

# JOINT PRESS RELEASE



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE



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## ARRANGEMENTS FOR NATIONAL EXAMINATION CANDIDATES AFFECTED BY COVID-19

1. In view of the rising COVID-19 cases, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) have put in place arrangements for the coming national examinations for those who may be affected by COVID-19. These include special consideration for those who miss any papers, as well as special arrangements to allow candidates to take their national year-end examinations while on Quarantine Order (QO), Leave of Absence (LOA) or Approved Absence (AA) in a safe manner.

### Special Consideration

2. Similar to previous years, candidates who miss any national examination paper(s) with valid reasons (including COVID-19, medical leave or compassionate reasons) can apply for special consideration<sup>1</sup>. Special consideration is a well-established procedure which awards candidates with projected grades through a fair and rigorous evidence-based methodology. In awarding a grade for these affected candidates, SEAB will consider multiple sources of data, such as the candidate's performance in the other papers for that affected subject in national and school-based examinations as well as the school cohort's performance in national and school-based examinations, to ensure a fair assessment for all candidates.

3. All special consideration applications are assessed on each case's merit, to ensure that the grades awarded are as accurate and fair as possible.

### For candidates who miss full papers (i.e. all components) in their national examination subject

4. Using an example of a candidate who had missed his/her PSLE Mathematics examinations due to valid reasons, SEAB will take into consideration the candidate's school preliminary examination results for Mathematics to determine his/her relative rank position among the peers in the school cohort. This relative rank position will then be used to derive the candidate's projected mark for PSLE Mathematics from the school cohort's performance in the PSLE based on the mark that corresponds to this relative rank position. The candidate's projected PSLE Mathematics mark will be used to derive his/her Achievement Level (AL).

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<sup>1</sup> School candidates may apply for special consideration through their schools. Private candidates may approach SEAB.

### For candidates who miss one or more papers in their national examination subject

5. Where a candidate had missed one or more papers of a subject, SEAB would look at the candidate's performance in those papers of the subject where the candidate had taken to derive a projected outcome for the subject, but also take into consideration the candidate performance in the school preliminary examination.

6. To illustrate, we use an example of a candidate who had missed his/her Paper 3 (Listening Comprehension or LC) in the PSLE English Language (EL) examination, but had attempted the other papers in the subject. In awarding a grade for the affected candidate, SEAB will take the following factors into consideration:

- i. Candidate's performance at PSLE in the other three papers [Paper 1 (Writing), Paper 2 (Language Use and Comprehension) and Paper 4 (Oral Communication)] at the PSLE. SEAB will use his/her total marks in these three papers to work out his/her relative rank position within the PSLE cohort for these three papers. This relative rank position will be used to derive his/her Paper 3 (LC) mark based on the PSLE cohort's LC performance. The derived Paper 3 (LC) mark will be added to the affected candidate's marks on the three other papers to give his/her total marks and derive an AL for EL; and
- ii. Candidate's school preliminary examination results – SEAB will compare the relative performance of the affected candidate vis-à-vis other candidates in his/her school. If he/she is ranked at a significantly different position for his/her derived PSLE AL from his school preliminary AL, his/her case will be flagged for further review.

7. Please refer to the Annex for an illustrated explanation on the special consideration process.

### **Arrangements for Candidates on Quarantine Order (QO)**

8. While special consideration will be applied to cases with valid reasons, we recognise that there would still be instances where the candidate would still wish to have the opportunity to take their national year-end examination. These candidates can include students who have been placed on QO but are otherwise well. The Ministry of Health (MOH) has approved a set of procedures for such candidates on QO to be allowed to apply for leave<sup>2</sup> from quarantine to sit for their national year-end examinations<sup>3</sup>. This is an additional option made available to all national examination candidates this year, starting from the PSLE examinations, beginning 30 September 2021, and for GCE N(A)/N(T), O and A level examinations thereafter.

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<sup>2</sup> More details will be provided to candidates in due course.

<sup>3</sup> This excludes science practical examinations, where candidates may have to share lab equipment or move about the lab, and examinations that have mask-off activities (eg. music performing examinations that require candidates to play wind instruments or sing).

