



2023 Entrance Assessment

Frequently Asked Questions

(FAQs) (updated April 2023)

A Guide for Parents and Teachers of P6 (and, from September 2023, P7) pupils

This Guide is produced primarily for parents whose children will be transferring to post-primary schools in September 2024 and their teachers.

It may be helpful for those who are considering applying for a place at a post-primary school which uses academic criteria for part or all of its Year 8 intake.

Q1 What is SEAG?

A The Schools' Entrance Assessment Group (SEAG) is a not for profit, private limited company, open to all 62 of the post-primary schools in N. Ireland which use academic selection for all or part of their Year 8 intake. As a private company SEAG is not under the control of the Department of Education, the Education Authority or any public body and does not report to the Department of Education, the Education Authority or any public body. SEAG includes Controlled and Voluntary Grammar Schools and Integrated Schools in its membership.

Q2 What is the role of SEAG?

A The role of SEAG is to provide an Entrance Assessment with standardised outcomes (results) for pupils who will be transferring from primary school and who may wish to transfer to one of the schools which uses SEAG outcomes within its Admissions Criteria.

Q3 How many schools have joined SEAG and who are they?

A All of the 62 **post-primary** schools in N. Ireland which use academic criteria within their year 8 Admissions Criteria are members of SEAG. A list of SEAG schools is provided at the end of this guide.

Q4 Does this mean that, for 2023, instead of parents entering their children for an AQE assessment or a PPTC assessment, or both, they will only need to sit one type of Assessment?

A Yes. Previously if parents wanted their children to have the opportunity to apply to any of the academically selective schools the children needed to sit Entrance Assessment papers on 4 different Saturdays in November/December. Alternatively, if they only took the AQE or PPTC Assessment the number of schools available was limited. With SEAG every P7 pupil will have the opportunity to access an academically selective place at one of our schools by sitting the SEAG Entrance Assessment.

Q5 Who can sit the 2023 SEAG Entrance Assessment?

A Children born between 2nd July 2012 and 1st July 2013 are eligible to take the 2023 SEAG Entrance Assessment. Applications for transfer outside of this age range will be facilitated where the Principal of the child's primary school provides a written statement that in his/her professional opinion the child is capable of working alongside others in a selective school environment and able to deal with the academic and social implications of early or late transfer. *Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs do not need to sit the Entrance Assessment because a separate Year 8 Admissions Process applies to them and the SEAG outcomes do not form part of that process.*

Q6 How much will it cost for my child to sit the Entrance Assessment?

A There is an administration fee of £20 to register a child to sit the Entrance Assessment. Parents of pupils with a Free School Meals Entitlement (FSME) are exempt from the £20 fee.

Q7 How can I make sure that my child can sit the Entrance Assessment?

A There are two stages to this process:

Stage 1: You (as a parent / guardian of your child) **register** yourself in the website www.seagni.co.uk

Stage 2: Having completed a **Parent / Guardian Registration** for yourself you will then be able to make a **Pupil Application**, on the website, to register your child to sit the Entrance Assessment.

Q8 Why do I need to make a Pupil Application?

A You need to complete a Pupil Application so that SEAG has all the details it needs to be able to put arrangements in place for your child to take the Entrance Assessment on **11th November 2023 and 25th November 2023** in one of the SEAG Assessment Centres. Only pupils for whom a Pupil Application has been completed are registered to sit the Entrance Assessment.

