

To All Principals
Of Post-Primary schools
And Chief Executives
Of Education and Training Boards

May, 2015

REMINDER – Circular M02/95 Repeat of a Year at Post Primary

Dear Principal/Chief Executive,

I wish to remind all schools that applications for a student to repeat a year at Post-Primary must be processed in full compliance with the provisions of circular M02/95 – *Repeat of a Year of Post-Primary* – Available from page 7 in this document.

[Click this link to skip to - Circular m02/95 - Repeat of a year of Post-Primary Level](#)

This letter provides clarification on the following points where the Department has received queries from schools:-

1. The **deadline** which applies to applications to the Department for a **second or more** repeat of a year where the student previously repeated a year OR where the student is part of a year group where **5% or more** have applied to repeat a year.
2. List of **appropriate relevant documentation** to be included with each application.
3. The **basis on which the 5% or more** of a year group who wish to repeat is calculated.
4. Option for a **further review of application** where the Department has refused to grant a repeat of a year.
5. Procedures for applications where the student for the **first time** is seeking to repeat a year AND where this student is **NOT** part of a year group where 5% or more or seeking to repeat. **Circular M02/95 delegates authority to the school to make the decision in these particular cases.**

1. **Deadline for applications from schools to the Department for a student to repeat a year for a SECOND or more time or a student who is part of a Leaving Certificate year group where 5% or more are seeking to repeat.**

I draw your attention to the deadline provided in circular M02/95 of **31st May** preceding the school year for receipt by the Department of applications from schools for students to repeat a year for the **second or more** time OR where the student is part of a Leaving Certificate (excl. Repeat LC) year group where **5% or more** are seeking to repeat. Where a student is repeating for the **FIRST** time the school under circular M02/95 has the authority to make the decision in these cases, see also paragraph 5 below.

I wish to thank those schools who have to date submitted their applications already for 2015/16. The Department will endeavour to reply to these as soon as possible. Others who are considering applications should submit these to the Department without delay to be received before **31st May**.

The Department is aware that there may be a small number of exceptional cases which may not come to light in sufficient time to meet the 31st May deadline. In recognition of this the Department will accept late applications in exceptional cases for 2015/16 up to **30th June**.

Please note that any applications to the Department in respect of a Repeat of a Year for 2015/16 received after 30th June will NOT be processed.

2. Relevant Documentation

To avoid delays schools are requested to check the application (see paragraph 1 above) BEFORE submission to the Department to ensure it includes ALL relevant supporting documentation. It is the school, NOT the student, who makes the application. Under no circumstances should a student seeking to repeat be requested to complete any section of the forms. If the student does wish to make a case to the school, any such correspondence should be retained on file in the school.

Applications per paragraph 1 above to repeat a year should include;

- A form M02/95A where the application is to repeat a year for a second or more times in very exceptional circumstances, OR
- A form M02/95B where 5% or more of a year group at senior cycle is seeking to repeat, AND
- A letter of application from the school stating the reason/s why it is being sought.

And for each student included in the application;

- A letter from the parents/guardians requesting a repeat of a year on behalf of their child,
- Medical report/s where the grounds for the repeat are based on ill health or trauma suffered by the student or close family member,
- Recent school reports, academic transcripts and attendance records where the grounds for the repeat are based on poor academic performance.

Incomplete applications forms and/or applications without relevant supporting documentation will be returned unprocessed to the school.

3. Bases for 5% or more of a Leaving Certificate (excl Repeat LC) year group repeat cases

Where a school proposes to allow more than 5% of a Leaving Certificate Year group (year 1 or 2) to repeat, applications with respect to EACH student wishing to repeat both below and above the 5% threshold must be made on form M02/95B, together with all relevant supporting documentation, as per paragraph 2 above. The 5% is calculated from the total combined first time Leaving Certificate year (1 or 2) group across all programmes, i.e. established Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme for the current school year. **This only applies in the case of those students prior to sitting the Leaving Certificate examination** i.e. those repeating the LC examination are excluded.

4. Review of a Refusal by the Department to grant an application from a school

A school may seek a review of a refusal by the Department to grant an application to repeat a year **where additional relevant information becomes available**. When seeking a review, the school must include a covering letter with the application setting out the grounds on which it is seeking a review, and identifying what new information has become available. Such requests, together with all relevant supporting documentation, - see paragraph 2 above, - must be submitted to the Department before **31st August**. The Department will endeavour to issue the outcome of reviews to schools by mid-September. **The review decision will be final.**

5. Under M02/95 school have the authority to consider application for repeat of a year for the FIRST time.

The follow refers only to cases of FIRST time repeats who are NOT part of a Leaving Certificate year group where 5% or more are repeating.

Students deemed eligible to repeat by their school in line with the provisions of circular M02/95A should be recorded by the school on the Post-Primary Online Database (P-POD). Guidance on how to use P-POD for this is available on the P-POD webpage on www.education.ie . Form M02/95A should still be completed and **retained on file in the school** for inspection by officials from the Department. There is NO need to forward these forms to the Department.

