

SPECIMEN PAPERS SENT TO SCHOOLS: ICSE COUNCIL HEAD

Teachers to study for new pattern

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Calcutta: Teachers have to study and apply their mind to set question papers and prepare students to answer application-based questions, the head of the ICSE council, Gerry Arathoon, told Metro on Saturday.

“We have already published specimen question papers. Teachers now have to go through the papers. Teachers have to study and apply their minds and set questions that are similar to these but not the same. They cannot copy the questions. They have to keep to the pattern,” said Arathoon, chief executive and secretary of the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE).

In a circular on June 13, the council said that the ICSE and ISC exams in



2024 will see a “small increase” in the percentage of “higher order and critical thinking questions” and that the share of such questions will progressively increase in subsequent years.

Arathoon told Metro on Saturday that there will be a maximum of 10 marks for such questions in each paper in ICSE and ISC 2024.

“The change will be gradual. There will be a change of a maximum of 10 marks in each paper (in 2024). That is also the change in the specimen papers,” he said.

Since the announcement of the change in pattern, the council has been sending specimen papers for ICSE and ISC to schools.

“Teachers will have to guide the students on how to answer these application-based questions. They will have to set many practice questions. The teaching method is going to change,” said Arathoon.

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Teachers to study for new ICSE, ISC pattern

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“Rote learning is being discouraged and gradually, it would be eliminated,” said Arathoon.

He said the council had already conducted workshops on assessments for a section of teachers of Classes IX to XII.

Among them, some will be “master trainers” who would train other teachers in their city or region in the new method.

“The master trainers have possibly started training the teachers of their own schools. They would also train teachers in other schools in their city or region. We plan to begin that soon,” said Arathoon.

Across schools, principals of institutions have asked teachers to study the specimen papers and mark the changes.

Several school heads said teachers can no longer be comfortable with how they have been teaching so far and would have to work more now.

“It is not easy to set higher-order thinking questions. Teachers will have to work more to imbibe the change. It cannot be a straightforward question with four choices. Teachers will have to think of various ways of asking the question,” said John Stephen, acting principal, La Martiniere for Boys.

Stephen said multiple choice questions were not easy, “neither for the student nor the teacher”.

Teachers would have to “unlearn” what they know and relearn the new methods, said John Bagul, principal of South City International School.

“As a biology teacher, I have to study, research and be updated rather than depend on question papers. I have to incorporate the new pattern of questioning in my lesson plan as well,” said Bagul. He has been teaching biology to students of Classes XI and XII for almost three decades.