

# Circular S/IF/15/10

January/2010

To: Principals of Post-primary Schools and Directors of Institutes of Further and Higher Education

For circulation to: Examination Officers and Heads of Departments

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION: KS3 TESTS, GCSE LEGACY SPECIFICATIONS and GCSE REVISED SPECIFICATIONS

**This circular highlights some of the most important arrangements for forthcoming KS3 Tests and GCSE Examinations. It is essential that you are familiar with these arrangements to ensure that your candidates are prepared appropriately.**

### GCSE legacy specifications – last examination opportunities

Legacy specifications with last examinations in summer 2010 are listed overleaf. This will be the final opportunity for assessment of these specifications.

### GCSE legacy Learning for Life and Work

There will be a final re-sit opportunity in January 2011 for GCSE Learning for Life and Work. (Coursework cannot be submitted in January 2011, but existing coursework marks can be carried forward). These arrangements apply also to Entry Level Learning for Life and Work.

### Revised GCSE specifications: the 40 per cent terminal rule

This rule applies to unitised specifications. The rule states that units making up at least 40% of the qualification **must** be taken in the examination series in which the qualification is certificated. The final grade will include the results for the units which satisfy this 40% terminal requirement even if there is a better score for an earlier attempt at one or more of these units.

The percentage contribution of each unit is given by its weighting, which can be found in the 'Specification at a Glance' table in the specification.

This rule is described in more detail in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) *Notes for Teachers and Examinations Officers on the Rules for new GCSE Specifications - terminal requirements, re-sits and cashing-in*. This document is available on the JCQ website. You are advised to familiarise yourself with all the rules described in this document.

### Revised GCSE specifications – 1<sup>st</sup> teaching September 2009: uniform marks available for specifications which are unitised and tiered.

For unitised, tiered specifications, the maximum uniform mark available to a candidate for a unit is determined by the tier of entry for that unit. The maximum uniform mark available is the maximum uniform mark for the highest grade allowed by the tier of entry.

Candidates can be entered for different tiers for each unit. Candidates can re-sit units taking a different tier from their previous attempt. The qualification level grade is based on the total uniform marks accumulated for all contributing units.



### Revised GCSE Religious Studies: dates for certification

Religious Studies (short course) can be cashed-in from the June 2010 series onwards but the Full Religious Studies GCSE cannot be cashed-in until the June 2011 series. If a candidate completes the assessments required for the Full GCSE Religious Studies in June 2010, certification for this award may be requested in June 2011 without taking any assessment during the 2010 – 2011 academic year. This is an exception to the 40 per cent terminal rule described above.

### KS3 tests

As indicated in DE Circular 2009/15, paragraph 18, the KS3 tests for English, Irish, Maths and Science, scheduled for 2010, will be following the former level descriptions, attainment targets and programmes of study, as opposed to the current KS3 Revised Curriculum



## GCSE Legacy Specifications with final assessments – Summer 2010

Applied Art and Design  
Applied Business  
Art and Design  
Business Studies  
Construction  
Drama  
Economics  
Engineering  
Financial Services  
French (including short course)  
Geography  
German (including short course)  
Health & Social Care  
History  
Home Economics  
Home Economics: Child Development  
Hospitality  
Irish (including short course)  
Journalism  
Leisure & Tourism  
Manufacturing  
Motor Vehicle and Road User Studies  
Music  
Physical Education  
Religious Studies (including short course)  
Spanish (including short course)  
Technology & Design

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