

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION NOTIFICATION (PA/31/20)

(Policy and Standing Instruction)

SCHOOL EXAMINATION DATES FOR 2021

1 National Examinations Time Table

The dates of the various activities related to the PSLE, GCE N-, O- and A-Level in 2021 are provided below to help schools plan their curriculum and school-based assessment schedule:

*PSLE	Dates
Oral Examinations	Thu, 12 Aug – Fri, 13 Aug
Listening Comprehension	Fri, 17 Sep
Written Examinations	Thu, 30 Sep – Wed, 6 Oct
Marking Exercise	Mon, 18 Oct – Thu, 21 Oct

*GCE N(T) & N(A)	Dates
Oral Examinations	Mon, 12 Jul – Fri, 16 Jul Thu, 29 Jul – Mon, 2 Aug
Listening Comprehension	Mon, 13 Sep – Tue, 14 Sep
Practical & Written Examinations	Wed, 15 Sep – Thu, 23 Sep Mon, 4 Oct – Thu, 14 Oct

*GCE O-Level	Dates
Oral Examinations	Wed, 7 Jul – Fri, 16 Jul Thu, 22 Jul – Thu, 5 Aug Wed, 11 Aug – Tue, 17 Aug Mon, 27 Sep – Wed, 6 Oct
Listening Comprehension	Tue, 6 Jul Tue, 12 Oct Fri, 15 Oct Mon, 18 Oct
Practical & Written Examinations	Mon, 31 May – Tue, 1 Jun Tue, 28 Sep – Fri, 1 Oct Thu, 7 Oct – Tue, 16 Nov

*GCE A-Level	Dates
Oral Examinations	Wed, 7 Jul – Wed, 21 Jul Wed, 6 Oct Wed, 13 Oct – Fri, 15 Oct
Listening Comprehension	Tue, 6 Jul Fri, 15 Oct Mon, 18 Oct
Practical & Written Examinations	Mon, 31 May – Tue, 1 Jun Wed, 6 Oct – Fri, 8 Oct Wed, 20 Oct – Fri, 3 Dec

**The national examination dates may be subjected to changes and schools will be informed of any changes by Mar 2021.*

- 1.1 Primary Schools^ will be closed on 12 and 13 Aug 2021 for the PSLE Oral Examinations.
- 1.2 Primary Schools^ will be closed for the morning session on 17 Sep 2021 for the PSLE Listening Comprehension.
[*^Primary schools without candidates for PSLE will remain open and school will function as usual on these dates.*]
- 1.3 All Primary Schools will be closed from 18 to 21 Oct 2021 for the PSLE marking exercise.
- 1.4 The last day for students in Secondary Schools which are serving as GCE O-Level examination venues will be 29 Oct 2021.
- 1.5 All Junior Colleges (JCs) and Millennia Institute (MI) will be closed on 1 Nov 2021 for the GCE A-Level Mother Tongue Language Written Examinations.

2 Guidelines for Enacting Sound Assessment Practices in Schools

Schools should optimise curriculum time for teaching and learning. As the number of school days in our academic calendar is limited, the timing and duration of school-based examinations should be planned judiciously. With the announcement on the changes to school-based assessment (SBA) at the 2018 Workplan Seminar, schools should take reference from the following guidelines on SBA practices in **Section D.5.1.1 Annex** of the **Principals' Handbook**:

2.1 **Section D.5.1.1.1.** Guiding Principles and Guidelines on SBA Practices from the [*Resource Guide for Enacting Sound Assessment Practices in Schools*](#)¹(OPAL2.0 log-in required).

Guideline 1.1. School Leaders (SLs) and Middle Managers (MMs) [in particular, appointed Heads of Departments (HODs)] should oversee and closely monitor inter- and intra-departmental assessment plans². Teacher Leaders (TLs) should support SLs and MMs in guiding teachers to implement learner-centred assessment practices. MMs should draw up Table of Specifications (TOS)³ and/or Assessment Objectives (AOs) to ensure clarity in the scope of what is to be assessed throughout the year, and to adopt appropriate frequency and number of assessments. Schools should also detail in the assessment plans and TOS the assessment modes, formats and weighting in accordance with assessment objectives stipulated in the syllabuses. For the distribution of assessment weighting, schools should refer to **D.5.1.1.2** on “School-Based Assessment Practices for Compliance”.

