

Irish Board  
of  
Speech  
&  
Drama



Syllabus  
2021-2022



Irish Board of  
Speech & Drama

*Inspiring confidence & imagination*

# Introduction

The Irish Board of Speech and Drama is the fastest-growing, friendliest, most approachable, and most flexible speech, drama and communications examining body in Ireland. Our professional approach to exams, our encouraging and experienced examiners and our accessible and modern syllabus (catering for all age groups from age 4) have made us a firm favourite with speech, drama and communications teachers throughout Ireland.

Irish Board examinations are easy to organise. You and your students can choose your poems, prose and drama pieces. You can choose an examination date, time and location which suit you.

If you have never held speech and drama exams before, or if you aren't sure about how to go about it, just ring us, and we'll help you through the process. If you want, we can visit you and discuss the process.

In this booklet you'll find our exam syllabuses effective from 1 January 2018 to 31 August 2020. Our Musical Theatre syllabus is contained in a separate booklet.

On our website – [irishboard.ie](http://irishboard.ie) – you'll find a range of useful items which will help you in your exam preparation. In addition to the essentials (entry forms, fees information, poetry suggestions, theory guides, diploma materials), you'll find information on

- How Irish Board exams work
- How we assess your candidates
- What our examiners need on exam day.

Remember, we want to make the exam process as pleasurable as possible for your candidates and you. No question is too small so please don't hesitate to contact us.

**David Meredith**  
Director



Irish Board of  
Speech & Drama



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[facebook.com/IrishBoardofSpeechandDrama](https://www.facebook.com/IrishBoardofSpeechandDrama)  
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**DIPLOMA**  
**EXAMINATIONS**

## Diploma Examinations

The Irish Board of Speech and Drama's highly regarded Diplomas provide candidates with the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in speech, drama and communication to the highest level.

The Irish Board offers Diplomas of Associate in Acting Performance, Musical Theatre and Teaching; a Diploma of Licentiate in Teaching, and a Fellowship. The requirements for the Diploma of Associate in Musical Theatre Performance may be found in the Musical Theatre Syllabus booklet.

Our Diploma examinations provide a rigorous test of knowledge, technical expertise and interpretive skills, and are oriented to the needs of those who wish to become professional drama practitioners or who wish to teach speech, drama and communications as a career.

Entry Forms are available from the Irish Board's office or may be downloaded from **[irishboard.ie](http://irishboard.ie)**

Examination fees are printed on a separate sheet enclosed with this syllabus and are also available on **[irishboard.ie](http://irishboard.ie)**



**Diploma of Associate in Acting Performance: AIBSD (Acting)**

The Irish Board of Speech and Drama Diploma of Associate in Acting Performance provides an opportunity for candidates who have significant and varied drama experience to be assessed in a wide variety of drama forms.

The syllabus facilitates a candidate to develop his/ her skills, technique and talent in period and modern drama, verse speaking, prose speaking, mime/ movement to music, and sight reading.

**Candidates will be expected to display a very high standard of technical, interpretive and stagecraft skills in order to pass the examination.**

***Eligibility:***

The candidate must be at least 18 years of age on the date of the examination.

***Requirements:***

- 1 Perform from memory a five minute recital, compiled by the candidate, comprising prose, verse, drama and a linking script (25%)
- 2 Perform an own choice dramatic selection not to exceed 3 minutes duration from a recognised play written before 1900 (15%)
- 3 Perform either a character sketch or a dramatic selection from a recognised play written since 1900 (3 minutes) (15%)
- 4 Perform a mime OR short piece of movement to music choreographed by the candidate (15%)
- 5 Perform an impromptu improvisation. The subject will be given by the examiner at the examination (2 minutes) (10%)
- 6 Read at sight a short passage of Shakespeare (10%)
- 7 Discuss with the examiner(s) your drama experience and future plans (10%)

*75% is the mark required to pass the Diploma of Associate in Acting Performance examination.*

## Diploma of Associate (Teaching): AIBSD (Teaching)

Many speech and drama students feel that they would like to teach the subject. With drama now included in the primary school curriculum, being provided for in an increasing number of post-primary schools, and with demands from parents for private tuition, opportunities for employment in the field are increasing.