- Q9 When will I be able to carry out the Parent Registration and Pupil Application processes?**
- A** The Registration and Application processes will open at 9am on Wednesday 3rd May 2023 and close at 5pm on Friday 22nd September 2023.
- Q10 If I miss the deadline to complete a Pupil Application will I be able to make a late Pupil Application?**
- A** NO. It will not be possible to make a Pupil Application after the 5pm deadline on Friday 22nd September 2023. The area on the website which parents complete to make a Pupil Application will not be available after the deadline has passed.
- Q11 If I have two children sitting the Entrance Assessment will I be able to make two Pupil Applications?**
- A** YES. Once a parent / guardian has registered he / she will be able to make two Pupil Applications.
- Q12 How will the Parent Registration and Pupil Application process operate?**
- A** The online step by step process will guide you right through from the initial Parent Registration (Step 1) to the 5 different steps in the Pupil Application process.
- Step 2: Key in basic information about your child (e.g., full name, date of birth, address, primary school attended) and then choose, from a drop down list the Assessment Centre where you would like your child to sit the Entrance Assessment.
- Step 3: Upload necessary documentation such as birth certificate and a passport size photograph
- Step 4: If you wish to request Access Arrangements complete this step and upload supporting documentation.
- Step 5: Make a payment of the £20 administration fee OR provide evidence to verify that your child has a free school meals entitlement (FSME) and that the fee is not required.
- Step 6: Submit the completed Pupil Application. You will receive a confirmation email.
- Q13 Will my child be able to sit the Entrance Assessment at my first choice Assessment Centre?**
- A** All 62 schools have worked very hard to try to ensure that, SEAG will be able to accommodate all registered pupils within a reasonable travelling time from their homes and to ensure that responsibility for accommodating pupils is spread fairly across all schools.
- As part of the Pupil Application process you will choose where you would like your child to sit the Entrance Assessment. A drop-down list will show you all the schools (Centres) which can accommodate your child. You should select the Centre which is most convenient for you from that list.
- Although the drop-down list will initially contain all 62 schools, it is possible that, over time, a school could reach its maximum capacity. If that happens the school will no longer appear in the drop-down list.
- Q14 Will the allocation of an Assessment Centre affect the school I want my child to attend?**
- A** No. The Assessment and Admission processes are entirely separate. Irrespective of where your child takes the Entrance Assessment you may apply for a Year 8 place in any of the SEAG schools. All SEAG schools will accept the results of children who take the SEAG Entrance Assessment regardless of the Centre where they have taken the assessment.
- Q15 Will my child be able to sit the Entrance Assessment in Irish?**
- A** Yes. Both English and Gaeilge versions of the Assessment will be available.

Q16 Which Assessment Centres will be able to provide the Assessment in Irish?

A The invigilation of children who take the Irish Medium version of the Entrance Assessment is conducted in Irish and so needs to take place in an Assessment Centre which can offer the Invigilation in Irish. SEAG has 11 Centres providing Invigilation in Irish. A parent who wishes their child to sit the Assessment in Irish will need to select, from the drop down list, one of the Centres listed here:

Abbey Christian Brothers Grammar School	(Newry)
Assumption Grammar School	(Ballynahinch)
Christian Brothers' Grammar School	(Omagh)
Loreto Grammar School	(Omagh)
Mount Lourdes Grammar School	(Enniskillen)
St Dominic's High School	(Belfast)
St Joseph's Grammar School	(Donaghmore)
St Louis Grammar School	(Ballymena)
St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School	(Belfast)
St Mary's Grammar School	(Magherafelt)
Thornhill College	(Derry)

Q17 What is the format of the SEAG Entrance Assessment?

A The SEAG Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. Paper 1 will be taken on 11th November 2023 and Paper 2 on 25th November 2023. Both papers assess English (or Gaeilge) and Mathematics and both have an identical format consisting of three Sections:

- The first Section, the **Practice Test** Section, has 5 English (or Gaeilge questions) followed by 5 Maths questions. These questions are designed to help pupils settle before the Main Test begins. The Practice Test is not assessed.
- The second Section is the **English (or Gaeilge) Main Test**. It has 28 questions(Q1-Q28).
 - There is a **“Punctuation Exercise”** containing 5 multiple choice questions, a **“Grammar Exercise”** also with 5 multiple choice questions and a **“Spelling Exercise”** with 5 multiple choice questions (Q1-Q15).
 - This is followed by an **“English (or Gaeilge) Comprehension”**. Pupils carefully read a passage and are then asked 13 questions; 7 of these are multiple choice (Q16-Q22). The final 6 questions (Q23-Q28) are described as “free response”; the pupil writes the answer to each in the space provided in the Answer Sheet.
- The third Section is the **Maths Main Test**. It also has 28 questions (Q29-Q56).
 - The first 22 Maths questions (Q29-Q50) are multiple choice questions. The final 6 Maths questions (Q51-Q56) are described as “free response”. For each of these questions the pupil works out the correct answer and writes the answer in the space provided in the Answer Sheet.
- Pupils will have 60 minutes to answer the 56 questions.
- Each of the multiple choice questions has 5 possible answers.

Q18 What is the Specification for the Entrance Assessment?

