

AMENDING DRAFT ENTRIES IN TRANSFER BOOKLETS

The Transfer 2010 Guidance published by the Department on 25 June 2009 is the Department's policy on transfer. The subject of much of the material that follows is the risks posed by unregulated entrance tests as raised in this Guidance. All schools should understand that ultimately the Department considers the withdrawal of unregulated tests to be the surest way of removing the risks these tests pose.

The absolute deadline for the amendments required is 4 December, 2009.

LEASÚ DRÉACHT-IONTRÁLACHA SNA LEABHRÁIN AISTRITHE

Leagtar amach polasaí na Roinne maidir le haistriú sa Treoir um Aistriú 2010 a d'fhoilsigh an Roinn ar 25 Meitheamh 2009. Is éard atá faoi chaibidil le cuid mhór den ábhar a leanfaidh anseo ná na rioscaí a bhaineann le teisteanna iontrála neamhrialaithe mar a luaitear sa Treoir. Ba chóir go dtuigfeadh gach scoil go measann an Roinn, go bunúsach, gurb í tarraingt siar na dteisteanna neamhrialaithe an bealach is cinnte chun na rioscaí a bhaineann leis na teisteanna seo a dhíbirt.

Is é 4 Nollaig, 2009, an dearbh-spriocdháta le haghaidh aon leasuithe is gá a dhéanamh.

CUID 1: SOILÉIRIÚ AN PHRÓISIS IONTRÁLA DO THUISMITHEOIRÍ

Le haghaidh Scoileanna a bhainfidh úsáid
as Critéir Acadúla

1. Tagairtí do cheart na Scoileanna

Gramadaí áit a dhiúltú ar bhonn

oideachasúil: Mar atá leagtha amach i

Paragraf 16 de Threoir na RO um Aistriú 2010, mar a eisíodh ar 25 Meitheamh, 2009, ba chóir go dtuigfeadh scoileanna gramadaí, maidir le hAistriú 2010, nach bhfuil sé dleathach níos mó aon áit atá ar fáil a dhiúltú d'iarratasóir ar bhonn oideachasúil nó acadúil. Maidir le hAistriú 2010, tá an dualgas bunúsach céanna ar scoileanna gramadaí is atá ar gach scoil eile gach iarratasóir le haghaidh Bliain 8 a iontráil go dtí a líon iontrálacha (ach gan a shárú). **Ba chóir do gach scoil ghramadaí agus gach Oifigeach Aistrithe aon tagairt nár baineadh amach cheana, don “cheart diúltaithe iontrála” ag scoil ghramadaí, ceart atá anois as feidhm, a bhaint amach sa na Leabhráin Aistrithe.**

2. I ndeireadh na dála, ní mór a chur i gcuimhne d'aon scoil a bhfuil sé beartaithe acu critéir iontrála acadúla a úsáid gur moladh dóibh gan é seo a dhéanamh sa Treoir um Aistriú 2010 a d'eisigh an Roinn ar 25 Meitheamh, 2009. Go deimhin, mhol an Roinn gan critéir acadúla a úsáid ar dhá chúis, cúis

PART 1: MAKING THE APPLICATIONS PROCESS CLEAR FOR PARENTS

For Schools using Academic Criteria

1. References to a Grammar School's right to refuse a place on educational grounds:

As set out in Paragraph 16 of DE's Transfer 2010 Guidance, as issued on 25 June, 2009, grammar schools should understand that for Transfer 2010 it is no longer lawful for them to refuse an applicant an available place on educational or academic grounds. For Transfer 2010, grammar schools have the same fundamental obligation as all other schools, to admit all applicants for Year 8 up to (and not beyond) their admissions number. **All grammar schools and all Transfer Officers should remove any outstanding references to a grammar school's now defunct “right to refuse admission”.**

2. Overall, schools currently planning to use academic admissions criteria should be reminded that they were recommended not to do this in the Transfer 2010 Guidance issued by the Department on June 25, 2009. Indeed, one of the two reasons why the Department recommended that academic criteria should

amháin acu seo ná go raibh baol ann, dar leis an Roinn, go dtarlódh mífheidhmiú de dheasca na nósanna imeachta neamhrialaithe a bheadh ag tacú le critéir iontrála acadúla. Tá ann go fóill don bhaol seo, ós rud é nár glacadh le moladh na Roinne agus is gá don Roinn, dá réir, na treoracha breise seo a sholáthar.

