



Teachers' Union of Ireland

Leaving Certificate 2020 Calculated Grades - Guidance for members

The TUI strongly urges members to read the DES document appended to Circular 37/2020 -

*“Calculated Grades for Leaving Certificate 2020
Guide for Schools on Providing Estimated Percentage Marks
and Class Rank Ordering”*

Frequently Asked Questions

Legal Protections for Members

Am I indemnified by the state to carry out this work?

Yes. All staff are fully indemnified by the State in relation to the work they undertake towards the provision of Calculated Grades for this year's Leaving Certificate students. To be covered by this indemnity, the only requirement is that a teacher acts in good faith in exercising her/his professional judgement to estimate the percentage marks and the rank order for the students in her/his class.

This state indemnification is comprehensive in its scope and is on a par with what applies in the case of other public servants who may have an exposure to legal proceedings arising from their work because of its critical and/or sensitive nature.

In this regard the TUI sought and received confirmation that:

- *the Chief State Solicitors Office will act for/defend any teacher who discharges her/his functions in relation to the calculated grades system in good faith but against whom legal proceedings are taken*
- *in the event that legal proceedings are taken, “costs” includes such costs as are reasonably incurred and, in accordance with the terms of the indemnity, these costs will be met by the state*
- *all staff involved in the calculated grades process in a school/centre/college are covered by the indemnity*
- *in this context, the term “teacher” in the indemnity is to be understood generically to cover all such staff - including teachers, principal teachers and deputy principal teachers, Youthreach Co-ordinators and Resource Persons, tutors etc.*

TUI is clear in its understanding that the indemnity comprehensively covers all those matters and risks that needed to be covered.

Other Protections for Members

Are there any other protections for members who provide estimated marks?

Yes. The following important protections were secured by the TUI.

- *First and foremost, the estimated percentage mark for a student in a subject that is submitted to the Department of Education and Skills is **the school’s mark**, not the class teacher’s.*
- *The estimated percentage marks drafted by the teacher and brought to the subject alignment group are preliminary only. Once the subject alignment process transacts the estimated marks and rank order that are forwarded to the Principal teacher become the school’s.*
- *The only data and documentation generated are the school’s estimated marks and the rank orders in Forms A and B, respectively. **Any notes that a teacher may have from the drafting stage are to be securely destroyed.** A teacher does not retain any documentation relating to the estimation of marks/rank ordering. Nor does the subject alignment group. On behalf of the school, the Principal teacher retains a copy of the Forms A and B but only until after the appeals process has concluded.*
- *While, as part of her/his oversight function, a Principal teacher may refer one or more of the Forms A and/or B back to the alignment group for review, citing one or more of the grounds set out in the Guide, it is for the alignment group to determine whether or not any adjustment/s should be made. Therefore, members who are Principal Teachers are protected against any suggestion of interference in the process.*

- *Once the subject alignment group has completed its review and has made any adjustment (to the relevant Forms A or B) that it deems necessary, the Principal teacher signs off for the school and submits the required data (i.e. Forms A or B) to the Department.*
- *A Principal Teacher may not, under any circumstances, alter an estimated mark or instruct what estimated mark should be given. This protects the Principal teacher against any suggestion that s/he has exercised or has attempted to exercise inappropriate influence. Her/his oversight role and professional integrity are therefore protected.*
- *The estimated marks and rank orders submitted by the school to the Department are - and can only be – those determined through the alignment process. They are the school's - not the individual teacher's and not the Principal's.*
- *There is **no appeal against an estimated mark** provided by the school. The Appeal does not and cannot challenge or re-open the school's estimated percentage marks*
- *The TUI publicly identified the need to protect teachers and the integrity of the estimated marks process against canvassing/inappropriate contact by students, their parents or others. We persuaded the Department that a protocol was needed. The agreed protocol set out in Paragraph 23 of the Guidance document is a significant statement of public policy and will serve as a serious deterrent for anybody who may otherwise be tempted to canvass.*

Training

Will training be provided to teachers on how to undertake this work?

Yes. Given the short time-frame and the prevailing public health requirements it is accessible on-line.

The most important training resource is DES Circular 0037/2020 and the attachment "Calculated Grades for Leaving Certificate 2020 - Guide for Schools on Providing Estimated Percentage Marks and Class Rank Orderings".

For a full understanding of the system of Calculated Grades and your role in it, you must read this Guide carefully.

A training video to accompany the Guide is available to teachers and can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/421625482> or at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d8920c-leaving-cert-2020/>

In addition, guidance documents (including FAQs) are available on the DES website and on the TUI website.

Contact with Leaving Certificate Students

May I contact my final year Leaving Certificate students?

No. Teachers must not contact their Leaving Cert students to discuss levels, marks, grades, rankings or any matter to do with the calculated grades system. You protect both yourself and the integrity of the process of estimating marks by adhering strictly to this requirement.

Calculated Grade

What is a calculated grade?

A calculated grade is a grade generated by the Department of Education Skills following the combination of school information (comprising Forms A and Forms B) about a student's expected performance in an examination and national data available from the State Examinations Commission in relation to the performance of students in examinations over a period of time (three years).

Students' estimated percentage marks (as provided to the Department by schools) become calculated (percentage) marks following the standardisation process conducted by the Department. The calculated marks are then converted into Calculated Grades, expressed in the normal manner – H1, H2 etc.

In the case of LCA students, the estimated marks provided by the school are first converted into credits by the Department before being converted into Calculated Grades, expressed in the normal manner – Distinction, Merit etc.

Will Calculated Grades be given for all three of the Leaving Certificate Programmes?

