

FOR PARENTS OF SEC 3 (AND SEC 2) STUDENTS

SEC 2027: what changes, and **what to do in Sec 3**

From 2027, the GCE O-Level, N(A)-Level and N(T)-Level exams are combined into one national exam: the **Singapore-Cambridge Secondary Education Certificate (SEC)**. Today's Sec 3 students, who entered Sec 1 under Full Subject-Based Banding in 2024, are the **first batch** to sit it. Today's Sec 2 students will sit it too.

THE SHORT VERSION

1. One national exam, the **SEC**, replaces the O, N(A) and N(T) Levels.
2. Each subject is taken at its own level: **G1, G2 or G3**.
3. **One certificate** shows all subjects at all levels.
4. SEAB says the **overall exam standards stay the same**.
5. From 2028, students apply for JC, MI and poly through a new **Post-Secondary Admissions Exercise (PSE)**.
6. **JC** counts 5 subjects, all at G3, and needs a G3 Maths pass. **Poly** counts 5 subjects, and only one of them can be at G2.

1 Is the first batch at a disadvantage?

This is the question we hear most. SEAB says there is **no change in the overall standards** of the exams under the SEC. What changes is the name, how subject levels are set, and how the JC and poly entry scores are worked out. Those are explained in this guide.

2 The 2027 exam year

When	What
Before the written papers	Orals, listening comprehension and Science practicals, as per current practice
September 2027	English Language and Mother Tongue written papers (one sitting for all Mother Tongue levels)
October to November 2027	All other written papers, including Mathematics
January 2028	One common results release and one certificate

Exact dates are set by SEAB.

3 Reading the new results slip

Each subject is graded on its own level's scale. A subject appears on the certificate if the grade meets the level shown below.

Level	Grades	Shown on the certificate if
G3	A1, A2, B3, B4, C5, C6, D7, E8, 9	E8 or better
G2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	5 or better
G1	A, B, C, D, E	D or better

CONVERTING GRADES BETWEEN LEVELS

For some admission scores, a grade is converted to a lower level's scale. This is **not** applied to every subject. For poly, it applies to one subject only (see section 5).

G3 grade	G2 grade	G2 grade	G1 grade
A1, A2, B3	1	1 to 3	A
B4, C5, C6	2	4	B
D7	3	5	C
E8	4	6	D
9	5		

Converted grades are also used in **ELMAB3**, the score for Year 2 of Higher Nitec and the Polytechnic Foundation Programme.

4 Aiming for JC or MI?

The JC entry score is called **LIR4**. It adds up the grades of **5 subjects**, and **all 5 must be taken at G3**. The old O-Level JC score, LIR5, counted 6 subjects. Lower is better: an A1 counts as 1, an A2 as 2, a B3 as 3, and so on.

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR JC OR MI (FROM 2028)

- LIR4 score of **16 or less for JC**, or **20 or less for MI**
- G3 English: **A1 to C6**
- G3 Maths or G3 A-Maths: **A1 to D7**
- A pass in Mother Tongue

The JC cut-off of 16 counts 5 subjects, so it can't be compared directly with the old LIR5 numbers, which counted 6.

5 Aiming for poly?

The poly entry score for Year 1 diploma courses is called **ELR2B2**: **E**nglish **L**anguage + **2** **R**elevant subjects for the course + the **2** **B**est other subjects. Lower is better.

THE RULES FROM 2028

- English, the 2 relevant subjects and the best other subject (B1) must be taken at **G3**, and they count at their **G3 grades**.
- The 2nd-best other subject (B2) can be taken at **G2 or G3**. Either way, it is **scored on the G2 scale**: A1 to B3 → 1, B4 to C6 → 2, D7 → 3, E8 → 4.
- If both best subjects are G3, the better grade is used for B1, and the other is mapped to G2 for B2.
- G3 grade 9 and G2 grades 5 and 6 can't be used in the score.
- The score must be **22 or less** (Diploma in Nursing: 24 or less).

EXAMPLE (MADE-UP GRADES)

Subject	Level	Grade	Counts as
English Language	G3	A2	2
Relevant subject 1	G3	A1	1
Relevant subject 2	G3	B4	4
Best other subject (B1)	G3	A2	2
2nd-best other subject (B2)	G3	C6, scored as G2 grade 2	2
ELR2B2 score			11

Why 22, when it used to be 26? The old O-Level poly cut-off was 26. Because the 2nd-best subject is now scored on the shorter G2 scale, the two numbers can't be compared directly. A cut-off of 22 does not simply mean poly is 4 points harder.

Important: converting to G2 applies only to the 2nd-best subject. It is **not** true that all G3 grades convert to G2 for poly. For English, the relevant subjects and B1, an A1, A2 and B3 still count as 1, 2 and 3.

6 What this means for Maths OUR ADVICE

1. **Keep Maths at G3.** JC needs G3 Maths or G3 A-Maths at A1 to D7, and only G3 subjects count in L1R4. For poly, the relevant subjects must be G3, so if a course counts Maths as relevant, it needs G3 Maths. G3 Maths keeps both doors open.
2. **Aim for the best grade, not just a pass.** In L1R4, and for English, the relevant subjects and B1 in ELR2B2, every grade step counts: an A1 counts as 1 and a B3 counts as 3.
3. **Plan revision around the calendar.** The Maths papers come in October to November, after the English and Mother Tongue papers in September. Use the weeks after September for a final Maths push.
4. **Talk to the school in Sec 3.** Subject levels are agreed with your child's school. Ask early if a subject could be taken at a different level.

YOUR SEC 3 CHECKLIST

- ☐ Decide on a goal: JC or poly
- ☐ Agree each subject's level with the school
- ☐ Keep Maths at G3
- ☐ Work out your child's likely L1R4 (JC) or ELR2B2 (poly) score now, and see which subject to push
- ☐ Mark the dates: English and Mother Tongue in September 2027, Maths in October to November 2027

7 How Matrix Math® can help

Matrix Math® has taught Maths for **18 years** and teaches **nearly 1,000 students** today. Our Sec 4 **G3 E-Maths and A-Maths** classes use the **Matrix Method™**: each topic is broken into clear concepts and methods, not just drills, with step-by-step worked solutions for every question.

Want your child ready for the first SEC Maths papers? Message us to find a class.

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SOURCES

- SEAB, Secondary Education Certificate: seab.gov.sg/secondary-education-certificate-sec
- MOE, Post-Secondary Admissions Exercise: moe.gov.sg/post-secondary/admissions/pse
- MOE, JC and MI admission criteria: moe.gov.sg/post-secondary/admissions/pse/jc-and-mi
- MOE, Polytechnic diploma admission criteria: moe.gov.sg/post-secondary/admissions/pse/polytechnic-diploma-course
- Information as at October 2026. Always check the official pages for the latest details. Sections marked "Our advice" are Matrix Math's own advice, not official MOE advice.