3. **Treoir shoiléir do thuismitheoirí:** tá beartaithe ag scoileanna gramadaí critéir acadúla a úsáid atá bunaithe ar thorthaí iarratasóirí in dhá theist dhifriúla. Tá éagsúlachtaí suntasacha ó scoil go scoil maidir leis an dóigh a mbaineann na critéir acadúla acu leis na torthaí a eascróidh as an dá theist dhifriúla seo. Ní mór, mar sin, go mbeadh treoir shoiléir ag thuismitheoirí agus ag páistí maidir leis an chineál eolais is gá dóibh a sholáthar ar/in éineacht leis an fhoirm aistrithe agus iad ag cur iarratas isteach chuig na scoileanna sin a bhfuil sé beartaithe acu critéir acadúla a úsáid.

4. Ní mór d'Oifigigh Aistrithe agus do gach scoil a mbeidh critéir acadúla in úsáid acu a chinntiú go dtabharfar ar dtús, laistigh dá n-iontráil sa Leabhrán Aistrithe, ráiteas feiceálach soiléir lena chur in iúl do thuismitheoirí agus do pháistí cén t-eolas go díreach ba chóir dóibh a sholáthar ar/in éineacht leis an Fhoirm Aistrithe (Roinn C) maidir le critéir iontrála acadúla na scoile.

not be used was the risk of dysfunction that the Department considered was presented by unregulated procedures in support of academic admissions criteria. As the Department's recommendation has not been followed, these risks remain and require these further instructions from the Department.

3. **Clear direction for parents:** grammar schools are planning to use academic criteria based on applicants' results in two different tests. There is considerable variety across individual schools in the way their academic criteria relate to the results produced by these two different tests. In making application to schools that are planning to use academic criteria, parents and children, therefore, need clear direction as to the information they need to provide on/with their Transfer Form.

4. **Transfer Officers and each school using academic criteria should ensure that uppermost within their entry for the Transfer Booklet is a prominent and clear statement telling parents and children exactly what information they should provide on/with their Transfer Form (Section C) in respect of a school's academic criteria. Included in this should be**

Ba chóir go gcuirfí san áireamh anseo treoracha soiléire maidir leis an eolas ba chóir don tuismitheoir agus don pháiste a sholáthar ar/in éineacht leis an Fhoirm Aistrithe más rud é go bhfuil éileamh á dhéanamh acu ar chúinsí eisceachtúla chomh maith (féach Paragraif 7-12 le haghaidh pointí sainiúla tábhachtacha i dtaca le heolas um chúinsí eisceachtúla). Molann an Roinn go gcuirfí na ráitis seo laistigh de bhosca faoi cheannteideal fóirsteanach ag barr iontráil na scoile sa Leabhrán Aistrithe.

5. Mar chuidiú breise do thuismitheoirí, ba chóir go mbeadh formáid agus struchtúr soiléir le gach iontráil ar feadh an Leabhráin Aistrithe le ceannteidil agus teidil chuidiúla. Ba chóir aon eolas, mar gheall ar scoil, atá ar fáil in áit eile (m.sh. i réamheolairí scoile srl.) agus nach mbaineann leis an phróiseas iarratais nó leis an dóigh a ndéanfar cinntí iontrála a chur ag deireadh na hiontrála, a chiorrú nó a bhaint amach ar fad.