Yes. Calculated grades will be given in respect of:

- *Established Leaving Certificate subjects*
- *Leaving Certificate Applied – subjects and vocational specialisms*
- *Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme – Link Modules*

Does a student have to accept Calculated Grades?

*Although calculated grades will be generated for every student and every student is entitled to calculated grades, a student (or his/her parent/guardian) will have to **opt-in**, using a portal provided by the DES, to **receive** her/his calculated grades.*

Therefore, although it is highly unlikely, a student could opt not to receive her/his calculated grades, whether a student opts to receive the calculated grades or not is the decision of the student/parent/guardian. The school has no role whatsoever in relation to this decision.

One of my students has advised the school that s/he doesn't want a calculated grade. What do I do?

As the student's teacher you must carry out the work of estimating percentage marks on the basis that all students in your class/es will opt to receive a calculated grade. Therefore, you must estimate a mark for that student and the school must submit an estimated mark to the Department.

Individual Teacher's Role

As a teacher of Leaving Certificate students, do I have to be involved in this process?

Yes. As their teacher,

- *You hold the kind of data and other information that can provide the best available evidence of student achievement.*
- *You understand the context and circumstances in which this information was generated.*
- *You know your students' work and achievements better than anyone else.*
- *You have unique information about your students that no one else has, for example, the quality of their classwork.*
- *You know the engagement of students in your subject throughout their studies at senior cycle.*
- *You have prepared students for the Leaving Certificate examinations and therefore know what is expected in your subject.*
- *The Department trusts your professional judgement and expects you to use that professional judgement to come up with the estimated mark, taking all the information you possess into account.*

As a teacher of Leaving Certificate students, what exactly is being asked of me?

You are being asked to provide:

- *an estimate of the percentage mark in your subject that each student in your class/es is most likely to have achieved if s/he had sat the Leaving Certificate examination in 2020 under normal conditions and*
- *a class ranking for each student in each subject – i.e. a list of all the students in a class group for a particular subject in order of their estimated level of achievement.*

*You prepare the estimated percentage marks and class ranking/s in **draft form for the subject alignment process**. You do this by completing template forms - Form A and Form B - provided by the DES and appended to the Guidance document. Form A sets out the estimated mark for each student and Form B is for the rank ordering of the class.*

Do I have to provide an estimated percentage mark to all final year Leaving Certificate students I teach?

Yes. All Leaving Certificate students are entitled to calculated grades in the subjects they studied. Therefore, a teacher will have to estimate a (percentage) mark for each student in her/his class. That draft estimated mark will, through the subject alignment process, become the school's/centre's mark.

Estimated Mark

What is an estimated mark?

*This is the best estimate of the **overall percentage mark** that the student is **most likely** to have achieved if the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 virus had never arisen and if s/he had sat the Leaving Certificate examinations as normal in June 2020 - i.e. the 'most likely' percentage mark. It is not the mark that you would like the student to get; it is the mark you would have expected her/him to have achieved had the Leaving Certificate taken place in the traditional manner this year.*

Does an estimated mark have to be a whole number, for example, 67%

The estimated mark should, if possible, be given as a whole number.

However, if you are torn between two adjacent numbers, there is nothing precluding you from providing a decimal number. Therefore, a student might get 72.6%

In terms of deciding the rank order of students in your class and in order to minimise the possibility of two or more students achieving the same estimated percentage mark, it may be of use to you to mark out of 1,000 in the first instance and then divide by ten. Obviously, taking this approach is more likely to result in some of your estimated marks including one decimal place.

I teach Leaving Certificate Applied students. Should I provide estimated credits or estimated percentage marks?

You must provide estimated percentage marks. The Department will convert the school's estimated percentage marks into credits.

Can there be a wide spread in the estimated percentage marks I provide?

There can be. The gaps between the estimated percentage marks within a class are important. If, for example, there is one very strong student in the class, it does not suffice, solely, to put her/him ahead of everyone else. It is important to ensure that the differential between her/him and the others is a true reflection of the size of the gap.

Research shows that, when estimating percentage marks, teachers tend to subconsciously gravitate towards multiples of 5 and, especially, multiples of 10. Research also shows that, when estimating marks on test scores, teachers gravitate towards grade boundaries.

It is important that you try to guard against these tendencies.

Evidence used in Estimating a Percentage Mark

Who decides what records and other evidence are to be used?

As the teacher of the students, you decide (ideally in consultation with subject department colleagues who also have Leaving Certificate classes) using your own professional judgement.

What records can I use to establish my estimated percentage marks?

You should base your judgement of the appropriate mark for a student on the assumption that school had carried on as normal in 2020, the students had finished out any relevant coursework components, oral assessments and practical examinations as normal, and that they had taken their examinations under normal conditions. You should consider:

- *Records of each student's performance over the course of study including for example, classwork, homework, assignments, questions and answering in class etc.*
- *Performance on any class assessments - for example, house exams, Christmas exams, summer examinations and (if appropriate) mock examinations taken over the course of study. You should take into account the quality of these tests, their level of difficulty and the purpose that they were designed to serve at the time they were taken.*

- *Performance on coursework/projects (even if incomplete). The estimated mark must incorporate the coursework components and the written examination (with the exception of Home Economics Scientific and Social). You should consider how students planned for, engaged in and demonstrated skills in preparing/completing the coursework/project.*
- *Previous results in the school in this subject, taking into consideration the structure and demands of the examination paper at the level concerned.*
- *The level of performance the teacher has observed in this year's students compared to those in previous years*
- *Other relevant information related to student performance in any assessment being relied upon - for example, if the student was ill, hospitalised or suffered a bereavement before, at or about the time of the assessment.*

It is worth noting that not all forms of evidence will be grounded in records but will be based on the professional judgement of the teacher.

