



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit**  
**State Examinations Commission**

**Leaving Certificate 2025**

**Marking Scheme**

**Politics and Society**

**Higher Level**

## **Note to teachers and students on the use of published marking schemes**

Marking schemes published by the State Examinations Commission are not intended to be standalone documents. They are an essential resource for examiners who receive training in the correct interpretation and application of the scheme. This training involves, among other things, marking samples of student work and discussing the marks awarded, so as to clarify the correct application of the scheme. The work of examiners is subsequently monitored by Advising Examiners to ensure consistent and accurate application of the marking scheme. This process is overseen by the Chief Examiner, usually assisted by a Chief Advising Examiner. The Chief Examiner is the final authority regarding whether or not the marking scheme has been correctly applied to any piece of candidate work.

Marking schemes are working documents. While a draft marking scheme is prepared in advance of the examination, the scheme is not finalised until examiners have applied it to candidates' work and the feedback from all examiners has been collated and considered in light of the full range of responses of candidates, the overall level of difficulty of the examination and the need to maintain consistency in standards from year to year. This published document contains the finalised scheme, as it was applied to all candidates' work.

In the case of marking schemes that include model solutions or answers, it should be noted that these are not intended to be exhaustive. Variations and alternatives may also be acceptable. Examiners must consider all answers on their merits, and will have consulted with their Advising Examiners when in doubt.

## **Future Marking Schemes**

Assumptions about future marking schemes on the basis of past schemes should be avoided. While the underlying assessment principles remain the same, the details of the marking of a particular type of question may change in the context of the contribution of that question to the overall examination in a given year. The Chief Examiner in any given year has the responsibility to determine how best to ensure the fair and accurate assessment of candidates' work and to ensure consistency in the standard of the assessment from year to year. Accordingly, aspects of the structure, detail and application of the marking scheme for a particular examination are subject to change from one year to the next without notice.

In considering this marking scheme, the following should be noted:

- The detail required in any answer is determined by the context and the manner in which the question is asked and by the number of marks assigned to the response in the examination paper.
- Words, expressions or phrases must be correctly used in context and not contradicted, and where there is evidence of incorrect use or contradiction, the marks may not be awarded.
- As a general rule, if in doubt about the validity of any response, examiners must consult their advising examiner before awarding marks.
- The suggestions, examples etc. in the scheme are not exhaustive and alternative valid responses etc. are acceptable.

The procedure for marking consists of:

- Careful reading and analysis of all the responses
- Allocation of marks to the components according to the agreed scheme.

### **ANNOTATIONS USED FOR ONLINE MARKING**



INDICATES THE POINT AT WHICH MARKS WERE AWARDED



INFORMATION NOT VALID / INDICATES THAT THE SECTION HAS BEEN SEEN AND READ BY THE EXAMINER



PAGE SEEN BY THE EXAMINER

## SECTION A

### Question 1

There are 15 questions of which candidates must answer 10

50 marks - 10 x 5 marks

- (a) Identify a group that may be under-represented in the decision-making processes in schools and suggest one way to increase their representation. 2 marks + 3 marks

Identify the group: 2M

Responses may make reference to:

- Students: Student Council/focus groups/surveys/attendance at BOM meetings
- Parents: Parents Association/advisory committees/discussion groups
- Other relevant responses

Very good description	3M
Good description	2M
Fair description	1M

- (b) Briefly describe why press freedom should be a key feature of any democratic society. 5 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- A free press serves as a check on government power by providing critical scrutiny and analysis of policies and actions
- It helps maintain the balance of power between the government, the media, and the public, preventing the concentration of authority
- Other relevant responses

Very good description	4 - 5M
Good description	2 - 3M
Fair description	0 - 1M

- (c) Explain the 'State of Nature' concept through the view of Thomas Hobbes or John Locke.**  
**5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- An absolute sovereign power allows people to live without a fear for their lives (Hobbes)
- People naturally seek peace and would live in harmony without governments (Locke)
- Other relevant responses

Very good explanation	4 – 5M
Good explanation	2 – 3M
Fair explanation	0 – 1M

- (d) Explain the role of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 in protecting against discrimination in Ireland.**  
**5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 are a set of laws in Ireland designed to combat discrimination and promote equality in various areas of society
- These acts prohibit discrimination on ten specific grounds: gender, age, family status, marital status, religious belief, sexual orientation, race, membership of the travelling community and receipt of HAP

