



ISSU
IRISH SECOND-LEVEL
STUDENTS' UNION

ISSU REPORT ON THE 2021 STATE EXAMINATIONS AND RETURN TO SCHOOL

Tuairisc ANDIÉ ar na Scrúduithe Stáit 2021
& Athoscailt na Scoileanna

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- Oral and Practical Exams | Scrúduithe Béil & Praicticiúla

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BACKGROUND

Cúlra

This report was prepared and produced by the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) on the 2021 Return to Schools & State Examinations. The report was compiled from two sources of consultation with students;

- A survey
- A Town Hall webinar consultation with ISSU member schools

The ISSU has also received hundreds of submissions from members in recent weeks, which have been considered by the National Student Executive (NSE) in the creation of this report and its recommendations.

Survey:

The survey took place between Thursday January 7th and Thursday January 15th 2021. The survey was promoted both online and within the ISSU's internal network of 480 member schools.

25,294 responses were received over the 8 days that the survey was open.

4,336 respondents did not consent to the use of their data, a further 78 did not identify as second-level students, and a further 248 responses were removed as duplications, giving a total valid response of **20,632** who inputted to the survey.

Of the 20,632, the number of respondents per year group was as follows.

BACKGROUND

Cúlra

Year Group	Number of respondents
1st	650
2nd	777
3rd	2,758
4th / TY	974
5th	2,228
6th	13,148
LCA1	0*
LCA2	97

*Due to a coding error in the survey software, LCA1 students were not directed to give consent for the use of their data. Only 35 LCA1 students had filled out the survey, however.

The ISSU acknowledges the small sample size for year groups outside of 6th Year, and has taken this into account in our recommendations.

Town Hall:

The ISSU Town Hall took place on Saturday 16th January from 6:30pm - 8:30pm. The webinar involved a one-hour information session explaining the current status of schools reopening, allowances made so far for State Examinations and updates from the ISSU's representations to the Department of Education over the past few months. The second hour was a private consultation for ISSU members only, facilitated by ISSU Regional Officers.

716 viewers watched the Town Hall information session live, with over **250** students joining the second hour-long consultation.

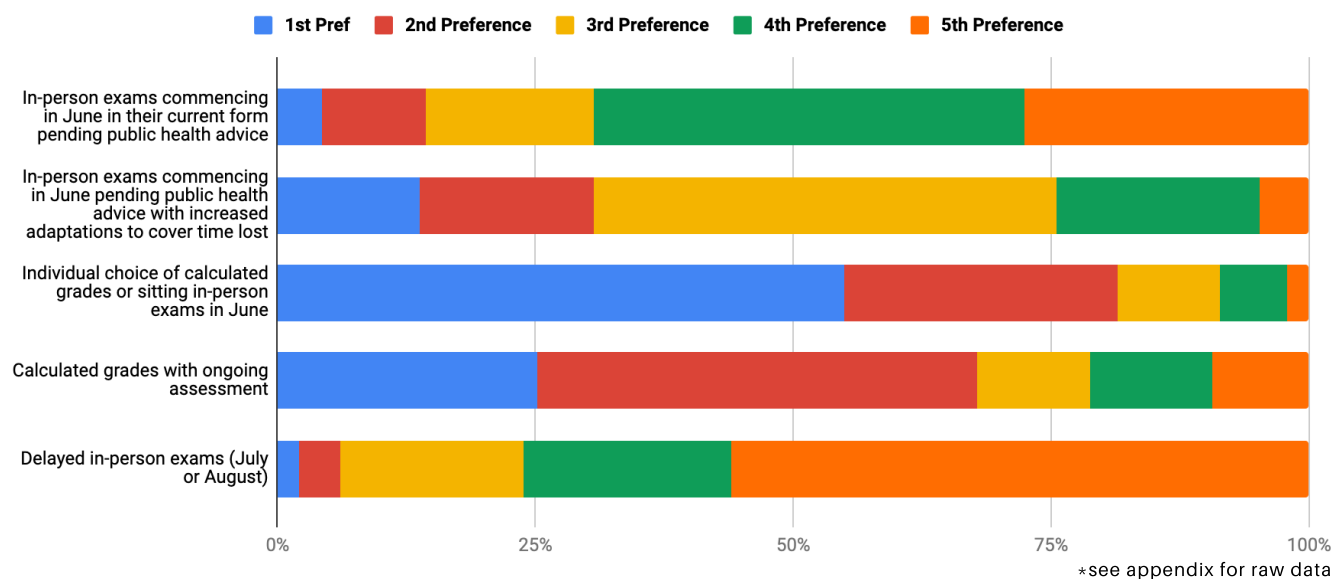
2021 SENIOR CYCLE EXAMS LEAVING CERTIFICATE AND LCA

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shinsearach 2021
Ardteistiméireacht agus Ardteist Fheidhmeach

SURVEY INFO AND ANALYSIS:

55% of respondents wish for a **choice between calculated grades or sitting in-person exams** in June as their first preference. When including 2nd preferences of this option, over **81%** of respondents rated this option favourably. Only **2%** of respondents put this as their least favorite option - this indicates very clearly that **students want a choice** and that there is not an established resistance to this option.

Rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to the Senior Cycle exams in June 2021



Calculated grades with ongoing assessment had over **25%** of respondents placing it as their 1st preference. When including 2nd preferences from other respondents, over **67%** have rated this favourably. This shows us that the student body is very clearly in favor of some kind of calculation of grades process.

Of respondents who selected individual choice of calculated grades or sitting in-person exams in June as their 1st preference, only **3.5%** of these students want to sit the exams with current changes as their 2nd preference.

2021 SENIOR CYCLE EXAMS LEAVING CERTIFICATE AND LCA

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shinsearach 2021 Ardteistiméireacht agus Ardteist Fheidhmeach

Furthermore, **having in-person exams with increased adaptations** is significantly more popular than sitting current planned exams, which shows us that there is little support for the exams to proceed as planned. This shows us that going ahead with exams as normal is not an option and we must make significant concessions to the exams if they are to go ahead in any circumstance.

The plan as it stands to **hold the exams in June with current changes** was very poorly received by respondents with just **4%** support as a 1st preference and **69%** of respondents placing it as their last or 2nd last preference. This supports the ISSU's stance that a change of direction and an alternative is now necessary.

Delayed in-person exams have even less support than the exams proceeding as they are currently planned, with over **75%** of respondents putting it as one of their 2 least favourite preferences. We can clearly state that delayed exams are not fair or feasible for the 2021 State Exams.

It is important to note that of the **55%** who want the option between written exams and calculated grades (1st pref) - **74%** of this group put calculated grades with ongoing assessment as their second preference. This means that **26%** of respondents who want a choice specifically want the opportunity to sit exams (their 2nd pref. was an option other than calculated grades). This clearly shows that the choice needs to be provided, but the exams will still have to be adapted for those who would choose to sit them.

CONSULTATION INFO AND ANALYSIS:

It is clear that students want **clarity** and **more communication** from the DES.

Some students mentioned being **worried** from the **stress** of the **uncertainty** and how much it is adversely affecting their **mental health**.

2021 SENIOR CYCLE EXAMS LEAVING CERTIFICATE AND LCA

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shinsearach 2021
Ardteistiméireacht agus Ardteist Fheidhmeach

Last year's model of calculated grades and later November exams disadvantaged homeschooled students and external candidates from progressing to college in 2020 and we are not in a position to reuse last year's system as we must cater to these groups as well.

The students of Leaving Certificate Class 2021 are not on a level playing field to previous Leaving Cert classes; they have missed 3 months of school in 2020, with many others missing time due to COVID-19. They are now missing out on another month of face-to-face tuition in 2021, and are in a period of uncertainty regarding what the exams will look like. They have been subject to far more fear and stress than any other Leaving Certificate year group in the past. Therefore, the fair, standard process of the traditional Leaving Certificate is lost and inapplicable to this group.