6. **Ba chóir go léireodh gach scoil, a mbeidh critéir iontrála in úsáid acu, go suntasach ina n-iontráil go bhfuil sé d'fhreagracht orthu féin amháin gach eolas laistigh d'iarratais, agus a mbeidh iarratasóirí incháilithe faoi chritéir acadúla dá bharr, a dheimhniú.** Ní mór go gcuirfeadh iontráil aon iar-bhunscoile as do ról an phríomhoide bunscoile, dá chuid dualgas i leith

clear instructions as to the information that the parent and child should provide on/with their Transfer Form if they also making a claim of special circumstances (for specific and important points in relation to this special circumstances information, see Paragraphs 7-12). The Department suggests that these statements are placed in a suitably headlined box at the top of the school's Transfer Booklet entry.

5. To help parents further, entries throughout should be clearly formatted and structured with helpful headings and titles. Information about a school which appears elsewhere (e.g. in school prospectuses etc), and which is not about how to apply or how admissions decisions will be made should be placed towards the end of an entry, should be reduced in length, or should be removed all together.

6. **All schools using academic criteria should reflect prominently in their entry the duty they alone will have to verify the information that applications will contain and which will qualify applicants for academic criteria.** The role of the primary principal, their duties in respect of the revised curriculum and responsibilities in relation to information about children, should not be

an churaclaim leasaithe agus dá chuid freagrachtaí maidir le heolas faoi pháistí.

7. **Sonraí mar gheall ar Chúinsí**

Eisceachtúla: ba chóir go ndéanfadh gach scoil a mbeidh critéir acadúla in úsáid acu machnamh maidir le dhá chomhfhreagras a chuir an Roinn amach le deireanas:

- An litir ón 9 Samhain 2009 ón Aire a eisíodh chuig gach scoil inar tugadh sonraí i dtaca leis na dualgais dhlíthiúla atá orthu maidir leis an eolas a choinníonn siad mar gheall ar pháistí atá rollaithe acu;
- An litir ó 9 Samhain 2009 ó Robson Davison a eisíodh chuig scoileanna gramadaí a mbeidh/ar féidir go mbeidh critéir acadúla in úsáid acu maidir leis an Ríomhchóras Measúnaithe Idirghníomhach (InCAS)

8. I bhfianaise na gcomhfhreagras seo, molann an roinn go láidir do gach scoil a mbeidh critéir acadúla in úsáid acu, go mbainfidh siad amach as an chuntas acu ar nósanna imeachta um chúinsí eisceachtúla (atá le fáil ina ndrúacht-iontráil son Leabhrán Aistrithe):

- aon ráiteas a thugann le fios go bhfaighidh siad, go díreach ón bhunscoil, eolas a thacóidh le héileamh iarratasóra ar chúinsí eisceachtúla. Ba chóir do scoileanna a bhfuil sé beartaithe acu critéir acadúla a

imposed upon by a post-primary school's entry.

7. **Special Circumstances details:** all

schools' using academic criteria should consider two recent communications from the Department:

- The letter of 9 November 2009 from the Minister issued to all schools and detailing their legal obligations in respect of the information they hold about children enrolled;
- The letter of 9 November 2009 from Robson Davison issued to grammar schools who are/may be planning to use academic criteria in relation to INCAS.

8. In the light of these communications, the Department strongly advises all schools using academic criteria to remove from accounts of their special circumstances procedures (found within their draft Transfer Booklet entries):

- any statement to the effect that they will be obtaining direct from a primary school information that will support an applicant's claim of special circumstances. Schools planning to use academic criteria should consider that they cannot be certain that they will be able to obtain such information

úsáid a chur san áireamh nach dtig leo bheith cinnte de go mbeidh siad in ann a leithéid d'eolas a fháil go díreach. D'fhéadfadh sé, agus iad ag brath ar bhunscoileanna an t-eolas seo a sholáthar go díreach dóibh, sa chás nach bhfaigheadh siad an t-eolas, go ndéanfaí nós imeachta na hiar-bhunscoile um chúinsí eisceachtúla agus, dá réir, na cinntí iontrála a dhéanann siad, a lagú.