Should I or can I just rely on mock examination results?

No, absolutely not. Mock examination results are deeply unreliable as evidence. This is because:

- *some schools do not offer mock examinations*
- *some teachers mark mock exams harshly to motivate students*
- *some teachers mark mock exams more leniently to encourage students*
- *some schools have mock exams marked externally.*
- *different schools use different approaches to mock examinations.*
- *students regularly have seen the papers before they sit the mock exams*
- *the quality of mock examination papers is very mixed*

Therefore, extreme caution must be exercised in relation to mock exams.

Should I or can I just rely on an average of the percentage marks secured by a student in assessments/examinations over the period of the Leaving Certificate programme?

No. Excessive reliance on numerical/mathematical records or, indeed, on any one source of evidence is to be avoided. You are asked to use your professional judgement to achieve an appropriate balance in relation to the evidence you draw upon in estimating the mark that

the student is likely to have achieved had s/he sat the Leaving Certificate examinations, as normal, in June 2020.

Can my school use and/or can I use a statistical or algorithmic software package to calculate the estimated marks or rank order?

No. Use of a statistical or algorithmic software package is expressly prohibited by the Department's guidelines – see paragraph 6, page 11 of the Guidance document.

Should I look at the Junior Cycle results of each student?

No. Junior Cycle results at individual student level should not be used.

Should I set additional assessments between now and the end of the school year for these students?

Absolutely not. Tuition for Leaving Certificate students ceased with effect from 11th May.

One of my students now wants to give me additional evidence/work recently completed. Can I accept this and take it into account?

No.

One of my students has been taking private “grinds” outside the school. The teacher providing the grinds wants me to take her/his estimate of the student's likely performance into account. Should I or can I do so?

No. Your estimation of a student's percentage mark must be based on your own professional judgement, taking into account the evidence available to you within the school context.

Should work undertaken by students since 13th March be taken into consideration?

Where additional work has been completed after schools were closed on 13th March, teachers should exercise due caution where that work suggests a change in performance by the student.

In many cases, this change in performance 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. In other words, some students will have had home conditions that were conducive to online engagement whereas others will not have had such conditions. Students must not suffer any disadvantage in estimated marks because of circumstances that were beyond their control.

This caution about interpreting what has happened since schools closed will not, of course, preclude teachers from taking account of the degree to which many students under normal circumstances would intensify their levels of commitment in the run-up to the examinations.

What questions should I ask myself when considering whether or not to include work undertaken since 13th March?

You should consider the following questions

- *Does the evidence relate specifically to student performance and achievement?*
- *Can the evidence be accessed? (If accessing this evidence requires contacting the student then it should not be included.)*
- *Is it feasible to consider this evidence in the time available?*
- *Is this evidence likely to improve the quality of the professional judgment made?*
- *If the evidence is accessible in respect of some students and not others, can it be considered in such a way as not to disadvantage either category?*
- *Information gathered since 12th of March can be taken into account if the teacher, using his/her professional judgement believes it relevant to a fair decision.*

I teach a student who is new to my class this year/within the last few months. How should I calculate her/his estimated mark?

- *If a student has joined your class from another class in the school, you should consult with the previous teacher/s 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 you think you do not have enough evidence to make a sound judgement, you should consult with school management about acquiring additional information from the student's previous school.*
- *If it is not possible to get this, you will still need to estimate a percentage mark for the student, making the best judgement you can from the information available.*

It is important to note that the consent of the student, or of the parent or guardian if the student is under 18, must be sought to enable this process of contacting a student's previous school. If this consent is not granted, it may not be possible to generate grades for this student.

Conflict of Interest

If I have a conflict of interest - should I still provide an estimated mark?

The principles of equity, fairness and objectivity are paramount in the calculated grades system.

If there is a student in a class about whom there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest involved in giving an estimated mark to, such as a son, daughter, sister, or brother, this should be drawn to the attention of the principal. The teacher may still need to assist in the process, by handing over data or factual information, but should not be involved in any judgment process that relates to that student as an individual. There will be additional oversight by the principal/deputy principal in such cases. This will include the principal/deputy principal countersigning Form A to confirm that appropriate arrangements were put in place and that he/she provided additional oversight and approval of the estimated mark.

In instances where the principal is the teacher concerned, the deputy principal will make the necessary arrangements and oversee all tasks in relation to this student and this student's class.

Unconscious Bias

How do I avoid unconscious bias?

You should do your best to remain alert to possible sources of unconscious bias that might affect your estimates. For instance, research shows that teacher estimates of student performance are often affected by the teacher's experience and perceptions of the student's classroom behaviour. By being alert to this source of unconscious bias, you have a better chance of examining the evidence more objectively, focussing on evidence that is clearly about attainment in the subject and not about other factors.

Similarly, research also suggests that teacher estimates can be unconsciously affected by what they know or think they know about students' backgrounds, such as their socio-economic or family background. Knowing that this can happen gives a teacher a better chance of focussing on evidence and considering why it is thought a particular student will achieve a particular standard.

Teachers on Protected Leave

I am on protected leave i.e. Maternity Leave, Sick Leave etc. Am I expected to provide an estimated mark and rank order for my students?

While you cannot be obliged to involve yourself in the process of estimating marks, you might well consider that to be involved would best serve the interests of your students. After

all, you may well be the teacher who can most accurately and fairly estimate what marks your students would have been likely to achieve had they sat the Leaving Certificate examination in the normal way. If you do assist with the process, you should liaise with the teacher who substituted/is substituting for you during the period of your absence.