There are certain challenges we face this year in the collection of material for calculated grades e.g. over-assessment in some schools vs others, inflated class test scores, the cancellation of mock / pre exams and the loss of 3 months of tuition in 2020. The Advisory Group must find a solution that addresses this.

Motivation amongst LC Students is extremely low and their mental health is in a very poor place - some students feel the Department is not recognising the mental toll this is taking on them.

OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- **Online tuition is not an equal substitute to in-person learning.** School closures have suffered a lot of disruption and we must recognise the impact of this on the exams.
- **There is still a lot of time left in the year** and it is illogical to end the school year early for students. Classes for 6th years should continue until May. This will give us many more options in how alternative plans could work.
- **A plan and clarity is needed,** but we cannot rush through a plan without giving it full consideration; we are not going to have a whole new plan ready in a matter of a few days, but we can and should provide clarity and we should not delay where it is not required.

2021 SENIOR CYCLE EXAMS LEAVING CERTIFICATE AND LCA

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shinsearach 2021
Ardteistiméireacht agus Ardteist Fheidhmeach

ISSU'S STANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The ISSU advocates on behalf of the student body of Ireland that the DES and the Advisory Group meet to explore alternative options for the 2021 Leaving Cert.

We recommend that this meeting discusses a **system of calculated grades for students based on the use of standardised continuous assessment to formulate these grades with the option to sit scaled down end of year exams**, and how to best implement this fairly and equitably.

There is little support for the exams to proceed as planned and this consultation process has re-enforced to us that the exams cannot go ahead as they are currently planned. The stakeholders in the Advisory Group need to make a pragmatic and compassionate choice to change the exams.

2021 SENIOR CYCLE EXAMS LEAVING CERTIFICATE AND LCA

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shinsearach 2021
Ardteistiméireacht agus Ardteist Fheidhmeach

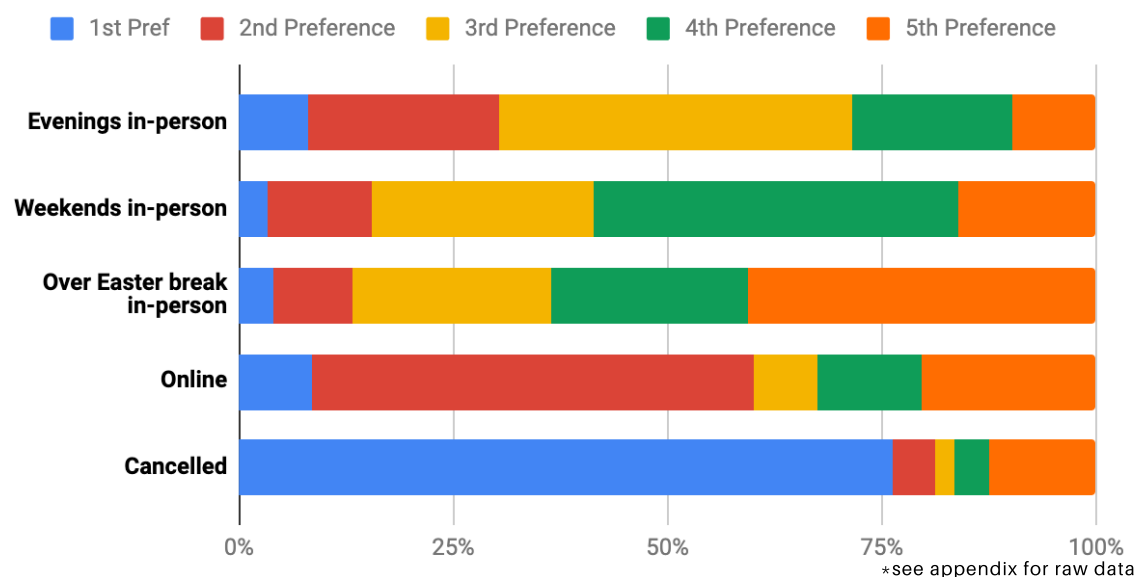
SURVEY INFO AND ANALYSIS:

Cancellation sees over **75%** support from respondents as a first preference, if oral and practical examinations cannot go ahead as planned.

15% of respondents support a form of **in-person orals or practical examinations** as their 1st preference. A further **8%** are in favour of these examinations taking place online.

We note that 50% of respondents said **online orals and practical examinations would be their 2nd preference**. This indicates that there is some preference for this option, but in order to fill out this survey a student had to have access to a phone or laptop with an internet connection - we must recognise the bias present in this question particularly.

If it is not possible for oral and practical exams to proceed as normal in April, rank in order of preference the following scen...



Oral and practical examinations over Easter enjoy little support with **39%** of respondents stating it as their least favorite preference and **62%** as one of their 2 least favorite preferences. There is an established resistance to this and we will position ourselves against oral and practical exams taking place over holidays.

2021 SENIOR CYCLE EXAMS LEAVING CERTIFICATE AND LCA

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shinsearach 2021
Ardteistiméireacht agus Ardteist Fheidhmeach

CONSULTATION INFO AND ANALYSIS:

The complete cancellation of all oral and practical exams would disadvantage students who would have excelled in these areas. Taking the practical out of LC Art means that the subject is simply art history.

The use of online orals would cause an inequity for students with poor wifi connectivity and would have particularly damaging effects on music practical exams.

Some students have not been afforded the opportunity to practice practical components of their subject in school e.g. students who have not been permitted to cook in Home Economics classrooms and students who borrow musical instruments from school no longer have the ability to practice for their practical exams.

OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER:

The oral and practical exams are scheduled to take place very soon and we cannot completely remove oral and practical assessments without unfairly disadvantaging certain cohorts of students.

ISSU'S STANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The traditional orals and practical examinations cannot go ahead. We must recognise the time missed by students and the fact that many students feel unprepared while not having the same time and experience as normal Leaving Cert years.

The ISSU advocates that scaled down oral and practical assessments take place as part of a programme of continuous assessment so that students with aptitudes in these areas will not be disadvantaged and their skills will be recognised. For students who wish to sit their end of year exams as normal they could also sit these assessments.

It is paramount that the Advisory group and DOE meets to discuss this issue and possible solutions.

2021 JUNIOR CYCLE EXAMS JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

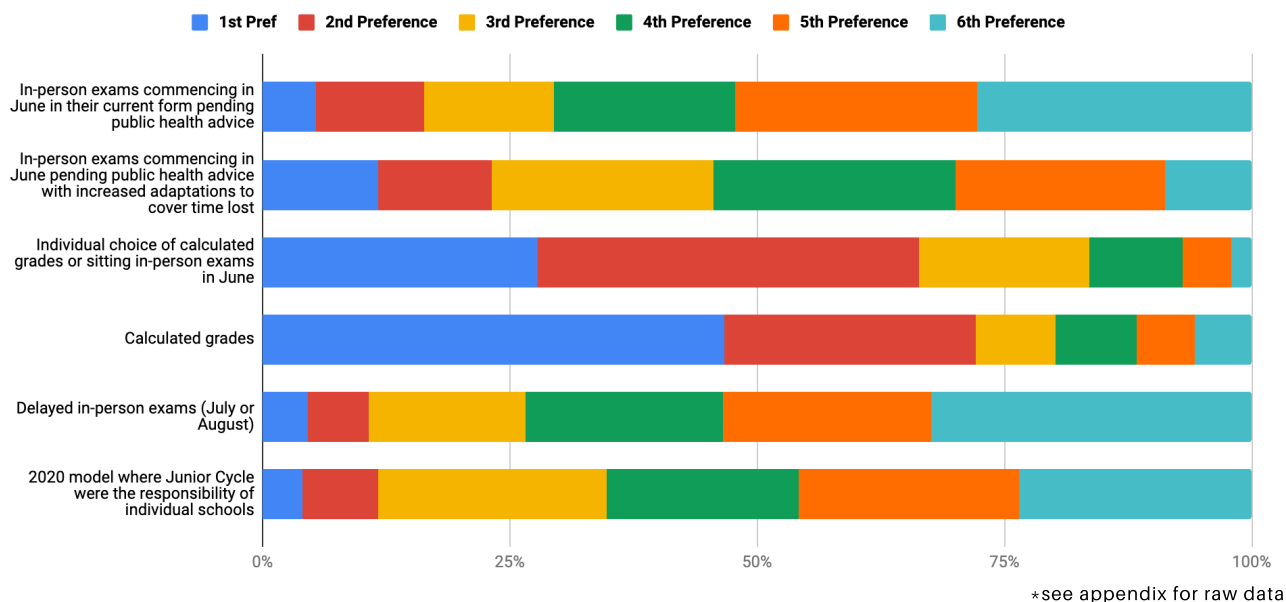
Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shóisearach 2021
Teastas Sóisearach