- aon tagairt do thorthaí InCAS. Go deimhin, ba chóir, sa chás go gcuirfí torthaí InCAS san áireamh mar chuid d'éileamh iarratasóra ar chúinsí eisceachtúla, gan iad a úsáid. Is í comhairle na Roinne nár chóir ar chor ar bith do scoileanna gramadaí torthaí measúnaithe InCAS, mar a thuairiscítear do thuismitheoirí, a úsáid mar eolas le haghaidh cinntí roghnaithe. Ba chóir go dtuigfeadh Boird Ghobharnóirí go bhféadfadh sé go mbeadh aon chinntí iontrála bunaithe ar InCAS i mbaol achomhairc agus nach mbeadh siad chomh stóinsithe sin mar gheall ar an réimse cúiseanna ar tugadh breac-chuntas orthu sa litir ón 9 Samhain 2009.

9. De bhreis air seo, measann an Roinn, ar mhaithe le thuismitheoirí agus le príomhoidí bunscoile, gur chóir go dtabharfaí isteach oiread gnéithe comhchoitianta agus is féidir ó thaobh struchtúir de chuig na nósanna imeachta um chúinsí eisceachtúla a bhíonn

directly. Reliance on a primary school's direct provision of this information may, if disappointed, undermine a post-primary school's special circumstances procedure and the admissions decisions it produces;

- Any reference to INCAS results. Indeed, INCAS results if provided within an applicant's claim of special circumstances should not be used. The Department's advice is that on no account should grammar schools consider using InCAS assessment outcomes reported to parents to inform decisions on selection. Boards of Governors should understand that admissions decisions based on INCAS may be vulnerable to appeal and may prove not to be robust for the range of reasons outlined in the letter to them of 9 November 2009.

9. Further to this, the Department considers that, in the interests of parents and primary school principals, there should be as much common structure brought to schools' special circumstances procedures as possible. This structure should provide clarity on the role of

ag scoileanna. Ba chóir go dtabharfaí, leis an struchtúr seo, soiléireacht maidir le ról an phríomhoide bunscoile, ba chóir go gcuideodh sé le tuismitheoirí agus, ar mhaithe leosan, go bhfaighfí, dá bharr, réimse de chinntí cúinsí eisceachtúla chomh comhsheasmhach agus is féidir ó na hiar-bhunscoileanna. Molann an Roinn, mar sin, nach leor do scoileanna a mbeidh teisteanna iontrála in úsáid acu agus nós imeachta um chúinsí eisceachtúla i bhfeidhm acu liosta simplí a thabhairt ina n-iontráil de na míreanna éagsúla eolais ar féidir go mbeidh siad/a bheidh ábhartha laistigh d'éileamh um chúinsí eisceachtúla. Ba chóir a lua go sonrach cé na rudaí is gá do thuismitheoirí a fháil agus a sholáthar chun tacú le héileamh um chúinsí eisceachtúla. Ba chóir go mbeadh tuismitheoirí soiléir maidir le cad é go díreach atá le fáil acu ón phríomhoide bunscoile.

10. Ba chóir do scoileanna breithniú cúramach a dhéanamh maidir le cé chomh cothrom agus/nó chomh stóinsithe is féidir cinntí iontrála a dhéanamh i dtaca le iarratais faoi chúinsí eisceachtúla, aon áit a mbíonn a ról ag duine a mbeadh na cáilíochtaí cuí aige agus a n-ainmneodh nó a gceapfadh bord na ngobharnóirí é chun measúnú a dhéanamh ar inniúlacht an pháiste.

11. Ba chóir go dtuigfeadh scoileanna a mbeidh nós imeachta um chúinsí eisceachtúla

primary school principals, should help parents and, in their interests, should promise as consistent as possible a range of special circumstances decisions on the part of post-primary schools. The Department suggests, therefore, that schools using entrance tests and operating a special circumstances procedure should not simply list in their entries the various items of information that may/will be relevant within a special circumstances claim. They should state specifically what a parent needs to obtain and provide in order to support a special circumstances claim. Parents should be clear on what exactly they should be requesting of their primary principal.

10. Schools should consider carefully how fair and/or robust admissions decisions on special circumstances applications can be made where a role is reserved for an assessment of the child's ability to be carried out by a suitably qualified person to be nominated by or appointed by the Board of Governors.