Subject Levels

Will my Leaving Certificate students be allowed to change the level at which they will receive an estimated mark?

- *Students are being provided with an opportunity to confirm their level of entry for each subject, via an online system provided by the Department . This portal will be available from Tuesday 26th May and will stay open for three days or so.*
- *Students will be permitted to confirm the level already recorded or change their level downwards i.e. from Higher level to Ordinary Level or Ordinary Level to Foundation Level.*
- *Students cannot change their level upwards using the portal.*

However, if a student was entered for Ordinary level in error in January/February, s/he will have an opportunity of making this known to the Department using a dedicated helpline. In such a case the Department will contact the school and, if the student's case is corroborated, a change to higher level may be allowed.

- *You must not, under any circumstances, contact the student to enquire or advise about levels or engage in any contact from a student (or a parent/guardian) in this regard. Instructions will issue to parents from the school/DES in relation to this.*
- *Once this process has completed, the DES will confirm levels of entry back to the school, and school management must relay this onwards to the teachers. It is anticipated that this will happen in the early days of June.*

Do I wait until my students confirm levels before commencing the estimation of marks?

No. In advance of this confirmation process, you should proceed with the estimation of marks, the rank ordering and the Subject Alignment process on the assumption that each student remains entered for the subject at the level you understand to be the case from the school's most recent interaction with her/him.

This will allow you and your colleagues in the subject alignment group to get the bulk of the work done. Then, if a student changes level, you will be left with only minor changes to make – i.e. providing the student with an estimated mark at the lower level in your subject and

adjusting the rank ordering for the class. No adjustment is required to the estimated marks of the students who do not change level.

If a student changes level from Higher to Ordinary, is there guidance as to how s/he might reasonably be expected to perform at the lower level?

There is no specific guidance. You must use your professional judgement, having regard to the evidence available to you. However, the table below shows indicatively what might be regarded as the broad alignment between Higher and Ordinary level grades. In reading it, please bear in mind that, eventually, your professional judgement is the most important factor in estimating percentage marks.

Higher level mark range	Higher grade	Ordinary grade	Ordinary level mark range
50 – 60 (or over)	5	1	90 – 100
40 – 50	6	2	80 – 90
30 – 40	7	3	70 – 80
25 – 30	8	4	60 – 70
20 – 25	8	5	50 – 60
15 – 20	8	6	40 – 50
10 – 15	8	7	30 – 40
0 – 10	8	8	0 – 30

Leaving Certificate Established

A) Subjects with more than one assessment component

My subject has more than one assessment component (Project, Oral, Coursework). Do I factor this into my estimated mark?

Yes (except for teachers of Home Economics Social and Scientific – see the relevant section below).

The normal breakdown of assessment in your subject should mirror your calculation of the estimated mark - i.e. if your subject has a 50% practical component and 50% written examination, each student should be given an estimation based on both elements. The same weighting should be considered by the teacher when arriving at the overall estimated percentage mark for that subject.

It is important to note that it is a single estimated percentage mark that you are required to provide.

My subject has an additional assessment component that has already been sent to the SEC for marking. What happens that work?

All work previously sent to the SEC will be returned to schools unmarked for consideration by the teacher in the estimation of marks, with the exception of Home Economics Social and Scientific (which has already been marked by the SEC examiners).

In the case of Design Communication Graphics (DCG) a full copy of all material submitted to the SEC early in 2020 is retained by the school and is, therefore, available for the teacher/s of DCG to access/view.

I teach Home Economics. The additional assessment component (i.e. Home Economics Journal) has already been marked by the SEC. What happens in this case?

The Home Economics Journal has already been marked by the SEC and the mark awarded to a student is 'banked'.

Therefore, as a teacher of this subject you base your estimated percentage mark on the written exam only - i.e. you do not include the Journal.

This is the only subject where teachers are required to provide an estimated percentage mark for the written examination paper only. The mark awarded by the SEC for the Journal will not be adjusted as part of the statistical standardisation process. The mark will be combined by the Department with the estimated mark to arrive at the final calculated mark for grading.

My subject has an additional assessment component that had not been completed by students by the time of school closure in March. What happens?

Performance on coursework/projects (even if incomplete) should be factored into the estimated mark awarded by the teacher. Students are not required to complete coursework/projects for an estimated mark to be given. You should consider how students planned for, engaged in and demonstrated skills in preparing/completing the coursework/project.

The normal breakdown of assessment in your subject should mirror your calculation of the estimated mark - i.e. if your subject has a 50% practical component and 50% written examination, each student should be given an estimation based on both elements. The same weighting should be considered by the teacher when arriving at the overall percentage mark for that subject.

The Minister made an announcement in March that full marks will be awarded to Orals and Music Performance test. Does this remain the case?

No.

That decision was predicated on the written examinations taking place. As the examinations are now not taking place, that decision is void.

*Based on the principle of fairness, all subjects will be treated equally in determining the estimated mark. The teacher will mark students based on her/his estimate of their **likely** level of achievement in all assessment aspects. The only exception to this is Home Economics Social and Scientific (because the Journal has already been marked by the SEC).*

I teach a new subject e.g. Computer Science, Physical Education. What should I do?

Given that this was to have been the first year for examinations in Physical Education and Computer Science, you will not have data on previous outcomes in these subjects in the school to reflect on and assist you with this process.

You are advised to refer to the specifications and guidelines for both subjects. In particular, refer to the Assessment section of the specifications, and to the quality descriptors in the guidelines. These documents are available on www.curriculumonline.ie.