SURVEY INFO AND ANALYSIS:

The data from Q18 shows that **46%** of respondents chose as their 1st preference that **calculated grades would replace the traditional exams** in June. A further **25%** of respondents chose this option as a second preference.

The option that received the second highest percentage of first preferences, at **28%**, was a choice of having the **option of calculated grades with the option of sitting the exam in June**. As the calculated grades will not suit all students and their abilities, having the individual choice for students would ensure that all students would be given the grade they deserve.

Q18 Rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to the Junior Cycle exams in June 2021



2021 JUNIOR CYCLE EXAMS JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shóisearach 2021
Teastas Sóisearach

CONSULTATION INFO AND ANALYSIS:

Junior Cycle students feel that the Department has not been giving as much consideration to the Junior Cert as is necessary. With the focus primarily on Leaving Cert students, it seems as if the Junior Cert has been left out of the conversation. As a result of this, students are deeply concerned by the lack of communication from the Department about their exams.

Due to the interruptions in the school year, they feel that there is no feasible way to hold a traditional Junior Cert exam. Additionally, there have been little to no changes to the written papers. This is putting undue stress on Junior Cycle students, and they are pushing for **clarity** from the Department in relation to their assessments.

OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER:

1. Impact of the current situation on students' mental health. Students feel that the Department has not recognised the lack of motivation and mental health issues that they are facing due to interruptions to in-person class time.
2. That online learning is not the same as in-person learning
3. Ensuring that early school leavers have a form of qualification before leaving school.
4. Changes made to the Junior Cert written papers as they stand are not sufficient.
5. There is a lack of communication and clarity from the Department.
6. Difficulties in running the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert exams at the same time, from both a safety and marking perspective.
7. That ensuring the Leaving Cert class of 2021 receive the results they deserve and in time to move on come September is a priority.
8. Data was taken from a relatively small sample size (2,758 students), so recommendations may need to be more nuanced.

2021 JUNIOR CYCLE EXAMS JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shóisearach 2021
Teastas Sóisearach

ISSU'S STANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is clear to the ISSU that the Junior Certificate exams cannot proceed as normal students have missed out on three months of in-person learning in their second year and they have suffered further disruptions; it would be unfair to expect these students to sit the traditional Junior Cert exam.

There are several options that are available for us to pursue and we call for the DES and the Advisory Group to meet to discuss how we can award students their 2021 JC qualifications possibly through the use of some of the following options:

- Classroom based assessments (CBA)
- Continuous assessment
- Previous exams
- Open book tests
- Homework and assignments

Additionally, the ISSU encourages the Department to provide more clear, comprehensive information to Junior Cycle students.

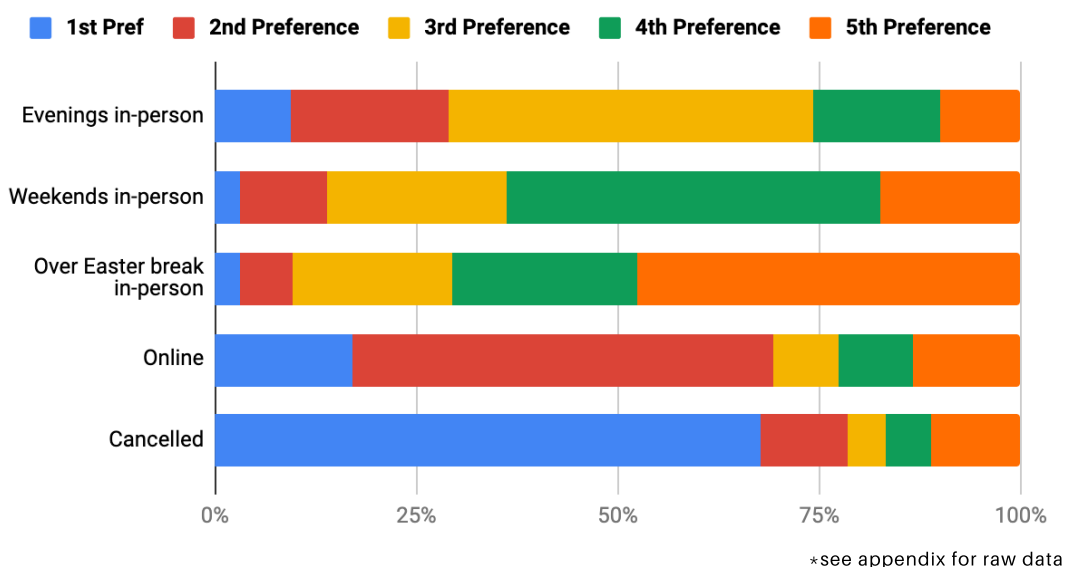
2021 JUNIOR CYCLE EXAMS JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shóisearach 2021
Teastas Sóisearach

SURVEY INFO AND ANALYSIS:

In summary of the results from Q20, the data shows that cancelling the practicals and orals is the most preferred option presented, with **65%** putting it as their first preference. Holding them online was the second most popular option, and it is clear that there is very little appetite for holding the exams through the Easter break (**45% as last preference**).

Q20 If it is not possible for oral and practical exams to proceed as normal in April, rank in order of preference the following sc...



CONSULTATION INFO AND ANALYSIS:

Students noted safety concerns of holding the orals and practicals in person, specifically around the use of external examiners that travel to multiple schools.

Students expressed that they do not feel sufficiently prepared for projects or oral exams due to the amount of disruption to their learning this year. There are also concerns from students about the use of online orals and practicals, fearing they could exacerbate the digital divide and have issues around cheating during orals.

2021 JUNIOR CYCLE EXAMS JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

Scrúduithe na Sraithe Shóisearach 2021
Teastas Sóisearach

OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER:

1. Students who perform well in practicals and orals may be negatively impacted if they are cancelled.
2. Students doing practical subjects (eg. home economics) are currently at a particular disadvantage as they haven't been able to practice using their school's facilities or under teacher supervision.
3. Data was taken from a relatively small sample size, so recommendations may need to be more nuanced.
4. Resources to facilitate Leaving Certificate oral and practical exams should be prioritised.

ISSU'S STANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The ISSU advocates for the cancellation of oral and practical exams for Junior Cert 2021. We advocate that we provide a scaled down version of oral and practical assessments so as not to disadvantage students who have worked hard on these areas. The ISSU further notes that the sample size for this question was reduced and so a nuanced approach will be required when interpreting the data.