11. Schools using a special circumstances procedure to support their academic criteria

i bhfeidhm acu chun tacú leis na critéir acadúla acu go bhfuil sé de dhualgas orthu féin aon fhianaise oideachasúil a chuireann tuismitheoir ar fáil dóibh mar chuid d'éileamh um chúinsí eisceachtúla a dheimhniú. Ba chóir go gcinnteodh na scoileanna seo go gcuirfí a gcumas maidir le comhlíonadh an dualgais seo san áireamh ina gcuid nósanna imeachta.

12. Cuirfidh roinnt scoileanna iallach ar tuismitheoirí aon rún atá acu éileamh ar chúinsí eisceachtúla a chur isteach, a chlárú faoi 4 i.n. ar 18 Nollaig 2009 agus an t-éileamh féin mar aon le haon ábhair tacaíochta a chur isteach in éineacht leis an Fhoirm Aistrithe i mí Feabhra 2010. Ba chóir go dtuigfeadh aon scoil a bhfuil sé beartaithe acu an spriocdháta seo a chur i bhfeidhm go bhféadfadh sé nár cheadmhach dóibh é seo a iarraidh ach amháin dá bhféadfadh siad a léiriú go raibh sé seo intuigthe ag gach iarratasóir féideartha. Ba chóir go dtuigfeadh siad gur 8 Eanáir 2010 an spriocdháta faoinar chóir do gach tuismitheoir an Leabhrán Aistrithe a fháil.

13. **Foráil Speisialta:** Ba chóir go dtuigfeadh scoileanna nach gcuirfidh Síceolaithe Oideachais de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne measúnuithe a dhéantar ar pháistí ar fáil chun críocha nós imeachta na forála speisialta in aon scoil. Ba chóir go mbeadh scoileanna meabhrach ar na brúnna a d'eascródh as an nós imeachta seo más féidir

should understand that they have the duty to verify the educational evidence submitted to them by a parent as part of a special circumstances claim. These schools should ensure that their ability to perform this duty is factored into their procedures.

12. Some schools are requiring parents to register their intention to submit a claim for special circumstances by 4pm on 18 December 2009 with the actual claim and supporting material being submitted with the Transfer Form in February 2010. Schools currently planning to operate this deadline should understand that their ability to insist on it may rely on their ability to demonstrate that it was understood by all potential applicants. They should appreciate that the deadline by which all parents will receive Transfer Booklets is January 8, 2010.

13. **Special Provision:** Schools should be clear that ELB Educational Psychologists will not be providing assessments of children for the purposes of a post-primary school's special provision procedure. Schools should be wary of the pressure that this procedure may cause if applications to it can be made after entrance test results issue. For this

iarratais a dhéanamh faoi i ndiaidh go n-eisítear torthaí na dteisteanna iontrála. Ar an ábhar seo, ba chóir do scoileanna a chinntiú go mbeidh na critéir, faoina measann siad páistí bheith incháilithe le haghaidh forála speisialta, beacht stóinsithe. Ba chóir dóibh, chomh maith, smaoineamh ar spriocdháta a chur i bhfeidhm faoinar chóir iarratais ar fhoráil speisialta a dhéanamh.

Le haghaidh gach Scoile

14. **Cúinsí Eisceachtúla:** chuir roinnt iar-bhunscoileanna san áireamh ina ndrúacht-iontráil don Leabhrán Aistrithe cuntas ar Nós Imeachta um Chúinsí Eisceachtúla atá míthreorach. Níl aon gá, go fiú, le cuntas ceart sna hiontrálacha de chuid scoileanna aonair agus tá an baol ann go dtabharfadh siad le fios do roinnt tuismitheoirí nach bhfuil le déanamh acu ach dul i muinín an nós imeachta seo chun áit a chinntiú san iar-bhunscoil is mian leo. **Ba chóir do gach scoil agus do gach Oifigeach Aistrithe a chinntiú nach mbeidh cuntais ar Nósanna Imeachta um Chúinsí Eisceachtúla, a chuirfear i bhfeidhm le haghaidh Aistriú 2010, le sonrú laistigh d'iontráil na scoile féin.**

15. **Critéar Molta FSME de chuid na RO:** tá an Critéar FSME a mhol an Roinn le sonrú i roinnt iontrálacha ó mheánscoileanna agus ó scoileanna gramadaí ach gan an

reason, schools should ensure that the criteria by which they will consider children as eligible for special provision are precise and robust. They should also consider putting in place a deadline by which applications for special provision must be made.