Entry for the Diploma of Associate (Teaching) examination signifies the aspiration of a candidate to become a speech and drama teacher. While the Diploma of Associate (Teaching) is not itself a teaching qualification, it is expected that each candidate intends to gain a teaching qualification in the future, and will have gained some experience in the teaching of speech and drama under the supervision of a qualified teacher.

The Associate Diploma (Teaching) syllabus not only encourages candidates to demonstrate their skills in performance, but also encourages them to develop a thorough knowledge and understanding of key historical and theoretical aspects of speech and drama, providing a foundation for further study.

A high standard of technical ability will be required to pass the practical section of the examination.

### ***Eligibility:***

To be eligible for entry, a candidate must:

- be at least 19 years of age on the date he/she attempts their first section of the examination
- have obtained at least an H4 in Higher Level English in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination, or equivalent
- have studied speech and drama for at least three years

Documentary evidence of eligibility MUST be submitted with a candidate's entry form.

### ***Requirements:***

#### SECTION ONE: Practical

- 1 Perform from memory a short own choice poem (25%)
- 2 Introduce and perform a solo dramatic selection from any play of literary merit, not to exceed three minutes (25%)
- 3 Speak from memory a prose selection not to exceed two minutes (25%)
- 4 Read at sight a selection chosen by the examiner (10%)
- 5 Hold a discussion with the examiner(s) about your speech and drama experience to date, and your future plans (15%)

#### SECTION TWO: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Each candidate will be required to write an essay of no more than 1500 words on each of four topics out of six supplied by the Irish Board, based on the following:

- **Theory of Speech and Drama**, including definitions, meaning and understanding of the importance of modulation (pitch, pause, pace, inflection, tone), diction, volume, phrasing, projection, resonance, vowels, and consonants. Candidates should be familiar with the use of exercises and techniques to enhance voice and speech. Speech faults and how to recognise them. Basic anatomy for voice production. Breathing. Movement (including fundamentals of period movement), gesture, stage directions, stagecraft.
- **Performance**, including how to prepare verse, prose and drama for performance. Character study and creation. Speaking Shakespeare.
- **Storytelling**, including the purpose and value of storytelling in drama class, different types of stories, methods of storytelling, encouraging and facilitating engagement and participation by pupils in stories, dramatising stories, including the use of tableaux vivantes.

- **Choral Verse Speaking**, including the difference between choral speaking and action poems, the purpose and value of choral speaking, benefits to students, choral speaking techniques and exercises, choice of material, effective choral poems, preparation, grouping, conducting, preparing a choir for competition and examination.
- **Mime**, including definition, the history and evolution of mime, outline of the work and influence of key Mimes such as Deburau, Decroux, Barrault and Marceau, mime conventions, techniques and exercises, types of mime (occupational, recreational, story, character, abstract, traditional and pantomime blanche), how mime may be introduced to students of different ages and experience.
- **Movement to Music**, including definition, choreographing movement to music, introducing it and choreographing it with students. Choice of suitable music.
- **Improvisation**, including definition, the history and development of improvisation from the Commedia Dell'Arte to the present day, the use and value of improvisation in working with text and character, how improvisation may be introduced in drama class and how the improvisational skills of students may be developed, themes and methods used in solo, duologue and group improvisations in class, féiseanna and examination work.
- **Public Speaking and Presentation**, including the skills and techniques required for effective public speaking, content and structure, oratorical techniques, appropriate styles of delivery for different purposes and sizes of groups and venues, how to introduce public speaking to students, exercises for fluency and confidence.
- **Puppets**, including a general knowledge of different types of puppet, how they are made, how they are manipulated, making simple puppets, their use in drama classes, devising and producing simple scenes and puppet plays.
- **Poetry**, including an outline knowledge of the main periods of English poetry (Chaucer, 16th and 17th Century, Shakespeare, metaphysical poets, nature poets, Victorian poets, pre-Raphaelites, 20th Century and Modern poetry). Outline knowledge of the history of poetry in Ireland. Candidates are advised to study at least one period of poetry in depth and have an in-depth knowledge of the life and work of at least one poet.