9. For PSLE candidates who may have to be accompanied to their examination venue, MOH has also approved a similar leave arrangement for an accompanying family member or caregiver, should the latter also be under quarantine. Both the PSLE candidate and the accompanying family member who are applying for leave from quarantine must satisfy a rigorous testing requirement and follow the procedure as detailed below:

- Have obtained a negative Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) entry swab at the beginning of the QO;
- Have completed a self-swab with Antigen Rapid Tests (ART) kits at home and test Ag- within 24 hours before each of their examination papers;
- Travel arrangements to their examination venue must be by private transport (i.e. by private vehicle or by private hire transport) or on foot, and only between their place of residence and examination venue with no additional stops in between. Travel by public transport such as buses or MRT is not permitted;
- Inform their schools that they intend to take the specific paper in order for the school to prepare the examination venue arrangements for them.

10. MOE will be providing more details of the requirements to candidates in due course, including the application procedure, and the expected timelines for processing of such applications.

11. To ensure the safety of candidates and invigilators in the examination venues and schools, rooms used for QO candidates will be thoroughly wiped down after the examinations. QO candidates will also need to:

- Take their examinations in a separate classroom/hall from the rest of the school cohort;
- Be seated 3m apart in exam-style seating;
- Avoid mingling with the other candidates as they will be provided with designated entry/exit points, restrooms, etc;
- Start examinations 30 minutes after the scheduled start time for the rest of the school cohort; and
- Stagger their reporting time and venue.

### **Arrangements for Candidates on Approved Absence (AA)**

12. MOE and SEAB have also updated the examination arrangements for candidates who are on AA due to being placed on MOH's mandatory testing regime or Health Risk Warning alert. In addition to completing their MOH-mandated entry PCR test and testing negative, i.e. PCR-, before they can sit for their examinations, these candidates must do a self-swab with ART test kits at home at regular intervals in compliance with MOH's testing regime and inform their schools of the outcome before their examination, until their AA is rescinded.

13. The remaining arrangements as well as prevailing SMMs implemented for the national examinations that were earlier announced<sup>4</sup> will continue to be in place. An updated summary of the arrangements for the 2021 national year-end written examinations, beginning from 30 September, is in Table 1.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/press-releases/20210828-updated-arrangements-for-the-2021-national-year-end-written-examinations>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Examination Arrangements</b>
Confirmed case of COVID-19 infection	Not allowed to sit for examinations.
Stay Home Notice (SHN) <sup>5</sup>	
<b>[Updated]</b> Quarantine Order (QO) <i>Including candidates pending issuance of QO.</i>	Allowed* if entry PCR test and self-swab ART before each examination paper are negative.
<b>[Updated]</b> Approved Absence (AA) <i>Due to MOH's mandatory testing or Health Risk Warning.</i>	Allowed if entry PCR test is negative and to self-swab ART at regular intervals, in compliance with MOH's testing regime.
Leave of Absence (LOA) (Confirmed) <i>For candidates who had close contact with confirmed case(s) and are not pending issuance of QO.</i>	Allowed if supervised ART is negative and to test at regular intervals.
LOA (QO) <i>For candidates who are staying in the same household as individuals serving QO.</i>	
LOA (SHN) <i>For candidates who are staying in the same household as individuals serving SHN at home.</i>	
AA <i>For candidates with household members (aged 6 and above) who have flu-like symptoms.</i>	Allowed if a one-time self-swab ART is negative.
MC due to ARI	Allowed if recovered and PCR test is negative.
MC due to Fever (non-ARI)	Allowed if recovered and one-time self-swab ART is negative.

Table 1: Summary of arrangements for the 2021 national year-end written examinations. Please refer to MOE's website (<https://www.moe.gov.sg/faqs-covid-19-infection>) for more information on the categories of candidates.

\*Only for the year-end examinations.

14. MOE and SEAB will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and provide updates if there are further changes to the examination arrangements. We urge all candidates and staff to continue practising good personal hygiene, adhere to SMMs, and exercise social responsibility. Students should stay away from school and seek medical attention if they are unwell.

<sup>5</sup> Similar to last year, candidates who have travelled overseas to attend a funeral or visit a critically ill next-of-kin, can sit for the written examinations under special arrangements. They will take the examinations in schools. They must take their own private vehicles or pre-book taxis to the exam venue as they are not allowed to take public transport.