For All Schools

14. **Exceptional Circumstances:** some current drafts of post-primary school entries for the Transfer Booklets include accounts of the Exceptional Circumstances Procedure that are misleading. Even correct accounts are not needed in individual schools' entries and have risks in that they may suggest to some parents that they need only engage this procedure in order to secure their desired post-primary schools. **All schools and all Transfer Officers should ensure that accounts of the Exceptional Circumstances Procedures that will be introduced for Transfer 2010, do not feature within the individual entries of schools.**

15. **DE's Recommended FSME Criterion:** some secondary and grammar entries include the Department's recommended FSME Criterion but without having fully quoted the

tsainfhoclaíocht iomlán le léamh, mar a luadh i bParagraf 9.6 den Chiorclán Iar-bhunscoile a d'éisigh an Roinn ar 7 Meán Fómhair 2009 agus atá ar fáil ar shuíomh gréasáin na RO (http://www.deni.gov.uk/mx-2700n_20090907_152030.pdf). D'fhéadfadh sé go n-eascródh fadhbanna as páirt-athfhriotal den fhoclaíocht mholta. **Ba chóir do gach scoil agus do gach Oifigeach Aistrithe a chinntiú, in aon iontráil scoile ina mbaintear úsáid as an Chritéar FSME atá molta ag an Roinn, go luaitear foclaíocht iomlán an Chritéir mar a mholann an RO.**

16. Le bheith soiléir, ní bhaineann a luaitear thuas le hiontrálacha ina bhfuil sé soiléir go bhfuil scoileanna ag leasú nó ag glacadh le leagan malartach den Chritéar FSME a mhol an Roinn. Tá an Roinn buartha faoi dtaobh de na scoileanna sin ar mian leo Critéar molta na Roinne a úsáid go díreach (i.e. critéar ina dtugtar tosaíocht d'iarratasóirí atá cláraithe mar FSME de réir choibhneas líon na n-iarratas dá leithéid laistigh de gach iarratas céad rogha a fhaightear) ach nach bhfuil an fhoclaíocht don Chritéar molta seo luaite go beacht agus ina hiomláine acu.

CUID 2: CRITÉIR IONTRÁLA AGUS CINNTÍ STÓINSITHE IONTRÁLA

17. Ba chóir d'aon scoil a bhfuil sé beartaithe acu critéir acadúla a úsáid gaol chomh soiléir

very specific wording for this criterion that was recommended in Paragraph 9.6 of the Post-primary Circular issued by the Department on 7 September 2009 and available on the DE website (http://www.deni.gov.uk/mx-2700n_20090907_152030.pdf). Partial quotations of the recommended wording may cause problems. **All schools and all Transfer Officers should ensure that school entries that use the Department's recommended FSME Criterion quote in full DE's recommended wording of this criterion.**

16. To be clear, the above does not apply to entries where schools are quite clearly adapting or adopting a variant of the FSME Criterion that the Department has recommended. The Department is concerned about those schools who wish to use exactly the Department's recommended Criterion (i.e. one giving priority to applicants registered as FSME according to the proportion of such applications received amongst all First Preference applications) but who have not quoted exactly, and in full, the wording for the recommended criterion.

