

# JOINT PRESS RELEASE



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE



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21 AUGUST 2020

## SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE SAFETY OF CANDIDATES DURING THE 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) will make special arrangements for candidates who require them. This is to safeguard the well-being of candidates and staff amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure that affected candidates are assessed fairly.
2. Safe management measures will continue to be implemented in schools and examination venues during the conduct of the national examinations.

### *Special Arrangements for Candidates*

3. The year-end written examinations for key subjects<sup>1</sup> will commence on 14 September 2020 (see Table 1 below for the start and end dates of the respective national examinations).

National Examination	Start Date	End Date
GCE N(A)/N(T)-Level	14 September 2020	16 October 2020
PSLE	1 October 2020	7 October 2020
GCE O-Level	19 October 2020	12 November 2020
GCE A-Level	26 October 2020	2 December 2020

*Table 1: Start and End Dates for 2020 National Examinations*

4. As the national year-end written examinations are important milestones that affect students' progression, we will make sure as many students as possible are given the opportunity to take the examinations, as long as it can be made safe for their schoolmates and invigilators.

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<sup>1</sup> Some GCE O- and A-Level subjects with a smaller candidature will be examined before the start dates indicated. For example, GCE O-Level Spanish will be examined on 7 October 2020.

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

5. Candidates who test positive for COVID-19 or are placed on Quarantine Order (QO) or Stay-Home Notice (SHN) will not be allowed to sit for the examinations to ensure they do not pose a risk to others.
6. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis for candidates on SHN to take the examinations under special arrangements if they had travelled out of Singapore for compassionate reasons, such as to attend a funeral of or visit a critically ill next-of-kin.

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

7. Candidates who are on Leave of Absence (LOA), due to close contact with confirmed case(s), will not be allowed to sit for the examinations. Candidates who are on LOA, as a result of staying in the same household with individuals on Home Quarantine Order (HQO), will only be allowed to sit for the examinations if they test negative for COVID-19. Arrangements will be made for these candidates to be tested.
8. Candidates who are on medical leave due to acute respiratory infection (ARI) will be allowed to sit for the examinations if they test negative for COVID-19.
9. Currently, individuals aged 13 and above who are diagnosed with ARI at first presentation to a doctor should be tested for COVID-19 under the enhanced Swab-and-Send-Home (SASH) criteria. From 17 September 2020, 14 days before the start of the PSLE written examinations, MOE and the Ministry of Health have made provisions for students taking PSLE this year to also be tested for COVID-19 at first presentation of ARI before and during the examination period. This will allow for the early detection of candidates with an active COVID-19 infection.
10. Candidates on Approved Absence (AA) as a result of staying in the same household with adults (aged 18 and above) with flu-like symptoms<sup>2</sup> will be allowed to sit for the examinations with enhanced safe management measures in place.
11. A summary of the arrangements for the year-end written examinations is in Table 2.

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<sup>2</sup> Candidates staying in the same household as adults (18 years and above) who have flu-like symptoms can be placed on AA for the duration of the unwell individual's medical leave or until the adult is informed of a negative COVID-19 swab result.

Category	Examination Arrangements
Confirmed case of COVID-19 infection	Candidates are not allowed to sit for examinations.
Quarantine Order (QO)	
Stay Home Notice (SHN)	
Leave of Absence, due to close contact with COVID-19 confirmed case(s)	
Leave of Absence, as a result of staying in the same household with individuals on Home Quarantine Order (HQO)	Candidates are allowed to sit for examinations if they test negative for COVID-19.
Medical leave due to acute respiratory infection (ARI)	
Approved Absence (AA), as a result of staying in the same household with adults (aged 18 and above) who have flu-like symptoms	Candidates are allowed to sit for examinations.

*Table 2: Summary of the arrangements for the year-end written national examinations*

### **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 evidences of these candidates' performance from multiple sources, such as the candidate's performance in the other papers for that affected subject in the national and school-based examinations, as well as the school cohort's performance in the national and school-based examinations. 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 for the safe conduct of national examinations. These include:

- Temperature taking and visual screening of all candidates.
- All candidates will wear face masks when reporting to the examination venue. When seated at the examination desk, candidates are allowed to replace their face masks with face shields. However, they must put on the face masks when they leave the examination venue, such as for visits to the toilet or at the end of the examination.
- Candidates will be seated 1.5 metres apart from one another, with a maximum of 30 candidates in each classroom.
- Larger venues, such as school halls, will be zoned with a maximum of 50 candidates in each zone, and up to 250 candidates per venue. There will be a

spacing of at least 3 metres between zones. Within each zone, candidates will be seated at least 1.5 metres apart.

- There will be designated toilets or staggered toilet breaks for groups of candidates where appropriate, to avoid congregation and intermingling between groups.
- Staggered dismissal timings as well as segregated entry and exit routes to minimise intermingling of candidates and avoid congregation.

14. Candidates who are on LOA as a result of staying in the same household with individuals on HQO or on medical leave due to ARI, and have tested negative for COVID-19, as well as those on AA, will be allowed to sit for their examinations with enhanced SMMs in place. These candidates will take their examinations in a separate room from other candidates in their schools. As an added precaution, these candidates will be seated at least 3 metres apart with a cap of 10 candidates per examination room. Precautionary measures will also be taken to ensure that these candidates do not mingle with the other candidates, including designated toilets, separate entry and exit routes for each examination room with deconflicted arrival and departure timings.

15. Candidates who are placed on SHN but allowed to sit for the national examinations for compassionate reasons will take their examinations in a centralised venue managed by SEAB. They will be seated individually in a room and will not be allowed to mingle with other candidates. The rooms will also be thoroughly wiped down after each paper. To further minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19, candidates must take their own private vehicles or pre-booked taxis to the examination venue as they are not allowed to take public transport. Invigilators will also be provided with Personal Protective Equipment as a safety precaution and will invigilate from outside of the examination room to minimise contact with candidates.

16. MOE and SEAB will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation closely and provide updates if there are any changes to the examination arrangements. We urge all candidates and staff to continue practising good personal hygiene and exercise social responsibility.

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