



Causeway CS Guidelines on Additional Assessment Components (AACs) *(Leaving Certificate Subjects)*

Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines outline the procedures, roles, and responsibilities governing the Additional Assessment Components (AACs) in Leaving Certificate subjects, in accordance with the requirements of the State Examinations Commission (SEC) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA).

These guidelines apply to all Leaving Certificate subjects that include an Additional Assessment Component, including but not limited to:

- Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Business and
any other subject designated by the SEC as having an AAC

The purpose of these guidelines is to:

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- Safeguard the integrity and authenticity of student work
- Ensure consistent procedures across all departments
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of students, parents/guardians, teachers, school management, and the Principal as School Authority
- Ensure compliance with SEC Coursework Rules and Procedures

This document is heavily influenced by the **State Examinations Commission Coursework Rules and Procedures**

Status of the Additional Assessment Component

The AAC is a ***mandatory component*** of the Leaving Certificate examination in designated subjects and forms part of the terminal assessment.

Failure to complete or authenticate the AAC in line with SEC requirements may result in:

- Coursework being referred to the SEC
- Coursework not being accepted for marking
- No marks being awarded for this component
- A candidate being ineligible to receive a grade in the subject

Nature of the Assessment

The AAC requires students to complete an individual investigative or project-based task, as specified annually by the SEC.

The assessment process typically includes:

- Research and inquiry
- Planning and design
- Practical / investigative work (where applicable)
- Data collection and analysis
- Reflection and evaluation
- A final written report or submission

Assessment briefs and nationally set deadlines are issued by the State Examinations Commission and must be adhered to in full.

Authentication Procedures

All AAC coursework must be authenticated in line with SEC requirements.

Authentication procedures include:

- Mandatory checkpoints during the academic year
- Submission of work-in-progress
- Maintenance of learning logs or equivalent records
- Evidence of progression from planning to final submission
- Teacher professional judgement based on observed work and discussion

In accordance with SEC Coursework Rules and Procedures, the Principal, as School Authority, confirms that appropriate authentication procedures have been fully applied prior to submission of coursework to the SEC. Failure to engage with authentication procedures may result in coursework being referred to the SEC and not accepted for marking.

Roles and Responsibilities

The SEC relies, in the first instance, on the professionalism of class teachers, principals and school authorities for their support in upholding and maintaining the integrity of the State examinations – with each playing an essential role in ensuring the highest standards of fairness, equity, and accountability. The role and responsibility of the candidate, the class teacher and the school authority are to safeguard inter-candidate equity and to ensure that each candidate is responsible for their own individual authentic work. This helps to confirm that all aspects of the coursework submitted is the candidates own individual authentic work and that research sources used, including AI, have been referenced and acknowledged

Candidate (Student) Responsibilities

The candidate must ensure that:

- They are aware of and fully comply with the SEC Coursework Rules and Procedures and the subject specific coursework procedures and conditions as outlined in the subject brief.
- They behave ethically and with integrity in their engagement with the coursework and do not seek or accept any form of inappropriate assistance in completing their coursework.
- All coursework is their own individual authentic work, completed under the regular supervision and oversight of the class teacher.
- They cooperate fully with the class teacher, enabling them to authenticate the coursework by, for example, maintaining a record of work in progress throughout the duration of the coursework as set out in the subject brief or other evidence of the developmental process.
- They declare the coursework presented is their own individual and authentic work and confirm the authentication process by signing the Authentication Form P.2 (Appendix 4).

- They are fully aware of the consequences of not adhering to the SEC Coursework Rules and Procedures (Section 18) including the penalties which apply if they are found to be in breach of the regulations.

Role of the Teacher

Class teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring, insofar as is possible, that the integrity of candidates' work and in clarifying for candidates what is acceptable in coursework presented for assessment. Teachers are members of a profession that is subject to a code of professional conduct that incorporates a requirement to "act with honesty and integrity in all aspects of their work". Education stakeholders can be confident that relying on teachers to uphold the integrity of the examinations is a well-founded basis for ensuring that integrity.