Candidates will be expected to include examples from their own experience in their answers where relevant.

*75% in each section of the Diploma examination will be required to pass.*

*Candidates may attempt each section a maximum of three times.*

*Candidates must complete all sections of the Diploma of Associate (Teaching) within three years of undertaking their first section.*

## Diploma of Licentiate (Teaching Diploma)

The Irish Board of Speech and Drama Diploma of Licentiate is a speech and drama teaching qualification.

The Licentiate syllabus encourages candidates to develop dramatic skills which will form the basis for their teaching of practical speech, drama and communication skills to their future students. The syllabus also encourages candidates to acquire a comprehensive practical knowledge and understanding of the field of speech and drama, which will provide a firm foundation for their teaching career.

The Lesson Demonstration, in which a candidate will teach a group of children, provides an opportunity to assess a candidate's ability to create a rapport with a group of children and enthuse them in the subject.

The Dissertation provides an opportunity to research and explore a particular aspect of speech and drama of interest to the candidate.

### ***Eligibility:***

To be eligible for entry, a candidate must:

- be at least 20 years of age
- have obtained at least an H4 in Higher Level English in the Irish Leaving Certificate Examination, or equivalent
- hold the Associate Diploma (Teaching) of the Irish Board of Speech and Drama (AIBSD (Teaching))
- submit with the entry form a letter from a recognised Speech and Drama teacher confirming that the candidate has been studying Speech and Drama for at least three years.

Documentary evidence of eligibility MUST be submitted with a candidate's entry form.

### ***Requirements:***

#### SECTION ONE: PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE

- 1 Introduce and perform from memory a seven minute recital incorporating prose, verse, drama and a linking script. The recital may be on a theme, or it may contain the works of one author (50%)
- 2 Perform a short piece of movement to music, choreographed by the candidate, OR Perform a two minute abstract mime (35%)
- 3 A discussion with the examiner(s) on your experience in speech and drama, and how you aim to use your licentiate qualification (15%)

#### SECTION TWO: TEACHING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Submit a reflective practice journal detailing the preparation for, execution and evaluation of four distinct speech & drama classes taught, together with ideas about how your teaching practice might be made more effective, in each case.

#### SECTION THREE: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

##### **PART ONE**

Each candidate will be required to write an essay of no more than 1500 words on each of four topics out of six supplied by the Irish Board, based on the following:

- **Teaching and Learning**, including an understanding of current theories of teaching and learning and their application in the teaching of speech, drama and communication.
- **Participation and Engagement**, including effective methods for engaging students, encouraging participation, maintaining discipline and commitment, and maximizing learning in speech and drama classes.
- **Lesson Planning**, including devising and compiling a programme of work for a term/ year on any particular aspect of speech, drama and communication to a defined group of students. Formulation of aims, objectives and lesson plans. Forms of classroom-based assessment of progress and achievement.

- **Resources**, including sourcing, selecting, collating, grading and preparation of teaching resources and materials. Sourcing and storage of costumes, props, equipment, sets and so on, required for class work and for performance.
- **Establishing a School/Academy**, including market research, location, venue/premises/ facilities required, marketing and advertising, fees and fee collection, financial management, insurance, staffing, health and safety, child protection measures, equipment, relationship with parents and the community.
- **Festivals, féiseanna and examinations**, including their purpose, value, advantages and disadvantages, the organisation and administration of a private or local Féis, preparing students for competitions in general, preparing students for particular competitions and/or examinations in verse speaking, prose, drama (solo, duologue, group), reading, choral verse speaking, mime, movement to music, improvisation and public speaking.
- **Adjudicating and examining**, including the differences between adjudicating and examining, skills and qualities required in an adjudicator/ examiner, preparation for an adjudication/ examination assignment, criteria for assessment and marking, marking schemes, the purpose and value of verbal adjudications.
- **School Concert**, including the purpose and value of the School Concert, the advantages and disadvantages of the School Concert from the points of view of the school, teachers, parents and students, devising and compiling a concert programme, organising a school concert (venue, stages and staging, sets and scenery, costumes, lighting, stage management, make-up, prompting, props, music)

