

JOINT PRESS RELEASE



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE



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UPDATED ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 2021 NATIONAL YEAR-END WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

1. For the upcoming national year-end written examinations, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board (SEAB) have updated the arrangements so that as many candidates as possible can sit for their papers while keeping candidates and staff safe.

2. The national year-end written examinations for key subjects¹ will commence on 15 September 2021 (see Table 1 for the start and end dates of the respective national examinations).

National Examination	Start Date	End Date
GCE N(A)/N(T)-Level	15 September 2021	14 October 2021
PSLE	30 September 2021	6 October 2021
GCE O-Level	18 October 2021	15 November 2021
GCE A-Level	8 November 2021	3 December 2021

Table 1: Start and End Dates for 2021 National Examinations

Updated Arrangements for Candidates

3. The national year-end written examinations are important for students' educational progression. To enable as many candidates as possible to sit for the examinations while ensuring that the examinations are conducted safely, MOE and SEAB are updating the arrangements to include the use of Antigen Rapid Tests (ART) and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) for affected candidates.

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases and Candidates on Quarantine Order or Stay-Home Notice

4. Similar to the 2020 national year-end written examinations, candidates who are tested positive for COVID-19, placed on Quarantine Order (QO) or Stay-Home Notice (SHN), will not be allowed to sit for the examinations. This is in line with the national measures where such persons are not allowed to leave home or their respective facilities.

¹ Some GCE O- and A-Level subjects with a smaller candidature will be examined before the start dates indicated. For example, GCE O-Level French will be examined on 8 October 2021. The detailed examination timetables can be found on the SEAB website (<https://www.seab.gov.sg>).

Candidates on Leave of Absence, Approved Absence and Medical Leave with Acute Respiratory Infection

5. As a further precautionary measure in addition to QO/SHN measures, MOE also issues Leave of Absence (LOA) and Approved Absence (AA) to students and staff to limit COVID-19 transmission by requiring those who might have been exposed to the virus to stay away from school campuses.

6. Candidates who are on LOA and pending issuance of a QO due to close contact with a confirmed case, will not be allowed to sit for the national examinations. For candidates who are on LOA but not pending issuance of a QO, they will be allowed to sit for the examinations with regular ART and if they test negative, i.e. Ag-. They will be required to take the ART at their schools or examination venues² at regular intervals every two days³ until their LOA is rescinded.

7. Candidates placed on Approved Absence (AA) as a result of staying in the same household with members (aged 6 and above) who have flu-like symptoms and have yet to receive a PCR- outcome, will be allowed to sit for the examinations with a one-time ART and if they test Ag-. They can do a self-swab with ART test kits at home and inform their schools of the outcome before their examination. For candidates on AA due to being placed on the Ministry of Health's (MOH) mandatory testing regime or Health Risk Warning alert, they must complete their MOH-mandated entry Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test and test negative, i.e. PCR-, before they can sit for their examinations.

8. For PSLE candidates, in view of their younger age, if they are required to undergo any ART at their schools or examination venues, they should be accompanied by their parent/guardian who can help administer the test. Alternatively, parents/guardians may give consent for their child/ward to perform a supervised self-administered ART in their school or examination venue.

9. Candidates who are on medical leave due to acute respiratory infection (ARI) must have recovered and tested PCR- if they wish to sit for the examinations. Individuals with ARI symptoms should seek medical attention early and are encouraged to visit <https://flu.gowhere.gov.sg/> to locate a Public Health Preparedness Clinic (PHPC) offering Government-funded PCR tests for persons with ARI. For candidates below the age of 13, parents may wish to check the website to locate a Swab-and-Send-Home (SASH) PHPC that offers Government-funded PCR swabs for children. Individuals should call ahead to confirm that the clinic can offer the relevant test during their visit.

10. Candidates who are on medical leave due to fever will be allowed to sit for the examinations if they no longer have a fever, and are tested Ag- after a one-time ART. They can do a self-swab with ART kits at home and inform their schools on the outcome before their examination.

11. A summary of the arrangements for the 2021 year-end written examinations is in Table 2.

² The ART will be self-administered by the student and supervised by trained staff.

³ From the date of their first examination (Day 1), candidates on LOA will be tested every two days, i.e. Day 3, 5 and 7 etc, if they have upcoming papers.

Category	Examination Arrangements
Confirmed case of COVID-19 infection	Not allowed to sit for examinations.
Quarantine Order (QO)	
Stay Home Notice (SHN)	
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>	
Approved Absence (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.
AA <i>Due to MOH's mandatory testing or Health Risk Warning.</i>	Allowed if entry PCR test 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 2: 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.

Special Consideration

12. Candidates who miss the national examinations with valid reasons can apply for special consideration. In awarding a grade for these affected candidates, SEAB will consider multiple sources of evidence, such as the candidate's performance in the other papers and the school cohort's performance in national and school-based examinations for the affected subject, to ensure a fair assessment. All special consideration applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis and subjected to a rigorous review process.

Safe Management Measures

13. Safe management measures (SMMs) will continue to be implemented in schools and examination venues, in addition to the COVID-19 testing regime highlighted above, to ensure a safe conduct of national examinations. These include:

- Temperature taking and visual screening of all candidates.

- Wearing of surgical masks or reusable mask of equivalent efficiency at all times during the examinations.
- For examinations conducted in school halls, areas will be zoned with a maximum of 50 candidates in each zone, and up to 250 candidates per venue. There will be a separation of at least 3 metres between zones. Within each zone, candidates will be seated at least 1.5 metres apart.
- For examinations conducted in classrooms, there will be a maximum of 30 candidates in each classroom and they will be seated at least 1.5 metres apart.
- Staggering dismissal of candidates, as well as segregating entry and exit routes to minimise intermingling of candidates and avoid congregation.

14. Candidates on LOA or AA who are allowed to sit for the examinations will do so in their schools or examination venues, but in a separate room from the other candidates. Enhanced SMMs, such as a spacing of at least 3 metres between candidates and a cap of 10 candidates per examination room, will be applied to this group.

Study Breaks for Graduating Cohorts

15. Similar to the arrangements for the 2020 year-end national examinations, schools will be implementing a study break for graduating cohorts prior to the national year-end written examinations to minimise the risk of school-based transmissions and reduce the number of students placed on QO and LOA. Please refer to Table 3 for the duration of the study breaks that will be implemented for the graduating cohorts.

Graduating Cohorts	Study Break
PSLE	25 – 29 September 2021
GCE O-Level	13 – 17 October 2021
GCE N(A)/N(T)-Level ⁴	4 – 12 September 2021 and 1 – 3 October 2021
GCE A-Level	3 – 7 November 2021

Table 3: Duration of Study Break for Graduating Cohorts

16. During the study break, students are strongly encouraged to remain at home to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. Students should also make use of the study break to revise for their upcoming examinations and clarify any questions they have with their teachers.

17. Schools will remain open for students who require additional support, including those whose home environments may not be conducive for studying. Teachers will be present to guide students in their learning, with the necessary SMMs in place. Parents of primary school students who cannot work from home, or who are unable to secure alternative care arrangements, may also approach their children’s schools for assistance.

18. MOE and SEAB will monitor the COVID-19 situation and provide timely 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.

⁴ Study break will be applied twice to cover the two examination windows for the GCE N(A)/N(T)-Level examinations.