



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF DIRECTOR: EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

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EXAMINATION READINESS SPECIAL CIRCULAR NO: 01 OF 2022

TO : DEPUTY DIRECTORS GENERAL
CLUSTER CHIEF DIRECTORS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
DISTRICT CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS:
CURRICULUM, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE AND
LABOUR RELATIONS
DEPUTY DIRECTORS: FINANCE AND SUPPLY CHAIN
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT HEADS OF EXAMINATION
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES
SOCIAL PARTNERS

FROM : A/HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MR MD QWASE

SUBJECT : URGENT REQUEST FOR FOCUSED SUPPORT DURING THE
CONDUCT, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF 2022
NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) EXAMINATIONS

DATE : 05 OCTOBER 2022

Dear Colleagues

INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Department of Education is responsible for the management, conduct and administration of the public examinations for all Grade12 learners in the province in all registered public and independent schools. These public and Umalusi accredited independent schools must also have been approved as examination centres to qualify them to administer, manage and conduct a public examinations.



- In order for the Department of Education to successfully execute this Departmental Examination project all sister Branches, Chief directorate, Directorates, Sub-Directorates and units must refocus and redirect both human, financial and material resources toward achieving the common goal of managing, conducting and administering credible 2022 NSC Examinations.
- Public examinations are defined primarily in terms of their purposes: to certify and select students based on an assessment of their achievements in curriculum area (World Bank: 2020)
- The basic principle of assessment and examinations is to provide for fair and equitable opportunities for all learners in the examination of the similar grade and prescribed curriculum. This enables candidates to write their examinations in a reasonably conducive environment so that they can give account of the knowledge and learning they have acquired over the 12/13 years of learning.
- The National and Provincial examinations are legislated by the *Policy and Regulations for the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate Examination*.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

1. The public examination plays an important equity role in improving access.
2. They help to limit the effects of patronage and open up access to Higher Education Institutions to students from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds through various forms of support, including elimination of fees and provision of scholarships.
3. They tend to enjoy a high measure of public confidence, though they have also been criticized for their overemphasis on the acquisition of low-level cognitive skills and encouragement of rote learning.



4. They have considerable effects on teachers, students, and parents as well. They help focus teachers' curriculum and pedagogical priorities and provide for students to study (*Kellaghan and Greaney, Public Examinations Examined, 2020*).

PROGRESS MADE

- There has been significant progress made in ensuring a common approach to the management, administration and conduct of assessment and examinations across all districts and schools. However, there are still variations in the interpretation and implementation of policies and regulations, national and provincial circulars and examination instructions inclusive of Umalusi Directives at the operational level.
- No efforts were spared in ensuring timeous mediation in all these documents in order to minimise variations and deviations across districts and schools. However, circumspection was taken to avoid over- prescription that may discourage constructive and progressive initiatives. The main objective of the mediation sessions (meetings, roadshows, workshops, virtual meeting, roundtables, print, and digital platforms) was to achieve the common understanding and standardised implementation across schools.

All of this is done to ensure that when the Department of Basic Education in collaboration with Provincial Education Departments conduct the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations for all candidates across the country, all the critical stakeholders have been fully informed, prepared and ready to undertake and support such a big national responsibility.



PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS – A CREDIBLE COSTLY PUBLIC PROGRAMME

- Overall running costs of public examination systems are progressively escalating with increasing candidate numbers and efforts to broaden the scope of assessment in the interests of enhancing validity.
- The expense associated with labour-intensive performance examinations, such as the printing of question papers, marking, orals, art, music, and aspects of science, needs to be weighed against the advantages and disadvantages of not using this type of examination format, especially bearing in mind the maxim that “what is examined tends to be taught, and what is not examined tends to be ignored.”
- Many systems, even if favourably disposed to offering performance examinations may be unable to afford the additional administrative costs.