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND ONLINE LEARNING

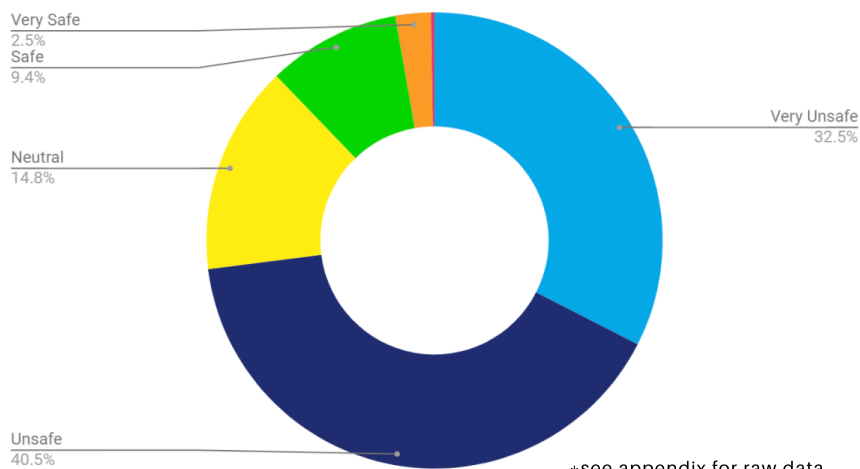
Dúnadh na Scoileanna & An Chianfhoghlaim

HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL SCHOOLS ARE IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19?

The survey showed that **73%** of respondents feel schools are either **very unsafe or unsafe**, in comparison to only **12%** of respondents saying they feel schools are **safe or very safe**.

From our consultation many respondents explained how they **don't believe** schools are actually safe. This shows that despite **NPHE** advice, students have **lost faith** in the safety of schools.

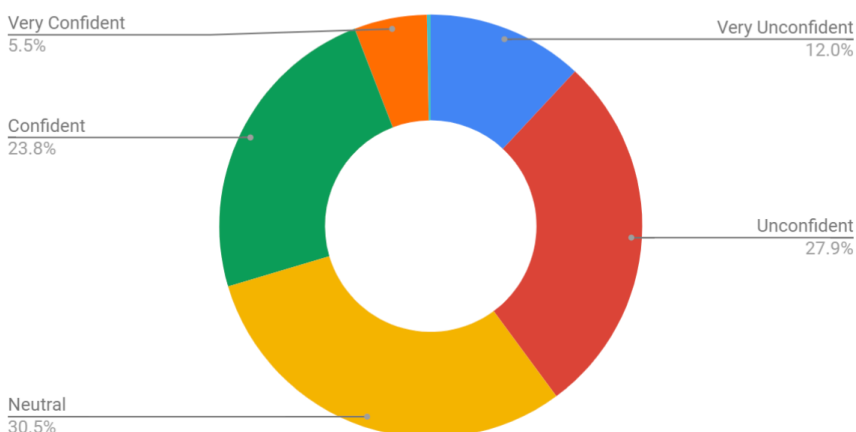
How safe do you feel schools are in the context of COVID-19?



*see appendix for raw data

HOW CONFIDENT DO YOU FEEL IN YOUR SCHOOL'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE A HIGH STANDARD OF ONLINE TUITION?

How confident do you feel in your school's ability to provide a high standard of online tuition?



*see appendix for raw data

40% of respondents have indicated that they are unconfident or very unconfident in their school's ability to provide a strong standard of tuition online. Only **6%** of respondents said that they are very confident in their school's ability. However, **24%** of respondents indicated they were confident in their school's ability alongside **30.5%** who indicated a neutral response.

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND ONLINE LEARNING

Dúnadh na Scoileanna & An Chianfhoghlaim

This indicates to the ISSU that there are still inconsistencies in the level of online support different students in different schools receive from their teachers.

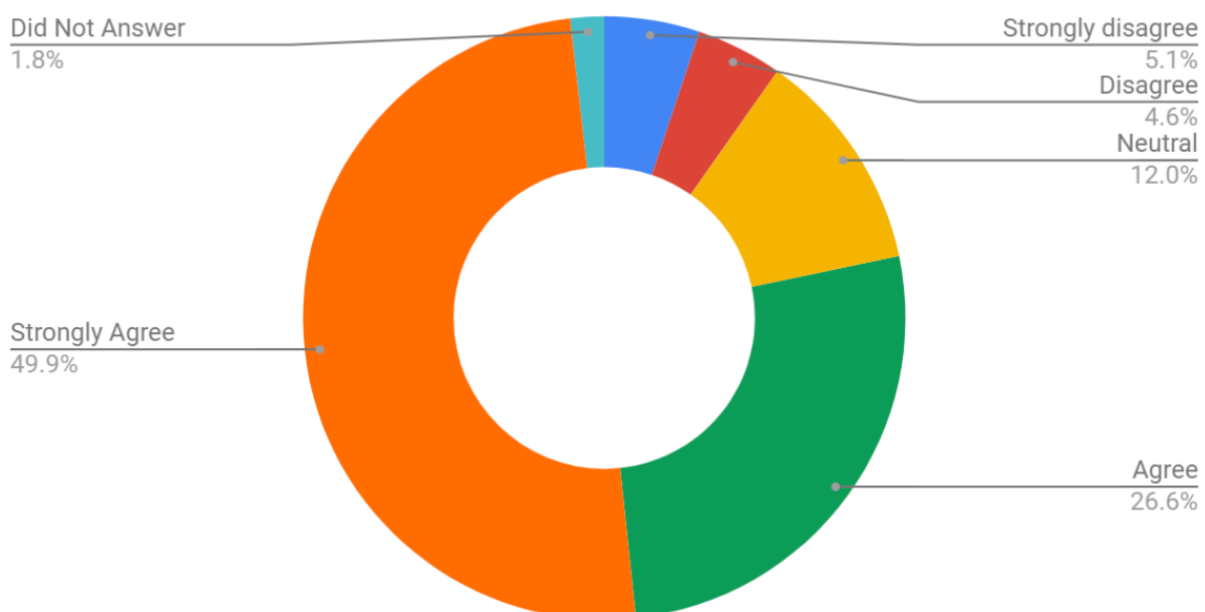
Asking this question of students again, following the resumption of online tuition would give very valuable insight.

Up to this point, the ISSU has maintained the position that very high-risk students or students with immediate family members who are very high risk in their household should be able to stay at home and receive online tuition

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS POSITION?

76% of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed, compared to **10%** who disagreed or strongly disagreed. This data shows that the student body favours high-risk students or students with high-risk family members being able to stay home and receive online tuition should schools reopen.

Up to this point, the ISSU has maintained the position that very high-risk students or students with immediate family members who are very high risk in their household should be able to stay at home and receive online tuition- to what extent do you agree with this position?



*see appendix for raw data

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND ONLINE LEARNING

Dúnadh na Scoileanna & An Chianfhoghlaim

DATA FROM CONSULTATION

Students noted that the length of school closures will have an impact on the State Exams and online schooling would present challenges in the use of calculated grades and/or the written exams.

Students expressed worry that education is being prioritised over students' physical and mental safety.

Students expressed frustration as they felt that online tuition was far from the same standard as face-to-face learning and many feel disadvantaged with poor facilitation of online learning. They expressed that the difference in standard should be acknowledged and reflected in the 2021 State Exams.

ISSU'S STANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

ISSU advocates that students who are very high-risk or have very high-risk families in their immediate household will be able to continue to learn from home if / when schools return.

Safety in Schools:

The ISSU advocates for the DES to work with the ISSU to ascertain and recognise why students don't feel safe in school and work together to address and find the solutions to these concerns.