Very good explanation	4 – 5M
Good explanation	2 – 3M
Fair explanation	0 – 1M

- (e) According to the CSO, 85% of candidates who sat Construction Studies (HL) in the Leaving Certificate in 2023 were male, while 88% of candidates who sat Home Economics (HL) were female.**

**Comment on these statistics in the context of educational equality/inequality in Ireland.**  
**5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- The theories of Kathleen Lynch
- Subject availability in different schools
- Gender stereotypes in schools
- Gender based career choices

Very good commentary	4 – 5M
Good commentary	2 – 3M
Fair commentary	0 – 1M

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**(f) Comment on the message in this image in the context of democratic countries today.**

**5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Progressive taxation penalises success /undermines the principle of equality before the law
- Libertarians view taxation as theft, it violates individual rights to own property and takes away the freedom to decide how your earnings are spent
- Modern governments have many branches, while some would argue a minimal state would be cheaper, governments should only protect individual rights and not pay for welfare/education
- Taxation in Western Liberal Democracies has potential to allow for a redistribution of wealth to address inequality

Very good commentary	4 - 5M
Good commentary	2 - 3M
Fair commentary	0 - 1M

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**(g) “Being poor controls how you see yourself, how you trust and speak, how you see the world and how you dream.” Katriona O’Sullivan.**

**What is the relevance of this statement in the context of social class in Ireland. 5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Access to education/higher education/subject choices
- Job security
- Homeownership/locality/facilities
- Access to healthcare/wellbeing
- Influence: political/cultural
- Other relevant responses

Very good response	4 - 5M
Good response	2 - 3M
Fair response	0 - 1M

- (h) According to Oxfam, the world's richest 1% own more wealth than 95% of humanity. Comment on this statistic in relation to global income inequality. 5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Colonisation / global trade / technological advances / dependency theory
- Education / healthcare / social instability / exploitation
- Solutions to the issue: aid / fair trade / SDGs
- Other relevant responses

Very good commentary	4 - 5M
Good commentary	2 - 3M
Fair commentary	0 - 1M

- (i) Describe two functions of the President of Ireland. (3M+2M) 5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces
- Appointing the Taoiseach, ministers and judges
- Summoning and dissolving the Dáil
- Signing legislation into law or referring bills to the Supreme Court
- Representing the people of Ireland at events

Very good description	3M		
Good description	2M	Good description	2M
Fair description	1M	Fair description	1M

- (j) In the context of sustainable development, how may technology help us solve our environmental problems? 5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Cleaner energy sources /smart appliances
- Waste management improvements /recycling
- Better monitoring of environmental conditions

Very good response	4 - 5M
Good response	2 - 3M
Fair response	0 - 1M

**(k) Explain the main difference between direct and indirect discrimination.**

**5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Direct discrimination occurs when an individual is treated less favourably than another person in a similar situation specifically because of a protected characteristic.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when a seemingly neutral policy, rule, or practice disproportionately disadvantages people with a particular protected characteristic compared to others.

Very good explanation	4 - 5M
Good explanation	2 - 3M
Fair explanation	0 - 1M

**(l) Name and briefly describe one non-democratic system of government.**

**5 marks**

Name may refer to: 2M

- Theocracy, autocracy, dictatorship, military junta, totalitarian regime
- A relevant example

Descriptions may make reference to:

- No / unclear elections
- Decisions made by fewer people
- Government control of the state

Very good description	3M
Good description	2M
Fair description	1M



**(m) Describe two ways language diversity is protected within the European Union (EU).**

**(3M+2M) 5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU
- Erasmus+
- European Day of Languages
- Support for minority languages
- An example from an EU country

Very good description	3M		
Good description	2M	Good description	2M
Fair description	1M	Fair description	1M

**(n) Bin shelves were introduced in Dublin city centre in October 2024 to prevent people from searching through bins for unreturned plastic bottles.**

**Comment on the need for bin shelves in contemporary Irish society. 5 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- The social contract/social deprivation
- Awareness raising about recycling
- Importance of recycling

Very good commentary	4 - 5M
Good commentary	2 - 3M
Fair commentary	0 - 1M

**(o) Name the Key Thinker associated with *The Capabilities Approach*. Briefly explain this theory. 2 marks + 3 marks**

Name: Martha Nussbaum 2M

Responses may make reference to:

- 10 capabilities including life, health, bodily integrity etc

Very good explanation	3M
Good explanation	2M
Fair explanation	1M

## SECTION B

### Question 2 – 150 marks

- (a) Based on the evidence in Document A, what reasons did people give for voting in EU elections? 10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Cost of living
- Economic situation
- International situation
- Defending democracy and rule of law
- Democratic habit etc.