SCOPE AND SIZE

- The Grade 12 class of 2022 is a group that has navigated through 400 days of national lockdown at various levels due to the havoc that COVID-19 pandemic created globally during their Grade 10 and 11 study years.
- The current Grade 12 class was not spared of the COVID-19 negative impact. This cohort lost over 40% of the effective teaching and learning time in 2020 whilst they were in Grade 10 and the troubled waters did not abate even in 2021 in Grade 11. But, not to forget that it also created an opportunity to use a variety of teaching and learning platforms and methodologies, what is sometimes called, ‘business continuity’. However, the intensification of this business continuity was hampered by the constrained fiscal environment.
- To make the situation even more challenging is that this cohort was only exposed to a standardized provincial examination when they wrote the Provincial Grade 12 mid-year examinations in high enrolment subjects and the 2022 Grade 12 NSC Trial Examinations in September 2022. The province has recorded the highest number of Grade 12 full time candidates in a period of more than eight years.



- The Department of Education in the Eastern Cape shall be conducting Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examinations in **884 (93,8%)** full time **Ordinary Public** schools, **10 Special Schools (1%)**, **2 Prisons (0,2%)** and **46 (4,9%) Independent** schools, which amounts to **942** centres combined and **125** part time centres.
- The full-time centres combined account for **98 756** candidates which is **26 858 (39.6%)** more than in **2020 (72 926)** and **3 083** candidates more than in **2021 (95 673) (3.2%)**.
- There are **5 688 (5.7%)** candidates that are classified as progressed learners from Grade 11 to 12. The **125** part- time centres account for **18 681** registered part- time candidates.
- It is clear from the above statistics that the **2022 National Senior Certificate Examinations enrolments** in the Province is the highest in the last 10 years. The highest numbers experienced in the last 10 years except 2021 and 2022 was in **2016** wherein **92 748** candidates were registered. This calls for the support of all the critical role players such as, the decision makers, parents, community members, learners, teachers, principals, officials, unions and other departments to all have their hands-on deck.

THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

The period starting from **19 October 2022** to the third week of **20 January 2023** is set aside for three critical activities for the Department of Education at all levels, namely;

- The writing of National and provincial examinations across grades, in particular the NSC Grade 12 examinations.
- Readiness of the Department of Education for 2023 academic year.
- Finalisation of the statutory financial planning for 2023/24, preparations for the oncoming budget adjustment estimates, performance reporting and PPN distribution processes.



- In order to conduct, administer and manage the 2022 NSC examinations it has become critical at this time that both human and financial resources are re-directed towards the strengthening the successful conduct, administration and management of examinations.

ADHERENCE TO COVID-19 PROTOCOLS AS PER THE DIRECTION OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DURING THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS

All examination centres and candidates shall be guided by DBE and DOH on the expected response to COVID-19 pandemic in view of the non- existence of the national state of disaster. The Department of Education shall implement relevant directives for as guided by the Department of Health.

SUPPORT REQUIRED FROM CLUSTER CHIEF DIRECTORS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS

A special appeal is made to the **Cluster Chief Directors and District Directors** in particular to support the **examination operations** in their districts and schools in the following focused ways:

1. Registration of centres and candidate

- The stability of statistics and compliance to registration requirements by all registered examination centres and the appropriate registration of all Grade 12 candidates for appropriate subjects are critical and have serious implications for the results not only of schools, but for circuits, districts, clusters and province at large.
- Ensure that there are no unaccredited Independent Schools in the District as this shall lead to the **non- resulting and non- certification of the candidates who are in those institutions.**
- Ensure that no learner has an unauthorised subject change in any of the centres in your district.



- Ensure that all eligible learners for concessions had applied and their applications processed, and approval duly granted.
- Ensure that all candidates with approved concessions approvals benefit from such a dispensation.

2. The efficient management of progressed learners.

- It is the responsibility of the principals, examination officials and district directors to maintain an accurate IECS and physical records of progressed learners in each school and the subjects they are registered for. The schools and districts must have declared and compiled such documents.
- It must be noted that for all NSC supplementary and SC open examinations shall be written in **May/June 2023** as scheduled.