The ISSU also reiterates the need for increased **communication** from the Department of Education & Skills regarding **safety protocols** and the rationale behind their decisions.

SCHOOL CLOSURES AND ONLINE LEARNING

Dúnadh na Scoileanna & An Chianfhoghlaim

Online learning:

- Increased provision of and **access to the necessary equipment** (computers, broadband etc) that is necessary to fully engage with remote learning.
- **The DES partners with the ISSU** to raise awareness of the support and funds available for students to access help and equipment while online learning.
- **Libraries and rural business hubs are kept open** for students in homeless accommodation, direct provision, unsafe homes or with no internet connection.
- **A pathway** should be developed for students to seek online support should they feel they are not currently receiving adequate online teaching support.
- **Guidance Counsellors and pastoral care teams** should be available to students through online school to address the impact of remote learning on student welfare.

SCHOOL REOPENING

Athoscailt na Scoileanna

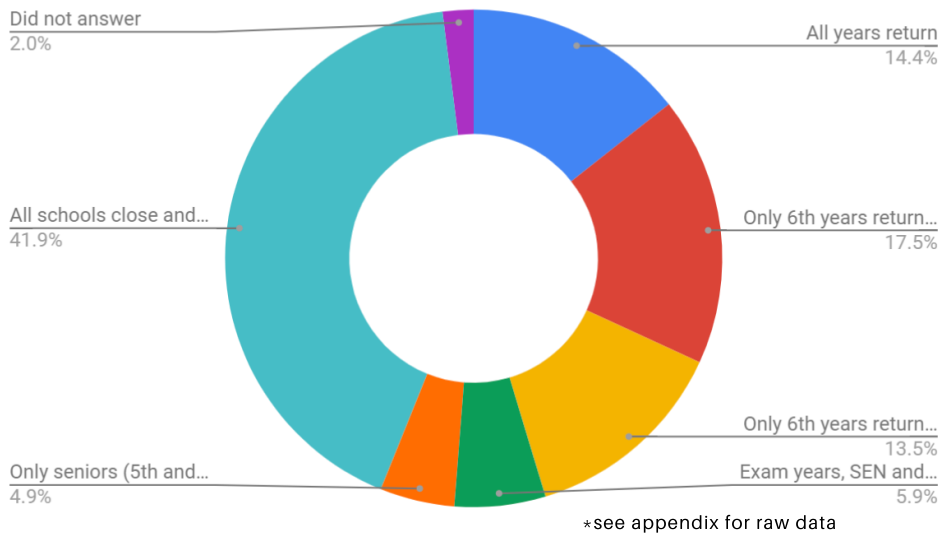
SURVEY INFO AND ANALYSIS:

Our data shows there is a varying range of perspectives on the opening of schools, shown by the % difference of just **10%** between schools remaining closed (**42% of first preferences**) and schools remaining either open full time for 6th years (**17.5%**) or 3 days a week for 6th years (**13.5%**) - **32%** of first preferences in total.

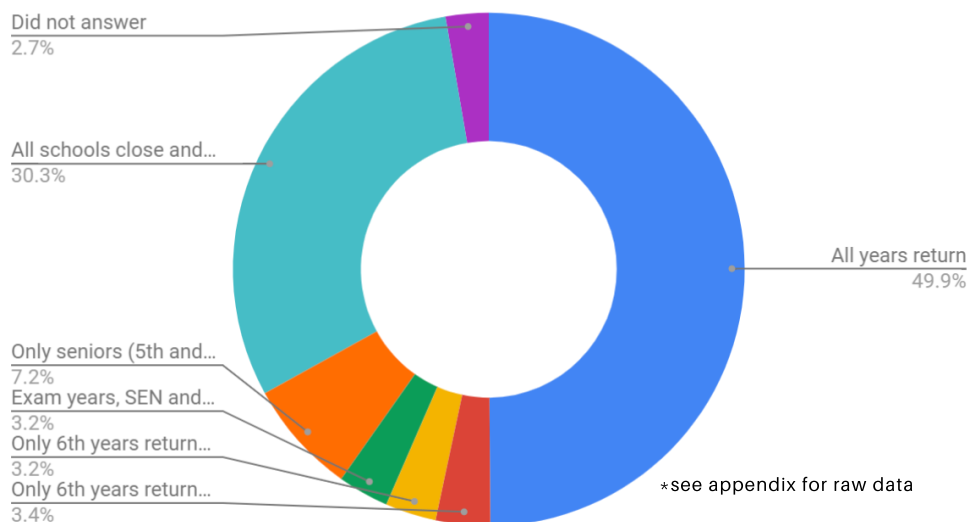
Full school closures received **42%** of first preferences. However, this also received **31%** of last preferences. This shows a large divide in student opinion regarding full closures of schools, and that more respondents are unhappy with full closures than with 6th years returning in some form (6.8% of last preferences).

Given the difference in opinion between full closures and just 6th years returning, it was appropriate to specifically examine 6th year students' responses to this question. 6th year students returning in some form received 37% of 6th year 1st preferences. Full school closures received 46% of 6th year 1st preferences.

1st Preference: What would you like to see from February 1st?



Last Preference: What would you like to see from February 1st?



SCHOOL REOPENING

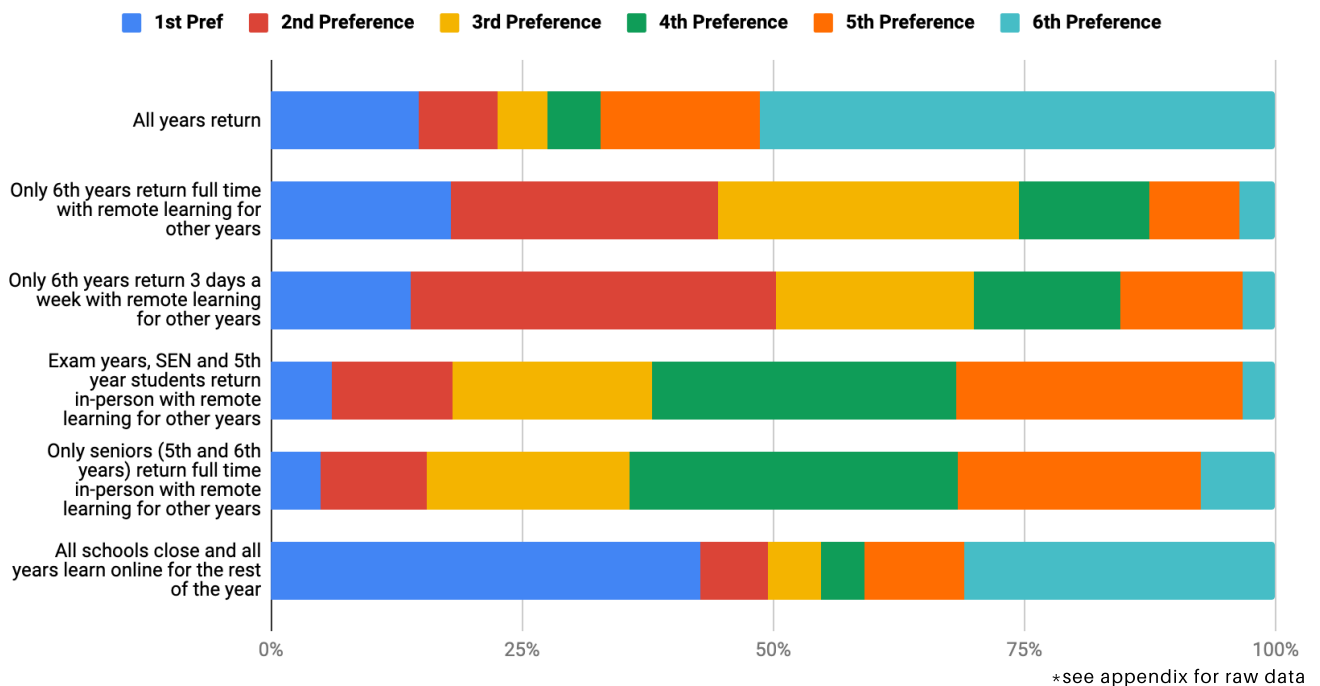
Athoscailt na Scoileanna

Just **8%** of 6th year & LCA2 respondents indicated 6th year students returning full time or 3 days a week as their **last preference**, compared to **27%** of 6th year & LCA2 respondents who indicated full **school closures as their last preference**.