Very good description	8 - 10M
Good description	4 - 7M
Fair description	0 - 3M

- (b) Referring to Document B, comment on the reasons Irish adults gave for not voting in the EU elections. 10 marks

Responses may make reference to:

- Away from home
- Couldn't decide how to vote
- Work commitments
- Lack of interest/belief in the system
- Disability/caring commitments

Very good commentary	8 - 10M
Good commentary	4 - 7M
Fair commentary	0 - 3M

**(c) Comment on the European election turnout of 51% in Document A.**

**20 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Highest in 1979/dipped in the early 2000s, stable over 2019/2024
- Men more likely to vote than women
- Age affects turnout (older people more likely to vote)
- Those with a positive view of the EU were more likely to vote than those with a neutral or negative view of the EU

Very good commentary	<b>16 - 20M</b>	independent and insightful
Good commentary	<b>11 - 15M</b>	relevant but lacking insight
Fair commentary	<b>6 - 10M</b>	limited, lacking clarity
Weak commentary	<b>0 - 5M</b>	contradictory or confused

**(d) Critique the methodology employed in Document B**

**20 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- The online panel
- Quota controls
- Representative samples
- Weighting for gender/age/region/social class

Very good critique	<b>16 - 20M</b>	independent and insightful
Good critique	<b>11 - 15M</b>	relevant but lacking insight
Fair critique	<b>6 - 10M</b>	limited, lacking clarity
Weak critique	<b>0 - 5M</b>	contradictory or confused

**(e) Based on the evidence in both documents what concerns of Irish voters are common across the EU?**

**20 marks**

Responses may make reference to:

- Cost of living/inflation
- International issues (migration and asylum/ international conflicts/ climate action)

Very good answer	<b>16 - 20M</b>	clear, accurate, insightful
Good answer	<b>11 - 15M</b>	relevant but lacking insight
Fair answer	<b>6 - 10M</b>	limited, lacking clarity
Weak answer	<b>0 - 5M</b>	contradictory or confused

**(f) Evaluate the relevance of the data in both documents to EU policy and decision-makers.**  
**20 marks**

Very good answer	<b>16 - 20M</b>	independent, insightful discussion using both documents
Good answer	<b>11 - 15M</b>	relevant discussion, lacking insight
Fair answer	<b>6 - 10M</b>	limited, lacking clarity
Weak answer	<b>0 - 5M</b>	contradictory or confused

**(g) Using the information in both documents and the statement below, what conclusions can we draw about the importance of citizen participation in the context of the social contract?**  
**50 marks**

**Conclusions** **(30 marks)**

Very Good	<b>24 - 30M</b>	focused, insightful
Good	<b>17 - 23M</b>	coherent, relevant
Fair	<b>9 - 16M</b>	limited, flawed
Weak	<b>0 - 8M</b>	confused, inaccurate

**Use of documents** **(20 marks)**

Very Good	<b>16 - 20M</b>	comprehensive use of documents
Good	<b>11 - 15M</b>	basic use of documents
Fair	<b>6 - 10M</b>	limited use of documents
Weak	<b>0 - 5M</b>	use of documents is vague or inaccurate

## Section C

### **Marking the discursive essay:**

1. Read the entire essay without allocating any marks.
2. Mark the essay using the marking criteria and total the marks.
3. Review total mark awarded using the grade band descriptors.
4. To finalise the total mark review again using the criteria.