The estimated mark should be for the subject as a whole, combining all components into a single estimate, and taking account of all evidence available.

B) Bonus Marks and Reasonable Accommodation

My students sit their exams in Irish and get bonus marks for this. What happens?

When estimating the mark of each student, you are asked to factor this into your estimation.

What bonus marks can be awarded for students who had intended to sit the exam through Irish?

A student who had intended to answer the written examination in Irish in the various subjects as set out below may be given bonus marks in addition to the marks gained in the subject.

- *Bonus marks at the rate of 10% of the marks obtained will be given to a student who obtains less than 75% of the total marks in the case of the following subjects:*

Latin, Greek, Classical Studies, Hebrew Studies, History, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, Physics and Chemistry, Biology, Science, Business, Economics, Economic History, Agricultural Science, Agricultural Economics, Home Economics, Music, Business Studies, History and Appreciation of Art, Civic, Social and Political Education, Religious Education, Arabic, LCVP Link Modules - written component only.

- *Bonus marks at the rate of 5% will be given to a student who obtains less than 75% of the total marks in the case of the following subjects*

French, German, Italian, Spanish, Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Accounting, Engineering, Construction Studies, Materials Technology (Wood), Metalwork, Junior Certificate Technology, Leaving Certificate Technology, Typewriting, Russian and Japanese.

- *Above 75%, the bonus will be subjected to a uniform reduction until the student who scores 100% gets no bonus.*

No bonus is given in the case of the following subjects:- Technical Graphics, Design and Communication Graphics, Leaving Certificate Art (other than History and Appreciation of Art).

Can a student now indicate that s/he had intended to answer the written examination in Irish and, as a result, have bonus marks factored into her/his estimated percentage mark?

No. Only those students who had already indicated their intention to answer the written examination in Irish are eligible for the bonus

Some of my students have access to a Reasonable Accommodation – a scribe, a reader a spelling waiver - that would have assisted them in the written exams. Do I factor this in when estimating their percentage marks?

Yes. When estimating the mark of a student, you are asked to factor such reasonable accommodations into your estimation.

*You can access a full description of the RACE provisions at:
<https://www.examinations.ie/schools/BI-1013-25610539.pdf>*

LCVP

I teach Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme – Link Modules. What happens?

The LCVP Portfolio of coursework has been returned to schools and may assist you with the process of establishing estimated marks. As with other subjects containing coursework, the

estimated percentage mark should incorporate both the Portfolio of coursework and the estimate of achievement in the written examination.

Please be aware that while these Portfolios are now in schools they will have to be returned to the SEC as they will be needed if a student sits the written examinations or repeats the year. Therefore you must not write on or otherwise mark or annotate the portfolios.

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA)

How will the calculated grades work for the Leaving Cert Applied (LCA)?

LCA students have already completed a lot of their assessments. Credits have been awarded in respect of these assessment and these credits are “banked” for the students. The system of Calculated Grades will be used for outstanding assessments, including subjects, vocational specialisms and tasks due to be completed in the current LCA session.

Do I have to provide an estimated percentage mark and rank order for all LCA students i.e. first and second year cohorts?

Yes.

As well as providing estimated marks and rank orders for Year two (session four) students, you are also required to provide the same data for Year one (session two) students for a number of subjects and tasks as outlined below.

Can I include key assignments when calculating my estimated mark and rank order?

Yes.

Other evidence for consideration specific to the LCA programme includes key assignments for both current and previous sessions in the subject, as appropriate.

You should also consider how students engaged with and performed in previous modules and tasks relevant to the subject area under consideration. For example, when considering Social Education, you should consider a student’s engagement with and performance in the Contemporary Issues Task which is anchored in this subject.

How are Vocational Specialisms to be dealt with?

The Vocational Specialisms involve a written examination and coursework (project or practical performance test). Your estimated mark should be for the two components combined. As outlined earlier, the coursework may be fully or partially completed.

How are Tasks to be dealt with?

- *Year One (Session two): An estimated percentage mark and rank order is required for Year One students for tasks in Vocational Preparation, Vocational Guidance and Personal Reflection.*
- *Year Two (Session Four): An estimated percentage mark and rank order is required for Year Two students.*
- *In relation to the **Personal Reflection Task**, while students have submitted the year one statement to the SEC, it has not been marked and will not be marked due to the current circumstances. Therefore, schools are required to provide an estimated mark for what they expect each student would have achieved had the Year Two statement been completed and marked with the Year One statement. In other words, the estimated mark is for the two statements combined.*

How is satisfactory completion of modules to be judged?

In the case of any module that was being carried out in Session 2 (Year one students) or Session 4 (Year two students) each student may be awarded the credit for satisfactory completion of that module, provided that the school is satisfied the student had engaged meaningfully with the module concerned. The level of engagement need only be such as to provide a reasonable prospect that the student would have completed the module, giving the benefit of any reasonable doubt to the student.

I have a student who has submitted late tasks from sessions one and three. What happens?

In respect of students who were unable to present for assessment in their tasks in sessions one and three, and who were to be provided with the opportunity to be assessed in May 2020, estimated percentage marks should be provided, together with a rank order (even if that rank order contains only one student).

Class Ranking

Why are class rankings needed?

Research consistently shows that teachers are very accurate in ranking students in their class. Therefore, ranking your class is an aid to the process of drafting estimated percentage marks. It is also of assistance at school level in ensuring that a reasonable consistency of standards applies.

How do I rank a class cohort?

You can approach rank ordering in either of two ways.

