LIVE AAC BRIEFS ISSUED FOR SENIOR CYCLE

The live briefs for eight Tranche 1 Senior Cycle subjects have been released.

The release by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) of the live briefs for the Additional Assessment Components (AACs) of eight of the nine Tranche 1 Leaving Cert subjects in January 2026 marks a significant if not controversial milestone in the roll-out of Senior Cycle Redevelopment. Arabic is assessed through oral and aural components, and therefore does not require a live AAC brief. This release follows on from materials previously published by the SEC:

- sample AAC briefs published in September 2025,
- sample examination papers published in April 2025, and
- AAC guidance documents for all Tranche 1 subjects published in 2024.

Tranche 1 subjects and AAC weighting

Tranche 1 consists of seven revised subjects and two new subjects – Drama, Film and Theatre Studies, and Climate Action and Sustainable Development. For students who entered fifth year in September 2025, the following revised subjects are available:

- Biology,
- Business,
- Chemistry,
- Physics,
- Arabic (oral and aural assessment – no live AAC brief),
- Latin,
- Ancient Greek,
- Drama, Film and Theatre Studies (new subject – phased roll-out), and
- Climate Action and Sustainable Development (new subject – phased roll-out).

In eight of these subjects, the AAC accounts for 40% of the total marks. Drama, Film and Theatre Studies is the exception, with a 50:50 split between:

- the Creativity in Practice Project, and
- the final 2.5-hour written examination.

Authentication and academic integrity
Key features

- For all Tranche 1 subjects with a live brief, each candidate is required to maintain a record of research, planning, and development work throughout the project,
- AACs must be completed in compliance with the SEC Coursework Rules and Procedures,
- AACs must be authenticated by the candidate, teacher, and school principal,
- AACs must be stored securely as a hard copy pdf by the school, for appeal purposes, and
- use of sources, including AI tools, must be acknowledged.

Teacher concerns include:

- the authentication of AACs when in the form of a written report,
- the inappropriateness of the allocation of 40% of overall marks to AACs that could be completed with third-party input,
- inequalities that exist in terms of availability of specialist classrooms and equipment,
- inequalities that arise due to the lack of laboratory technicians,
- inequalities in IT infrastructure, including student access to devices, and
- the widening of the social divide.

Mandatory live briefs January 2026 – overview by subject

Subject/AAC	Live brief Jan 2026 Title/topic	Project work stages
Biology • Research, design and conducting of an experiment, • collection and evaluation of primary data, and • written report.	Biology in Practice Investigation. Report based on the following: • membranes, • osmosis, and • food preservation.	• Initial response to the investigation brief, • background research, • designing and planning the experiment, • conducting the experiment, • data analysis and conclusions, and • finalising the Biology in Practice Investigation report.
Business Studies • Investigative study/report.	Business Alive Investigative Study: • "… investigate how a work practice that uses digital technology is impacting either employers or employees".	• Getting started, • developing a question to research, • developing a project plan, • identifying sources and gathering information and data, • analysis and evaluation, and • applying learning and drawing conclusions in the compilation of the final report.
Chemistry • Research, design and conducting of an experiment, • collection and evaluation of primary data, and • written report.	Chemistry in Practice Investigation: • "… the rate of a chemical reaction … factors".	• Initial response to the investigation brief, • background research, • designing and planning the experiment, • conducting the experiment, • data analysis and conclusions, and • finalising the Chemistry in Practice Investigation report.
Physics • Research, design and conducting of an experiment, • collection and evaluation of primary data, and • written report.	Physics in Practice Investigation: • "… sustainable practices in a domestic setting have led to ways of reducing domestic energy losses … Investigate one or more aspects of domestic sustainability … "	• Initial response to the investigation brief, • background research, • designing and planning the experiment, • conducting the experiment, • data analysis and conclusions, and • finalising the Physics in Practice Investigation report.
Latin • Research study report.	Research study − text in context: • "For this examination year, candidates should research a language-centred topic that relates to 'the divine' … "	• Getting started with the brief and identifying an area for your individual topic, • delving deeper into your individual topic by deciding on a focused aspect, • planning and researching your individual topic, • selecting relevant and reliable sources, • writing and reviewing your research study report, and • reflection.
Ancient Greek • Research study report.	Research study − text in context: • "For this examination year, candidates should research a language-centred topic that relates to ξενία"	• Getting started with the brief and identifying an area for your individual topic, • delving deeper into your individual topic by deciding on a focused aspect, • planning and researching your individual topic, • selecting relevant and reliable sources, • writing and reviewing your research study report, and • reflection.
Drama, Film and Theatre Studies • Combines a project journal and recorded performance or film.	Creativity in Practice Project: • "The use of Colour in Theatre and Film".	• Respond to the brief by imagining and conceptualising, • develop the work, • define the work, • perform your piece of theatre/screen your film to a live audience, • evaluate the work, and • review and finalise your project journal.
Climate Action and Sustainable Development • Action Project Journal requiring research, planning, action and reflection.	Action Project • "Reducing Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions".	• Considering the brief, • researching the topic in the brief, • researching an action taken by others, • deciding the specific issue to address, • creating an action plan, • taking action, • reflecting and evaluating, and • finalising the Action Project Journal.