A The Specification is set out in the “Specification for the 2023 Entrance Assessment” and the “Gaeilge Specification for the 2023 Entrance Assessment” documents which you can download from www.seagni.co.uk.

Q19 Who has set and who will mark the Entrance Assessment?

A The SEAG Entrance Assessment is being set and marked by GL Assessment.

Q20 Who are GL Assessment?

A GL Assessment are a world leader in the provision of high quality assessments for schools and school groups, having over 40 years' experience of developing robust assessments. GL are the largest independent provider of educational assessments in the UK and Ireland and their products are used by over 19,000 schools in 111 countries to support children's learning. GL Assessment tests are used every year by the vast majority of UK primary and post-primary schools, including many schools in N. Ireland. You may be familiar with your child taking the Progress Test English or Progress Test Maths assessments in primary school; these are GL Assessment products.

Q21 Does SEAG have Practice Papers available?

A Yes. Ahead of the 2023 Entrance Assessment, SEAG and GL Assessment have worked together to produce two **official Practice Papers** along with an **Answer Sheet** for each paper for pupils to use, plus a **Parents' Guide with Answer Keys** to both papers. Parents can be assured that these are the official SEAG/GL Practice Papers 1 and 2 and their Answer Sheets, available in both English and Gaeilge, commissioned by SEAG and produced by GL Assessment to follow the format of an actual SEAG Entrance Assessment paper. These papers and the Answer Sheets have the GL Assessment logo on the front page.

All the Practice Papers, Answer Sheets and the "*SEAG Practice Papers 1 and 2 with Answer Keys – Parents' Guide*" are free to download from our website. These materials should help everyone gain a clearer understanding of the format of the Entrance Assessment. The "*SEAG Practice Papers 1 and 2 with Answer Keys – Parents' Guide*" provides helpful detail as well as containing the correct answers to all the questions.

Q22 How can I help my child to prepare for the 2023 Entrance Assessment?

A You should support the work of your child's teacher in the primary school by ensuring that homework is always completed to a high standard and by encouraging your child to read beyond the reading homework set by his/her teacher. SEAG schools are not suggesting or requesting the primary schools to teach beyond the requirements of the NI Curriculum or wishing them to adjust their teaching programmes by concentrating on preparation for the Entrance Assessment. Your child should be well prepared for the Entrance Assessment by being taught English and Maths within the NI Curriculum to the usual high standards of his/her primary school.

Q23 During the Entrance Assessment, will my child have any recognition of his/her special needs, medical or dietary requirements?

A Yes. When you are completing the Pupil Application you will have the opportunity to request Access Arrangements, if you feel that your child may be entitled to additional support. It will be important that you provide SEAG with sufficient detail of your child's needs so that SEAG can determine from the information you provide which, if any, Access Arrangements it can provide. An Access Arrangements Policy and other documents will be available to help you.

Q24 When and how will my child's SEAG Entrance Assessment results be reported?

A It is planned that SEAG results will be released on Saturday 27th January 2024. You will be able to access your child's results in "Statement of Outcomes" from a secure area on the SEAG website.

Q25 What is a Statement of Outcomes and what results or outcomes will I receive for my child?

A The Statement of Outcomes is a page which sets out how your child has performed in the SEAG Entrance Assessment. The results it contains are based on your child’s total overall performance across the two papers which make up the SEAG Entrance Assessment. The key outcomes which are most likely to be used by SEAG schools within their Year 8 Admissions Criteria are the **Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS)** and the **Band**. The Statement of Outcomes will provide five types of information:

- 1. The Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS)**
2. The English (or Gaeilge) SAS
3. The Maths SAS
- 4. The Band**
5. Information about the Cohort Percentile Ranking

1. The Total Standardised Age Score (TSAS)

- The overall outcomes are based on the 56 English (or Gaeilge) Questions in Papers 1 and 2 and the 56 Maths questions in Papers 1 and 2.
- The Total SAS is the sum of the English (or Gaeilge) SAS and the Maths SAS.
- The Total SAS range will be 138-282 with a mean (or average) of 200.

A Standardised Age Score (SAS) takes account of a child’s age when he/she took the assessment, the number of correct answers and the degree of difficulty of the assessment.

2. The English (or Gaeilge) SAS

- This is the Standardised Age Score based on answers to the 56 English (or Gaeilge) questions.
- The English (or Gaeilge) SAS range will be 69-141 with a mean (or average) of 100.
- The English (or Gaeilge) SAS is provided to inform parents and primary school teachers as to how their children have performed in this aspect of the Entrance Assessment.