## Marking Criteria

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak
<b>Introduction (I)</b>	Directly addresses, clarifies and contextualises the issue.	Directly addresses and contextualises the issue.	Issue is reasonably addressed with limited contextualisation.	Issue is vaguely addressed with no contextualisation.	Issue is vaguely or completely misunderstood.
<b>10 marks</b>	<b>9 - 10</b>	<b>7 - 8</b>	<b>5 - 6</b>	<b>3 - 4</b>	<b>0 - 2</b>
<b>Knowledge (K)</b>	Clear and critical understanding.  Extensive knowledge of the issue.	A very good logical essay based on a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the issue.  No significant omissions or errors.	A reasonable essay based on a basic knowledge but limited understanding of the issue.  Contains minor omissions and errors.	A confused essay based on a vague understanding of the issue.  Contains major omissions and errors.	A weak essay showing little or no knowledge of the issue.  Information may be incorrect or contradictory.
<b>20 marks</b>	<b>18 - 20</b>	<b>14 - 17</b>	<b>10 - 13</b>	<b>5 - 9</b>	<b>0 - 4</b>
<b>Evidence (E)</b>	Identifies and interrogates convincingly a broad range of relevant, authoritative and credible sources of evidence.	Identifies and interrogates a sufficient range of relevant, authoritative and credible evidence.	Identifies and interrogates a limited range of evidence with an over reliance on unsubstantiated data.	Evidence presented is simplistic or confused. Evidence is only vaguely relevant to the topic.	Little or no evidence presented / evidence is not relevant to the issue.
<b>20 marks</b>	<b>18 - 20</b>	<b>14 - 17</b>	<b>10 - 13</b>	<b>5 - 9</b>	<b>0 - 4</b>
<b>Analysis &amp; Synthesis (A)</b>	An excellent argument based on a critical and perceptive analysis of the evidence.	A very good argument based on a critical and perceptive analysis of the evidence.	A good argument based on a basic analysis of the evidence.	Argument is flawed with limited evidence of analysis / superficial analysis with significant inaccuracies.	Argument is poorly constructed, confused or illogical.  Analysis is poor.
<b>15 marks</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>	<b>10 - 12</b>	<b>7 - 9</b>	<b>4 - 6</b>	<b>0 - 3</b>
<b>Evaluation (V)</b>	Comprehensively integrates comparative / alternative perspectives.  Draws insightful, independent conclusions & confidently justifies own position.	Very good integration of comparative / alternative perspectives into the argument.  Draws very good independent conclusions & clearly justifies own position.	Good integration of comparative / alternate viewpoints in to the argument.  Draws independent conclusions & justifies own position	Limited comparative / alternative perspectives and viewpoints.  Limited independent conclusions & justification of own position	No comparative perspectives or viewpoints.  No independent conclusions or justification of own position
<b>15 marks</b>	<b>13 - 15</b>	<b>10 - 12</b>	<b>7 - 9</b>	<b>4 - 6</b>	<b>0 - 3</b>
<b>Cohesion (C)</b>	Organisation and management of views and opinions is excellent.  Excellent focus and clarity throughout.  Excellent construction.	Organisation and management of views and opinion is very good.  Very good focus and clarity throughout.  Very good construction.	Organisation and management of ideas is basic.  Reasonable construction	Organisation and management of ideas is limited and confused  Poor construction.	Essay lacks structure, organisation, coherence, focus, context and clarity.
<b>20 marks</b>	<b>18 - 20</b>	<b>14 - 17</b>	<b>10 - 13</b>	<b>5 - 9</b>	<b>0 - 4</b>