Once you generate draft estimated percentage marks, you can then put the students in your class (by subject level) into a rank order. Alternatively, you can rank your students first and then calculate the draft estimated percentage marks.

How do I rank a student who has the same estimated mark as another student?

If there are two or more students with the same estimated percentage mark, you could consider what mark out of 1,000 you would estimate for each of those students. If that recourse does not separate the students, you should take the following two steps:

- *consider whether the mark that you have estimated for each is the correct mark or whether it should be moved up or down for any of them. If your consideration leads you to believe that the marks are correct as they stand, then let them stand. If you do decide to move them, you do not have to move them by a whole number. You can use decimals to separate them.*
- *if, following this consideration, you conclude that the estimated mark is correct, you must then make a conscious decision in relation to rank ordering these students. For example, if there are two students with an estimated mark of 74% and you have concluded that both should remain at 74%, then you must use your professional judgment based on all the evidence you have considered in order to place the one that you are most confident will achieve that mark ahead of the other.*

I teach a mixed ability class - i.e. Higher Level and Ordinary level. How many ranking lists do I provide?

Two separate ranking lists are required in such cases – one for higher level and the other for ordinary level. Teachers rank each student by class and by level, resulting in two separate lists in rank order. It may be the case that a rank order only has one student listed, if that student is the only one in the class taking the particular level.

National Templates and Supporting Evidence

Will templates be provided for me to use?

Yes.

Templates are provided for the teacher and for the subject alignment group – Form A and Form B. Form A is for the estimated percentage mark and Form B for the rank ordering of the class by level.

The forms will also be available in editable PDF format to allow teachers to complete the forms electronically – if they choose to do so.

Do I have to provide supporting evidence of how I got the estimated mark?

No.

*While you may have assembled supporting evidence for your draft estimated percentage marks in preparing for the subject alignment process, there is no requirement to submit supporting evidence, such as student work, with the estimated marks and rank orders provided to the Principal teacher following the alignment process. The estimated marks and the rank order (entered on the national template forms – Form A and Form B) comprise **the full and only documentation** that is to be submitted to the Principal teacher.*

Should I or must I retain documentation generated for, or during, the process of estimating marks?

No.

*The guidance issued by the Department is clear and unequivocal; teachers should **not** retain copies of Forms A or B or any drafts of the forms or any documentation that was generated in the course of completing them. Any such documentation should be “**securely destroyed**”.*

Am I required to complete spreadsheets (or any documentation) that shows how I got my estimated marks?

No.

The estimated mark is based on the professional judgement of the teacher and no documentation should be completed in this regard apart from Form A and Form B which are submitted, following the alignment process, as the school’s estimated percentage marks and rank orders.

My Principal has asked me to provide evidence of how I got my estimated mark. Do I have to do this?

No. Absolutely not. This would be a breach of the process agreed and members must not comply with any such request/instruction from school management.

Your Principal should be advised that the submission and retention of such documentation would weaken the agreed protections for the process and those involved in it, including the Principal teacher.

If your Principal persists with her/his request, the TUI workplace committee, Branch officers and Area Representative should be contacted and informed without delay.

Timeframe for Completing Estimated Mark and Ranking

When am I expected to do this work?

You may already have started. If not, start immediately.

It is hoped that the teacher involvement in generating estimated marks and ranking lists towards calculated grades will conclude by the end of May. However, it is likely that some elements of the work may remain to be done in the early days of June.

External Subjects and External Students

What about students taking an extra subject outside of school?

- *In the case of students taking an additional subject outside school - if school management authorities are confident that there is sufficient evidence of the student's achievement to make an objective judgement, then an estimated percentage mark will be given.*

What about students receiving home tuition?

- *For students in receipt of home tuition with an association to the school, school authorities should engage with the home tutor in arriving at a decision. Whether a valid estimate of performance can be provided will depend on whether the home tutor is a registered teacher and whether or not the school is satisfied with the evidence used to support the judgement.*
- *Please read Form C and Form D that issued from the DES as both relate to cases where the student seeking a Calculated Grade is not a student of the school.*

What about "repeat" students?

- *If a student is repeating in your school having previously been enrolled in your school for the first sitting, evidence of achievement from both cycles should be considered, but particular weight should be given to the student's work and level of achievement during the repeat year.*
- *If the student has a different teacher during the repeat year from the one they previously had, you should ensure that you, as the student's current/most recent teacher (who will be making the estimate), are in a position to consult with the previous teacher/s and have access to any necessary records.*
- *If the student was previously enrolled in a different school, then you should contact the previous school the student attended to ascertain whether additional information can be made available to support the process. The consent of the student, or of the*

parent or guardian if the student is under 18, must be sought to enable this process. You will need to advise that, if this consent is not granted, it may not be possible to generate grades for this student.

Estimated Percentage Marks – Subject Alignment Process

What is the subject alignment process?

In this step of the process, the teachers who have Leaving Certificate classes in a particular subject this year, together review their estimated percentage marks for students who are taking that subject.

The main purpose of the alignment process is to ensure that all teachers who are providing estimated marks in respect of the same subject in the school are applying similar standards when doing so.

Following this element of the alignment process, each teacher will finalise her/his estimated marks and the rank order of the students in her/his classes.

Why do we need an alignment process?

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

- the estimated percentage marks awarded by a teacher and the class rank order correspond exactly with each other*
- the process of estimating marks and rank ordering students within a class is correctly applied by each teacher*

What if I am the only teacher of a subject in my school?

In such a case, as the only teacher of the subject in the school/centre, you conduct the in-school alignment process with the Deputy Principal of the school.

What if I am the only teacher of the subject in my school who has a Leaving Certificate class this year?