3. The Maths SAS

- This is the Standardised Age Score based on answers to the 56 Maths questions.
- The Maths SAS range will be 69-141 with a mean of 100.
- The Maths SAS is provided to inform parents and primary school teachers as to how their children have performed in this aspect of the Entrance Assessment.

The SAS for English (or Gaeilge) and for Mathematics is given as a number between 69 and 141. You may be familiar with the scores from standardised tests used in your child’s primary school, e.g., Progress Test in English and/or Progress Test in Maths, which also use this scale.

4. The Band

- There are six Bands.
- The Bands are designated as Band 1, Band 2, Band 3, Band 4, Band 5 and Band 6.
- Cohort Percentiles are used to determine the borderline for each Band.

Table 1

SEAG Band	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cohort Percentile	60%+	50-59%	40-49%	30-39%	20-29%	<20%

60%+ (Band 1) means pupils who are in the top 40% of those who sat the Assessment; 50-59% (Band 2) means pupils who are in the top 50% but not the top 40% of those who sat the Assessment etc.

5. Information about the Cohort* Percentile Ranking (CPR)

- Pupils in Band 1 will be in the top 40% of those who sat the Assessment.
- Bands 2-5 will each contain 10% of the total cohort.
- Actual CPRs will be provided for pupils in Bands 2-4 to help inform parents who may be considering a remark in the hope that their children could achieve a higher band.

**Cohort means all those who take the SEAG Entrance Assessment in a given year.*

Q26 What happens if my child only sits one of two Entrance Assessment Papers?

A SEAG is very clear that its Entrance Assessment consists of two papers. A pupil who only takes one paper (i.e., either Paper 1 or Paper 2 but not both) will **not** have completed the full Entrance Assessment. Such pupils will, however, have their “single paper” marked by GL Assessment and will receive a Statement of Outcomes. Outcomes for pupils who only sit one paper will have the designation “e” (for estimate) immediately after the Outcome, e.g., Total Standardised Age Score TSAS 196e; Band 4e.

Q27 How will SEAG schools use the Outcomes from the Entrance Assessment in their Admissions Criteria?

A Although SEAG provides the Entrance Assessment and Statements of Outcomes for each pupil it has no role or involvement in decisions as to how each SEAG school uses those Outcomes. Decisions relating to the Year 8 Admissions Criteria such as whether to use Total Standardised Age Score, Band, a combination of both or by some other method are entirely a matter for the Board of Governors of each SEAG school. Each Board of Governors has a responsibility to publish its Admissions Criteria for Year 8 September 2024 Entry. These Criteria are published in the 2023-24 school year before parents / guardians begin the Post Primary Transfer Application Process.

SEAG Schools

Abbey Christian Brothers Grammar School	Mount Lourdes Grammar School
Antrim Grammar School	Omagh Academy Grammar School
Aquinas Diocesan Grammar School	Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock
Assumption Grammar School	Our Lady's Grammar School
Ballyclare High School	Rainey Endowed
Ballymena Academy	Rathmore Grammar School
Banbridge Academy	Regent House School
Bangor Grammar School	Royal Belfast Academical Institution
Belfast High School	Royal School Armagh
Belfast Royal Academy	Royal School Dungannon
Bloomfield Collegiate	Sacred Heart Grammar School
Cambridge House Grammar School	Slemish College
Campbell College	St Colman's College
Carrickfergus Grammar School	St Columb's College
Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh	St Dominic's High School
Coleraine Grammar School	St Joseph's Grammar School, Donaghmore
Dalriada School	St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena
Dominican College, Fortwilliam	St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel
Down High School	St Malachy's College
Enniskillen Royal Grammar School	St Mary's Christian Brothers' Grammar School
Foyle College	St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt
Friends' School Lisburn	St Michael's College
Glenlola Collegiate	St Patrick's Academy, Dungannon
Grosvenor Grammar School	St Patrick's Grammar School, Downpatrick
Hunterhouse College	Strabane Academy
Lagan College	Strathearn School
Larne Grammar School	Sullivan Upper School
Limavady Grammar School	Thornhill College
Loreto Grammar School, Omagh	Victoria College
Lumen Christi College	Wallace High School
Methodist College Belfast	Wellington College