This indicates an established opposition to **full school closures from February 1st** amongst a proportion of 6th year students. In contrast 6th year students returning to school on February 1st in some capacity did not have such opposition.

The ISSU notes that should a decision be made to go ahead with calculated grades, in-person tuition and access to school will be crucial to fairly conduct assessment.

Q9: What would you like to see from February 1st? Rank the below scenarios in order of preference



SCHOOL REOPENING

Athoscailt na Scoileanna

ISSU'S STANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Return to School February 1st:

The ISSU recommends that schools **remain closed until February midterm** whereon students will return in a staggered approach with 6th years returning first. We recommend this is reviewed prior to the midterm with regard to developments with COVID-19 and public health advice.

We further emphasise the need for increased **communication** around public health advice and rationale by the Department of Education to increase students' **trust and safety** in the eventual return to school - we can currently see that there is **no confidence** in schools amongst the student body - if we fail to invest time and energy in **increasing this confidence** we cannot re-open schools.

A return after February midterm would allow more time for this trust to be restored, and give us the opportunity to address the safety concerns of students.

The ISSU emphasises the need for clarity as soon as possible in order to allow students, teachers and parents to effectively prepare for the return to school and/or continuation of remote learning.

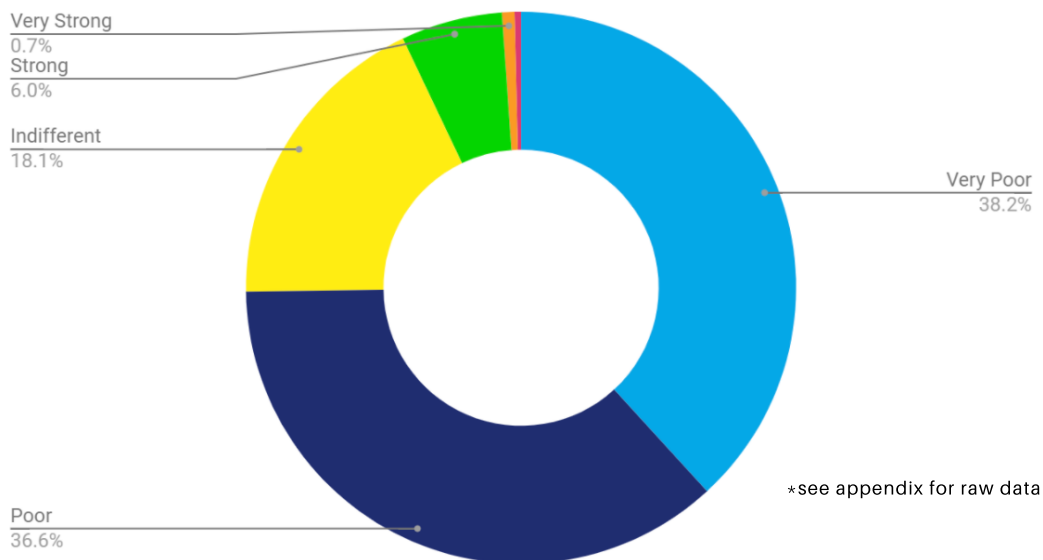
STUDENTS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Caidreamh na nDaltaí leis an Roinn Oideachais

SURVEY INFO AND ANALYSIS:

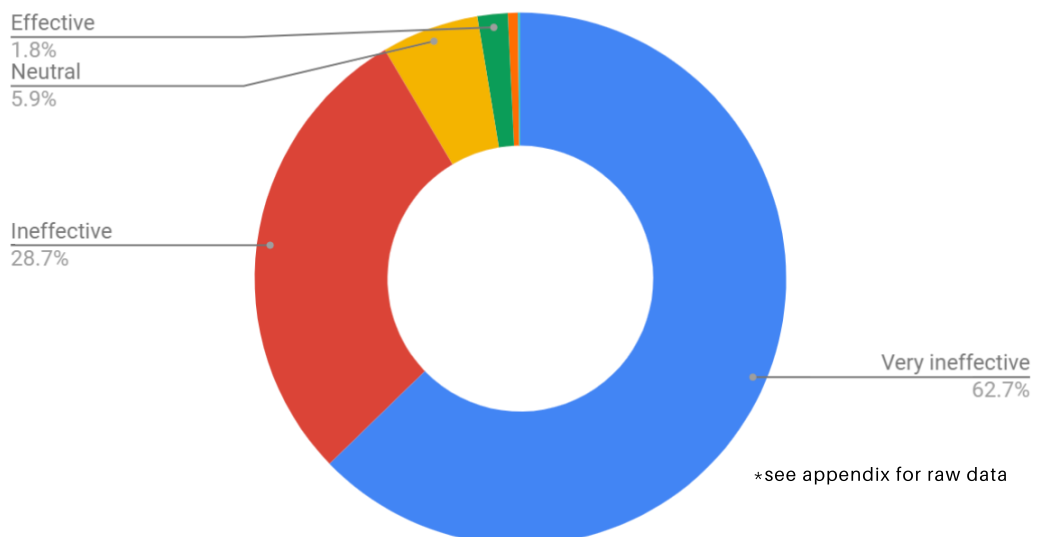
ISSU found that **75%** of respondents have Poor or Very Poor trust in the DES. A small proportion of only **7%** of respondents have a Strong or Very Strong trust in the DES.

How would you rate your trust in the Department of Education?



92% of Leaving Certificate respondents said that communication from the Department was ineffective, of which **63%** said the communication was very ineffective.

6th Years and LCA2: How effective do you feel the Department's communication has been since 2020 school closures?

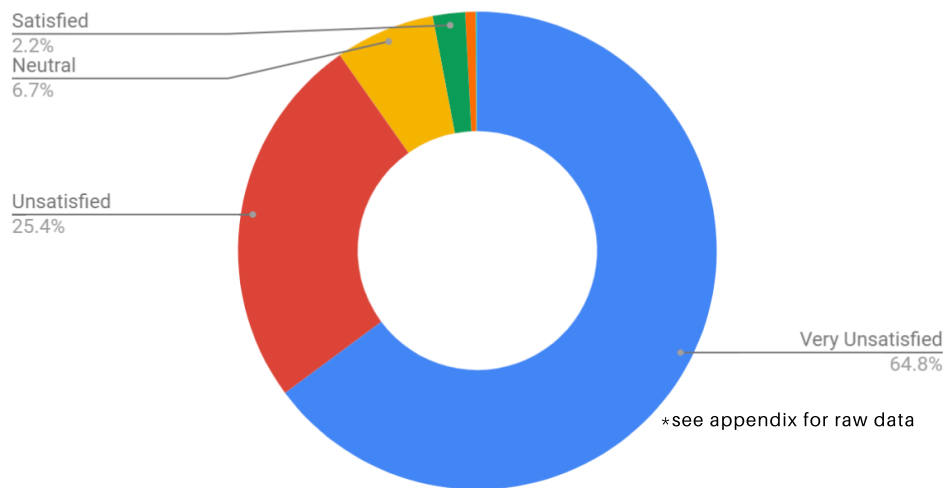


STUDENTS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Caidreamh na nDaltaí leis an Roinn Oideachais

90% of Leaving Certificate respondents are either very unsatisfied or unsatisfied with the support they received from the DES throughout the year. This is further highlighted by noting the fact that only **3%** of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the support given to them by the Department.