## PART TWO

Each candidate will be required to write an essay of no more than 1500 words on each of four topics out of six supplied by the Irish Board, based on the following:

- **History of Western Theatre**, including an outline knowledge of the characteristics, themes and influences on modern theatre of Greek theatre, Roman theatre, Medieval European theatre, theatre of the Italian Renaissance, Elizabethan theatre, Restoration theatre, 18th and 19th Century theatre, 20th Century theatre and Contemporary theatre. The history of theatre in Ireland. Outline knowledge of key theatrical genres. Critical appreciation of current theatrical productions and issues.
- **Acting Theory and Methods**, including knowledge and understanding in particular of the work and influence of Aristotle, Brecht, Boal, Stanislavski, Artaud, Strasberg, Meisner and Brooke.
- **Acting Styles**, including the differences in acting style required for stage, film and television.
- **Costumes**, including an outline knowledge of costumes through the ages, ideas about costumes for children and the school play/concert, sourcing, designing and making simple costumes for children.
- **Play production with adults and children**, including the processes of producing and directing plays from initial reading to performance. Casting, staging, set design, sets and scenery, props, costumes and make-up, direction, and backstage organisation.
- **Stage lighting and sound**, including lighting equipment (floods, spots, follow spots, beamlights and gobos), lighting control systems, lighting design, the use of colour, devising a lighting plot/ marking a script, lighting effects, creating atmosphere with lighting. lighting a performance with limited or no professional lighting equipment. The design, selection and use of music and sound effects in theatrical productions; knowledge of basic sound equipment; the pros and cons of using microphones in young people's productions.
- **Stage Management**, including the role, responsibilities and functions of the stage manager throughout the production process.
- **Poetry**, knowledge and understanding of poetic forms and genres, rhythm and metre, metrical patterns, rhyme, rhyme schemes, alliteration, assonance and consonance.

*In the written assignments, candidates will be expected to include examples from their own experience in their answers where relevant.*

#### SECTION FOUR: DISSERTATION

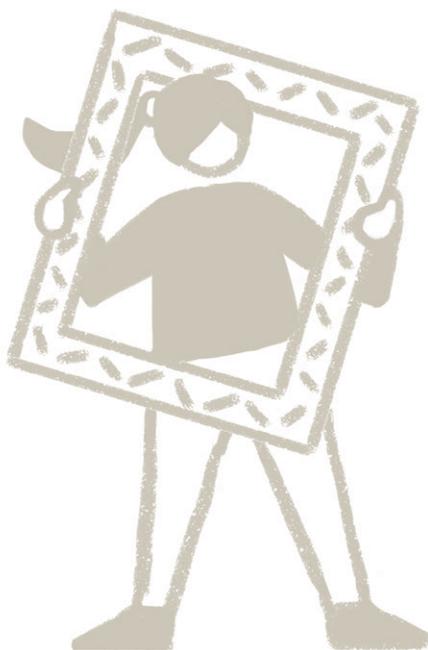
Write and submit a dissertation of not less than 4000 words on any aspect of Speech and Drama, bringing in your own experiences as a teacher. The thesis must be the candidate's own work. The dissertation should contain an introduction outlining the aim of the dissertation and should be laid out in logical fashion. Any quotations must be referenced with the name of the author, the date and, if appropriate, the publication from which it is taken. A bibliography of sources (including internet-based sources) must be included.

Dissertations should be typed/word processed, printed clearly in black ink on one side of white A4 paper, should be covered, titled and soft-bound. Submitted dissertations will be retained by the Irish Board of Speech and Drama.

*75% in each section of the Diploma examination is the mark required to pass.*

*Candidates may attempt each section a maximum of three times.*

*Candidates must complete all sections of the Diploma of Licentiate (Teaching) within three years of undertaking their first section.*



**Irish Board of Speech and Drama Fellowship*****Eligibility:***

To be eligible for consideration for a Fellowship award, a candidate must:

- hold the Irish Board of Speech and Drama Licentiate Diploma
- have a minimum of ten years Speech and Drama teaching experience
- have a current examination centre with the Irish Board of Speech and Drama
- submit a resume of their work in speech and drama during the past five years.