6. Contact Details

The following refers solely to applications involving repeat of a year for a **second or more** time and/or where **5% or more of a Leaving Certificate year group** (1 or 2) are seeking to repeat. In these cases the school must apply to the Department.

All “Repeat of a Year” applications from schools together with relevant supporting documentation should be posted to:

Department of Education and Skills
Schools Division
Parents, Learners and Database Section
Athlone
Co. Westmeath

Please mark the envelope “*Repeat of a Year*”

Telephone enquiries

(090) 648 3870 or (090) 6483906.

Yours sincerely,

TOM DEEGAN

PRINCIPAL OFFICER

SCHOOLS DIVISION



Circular M02/95

To the Authorities of Post-Primary schools

Repeat of a year of Post-Primary Level

1. Repeat Years - General Position

- 1.1 The circumstances in which an individual pupil may repeat a year at post-primary level, and the detailed arrangements for assessing, deciding, recording and reporting individual cases, have been set out in a number of Circulars — M57/87, M33/89 and M47/93.

In certain instances, delegated authority within defined limits has been given to schools to permit students to repeat a year. In other instances, individual applications have to be referred to the Department for decision.

Pupils permitted to repeat a year in accordance with the terms of these circulars are reckoned for the purposes of staffing and grant allocations.

The purpose of this circular is to clarify and consolidate these arrangements in the light of the extension and restructuring of the Senior Cycle. The arrangements set out in this Circular will apply for the 1995/96 and subsequent school years.

As indicated in paragraph 5 of Circular Letter M47/93, schools will require specific Departmental approval to provide a repeat Leaving Certificate Year 2 class in the 1996/97 and subsequent school years. Approval will be given only where there are compelling educational reasons for so doing, account being taken of the availability of this option in neighbouring post-primary schools. A separate Circular on this matter will issue shortly.

- 1.2 The following are the grounds on which consideration of requests or proposals for individual pupils repeating a year at post-primary level will be based:

- (i) **Prolonged absence** from school for a valid reason such as ill-health. Prolonged absence may be taken as either
 - (a) a continuous absence for at least eight weeks in the preceding school-year, or
 - (b) intermittent absences over a period of at least 16 weeks, and for an average of 2½ days per week during that period, in the preceding school-year.

The absence and the reason for it must be certified by the school authority. If the reason is related to health, that reason must also be certified by a doctor.

- (ii) **Serious illness** which does not necessitate prolonged absence from school but which has a seriously damaging effect on the pupil's academic performance at school. The illness and its effect must be certified by a doctor and by the school authorities.
- (iii) **Serious family trauma** (e.g. death of a parent, separation of the parents, violence in the home etc.) which the school authorities can show has had a seriously damaging effect on the pupil's academic performance.

- (iv) **Very poor academic record** which requires regular remedial treatment where there is sufficient evidence to establish that (a) the pupil's academic record is very poor (b) that the pupil is in real need of regular remedial treatment and (c) **that the pupil can benefit from the extra year.**
- (v) **Change of school** in the following circumstances:-
 - (a) when necessitated by change of residence, provided that it is established that the pupil could not reasonably be expected to follow the curriculum in the new school without repeating a year of the post-primary course there;
 - (b) for the purpose of taking up a revised course of study, provided that (i) the course in question is not available in the pupil's former school, (ii) the pupil has a valid reason for taking up the revised course at this stage, (iii) the pupil has a reasonable prospect of completing the revised course of study satisfactorily, (iv) fulfilment of these conditions is certified by the school authority in the pupil's new school;
 - (c) for reasons other than (a) and (b) above, provided that there are valid reasons why the pupil might have been permitted to repeat the year in his/her former school. Details should be entered in the pupil's record.

1.3 For pupils entering post-primary cycle in or after September 1991, the standard maximum period of second-level education is six years. Except in very exceptional circumstances, a pupil will not be permitted to repeat more than one year of the post-primary cycle prior to first sitting the Leaving Certificate examination.

2. Junior Cycle

- 2.1 Authority will continue to be delegated on the following conditions to school authorities to permit a pupil to repeat a year of the Junior Cycle.
- 2.2 Permission to repeat may be granted only on the grounds set out in paragraph 1.2 above.
- 2.3 Documentary evidence bearing on the consideration of all requests or proposals for the repeat of a year of the Junior Cycle Programme must be retained in the school records and made available for examination by officers of the Department if required.
- 2.4 Such documentation would include:-
 - (i) medical or other certification, as appropriate;
 - (ii) school attendance records for the year prior to the proposed repeat year;
 - (iii) all school examination results, results of psychological tests (if any) and public examination results (if any), which are relevant to the case in question;
 - (iv) the school authority's own evaluation of the case.
- 2.5 Medical certificates should clearly state:-
 - (a) the nature of the pupil's illness;
 - (b) the length of time which the pupil must be absent from school as a result of the illness;
 - (c) the presumed effects of the illness upon the pupil's capacity for study;
 - (d) the likelihood of future absences from school as a result of the illness.
- 2.6 Requests or proposals for repeating a year should normally be made and adjudicated on before the end of the previous school year but not, in any event, after the 29th September of the school year in question.
- 2.7 Where it has been decided to permit a student to repeat a year, this fact should be noted on the return for the purposes of the Post-Primary School Database.