The class teacher is required to ensure that, insofar as is possible:

- They fully comply with the SEC Coursework Rules and Procedures and the subject specific coursework procedures and conditions as outlined in the subject brief and are familiar with the submission process.
- All candidates participating in a subject with coursework receive a copy of the subject briefs issued by the SEC annually and are aware of the coursework procedures and conditions set out in the subject brief.
- The authentication process has been followed in full. This involves the regular supervision, monitoring and oversight of the candidates' work. The process includes monitoring progress during the development of coursework as part of teaching and learning, from commencement of the coursework to completion and submission. This process ensures that the class teacher can be satisfied that candidate's coursework has been completed by the candidate themselves and can therefore authenticate it.
- Candidates are made aware and are regularly reminded of the authentication process and submission procedures for coursework.
- Candidates adhere to the timelines for completion of coursework and do not continue any work beyond the completion date.
- Each candidate signs the Authentication Form P.2 (Appendix 4) following completion of the coursework authentication stage, thus confirming the coursework presented is their individual and authentic work.
- Following the signing of the Authentication Form P.2 by the candidates, that the teacher authenticates the work by completing and signing the Authentication Form P.2, to confirm that all coursework presented is, in each case, the candidate's individual, authentic work.
- They are objective in authenticating the coursework of candidates and are not coerced by others in conducting this process.
- They do not over-assist or over-direct candidates in the completion of their coursework which may compromise the authenticity of the candidates' individual coursework.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians are asked to:

- Support understanding of the mandatory nature of AACs
- Encourage adherence to deadlines
- Support effective time management
- Notify the school of circumstances affecting completion

Notes on Scheduling and Time Management

In scheduling of State examinations coursework completion dates, and especially as more subjects have had coursework introduced, the SEC has made every effort to seek to balance the load on candidates and schools to the greatest possible degree in the context of the school calendar and other assessment events taking place in examination years. Individual subject specific documentation provides guidance on the amount of time which should be devoted to coursework and schools should have regard to this in planning for and undertaking coursework with their candidates. The SEC makes a distinction between completion dates and submission dates – completion dates are the dates by which all candidates taking the subject must have completed all of their coursework. Submission dates are the dates by which that coursework must be returned to the SEC. The SEC reserves the right to engage with schools to confirm that all coursework in a particular subject has been completed and lodged with the school authority by the completion date for the subject.

For equity reasons, school authorities do not have discretion to extend completion dates for any individual candidate or group of candidates. Where there are extenuating circumstances, the SEC will consider applications from schools for modest extensions to coursework completion dates on behalf of individual candidates. Such applications must be supported by relevant evidence of the need for the extension and must be submitted to the SEC before the completion deadline by contacting coursework@examinations.ie.

There are constraints on the degree to which the system can ensure that each candidate has an even spread of assessment activity in advance of the final written examinations. This is largely dependent on the candidate's personal combination of subjects, and some candidates may have a number of assessment events at the same time or close together. School authorities and teachers can assist candidates in managing their time by ensuring that coursework is completed over the required timeframe and that work is done on a consistent basis.

School Responsibilities

The school will:

- Ensure consistent application of this policy
- Facilitate SEC-compliant authentication procedures
- Communicate clearly with students and parents/guardians
- Retain AAC-related records in accordance with SEC guidance and data protection legislation, **until the conclusion of the examination cycle and any subsequent appeals**

Authenticity and Academic Integrity

All AAC work submitted must be the student's own individual and authentic work. Authenticity is fundamental and non-negotiable.

Academic integrity includes:

- Honest and independent work
- Proper referencing of all sources used
- Full acknowledgement of any use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools
- Avoidance of plagiarism, collusion, or unauthorised assistance

Any unacknowledged material not created by the student will be considered plagiarism and represents a breach of SEC regulations.

Rules for the Use of AI in SEC Examination Coursework

Where Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (including software and applications) are used in State examination coursework, it must be conducted in a responsible and ethical manner. This is essential to maintain academic integrity and ensure that candidates' work reflects their own understanding and efforts. **AI tools should not be used to generate coursework content.** However, AI tools may assist in generating ideas, conducting research, or enhancing clarity, provided its use is clearly documented, in the same manner that all research sources are treated in coursework. These rules set out the acceptable use and appropriate acknowledgment of AI tools in coursework.

1. (a) Ensuring the Authenticity of Candidates' work

Authentic and individual work

Candidates are required to sign the Authentication Form P.2 confirming that all submitted coursework is their own authentic and individual work and is free from any unacknowledged AI tool assistance. The use of AI tools should only be used to enhance the candidate's own learning process and not to replace the candidate's role in creating the coursework.

Candidates should discuss the proposed use of any AI tools with their class teacher before they undertake their coursework.