In such a case, you conduct the in-school alignment process with the Deputy Principal of the school or with another teacher of the same subject in the school who does not have a Leaving Certificate class in 2020, subject to the agreement of the school principal.

What if I am the Deputy Principal and also the only teacher of a Leaving Certificate subject in my school?

The alignment process is carried out with another teacher of the same subject in the school who does not have a Leaving certificate class in 2020 (if available), or with a second Deputy Principal, or with the Principal.

I teach LCA. Who attends/participates in my subject alignment group?

It is likely that, for the most part, there will be single teachers involved in teaching LCA subjects in schools. For this reason, it is advised, where possible, that the LCA coordinator undertakes the alignment process with the single subject teacher. The coordinator has significant experience with the programme requirements and also with the students.

It is also permissible for a number of (or all of) the teachers delivering LCA to be involved in the subject alignment process, assisted by the LCA co-ordinator.

I teach in a non-mainstream setting and I am the only teacher of a subject. Who attends/participates in my subject alignment group?

It is likely that for the most part, there will be single teachers involved in teaching Leaving Certificate in a non-mainstream setting - i.e. Core VTOS Centre or Youthreach Centres. In these circumstances, it is permissible for a number of (or all of) the teachers delivering Leaving Certificate/LCA in the Centre to be involved in the subject alignment process.

The role of the VTOS co-ordinator and/or Youthreach Co-ordinator in these Centres mirrors the role of a principal teacher in a school.

Does the subject alignment process require me to meet with my colleagues in a physical setting?

No. The subject alignment engagement can be conducted remotely. Public Health advice in this regard is paramount.

What do I bring to the subject alignment process/engagement/meeting?

You bring your draft estimated mark for each student and the rank order/s for your class/es by level, using the national templates (Forms A and B). Nothing further is required.

What are the questions to consider at the subject alignment engagement/meeting?

You and your colleague/s should consider the following:

- *What is collectively known about the different class groups - for example, the way they are streamed in a school, previous experience, students who may have moved class etc?*
- *What do we know that helps us discern how we might expect these class groups to perform relative to each other?*
- *Have we focussed on information about achievement and likely achievement, (rather than, for example, classroom behaviour)?*
- *How do the students in my class compare – in terms of aptitude, engagement and achievement – with others I have taught before? Do the same observations hold for other teachers in respect of their groups?*
- *If the estimated results for one group appear to be stronger than those for another, are there good reasons for this, in light of the above?*
- *Are there particular students who are exceptionally strong or weak at this subject in comparison to others in the class(es) and other students that I/we have taught?*
- *Taking the combined set of estimated results for all groups, and if we think that these students are broadly comparable to previous groups, is our distribution of estimated marks broadly in line with the results we have achieved in the school over recent years? If not, is the discrepancy attributable to the estimated marks within one particular group, or across the board?*

What happens after the subject alignment engagement/meeting?

- *Following the consultative engagement, each teacher reviews his/her class group data sets (i.e. the estimated marks and rankings), makes any adjustments that may be necessary, and finalises a completed estimated percentage mark form (Form A) for each student in the class group.*
- *These individual student forms and the completed rank order form/s (Form B) 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 teacher who is providing the estimated percentage mark can change an estimated mark and/or the rank order for a class group.

Can the Principal teacher participate in the subject alignment engagement/attend meetings of the Subject Alignment Group?

No; unless s/he is doing so in her/his capacity as a teacher of the subject who has a Leaving Certificate class this year.

Calculated Grades – School Management’s Role

When does the school principal become involved in the calculated grade process?

The Principal teacher has an oversight role following the subject alignment process (unless s/he is involved in that process by virtue of her/his capacity as a teacher of the subject who has a Leaving Certificate class this year).

What does the school principal have to do following the subject alignment process?

The school principal:

- *reviews the data sets submitted to her/him by the subject alignment groups*
- *assures herself/himself 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; **her/his role is to return the queried marks/rankings to the subject alignment group for further review.***

On what basis can a school principal return estimated marks or rank orders to the subject alignment group for review?

*A principal teacher can return the marks or rank order for review by the subject alignment group **only** on one (or more) of the following grounds:*

- *If 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*
- *If there were unexplained inconsistencies in the data sets submitted following the subject alignment stage*
- *If 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.*

- *If there is evidence of lack of objectivity (bias, discrimination) in the procedures as applied.*

Does a school principal return estimated marks or rank orders to a teacher or to the subject alignment group?

Form A and Form B are returned to the subject alignment group who will re-engage to consider same.

The marks/forms are not returned to the teacher and the Principal teacher must not seek to engage with the individual teacher/s in regard to the forms/data.

As a school principal teacher, can I ask teachers to change either the estimated mark or rank order?

No. A principal may return the estimated mark and rank order only on the grounds outlined above. The subject alignment group reviews the reasons as set out by the Principal and considers what, if any, adjustments should be made to the estimated marks and/or rank orders. The estimated marks and rank orders returned (in Forms A and B) to the Principal teacher following this review by the subject alignment group are the final estimated marks and rank orders of the school. The principal then countersigns Forms B.

When should the school transmit the estimated percentage marks and rank orders to the DES?

The submission of the data to the Department will be facilitated through an application on the ESINET portal or, in the case of LCA, through the online system for collection of module credits.

Data collection on Esinet will be live in the week ending 5th June. Guidance on the submission of data to the Department will issue shortly to the management of schools. A helpline will also be available to schools.

Has the school's Board of Management any role in relation to the estimated percentage marks/rank ordering process?

No.