- 2.8 In the case of permissions granted, a return certifying the fact of the permissions and the specific grounds on which they were granted must be forwarded to the Department. Form M02/95A is attached for the purpose and must be returned not later than the 29th September of the school year in which the repeats are taking place.

The incidence and circumstances of permissions granted will be monitored by the Department both from the Pupil Database data and from the Forms M02/95A.

- 2.9 The Minister reserves the right:-
- (a) to review any case and to obtain further information or clarification, including the production of documentation when appropriate, on decisions of school authorities;
 - (b) to withdraw the delegated authority in the case of any individual school or schools if this is considered warranted;
 - (c) to exclude from reckoning as a recognised pupil, for the purposes of staffing and grant allocations, pupils permitted to repeat other than in accordance with the terms of this circular.

3. Senior Cycle – General

- 3.1 All pupils entering Senior Cycle in September 1994 and after may spend up to three years in Senior Cycle in accordance with the structures outlined in Circular M47/93. The time spent in Senior Cycle will normally be comprised of:-
- a two-year Leaving Certificate programme immediately after Junior Certificate or
 - a Transition Year Programme followed by a two-year Leaving Certificate course.
- 3.2 From September 1995, the structure of the Leaving Certificate programme will have three main orientations viz.
- the established Leaving Certificate programme,
 - the Leaving Certificate Applied,
 - the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

Schools are not permitted to offer a three-year Leaving Certificate programme, i.e. a Leaving Certificate programme extending to three years.

- 3.3 The standard maximum period at Senior Cycle is three years for all pupils entering Senior Cycle in or after September 1994 and for those pupils who entered Senior Cycle prior to September 1994 in schools which had an approved six-year post-primary cycle of which they availed. For pupils who entered Senior Cycle prior to September 1994 in schools which did not have an approved six-year post-primary cycle, the standard maximum period at Senior Cycle is two years.

4. Transition Year Programme

Authority will continue to be delegated to school authorities to permit a pupil to repeat a Transition Year Programme in accordance with the same criteria, conditions and procedures set out for Junior Cycle pupils (paragraph 2 of this Circular). Details of permissions granted should be returned to the Department on Form M02/95A.

5. Leaving Certificate Programme – Year 1 and Year 2

- 5.1 Subject to the terms of paragraph 5.2, authority will continue to be delegated to school authorities to permit a pupil to repeat a year of the Leaving Certificate Programme (**prior to first sitting the Leaving Certificate Examination**) in accordance with the same criteria, conditions and procedures set out for Junior Cycle pupils (paragraph 2 of this Circular). Details of permissions granted should be returned to the Department on Form M02/95A.
- 5.2 Where a school proposes to allow **more than 5% of a Leaving Certificate year-group (Year 1 or Year 2)** to repeat, the prior approval of the Department must be obtained in the case of each individual pupil. In such a situation, permission for a pupil to repeat must be sought by the school on the formal application form attached, Form M02/95B, by the 31st of May preceding the school-year in which it is intended to repeat. The application form will set out particulars of the pupil in question and the circumstances in which the application to repeat is being made and will be accompanied by supporting documentation.

It is intended that decisions on the applications will be conveyed to schools without delay.

6. Repeat of Leaving Certificate

- 6.1 Pupils who have sat the Leaving Certificate Examination may be enrolled as recognised pupils to repeat Leaving Certificate Year 2 and the appropriate Leaving Certificate Examination on payment of the appropriate course and examination fees. **The Repeat Course Fee is €126.97 per pupil.** Pupils whose parents or guardians are the **holders of current medical cards will be exempted from the payment** of the course fee on production of the medical card for noting by the school authorities. In addition, only the ordinary examination fee will apply to these pupils. The current Repeat Examination fee is available from the State Examinations Commission on 09064-42700.

In respect of the 1995/96 and subsequent school years, school authorities should inform prospective repeat Leaving Certificate pupils accordingly, and arrange for the collection and transmission (where appropriate) to the Department of the course fee involved. Form M02/95C is attached for this purpose and should be forwarded to the Department not later than the 7th October of the school-year in which the pupils are repeating. (School authorities will be advised of future changes in fee rates).

Pupils in respect of whom the course fee is due but not received will not be reckoned as recognised pupils for the purposes of staffing and grant allocations.

Repeat Leaving Certificate course **fees collected from pupils in voluntary Secondary schools and Community and Comprehensive schools must be returned to the Department.** Course fees collected from pupils attending Vocational schools and Community Colleges are retained by the relevant Vocational Education Committee and a corresponding amount is deducted from the Department's grant to that VEC.

Don Thornhill,
Secretary
16 May, 1995

- [This Information Note should be read in Conjunction with Circular M2/95](#) (File Format Word 35KB)
- [Download Forms M02/95A, M02/95B, M02/95C](#)