

# 19 March, 2020 – Minister McHugh Announces Cancellation of Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle Oral and Practical Performance Tests

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Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh TD has today (Thursday 19 March 2020) announced the cancellation of oral and practical performance tests of the state examinations which were originally scheduled to take place from Monday 23 March to Friday 3 April 2020.

All students who were due to take these tests will be awarded full marks for this portion of the exam.

The decision was taken in light of the closure of schools as a result of the Covid-19 virus and it will be implemented by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

Minister McHugh said: “This is a difficult time for all. Students are facing a challenging period out of school and our decision on this element of the exams is being taken with their best interests at heart.

“It is the fairest response we could take in the circumstances. It guarantees that no student will score less than they would have if schools had been operating as normal.

“We have seen a new emphasis on remote learning amid the uncertainty about the impact of Covid-19 and the closure of all schools. I hope this decision will ease some of the pressure that students are feeling and allow them to focus more clearly on completing project work and preparing for written exams.”

The change to the 2020 state examinations means all students who were due to take oral and practical performance tests in the following subjects will be given full marks for this part of the examination:

- Oral tests in Leaving Certificate Irish and the Modern Languages of French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese.
- Practical performance tests in Leaving Certificate Music.
- Practical performance tests in Junior Certificate Music and Home Economics.

Minister McHugh also confirmed changes to deadlines for students to complete project work and coursework in a number of subjects.

Students were originally scheduled to complete these elements of the state examinations on a number of dates from Friday 20 March to Friday 24 April 2020, depending on the subject.

Students will now be given until Friday 15 May 2020 to complete this work.

Minister McHugh said: “We know we are asking a lot of people in order to stem the spread of Covid-19. In response to that I want students and their parents or guardians and teachers to be given flexibility as they work towards the exams.

“All of Government is hugely grateful for the effort, commitment and energy that students and teachers are putting in to continue education in difficult circumstances. I urge you all to keep up the momentum and focus on preparing for the exams.”

Minister McHugh also said the Department will continue to work with the State Examinations Commission to monitor the Covid-19 situation in terms of its potential impact on the other later scheduled components of the state examinations.

“We will continue to respond at the right time and in the right way, with the impact on our students at the forefront of our minds,” Minister McHugh said.

The Minister also advised of steps taken by the Department to minimise the impact on teaching and learning of the current school closures. All schools have been asked to continue to plan lessons and, where possible, provide online resources for students or online lessons where schools are equipped to do so. Schools have also been asked to be conscious of students that may not have access to online facilities and to consider this actively in their responses. School buildings are available to staff if they wish to access the facilities in order to provide online delivery, or essential services once this is in line with Health Service Executive (HSE) advice.

The Department of Education and Skills will continue to provide supports to the education sector at this time, particularly schools with students taking State examinations.

The Department of Education and Skills has been liaising closely on a continual basis with the Department of Health in relation to Coronavirus/Covid-19 since early January. This will continue.

**Ends**

**Notes for Editors**

Further information in relation to the Department's response to Covid-19 is available here [www.education.ie/covid19](http://www.education.ie/covid19)