Class Teacher oversight

Class teachers play a critical role in guiding candidates on the responsible use of AI tools in State examination coursework. The Department of Education and Youth AI Guidance aims to support school leaders and teachers to develop an understanding and knowledge of relevant considerations regarding the use of AI in teaching and learning and school leadership. Through the coursework authentication process, teachers confirm that the coursework was completed in accordance with these rules and can verify that an AI tool has not been used to produce uncredited material.

1. (b) Consequences for misuse of AI tools

The misuse of AI tools, including their use to generate unacknowledged content, is plagiarism and constitutes a breach of regulations (see Section 15). Penalties for misuse will apply and may include loss of the marks for the coursework, loss of the subject, loss of the entire examination in all subjects, or being debarred from the certificate examinations in subsequent years.

2. Permissible uses of AI tools in coursework

AI tools may be used for specific purposes in coursework, such as:

- Gathering background information on a topic from credible sources.
- Structuring coursework plans.
- Clarifying research material.

Candidates must be able to critically evaluate any AI generated output for accuracy, bias, and reliability including hallucinations. (a response / output from AI resulting from faulty code that generates credible but factually incorrect, invented or logically flawed information).

3. Prohibited use of AI tools in coursework

Candidate's coursework must reflect their own knowledge, skills and understanding of a subject. The inappropriate use of AI tools may undermine this outcome, and result in the coursework not being marked.

Prohibited uses include but are not limited to:

- Using one or more AI tools to generate coursework content, responses, or creative elements directly.
- Copying or paraphrasing AI generated material. Any ideas, prompts, or suggestions derived from the use of AI tools must be explicitly acknowledged; however, candidates remain responsible for expressing these ideas in their own words and developing their own original work.

4. Acknowledging the use of AI tools:

When to acknowledge the use of AI tools

The use of AI tools must be acknowledged whenever it has contributed to the development of ideas, research, or other aspects of coursework. This includes summarising information, brainstorming ideas and conducting research.

Minimum acknowledgment requirements

The use of all AI tools must be documented in a dedicated section of the coursework, such as an appendix section.

The following details must be included:

- The name and version of the AI tool used (e.g., ChatGPT-3.5 or Microsoft Copilot, version GPT-4 etc.).
- The developer or publisher of the AI tool (e.g., OpenAI or Microsoft).
- The date the AI output was generated.
- A brief description of how the AI tool was used (e.g., “Used to refine initial research notes” or “Summarised data findings”).

Referencing AI tools

Where applicable, candidates must include the prompt(s) used to generate the output from the AI tool. If the tool generates a shareable URL or session link, this should also be included in the appendix.

Marking material sourced from an AI tool

Any material generated by AI software will be treated in the same way as any other material that the candidate has not generated themselves. Including it without quoting it as the work of AI software will be considered plagiarism, which can result in the forfeit of all marks for the coursework component. Where any material generated by AI software is included in a coursework submission and is properly quoted or referenced, no credit will be awarded for any of that material itself. Credit can only be awarded for the effective use of this material in the support or development of the candidate’s own work. This is the established practice that already applies to the inclusion of quoted material, (whether that be text, images, or other forms of material,) created by human authors.

Example of AI use in coursework:	AI tool:	Developer:	Date of Use:	Purpose:
Brainstorming	ChatGPT-4	OpenAI	14 February 2025	Used to suggest possible project themes during the brainstorming stage. No text was copied; final ideas were refined and developed independently.
Clarifying information	Microsoft Copilot (GPT-4)	Microsoft	20 February 2025	Used to clarify the distinction between fiscal policy and monetary policy. Notes from the explanation were paraphrased into my own words.
Supporting research/data sources	ChatGPT-3.5	OpenAI	25 February 2025	Used to identify potential data sources relevant to climate change modelling. Sources were then independently checked and verified before inclusion in the coursework.

An example of good practice for the candidate when acknowledging the use of AI tools, could include documenting the question posed and the response generated by the AI tool in a screenshot for preparatory and reference purposes

Failure to disclose AI use will be treated as unacknowledged source use and constitutes a breach of SEC regulations.

Declaration and Agreement

Students, parents/guardians, teachers, and school management may be required to sign declarations confirming understanding of:

- AAC requirements
- Authentication procedures
- Consequences of non-compliance

I understand my school's guidelines on using AI. I know I must only submit work that is my own, and I may be asked questions to show I understand what I have written. I also understand that the school's Behaviour policy applies to all use of AI."

Student's Name : _____

Student's Signature: _____