## ESSAY GRADE BANDS

H1 90 - 100 Marks	H2 80 - 89 Marks	H3 70 - 79 Marks	H4 60 - 69 Marks	H5 50 - 59 Marks	H6 40 - 49 Marks	H7 30 - 39 Marks	H8 0 - 29 Marks
<p>Response is coherent; well-structured and supported by relevant, accurate and varied evidence using comparative evidence.</p> <p>A thorough grasp of the requirements of the task is obvious as is understanding and independent thinking.</p> <p>Engagement with the topic is in-depth and judgements and conclusions offered are comprehensively justified.</p> <p>This answer exhibits detailed knowledge based on critical thinking, deep insight, sharp focus, accomplished argument and is supported by a range of evidence and sources.</p>	<p>Response focuses clearly and coherently on the question posed.</p> <p>Arguments are very well structured and unified supported by relevant, accurate and varied evidence.</p> <p>Points are very well organised and there is a very good coherent argument present using comparative viewpoints.</p> <p>There is very good critical engagement with the topic.</p> <p>Independent judgements and conclusions offered have very reasonable justification.</p>	<p>Response focuses clearly on the question set.</p> <p>The demands of the question are well understood.</p> <p>Points tend to be well supported by accurate and relevant evidence.</p> <p>Points are well organised and there is a coherent argument present.</p> <p>There is evidence of critical engagement with the topic and judgements and conclusions offered have reasonable justification.</p>	<p>Response shows a basic understanding of the question.</p> <p>Response reasonably addresses the question set.</p> <p>Knowledge of the issue is basic.</p> <p>Points made will be relevant and will be supported by some valid references and illustration.</p> <p>There may be a sense however, that some points are left to stand alone and are not fully integrated into a unified argument.</p> <p>There will be some judgements and independent conclusions offered with limited justification.</p>	<p>Response shows that the question is reasonably well understood.</p> <p>Knowledge of the issue is limited and answers make tentative points and use limited evidence that is valid and appropriate.</p> <p>Points made are limited and evidence is not developed into a forceful, unified argument.</p> <p>There is limited critical engagement with the topic resulting in answers which lack an integrated independent conclusion.</p>	<p>Response shows that the question is only partially understood.</p> <p>Response lacks clear focus and will tend to wander from the point or from point to point.</p> <p>Summary and repetition often take the place of discussion.</p> <p>Knowledge of the issue is very limited with very little evidence to support the points being made.</p> <p>There is very limited or no critical engagement with the topic.</p> <p>Judgements and conclusions offered are vague or personal with very limited justification.</p> <p>Re-reading may be necessary to discover meaning.</p>	<p>Response shows that the question has been partially understood and the response is poorly focused.</p> <p>A few valid points may be stated but not purposely linked to make an argument and there is no evidence to support any of the points made.</p> <p>There is no evidence of critical engagement with the topic.</p> <p>The candidate has not formed a judgement, drawn independent conclusions or offered justification for their own opinion or position.</p>	<p>Response shows that the question will be very poorly understood or completely misunderstood.</p> <p>A very poor answer which, at best, offers only fragmented pieces of information with little or no relevant points.</p> <p>No relevant arguments offered or evidence to support any claims made.</p> <p>Response is very poor and lacks focus and the reader is confused.</p> <p>Some points might be totally inaccurate or irrelevant to the question.</p>

**Note: Be careful not to penalise skilful brevity, nor to reward unwarranted length.**

## CITIZENSHIP PROJECT REPORT

### Rationale and research

- Explain the rationale for the action you have chosen to carry out.
- Give a clear account of the aims of the citizenship project, the means chosen to achieve those aims and the action plan. In the case of a group project, identify both the group's aims for the project and the aims that you had as an individual in order to fulfil your role.
- Provide a summary of research undertaken including the key research findings (data) which informed the action. Comment on the sources of information used to inform the action such as web-based materials, literature, interviews, and other sources.
- Make sure you include full references in the *References and Bibliography* section at the end of the report.

### Execution of citizenship project

- Provide a summary of the actions undertaken in carrying out the project. In the case of a group project, distinguish clearly between group actions and your individual actions by using "we" or "I" as appropriate.
- Critically analyse the various elements of the action plan, including as appropriate any challenges encountered and how these challenges were dealt with.
- Describe the outcomes of the project.

### Reflections on knowledge gained and skills developed

- Critically reflect on the personal insights and knowledge you have gained about this issue since undertaking the project.
- Identify and describe the skills you developed through your work on this project with particular reference to working with others and being personally effective.
- Briefly explain the role that reflection, feedback from others, and learning from the course played in helping you to carry out the project.



## CITIZENSHIP PROJECT – SECTION A

**Rationale and Research**

**35 marks**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
Explanation for the rationale	6 - 7M	4 - 5M	2 - 3M	0 - 1M
Aims of the project with an action plan setting out the means chosen to achieve those aims	10 - 12M	7 - 9M	4 - 6M	0 - 3M
Summary of the findings and sources	10 - 12M	7 - 9M	4 - 6M	0 - 3M

**References and Bibliography** - Check the back of the booklet

**(0/2/4)**

**(4 marks)**

## CITIZENSHIP PROJECT - SECTION B

**Execution of citizenship project**

**45 marks**

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
Summary of the actions undertaken (We / I)	12 - 15M	8 - 11M	4 - 7M	0 - 3M
Critical analysis of the action plan	12 - 15M	8 - 11M	4 - 7M	0 - 3M
Outcomes	12 - 15M	8 - 11M	4 - 7M	0 - 3M

## CITIZENSHIP PROJECT - SECTION C

**Reflections on knowledge gained and skills developed**

**20 marks**

	Very Good	Good	Fair
Knowledge and insights about the issue	5 - 6M	3 - 4M	0 - 2M
Skills	5 - 6M	3 - 4M	0 - 2M
Reflection	4M	3M	0 - 2M
Feedback and learning	4M	3M	0 - 2M