Guideline 1.2. Schools should not conduct multiple examinations or mock examinations to prepare students for national examinations and should adhere to the SBA practices detailed in **D.5.1.1.2**

Guideline 2.1. Teachers should refer closely to the Teaching and Learning Syllabus and Guide (TLS and TLG), and Assessment Guide to right-size assessment demands and marking standards. For levels preparing for national examinations (i.e. P6, S4/5, JC2), teachers should also take reference from the Examination Syllabus and Specimen Papers to guide the setting and marking of SBA and should not assess concepts and topics beyond the syllabus. SBA for the non-graduating levels should not be designed based on the format of the national examinations as the curricula may have a different scope, sequence and structure.

Guideline 2.2. SLs and MMs (in particular, appointed HODs) should regularly review the TOS and/or AOs, and analyse the discrepancy between students’ performance in school-based examinations and national examinations to better evaluate the appropriate pitching of their SBA in terms of assessment demands and marking standards. TLs should support SLs and MMs to guide teachers to pitch their SBA at the appropriate level of assessment demand and marking standard.

¹ The *Resource Guide for Enacting Sound Assessment Practices in Schools* was disseminated on 21 Oct 2018 to all school leaders through the LENS 2 Package and is available on the Assessment Portal on OPAL2.0.

² The departmental assessment plan should contain the assessment schedule, duration of assessment, nature of assessment tasks, Table of Specifications (TOS) or Assessment Objectives (AOs), and assessment weighting details.

³ Some subjects, e.g. Mathematics and Science, would have TOS while other subjects, e.g. Humanities subjects, may use the term “Assessment Objectives” (AOs).

Guideline 3.1. Schools should leverage in-class formative assessment strategies to focus on learning for mastery and not overly rely on grades and marks to indicate students' learning progress.

Guideline 3.2. Teachers should set aside time after each assessment to provide feedback to students, provide opportunities for students to act on feedback and help them close learning gaps.

Guideline 3.3. Schools should use academic and non-academic considerations to make professionally sound decisions (e.g. class allocation, selection of students for specific programmes).

- 2.2 Refer to **D.5.6** for guidelines on the conduct of school-based examinations such as the setting of examination papers, marking of examination scripts, treatment of marked scripts and release of examination results.

3 Mid-Year School Examinations [For Reference]

- 3.1 Schools should not conduct semestral examinations too early before the end of term. Factoring the time needed for marking, moderation of examination results, and other administrative matters, schools are strongly encouraged not to start their Mid-Year Examinations⁴ before the following dates:

Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	JCs and MI
10 May 2021	4 May 2021	17 May 2021

- 3.2 Primary and Secondary schools could set aside **one day**, if needed, after the Mid-Year Examinations for marking and processing of results. Students do not have to attend school on that day.
- 3.3 There is no requirement for schools to issue results slips and collect back the signed copies before the end of Term Two. For the purpose of giving feedback to students and parents, teachers could use evidence from continual and formative assessments, and the mid-year examination scripts instead.
- 3.3 After the Mid-Year Examinations, teaching and learning, as well as other meaningful student development activities, should continue.

⁴ Starting from 2019, mid-year examination is removed for Secondary 1. By 2021, mid-year examination will be removed for Primary 3 and 5, and Secondary 3.

4 End-of-Year School Examinations [For Reference]

- 4.1 To allow for synoptic learning to consolidate what students have learned over the year(s), schools are strongly encouraged to conduct only one set of Preliminary Examinations for students in the graduating levels, no earlier than the following dates:

Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	JCs and MI
16 Aug 2021	N Level – 26 Jul 2021 O Level – 23 Aug 2021	23 Aug 2021

- 4.2 Similarly, for students in the non-graduating levels⁵, schools are strongly encouraged not to conduct the End-of-Year and JC1 Promotional Examinations earlier than the following dates:

Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	JCs and MI
P3, P4 & P5 – 22 Oct 2021	27 Sep 2021	27 Sep 2021

- 4.3 For Primary Schools, **one day**, if needed, could be set aside after the End-of-Year Examinations for marking and results processing. Students do not have to attend school on that day.
- 4.4 For Secondary Schools, JCs and MI, **up to two days** could be set aside after the End-of-Year Examinations for marking, results processing and finalising promotions, retentions and lateral transfers. Students do not have to attend school on those days.
- 4.5 After the End-of-Year and Promotional Examinations, teaching and learning (such as Learning Journeys, Elective Modules, providing feedback on examination papers to close learning gaps), as well as other meaningful student development activities, should continue.

- 5 Schools are to inform parents through an official letter about the above-mentioned days when students are not required to report to school.

For clarification, please contact :

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⁵ Starting from 2019, end-of-year examination is removed for Primary 2. In addition, there will be no weighted assessments for Primary 1 and 2.

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