PART 2: ADMISSIONS CRITERIA AND ROBUST ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

17. Schools planning to use academic criteria should seek as simple and as clear a

simplí agus is féidir bheith acu idir na critéir seo agus na torthaí teiste ar a mbeidh na critéir bunaithe. Ba chóir go gcuimhneodh siad go n-eascródh níos mó achomharc agus agóidí as critéir chasta ná mar a d'eascródh as critéir shimplí. Ba chóir go mbeadh siad meabhrach, chomh maith, ar an ghrinnscrúdú a chuirfear ar a gcuid critéar de thoradh na n-achomharc agus na n-agóidí seo. D'fhéadfadh sé go ndíreofaí aon agóid ar mhionlochtanna ó thaobh na foclaíochta de. Is dóchúla a leithéid de lochtanna le critéir is casta. Ba chóir go mbeadh scoileanna cúramach ach go háirithe maidir le critéir faoina dtugtar tosaíocht d'iarratasóirí ar bhonn "grúpa feidhmíochta" a gcuirfí iarratasóirí isteach iontu de réir na dtorthaí a fhaigheann siad (m.sh. bandáil nó peircintílí).

18. Tráchtanna ar leith: ba chóir do gach scoil a bhfuil sé beartaithe acu critéir acadúla a úsáid a chur san áireamh:

- go mbeidh sé le haithint go soiléir ó na teisteanna ar a mbeidh na critéir bunaithe gurb amhlaidh nach bhféadfaí a mhaíomh go mbeadh feidhmíocht in aon teist eile ábhartha;
- go mbeidh sé soiléir le haithint ó fhoirm shonrach na dtorthaí teiste ar a mbeidh na critéir bunaithe gurb amhlaidh nach bhféadfaí a mhaíomh go mbeadh aon fhoirm eile de thoradh, nó aon eolas

relationship between these criteria and the test results on which these criteria will be based.

They should bear in mind that complex criteria may generate greater levels of appeal and challenge than simple criteria. They should consider also that the process of appeal and challenge will expose their criteria to fine scrutiny. Small flaws in wording could become the focus of a challenge. Such flaws are more likely as criteria become more complex.

Schools should be particularly careful about criteria that prioritise applicants on the basis of a "performance group" into which a result places an applicant (e.g. banding or percentiles).

18. Specific comments: all schools planning to use academic criteria should particularly consider:

- that the test(s) on which their criteria are to be based are clearly identified such that it could not be argued that performance in any other test is relevant;
- that the specific form of test-result on which their criteria are to be based is clearly identified such that it could not be argued that any other form of result, or any complementary information, is relevant. If criteria are to apply to scores after they

comhlántach ábhartha. Má tá na critéir le cur i bhfeidhm ar scóir i ndiaidh a slánaithe chuig an tslánuimhir is cóngaraí, ní mór go luafaí amhlaidh san fhoclaíocht le nach mbeidh aon díospóid ann;

- go sonraítear go soiléir agus go dóthanach an t-ord ina gcinntear ar thosaíocht iontrála de réir thorthaí teiste le nach féidir a mhaíomh go mbeadh aon ord ar bith eile ábhartha. Mar shampla, má dhéantar tagairt do dhaltaí á rangú “in ord grád”, is gá an t-ord sin a shonrú go beacht. Ní mór a shonrú, de réir mar is cuí, laistigh de thagairtí do dhaltaí á rangú de réir “scór”, go ngabhann scóir is airde roimh scóir is ísle.

19. Ba chóir go dtuigfeadh gach scoil go measann an Roinn, go bunúsach, gurb í tarraingt siar na dteisteanna neamhrialaithe an bealach is cinnte chun na rioscaí a bhaineann leis na teisteanna seo a dhíbirt. Má tá a thuilleadh comhairle de dhíth ar aon scoil, ba chóir dul i dteagmháil leis an Fhoireann Rochtana Scoile ag an Roinn Oideachais: paul.price@deni.gov.uk

have been rounded to the nearest whole number then criteria should be worded so that this cannot be disputed;

- that the order in which test-results will determine admissions priority is clearly and sufficiently specified such that it could not be argued that any other order is relevant. For instance, references to pupils being ranked “in Grade order” need to specify that order exactly. References to pupils being ranked according to “scores” need to specify, as appropriate, that higher scores precede lower scores.

19. All schools should understand that ultimately the Department considers the withdrawal of unregulated tests to be the surest way of removing the risks these tests pose. Schools seeking further advice should contact School Access Team, Department of Education: paul.price@deni.gov.uk

WILL HAIRE