Calculated Grades – DES Standardisation Process

What happens at the standardisation stage?

- *The data forwarded by the school is combined with data already available from the State Examinations Commission and a calculated grade is generated by the DES.*

- *The rank order of a class will not be affected by the standardisation process.*
- *The DES will compare the school's profile of achievement at Leaving Certificate over the past three years to the national standards, to build up a picture of the school's performance.*
- *The DES will review the performance of this year's group of students against their overall performance at Junior Cycle.*

Can the estimated mark submitted by the school be changed in the standardisation stage?

Yes.

Can the class rank order submitted by the school be changed in the standardisation stage?

No.

Is this standardisation process school "profiling" by another name?

It is not. At every point the TUI has been consistent in requiring that the system of Calculated Grades must not exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and absolutely insistent that school "profiling" would be completely unacceptable.

We have been assured by the DES that the system of Calculated Grades does not involve profiling, with its negative connotation of having the grades of this year's cohort of Leaving Certificate students in a school predetermined by the pattern of performance in the Leaving Certificate by the school's cohorts in preceding years. We have been assured that the Department's position and determination in this regard is underpinned by a determination by government that profiling will not be allowed to intrude.

We sought and received further assurance that the most important piece of data is the school's estimated mark for a student and that a particularly strong student will not suffer any detriment by virtue of being in a DEIS school.

We have also been assured that where a small school has a particularly strong Leaving Certificate cohort this year (by contrast with recent years), the relative strength of that cohort will be recognised and vindicated by the standardisation process.

GDPR

As a teacher, what records should I retain?

*When the principal has signed off on the post-alignment estimated marks and rank orders and submitted them to the Department, teachers should **not** retain copies of Forms A or B or any drafts of the forms or any documentation that was generated in the course of completing them. **Any such documentation should be securely destroyed.***

All personal notes taken by the teacher in relation to completion of Form A and Form B should also be securely destroyed.

As a Principal teacher, what records should I retain?

When the principal teacher has signed off on the post-alignment estimated marks and rank orders and submitted them to the Department, s/he should retain copies of Forms A, B, C and D until the school has been notified that all stages of the appeal process have been completed.

School's Data Protection Policy – does it apply in estimating a mark and rank order?

In the course of the work that you are being asked to do, you will be accessing, generating, and discussing records that include personal data about individuals. It is important that you remain in compliance, at all times, with the school's data protection policies, whether that be in relation to generating, accessing or transmitting records, or in relation to the media through which confidential information is discussed.

No documentation other than the final completed Forms A and B, and, in the case of Forms C and D, the final forms and any supporting documentation, will be retained by the school for the purpose of appeals.

What happens if a student or parent/guardian submits a data access request?

If a school receives a data access request from a student for her/his estimated marks and/or ranking before the issue of results, the school should respond to say:

- *that in line with section 56 of the Data Protection Act 2018, it is not possible to respond to the request at present, and*
- *that the request will be taken to have been made on the later of either the date of the first publication of the results of the 'examination' (i.e. the calculated grades process), or the date of the request.*

Will my students be entitled to see the estimated marks or class rankings that the teacher awards?

It is important to restate that while the teacher provides a draft estimated percentage mark and class ranking, s/he does not award either the final estimated mark or final class ranking – the school does.

If a student submits a data access request, the only information available to the student (following the appeals process) will be the school mark i.e. the estimated percentage mark determined and submitted by the school (following the school alignment process as overseen by school management) and her/his individual ranking in the class. S/he will therefore have access, on a redacted basis, to Form A and Form B.

Examination Aides

I have been assigned the role of Examination Aide. Am I still needed?

Yes. The TUI has received assurances that examination aides, to be known this year as Calculated Grades Aide, will continue to be required for Leaving Certificate 2020 to assist in the calculated grades process. The Department will shortly provide guidance on the functions of the Calculated Grades Aide in the context of the Calculated Grades system.

TUI is actively seeking the recruitment of additional Calculated Grades Aides to assist schools. Details of role of the Calculated Grades Aide, the quantum of time available and payment arrangements will be the subject of a separate circular.

Progression to Third Level

Will my students who wish to progress to Third Level in 2020 be able to do so?

Third Level entry, through the CAO system, for the 2020/21 academic year will be determined by the Calculated Grades.

It is important to note that, as students wishing to sit Leaving Certificate exams (rather than or in addition to receiving a calculated grade) will not be able to do so until it is safe to do so. As a consequence, results of the written examination will issue too late for the purposes of entry to Third Level for the 2020/2021 academic year.

However, for the purposes of entry to third level for the 2021/22 academic year, students will be allowed to avail of the best combination of their calculated grades and their Leaving Certificate examination grades. If this results in securing a preferred course for 2021/22, a student will retain all SUSI grants entitlements as if 2021/22 were her/his first year in Higher/Further education.

The Minister for Education and Skills is in discussions with his counterparts in the UK and Europe in relation to students who intend studying in those jurisdictions, using the UCAS tariff etc..

Precedent

Will this form of assessment (calculated grades) be used as a precedent?

No. The DES has acknowledged the great work being done by teachers to maintain teaching and learning during this unprecedented time of a national health emergency and has confirmed, in writing, to the unions that a precedent will not be established. The DES has stated 'It is accepted that such temporary measures are being operated by staff on a without prejudice basis and will not be used in any way by the Department as a precedent in any subsequent industrial relations discussions'.

The TUI will ensure that this assurance is honoured and that the terms and conditions of teachers are protected.

This document will be updated on a regular basis so please continue to check the website (www.tui.ie), TUI's social media and the TUI App following the initial publication.