculated Grades – A Guide for Leaving Certificate Students 2020

Introduction

- It's not possible to hold normal Leaving Certificate examinations in summer 2020, so students are being offered Calculated Grades instead.
- Calculated Grades will allow you to go on to further or higher education or the world of work when you leave school. It is the fairest way possible to tackle the effects that lack of schooling and other problems caused by Covid-19 have had on your Leaving Certificate.
- Calculated grades are offered to you if you are taking Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) in 2020.

What is a calculated grade?

- A Calculated Grade is a grade that can be provided to you following a combination of school information about your expected performance in an examination and national data available in relation to students' performance in examinations over a period of time.
- A national standardisation process will produce a Calculated Grade for each subject by combining the school data with historic examination data.
- Students in post-primary schools, further education and training centres, private colleges or any other institution through which students have entered for their 2020 Leaving Certificate examination are included in the Calculated Grades process.

What do you need to do next?

- To support the Calculated Grades model, the Department of Education and Skills has developed a Calculated Grades Student Portal for Leaving Certificate students. This is available at gov.ie/leavingcertificate
- You will need to register on the student portal between 10am on Tuesday 26 May and 10pm on Thursday 28 May.
- To register you will need your examination number and to know your PPS number. You will also need to provide an email address and phone number which will be used to communicate with you about later stages of the Calculated Grades process.
- You will be asked to confirm the levels (Higher or Ordinary or Foundation) at which you are taking each subject or you can change to a lower level.
- If you are a Leaving Certificate Applied student, all you need to do is to complete the registration process.
- At a later date you will be asked to confirm that you are opting to receive Calculated Grades.
- You will also have access to your provisional Calculated Grades and to later stages of the process, such as appeal application process, through the portal.

How fair is the system of calculated grades?

- The Calculated Grades model uses the best information available about your achievements by asking your teachers to apply their professional judgement and review several pieces of information about your work over the last two years.
- The national standardisation process does not favour any type of student or school.
- If you are a particularly strong student in your class, and the information provided by the school reflects this then you will still emerge as a particularly strong candidate.
- The process will ensure that the Calculated Grade will be as close as possible to what you would have achieved in the examinations.

What will schools do ?

- Your teachers will provide an estimation of marks and class ranking for each subject that you are taking in the examinations. The teachers' estimates of the percentage marks are those that you are most likely to have achieved had you sat a Leaving Certificate in 2020 as normal.
- The subject teachers will work together to align the marks for the subject and the school principal will provide oversight of the alignment process.
- The finalised marks and rankings will be transmitted to the Department of Education and Skills for national standardisation.

What informs the estimated marks and rankings?

- In coming to their judgements, your teachers will use for example, records of your performance over the course of study, previous results in the school in the subject and the level of performance your teachers have observed in this year's students compared to those in previous years.
- Teachers have been advised to carefully consider how the results of school-based examinations, as well as other records are used in this process.
- Your teacher will take into account your performance on course work components even if they have not been completed.
- Judgements made by the school will be objective and will not take into account perceptions of students' behaviour.
- If you are being taught by a substitute teacher, the assistance of the previous teacher can be included in the process.

Will I have to do extra assignments or assessments?

- No. Your teachers will not set additional assessments for the purposes of determining an estimated percentage mark.
- Your teachers' judgements will be based on evidence of learning and achievement. Where additional work was completed after schools closed on 12 March up to the end of formal tuition on 11 May, your teachers have been advised to exercise due caution where that work suggests a change in performance.
- However, teachers are not precluded from taking account of the degree to which many students under normal circumstances would intensify their levels of commitment in the run up to examinations.

Can I discuss my marks with the school?

- No. The principal and teachers are not permitted to discuss the estimated marks the school is submitting with you or with your parents or guardians either before or after the estimation process.
- You must not under any circumstances contact either formally or informally a teacher or other member of the school staff to discuss the estimated marks or rankings to be assigned to you.
- You must not attempt to influence, pressurise, coerce or provide an inducement (e.g. gift) to a teacher in relation to your mark either before or after it is assigned.
- The reason for this is to ensure that the fairness and objectivity of the process is kept intact for you and the other students in your school.

Can I change level?

- Yes. As part of the process of Calculated Grades, you will have access to an online portal where you will be required to confirm the subject level at which you initially entered for the examinations or you can change to a lower level. You will need to do this on or before 10 pm on Thursday 28 May. It is essential that students confirm their levels at this time so that their schools can complete their task of providing an estimated percentage mark and rank order for each student.

What about reasonable accommodations for students with special educational needs ?

- Where any reasonable accommodation has been approved for you (such as a reader, scribe or spelling and grammar waiver), your teacher will base the estimate of your likely performance on the assumption that this accommodation would have been available.

Will I get 100% for my oral examination(s)?

- No. The earlier arrangement (communicated in March) that full marks would be awarded for the orals and music performance tests was based on the written examinations taking place this summer.
- As these examinations will not now take place in the summer, this arrangement will not apply.

Will I get a Calculated Grade for a subject studied outside of school?

- If you are taking a subject outside of school your principal will be asked to work with whomever is teaching you to make every effort to provide an estimated mark. There must be sufficient evidence of your achievement in the subject for the school to make an objective judgement.
- There will be a separate application process for students studying independently and not attending any school or other centre to apply to receive Calculated Grades. These applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- Every effort will be made to obtain sufficient evidence to provide students with a Calculated Grade but this may not be possible in all cases. Students will have the opportunity to sit the 2020 Leaving Certificate examination at a later date when it is safe and practicable to do so.

When will I get Calculated Grades ?

- It is intended that the Calculated Grades will be provided to candidates as close as possible to the normal results day.

Will the calculated grades be recognised for employment and further study?

- Yes. Calculated Grades will have the same status as Leaving Certificates awarded to students in previous years.
- As usually happens, you will receive a provisional statement of results. At a later time a formal final certificate will issue from the Department of Education and Skills confirming the grades.
- Students' Calculated Grades will be transferred directly to the Central Applications Office (CAO).
- The CAO timelines will run as close as possible to normal to allow for students to take up offers and to transition to third level, further education or work etc.

Can I also sit a Leaving Certificate examination later?

- At this point in time all students are being offered Calculated Grades which means that you can progress on to the next stages of study or employment. You can sit a Leaving Certificate later but at this point it is not possible to confirm the date. These examinations will be provided as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.

Can I see the estimated result that the school submitted for them?

- Yes. After the results are issued by the Department of Education and Skills, you will be able to see a record of your individual percentage mark and ranking that your school has given to you.

What if I am unhappy with my Calculated Grade?

You can appeal to the Department of Education and Skills and the appeals process has three stages involving:

- Stage 1 & 2: Checks will be undertaken to ensure that the data processing was completed correctly by the school and the Department of Education and Skills
- Stage 3: If you are still unhappy after stages 1 and 2 then you can seek a review by Appeal Scrutineers, who are independent of the Department of Education and Skills.

Finally, if you remain unhappy you have the opportunity to sit an examination later when it is safe and practicable to do so. Additional information in relation to Appeals is available in the Guide to Calculated Grades for Leaving Certificate Students 2020

Due to the nature of the model, the professional judgment of the school will not form part of the appeals process.

Further Information:

For further information and resources including wellbeing resources see www.gov.ie/leavingcertificate