

New Common Points Scale for entry from 2017

Introduction

The purpose of this presentation is to:

- Discuss the evolution of the HEI Common Points Scale over a 50 year period.
- Highlight the rationale for the recent changes to the scale which will come into effect from 2017.
- Introduce the confirmed changes to the HEI Common Points Scale from 2017.

Background to 'points'

- Points employed by some Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for high demand courses (e.g. Vet & Med) since late 1960s.
- Purpose: to place qualified applicants on an order-of-merit list to allow for selection where the number of qualified applicants exceeded the number of places available on a course.
- Became more widespread with introduction of CAO in 1977
- By the late 1980s almost all HEIs employed points scales for this purpose. However, there were many different scales in use.
- In 1992, HEIs agreed to come together and develop a common points scale – this Common Points Scale is the one that is currently in use.

Background to LC grades

- In conjunction with the 1992 implementation of the HEI Common Points Scale, the Examinations Branch of the Department of Education was asked to implement a more granular scale of Leaving Certificate (LC) grades.
- It was expected that more grade divisions would mean less random selection.

Pre-1992 LC Grade
A
B
C
D
E
F
NG

1992 to 2016 LC Grade
A1
A2
B1
B2
B3
C1
C2
C3
D1
D2
D3
E
F
NG

Reviewing selection for entry to HE

- The **Transitions Reform Conference** in 2011, organised by HEA and NCCA, highlighted two key factors that were having a negative influence on teaching and learning at second-level
 1. Process of selection for entry to higher education.
 2. Highly granular Leaving Certificate grade scale
- A process was initiated to examine all aspects of the higher education **selection process** in order to ensure minimal negative influence on teaching and learning at second-level.
- At the same time, the Leaving Certificate examination was to be adjusted to **minimise problematic predictability** in the examination and a **revised grading scale** was to be considered.
- This process involved stakeholders in second and third-level, as well as SEC, DES, NCCA, HEA etc.

Changes to the LC grading system

- Reducing the number of grade bands from 14 to 8
- Candidates receiving Leaving Certificate results in August 2017 will have their results expressed in the following new Leaving Certificate grades:

Higher Level Grade	Ordinary Level Grade
H1 (90-100)	O1 (90-100)
H2 (80 < 90)	O2 (80 < 90)
H3 (70 < 80)	O3 (70 < 80)
H4 (60 < 70)	O4 (60 < 70)
H5 (50 < 60)	O5 (50 < 60)
H6 (40 < 50)	O6 (40 < 50)
H7 (30 < 40)	O7 (30 < 40)
H8 (0 < 30)	O8 (0 < 30)

Changes to the grading system: Linear versus Non-Linear

- **The scale that has been developed is non-linear.** This means that the scale does not have equal divisions between each value on the scale.
- **Why Non-Linear ?** Using a linear scale with a reduced number of grade bands and possible scores would result in large numbers of candidates presenting with the same score and an increased use of random selection.
- **The non-linear quadratic scale** that has been agreed was developed with help from statisticians and a mathematician and underwent testing* to demonstrate the ability of the scale to **recognise achievement while distinguishing between candidates and minimising the employment of random selection.**

* *Models tested for a) distribution of applicants amongst grade points and b) reversed pair counts*

Changes to the Common Points Scale

- The HEIs developed a new common points scale, aiming to minimise the need for random selection and catering also for applicants presenting sittings of the Leaving Certificate from years prior to the introduction of the new grading scale in 2017.

Higher Level Grade	Points	Ordinary Level Grade	Points
H1	100		
H2	88		
H3	77		
H4	66		
H5	56	O1	56
H6	46	O2	46
H7	37	O3	37
H8	0	O4	28
		O5	20
		O6	12
		O7	0
		O8	0

Alignment between higher and lower levels were guided by SEC & ERC.

Changes to the Common Points Scale

- **Maths Bonus Points**

25 bonus points will continue to be awarded for Higher Level Mathematics for H6 grades and above. For example, if an applicant receives a H6 grade, an additional 25 points will be added to the 46 points already awarded for a H6 grade i.e. Higher Level Mathematics now carries a points score of 71 for this applicant.

- **Foundation Level Mathematics**

Universities do not award points for Foundation Level, the IoTs are currently considering a conversion for 2017.

- **Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme**

LCVP Grade	Revised LCVP Points
Distinction	66
Merit	46
Pass	28

Changes to the Common Points Scale

Points for H7

- HEIs considered the level of achievement represented by H7 and it was decided that points would be awarded for this grade.
- It was noted that accepting an OD3/O6 (for entry requirements and points) but rejecting a H7 grade was not reflecting the level of achievement represented by a HE/H7.
- In addition, it is hoped that this will encourage the take-up of higher level curricula in senior cycle and reduce the risk in taking higher level examinations.
- The points awarded to a pre-2017 HE is less (i.e. 33 points) to reflect the different scale of HE (25 < 40 %) to H7 (30 < 40 %)

Matriculation requirements from 2017

Changes to *basic matriculation* requirements from 2017

Where Current requirement is :	2017 requirement :
5 OD3	5 O6/H7
2 HC3 & 4 OD3	2 H5 & 4 O6/H7
3 HC3 & 3 OD3	3 H5 & 3 O6/H7

Changes to *specific subject* requirements from 2017

- HEIs currently finalising the mapping of programme entry requirements to the new grade scale
- Recommendation is that current grade requirements falling in the top half of a new grade band such as HC3, HC1 and HB2 will convert to H4, H3 and H2 respectively. Some exceptions will apply.

Example : Entry Requirement updates

Programme Title	Programme Entry Requirements					
	Irish	English	Other Language	Maths	Laboratory Science Subject	Additional Matric Subjects
Architecture	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7		2
Landscape Architecture	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Engineering	O6/H7	O6/H7		H4	H6	2
Science	O6/H7	O6/H7		O3/H6	O3/H6	2
Computer Science	O6/H7	O6/H7		O3/H6		3
Actuarial and Financial Studies	O6/H7	O6/H7		H2		3
Agricultural Science	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Dairy Business	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Agri-Environmental Sciences	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Food Science	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Human Nutrition	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Forestry	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Horticulture, Landscape and Sportsturf Management	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O6/H7	2
Veterinary Medicine (Undergraduate Entry)	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	O6/H7	Chemistry H5	1
Veterinary Nursing	O6/H7	O6/H7		O6/H7	O3/H6	2

Revised scoring for QQI-FET awards

From 2017, the last step of the scoring process for level 5/6 QQI-FET awards will be adjusted as follows:

- The maximum total score of 360 will be multiplied by 13 and divided by 12, to give a revised maximum overall points score of 390.
- At present, the maximum total score of 360 is multiplied by 10 and divided by 9, to give a revised maximum overall points score of 400.

Note: For some institutions or courses , this is a separate competition

Applicants presenting Leaving Certificate results 1992 to 2016

The 1992 to 2016 grade bands will be scored as follows:

1992 to 2016 LC Grade	New Points Awarded Higher Level	New Points Awarded Ordinary Level
A1	100	56
A2	88	46
B1	88	46
B2	77	37
B3	77	37
C1	66	28
C2	66	28
C3	56	20
D1	56	20
D2	46	12
D3	46	12
E	33	0
F	0	0
NG	0	0

Because of different
bandwidth



Applicants presenting pre-1992 Leaving Certificate results

The pre-1992 grade bands will be scored as follows:

Pre-1992 LC Grade	New Points Awarded Higher Level	New Points Awarded Ordinary Level
A	100	56
B	77	37
C	66	28
D	46	12
E	33	0
F		
NG		