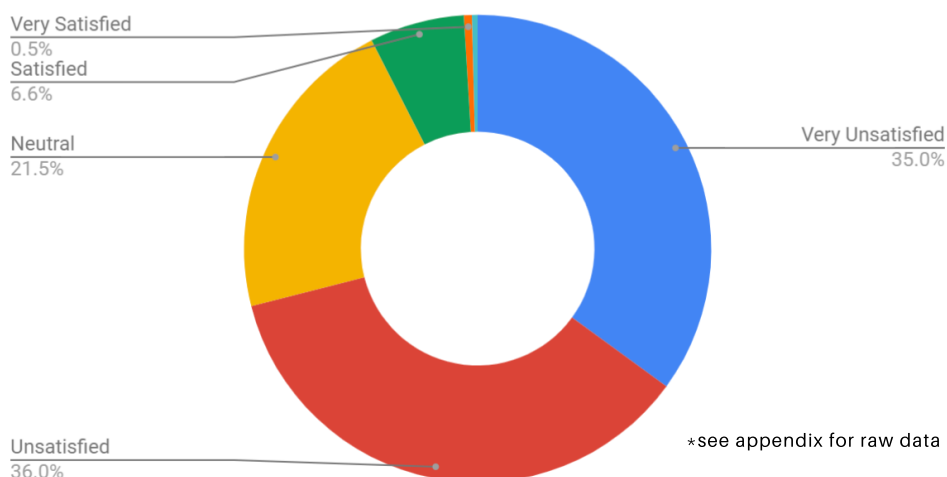
6th Years and LCA2: How satisfied are you with the support you have received throughout the year from the Department of Education?



71% of 3rd Year respondents are either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with the support they have received from the DES. This is further highlighted by noting the fact that only **7%** of respondents are satisfied or very satisfied with the support given to them by the DES.

Overall, 3rd year respondents are asking for **clarity** as to whether their exams will go ahead, and if so, in what manner.

3rd Years: How satisfied are you with the support you have received throughout the year from the Department of Education...



STUDENTS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Caidreamh na nDaltaí leis an Roinn Oideachais

CONSULTATION INFO AND ANALYSIS:

- Many students have expressed that they want more honest communication and clarity from the DES regarding the reopening of schools and how examinations will be carried out.
- There is a lot of anxiety and worry widespread amongst students and we should take steps to try to mitigate this.
- Students reported feeling that the Department isn't aware of the disruption and mental strain the past year and the current event is having on them.

ISSU'S STANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The ISSU advocates for more honest and open communication with students from the DES. We understand this is a challenge and we would like to collaborate with the Department to improve communication with students.

We must all make a conscious effort to reduce speculation around the return to school and the State Exams in the media - we ask the Department to pay particular attention to the leaking of documents and current discussions as this only serves to increase mental strain and worry on students.

The ISSU recommends that the Department evaluates how it can release information in a way that is accessible to students. The ISSU can collaborate with the Department in ensuring that we communicate more effectively with learners.

APPENDIX

Iarscríbhinn

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Main Section (Every respondent:

1. Email address
2. What county is your school in?
3. School (This information is used for verification and we will not store this data)
4. To take part in this survey you must confirm that you are a secondary school student in Ireland and you have not answered this survey more than once and you will not try to answer the survey again. If you are not a secondary school student in Ireland or you have already filled out this survey you may not partake in this survey.
5. How would you rate your trust in the Department of Education?
6. How safe do you feel schools are in the context of COVID-19?
7. How confident do you feel in your school's ability to provide a high standard of online tuition?
8. What did you want to see for Monday 11th January? Rank the below scenarios in order of preference
9. What would you like to see from February 1st? Rank the below scenarios in order of preference
10. Up to this point, the ISSU has maintained the position that very high-risk students or students with immediate family members who are very high risk in their household should be able to stay at home and receive online tuition- to what extent do you agree with this position?
11. What year are you in? (Exam years will be directed to questions about the Senior/Junior Cycle examinations)

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At this point, depending on the school year respondents who stated they were in 3rd Year, 6th Year or LCA2 were directed to one of two sets of questions. Those who identified as 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th year finished the survey after Q11.

Specific Questions - Leaving Certificate

12. How satisfied are you with the support you have received throughout the year from the Department of Education?

13. How effective do you feel the Department's communication has been since 2020 school closures?

14. Rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to the Senior Cycle examinations in June 2021

15. Do you do a subject with an oral or practical examination? (Irish, a modern language, Music etc)

16. If it is not possible for oral and practical exams to proceed as normal in April, rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to Senior Cycle oral and practical examinations

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Specific Questions - Junior Cycle (1st, 2nd and 3rd Years)

17. How satisfied are you with the support you have received throughout the year from the Department of Education?

18. Rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to the Junior Cycle exams in June 2021

20. If it is not possible for oral and practical exams to proceed as normal in April, rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to Leaving Certificate oral examinations

This final Question was asked of all participants

Final Question

21. Do you understand and agree to the above?

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Leaving Certificate

Written Exams - Scrúduithe Scríofa:

	In-person exams commencing in June in their current form pending public health advice	In-person exams commencing in June pending public health advice with increased adaptations to cover time lost	Individual choice of calculated grades or sitting in-person exams in June	Calculated grades with ongoing assessment	Delayed in-person exams (July or August)	Did not answer	Total
1st Pref	553	1804	7240	3313	281	54	13245
Percentage	4.18%	13.62%	54.66%	25.01%	2.12%	0.41%	100.00%
2nd Preference	1322	2207	3491	5625	514	86	13245
Percentage	9.98%	16.66%	26.36%	42.47%	3.88%	0.65%	100.00%
3rd Preference	2143	5888	1294	1445	2341	134	13245
Percentage	16.18%	44.45%	9.77%	10.91%	17.67%	1.01%	100.00%
4th Preference	5456	2592	854	1562	2629	152	13245
Percentage	41.19%	19.57%	6.45%	11.79%	19.85%	1.15%	100.00%
5th Preference	3610	621	290	1241	7355	128	13245
Percentage	27.26%	4.69%	2.19%	9.37%	55.53%	0.97%	100.00%

Oral and Practical Exams - Scrúduithe Béil & Praicticiúla

If it is not possible for oral and practical exams to proceed as normal in April, rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to Senior Cycle oral and practical examinations

	Evenings in-person	Weekends in-person	Over Easter break in-person	Online	Cancelled	Did Not Answer	Total
1st Pref	1017	423	511	1073	9696	188	12908
Percentage	7.88%	3.28%	3.96%	8.31%	75.12%	1.46%	100.00%
2nd Preference	2787	1521	1145	6482	641	332	12908
Percentage	21.59%	11.78%	8.87%	50.22%	4.97%	2.57%	100.00%
3rd Preference	5154	3231	2903	927	298	395	12908
Percentage	39.93%	25.03%	22.49%	7.18%	2.31%	3.06%	100.00%
4th Preference	2324	5313	2861	1520	491	399	12908
Percentage	18.00%	41.16%	22.16%	11.78%	3.80%	3.09%	100.00%
5th Preference	1222	2018	5097	2572	1602	397	12908
Percentage	9.47%	15.63%	39.49%	19.93%	12.41%	3.08%	100.00%