***Entry Procedure:***

Candidates wishing to enter for the Fellowship examination should submit evidence of their eligibility, together with the examination fee by 1 May or 1 November. Candidates meeting the eligibility requirements will receive written confirmation that they have been accepted for examination within twenty-one days.

***Requirements:*****SECTION ONE: PRACTICAL PERFORMANCE**

Prepare and deliver from memory:

- 1 A six minute recital on a single theme or author, to incorporate verse, prose and drama, with a linking script written by the candidate (50%)
- 2 a three minute abstract mime (15%)
- 3 a short piece of movement to music choreographed and performed by the candidate (15%)
- 4 a performance, not to exceed three minutes, of one of the following:
  - a. a scene from a contemporary comedy
  - b. a scene from a period play written before 1800
  - c. a scene from any play by William Shakespeare (20%)

**SECTION TWO: VIVA VOCE**

To discuss with representatives of the Irish Board of Speech and Drama your contribution to Speech and Drama over the past five years, and to discuss any aspects of Speech and Drama chosen at the discretion of the representatives. Marks will be awarded for the demeanour, fluency, enthusiasm, originality and personality of the candidate. The duration of the discussion will not exceed 20 minutes.

**SECTION THREE: THESIS**

To write and submit a thesis (minimum 10,000 words) on any original aspect of Speech, Drama or the Allied Arts. The thesis must be the candidate's own work, and will be retained by the Irish Board of Speech and Drama.

*A minimum of 75% in each section is the mark required in order to qualify for the award of a Fellowship of the Irish Board of Speech and Drama. The award will be made at the sole discretion of the Central Council of the Board.*

# Irish Board of Speech & Drama Examination Regulations

- 1 Applications for examinations are accepted on the condition that candidates will be examined in accordance with the requirements of the current syllabus.
- 2 All entries must be made on the official entry form or through the online booking system. Each entry must be accompanied by the correct entry fee. Entries and fees must reach the Irish Board of Speech and Drama at least one month before the proposed date of the examination. The Irish Board reserves the right to refuse entries which do not comply with these conditions.
- 3 The person submitting the entry must complete an agreement to abide by the regulations of the Irish Board.
- 4 The minimum fee for the recognition of an examination centre is €400. By agreement and arrangement, an examination centre may comprise more than one physical location.
- 5 Examination fees will not be refunded.
- 6 A candidate who has been entered for an examination in one centre may not be examined in a different centre.
- 7 A list of candidates' names with the type and grade of their examinations must be given to the examiner prior to the start of the examination.
- 8 Each candidate is responsible for the supply of all equipment, props, costumes and so on required for his/ her examination.
- 9 70% will be required to pass any examination; 75% - 79% will be awarded a Merit; 80% -84% will be awarded Honours; 85% - 89% will be awarded First Class Honours; 90% -100% will be awarded a Distinction. The pass mark for all Diploma examinations is 75%.
- 10 A certificate will be awarded to each candidate achieving a pass mark or over in an examination.
- 11 One Irish Board Centre Medal will be awarded in each examination centre as defined in Regulation 4, above, save for the exceptions below.
- 12 In the Acting Performance and Musical Theatre examinations, a certificate will be awarded to each candidate achieving 70% or over. Each candidate in the Acting Performance and Musical Theatre solo and duologue examinations achieving a mark of 80% or above will receive a certificate and an Irish Board Performance Medal. Acting Performance and Musical Theatre candidates are not eligible to receive an Irish Board Centre Medal in respect of their Acting Performance and Musical Theatre examinations.
- 13 In the Grade Proficiency, Public Speaking Proficiency, Acting Proficiency and Musical Theatre Proficiency examinations, a medal will be awarded to each candidate achieving a mark of 85% or above.
- 14 The Irish Board of Speech and Drama welcomes candidates with particular needs. Candidates requiring particular provision, for example, sight reading in a large format or on a coloured background must notify the Irish Board at the time of entry.