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Junior Certificate

Q18 Rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to the Junior Cycle exams in June 2021								
	In-person exams commencing in June in their current form pending public health advice	In-person exams commencing in June pending public health advice with increased adaptations to cover time lost	Individual choice of calculated grades or sitting in-person exams in June	Calculated grades	Delayed in-person exams (July or August)	2020 model where Junior Cycle were the responsibility of individual schools	Did not answer	Total
1st Pref	149	319	760	1277	124	110	19	2758
Percentage	5.40%	11.57%	27.56%	46.30%	4.50%	3.99%	0.69%	100.00%
2nd Preference	296	311	1053	694	171	207	26	2758
Percentage	10.73%	11.28%	38.18%	25.16%	6.20%	7.51%	0.94%	100.00%
3rd Preference	357	610	472	221	432	633	33	2758
Percentage	12.94%	22.12%	17.11%	8.01%	15.66%	22.95%	1.20%	100.00%
4th Preference	500	665	258	225	543	527	40	2758
Percentage	18.13%	24.11%	9.35%	8.16%	19.69%	19.11%	1.45%	100.00%
5th Preference	665	577	135	161	577	607	36	2758
Percentage	24.11%	20.92%	4.89%	5.84%	20.92%	22.01%	1.31%	100.00%
6th Preference	754	239	55	157	883	641	29	2758
Percentage	27.34%	8.67%	1.99%	5.69%	32.02%	23.24%	1.05%	100.00%

Q20 If it is not possible for oral and practical exams to proceed as normal in April, rank in order of preference the following scenarios with relation to Junior Cycle oral and practical examinations							
	Evenings in-person	Weekends in-person	Over Easter break in-person	Online	Cancelled	Did Not Answer	Total
1st Pref	180	60	60	332	1323	70	2025
Percentage	8.89%	2.96%	2.96%	16.40%	65.33%	3.46%	100.00%
2nd Preference	379	207	126	1016	213	84	2025
Percentage	18.72%	10.22%	6.22%	50.17%	10.52%	4.15%	100.00%
3rd Preference	871	430	385	155	93	91	2025
Percentage	43.01%	21.23%	19.01%	7.65%	4.59%	4.49%	100.00%
4th Preference	302	896	445	181	108	93	2025
Percentage	14.91%	44.25%	21.98%	8.94%	5.33%	4.59%	100.00%
5th Preference	194	338	919	259	219	96	2025
Percentage	9.58%	16.69%	45.38%	12.79%	10.81%	4.74%	100.00%

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Q6: How safe do you feel schools are in the context of COVID-19?							
	Very Unsafe	Unsafe	Neutral	Safe	Very Safe	Did Not Answer	Total
No. of respondents	6711	8347	3059	1945	519	51	20632
Percentage	32.53%	40.46%	14.83%	9.43%	2.52%	0.25%	100.00%

Q7: How confident do you feel in your school's ability to provide a high standard of online tuition?							
	Very Unconfident	Unconfident	Neutral	Confident	Very Confident	Did Not Answer	Total
No. of respondents	2466	5761	6295	4903	1145	62	20632
Percentage	11.95%	27.92%	30.51%	23.76%	5.55%	0.30%	100.00%

Q10 Up to this point, the ISSU has maintained the position that very high-risk students or students with immediate family members who are very high risk in their household should be able to stay at home and receive online tuition- to what extent do you agree with this position?							
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Did Not Answer	Total
No. of respondents	1055	956	2469	5490	10287	375	20632
Percentage	5.11%	4.63%	11.97%	26.61%	49.86%	1.82%	100.00%

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Q9: What would you like to see from February 1st? Rank the below scenarios in order of preference

	All years return	Only 6th years return full time with remote learning for other years	Only 6th years return 3 days a week with remote learning for other years	Exam years, SEN and 5th year students return in-person with remote learning for other years	Only seniors (5th and 6th years) return full time in-person with remote learning for other years	All schools close and all years learn online for the rest of the year	Did not answer	Total
1st Pref	2,963	3,608	2,782	1218	1002	8645	414	20632
Percentage	14.36%	17.49%	13.48%	5.90%	4.86%	41.90%	2.01%	100.00%
2nd Preference	1565	5,323	7,290	2421	2096	1360	577	20632
Percentage	7.59%	25.80%	35.33%	11.73%	10.16%	6.59%	2.80%	100.00%
3rd Preference	1004	6,001	3,975	3962	4056	1053	581	20632
Percentage	4.87%	29.09%	19.27%	19.20%	19.66%	5.10%	2.82%	100.00%
4th Preference	1049	2599	2898	6064	6565	863	594	20632
Percentage	5.08%	12.60%	14.05%	29.39%	31.82%	4.18%	2.88%	100.00%
5th Preference	3164	1814	2447	5722	4856	2025	604	20632
Percentage	15.34%	8.79%	11.86%	27.73%	23.54%	9.81%	2.93%	100.00%
6th Preference	10297	707	666	665	1483	6254	560	20632
Percentage	49.91%	3.43%	3.23%	3.22%	7.19%	30.31%	2.71%	100.00%

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6th year responses

Q9: What would you like to see from February 1st? Rank the below scenarios in order of preference									
	All years return	Only 6th years return full time with remote learning for other years	Only 6th years return 3 days a week with remote learning for other years	Exam years, SEN and 5th year students return in-person with remote learning for other years	Only seniors (5th and 6th years) return full time in-person with remote learning for other years	All schools close and all years learn online for the rest of the year	6th years full time or 3 days a week	Did not answer	Total
1st Pref	1346	2909	1947	400	386	6061	4856	196	13245
Percentage	10.16%	21.96%	14.70%	3.02%	2.91%	45.76%	36.66%	1.48%	100.00%
2nd Preference	1180	3401	5145	1109	1172	930	8546	308	13245
Percentage	8.91%	25.68%	38.84%	8.37%	8.85%	7.02%	64.52%	2.33%	100.00%
3rd Preference	658	3729	2340	2713	2711	691	6069	403	13245
Percentage	4.97%	28.15%	17.67%	20.48%	20.47%	5.22%	45.82%	3.04%	100.00%
4th Preference	717	1234	1592	4290	4449	549	2826	414	13245
Percentage	5.41%	9.32%	12.02%	32.39%	33.59%	4.14%	21.34%	3.13%	100.00%
5th Preference	2213	1045	1356	3902	3057	1253	2401	419	13245
Percentage	16.71%	7.89%	10.24%	29.46%	23.08%	9.46%	18.13%	3.16%	100.00%
6th Preference	6769	575	504	444	1094	3547	1079	312	13245
Percentage	51.11%	4.34%	3.81%	3.35%	8.26%	26.78%	8.15%	2.36%	100.00%

All years

Q5: How would you rate your trust in the Department of Education?							
	Very Poor	Poor	Indifferent	Strong	Very Strong	Did Not Answer	Total
No. of respondents	7878	7551	3743	1232	150	78	20632
Percentage	38.18%	36.60%	18.14%	5.97%	0.73%	0.38%	100.00%

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6th Years & LCA2

How effective do you feel the Department's communication has been since 2020 school closures?							
	Very ineffective	Ineffective	Neutral	Effective	Very Effective	Did Not Answer	Total
No. of respondents	8311	3805	785	244	78	22	13245
Percentage	62.75%	28.73%	5.93%	1.84%	0.59%	0.17%	100.00%

How satisfied are you with the support you have received throughout the year from the Department of Education							
	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Did Not Answer	Total
No. of respondents	8587	3367	893	291	90	17	13245
Percentage	64.83%	25.42%	6.74%	2.20%	0.68%	0.13%	100.00%

3rd Years

How satisfied are you with the support you have received throughout the year from the Department of Education?							
	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Did Not Answer	Total
No. of respondents	966	993	592	181	15	11	2758
Percentage	35.03%	36.00%	21.46%	6.56%	0.54%	0.40%	100.00%



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