3. Security and safety of all storage facilities.

- ***All the storage facilities must be secured with double locking, armed security guards, CCTV cameras and alarm systems with armed response teams.***
- ***Double locking security systems in the form of strong rooms and burglar gates and access control to the premises is mandatory.***
- ***No schools shall be allowed to collect both morning and afternoon question papers in the morning.***
- **In cases where the collection of the morning and afternoon question papers is inevitable due to geographical location of the school, appropriate due diligence shall be undertaken by local and provincial examination officials to ensure satisfactory compliance and confirm the availability of a digital safe which is a non- negotiable and a heart-beat of the evaluation criteria.**



- If the schools fully comply with minimum security standards, compliance certificate to that effect shall be issued to the school. It is only when such a compliance certificate has been issued that the school(s) can be issued with morning and afternoon question papers in the morning.
 - Schools that are collecting morning and afternoon question papers must be monitored daily.
 - The district examination offices must adhere to the protocol document provided to control the issue of question papers and the return of the written scripts.
- 4. Secure receipt, control, storage, distribution of question papers, admission letters, control lists and mark sheets.**
- It is of utmost importance that all storage facilities comply with minimum security norms and standards as prescribed in the *examination policy and regulations*.
 - The allocation of responsibilities such as; **the receipt of examination material, safe key custody, nodal points and distribution points managers, delivery officials, resident monitors, capturers, mark sheet control officials and question paper sorting officials must be done in writing** and allocation files be available at all times upon request.
- 5. Secure receipt, control, storage and delivery of candidates' batches of written scripts, mark sheets and attendance registers.**
- The Department of Education must account for all the written scripts and mark sheets of candidates. The security and safety of these sensitive documents is of utmost importance for examination integrity and credibility.
 - Procedures for receipt, delivery, storage and distribution must be observed at all times, cumbersome as they may be. **NO DEVIATION FROM THE PROCEDURE MUST BE IMPLEMENTED.**



6. **The monitoring of the writing of examinations.**
 - The examination officials are mandated to monitor all examination centres in their districts as **per approved customised monitoring plan**. Priority must be given to all **high-risk centres**.
 - **Resident monitors** must be placed in all high-risk centres.
 - **Daily reports** must be sent to Provincial Office as per the policy requirements.
7. **The collection of written scripts.**
 - At regular intervals, the written scripts shall be collected for delivery to various marking centres and provincial office. *The written scripts must at all times be found ready, controlled, fully accounted for and appropriately batched and secured in scripts bins ready for collection.*
 - Due to load shedding ensure that alternative power system is made available to examination section in the district.
 - ***All the above responsibilities require more resources to be re-directed to examinations sub-directorates to enable them to effectively and efficiently handle this peak period of examinations activities.***
 - ***Intensive monitoring and integrated execution of examination related work need the support of each and every sub-directorate in the cluster and district offices.***

The following list of resources, but not exhaustive, is very vital for enabling successful execution of credible examinations:

- Secured storage facilities, strong rooms and safes and CCTV cameras.
- Double locking systems in all storage and nodal points.
- Physical security guards to conduct body searches and manage access control to examination sections and nodal points.
- All officials at a distribution point must be accompanied by a second official or security guard.
- Telephones, photocopying, fax and email facilities for providing daily reports must be provided.



- Provision of airtime bundles and vehicles preferably 'bakkies' for monitors and officials operating in nodal and distribution points as well as those officials doing direct delivery to schools is critical.
- Additional human resource from other sections can be deployed as per the requirements of the district plan determined by the CES for Curriculum/Examinations and District Head of Examinations.
- The District Director and CES for Curriculum/Examinations must directly monitor the operations at all Examination Sections in their districts at this time.
- District Directors to be supplied with copies of the daily reports that are submitted to PED and DBE in order for them to note and timeously intervene where necessary.
- The reporting and management of all examination related irregularity cases to be handled immediately.
- To note the presence of Independent Monitors from PED, DBE and Umalusi in all our districts.
- Ensure that the schools offering CAT and IT have a back-up generator on the day of the Practical Examinations.



CONTACT NUMBERS

The following numbers can be contacted at Head Office to deal with your NSC Grade 12 Examination queries:

OFFICE	NUMBER	ENQUIRY
Chief Director: Examinations' Office	040 602 7003/4	Ms A Mba - PA
Director – Examination Management	040 602 7020/37	Ms Y Mhambi - PA
Acting Director – Examination Administration, Logistics , Systems and Certification	040 602 7028/93	Ms Y Ncete- PA
Exam Support,	040 602 7069	Mr S Mosele - AD
Examination Computer System & Certification	040 602 7069	Mr T Fourie - DD
Items Development, Moderation and Delivery	040 602 7295	Ms F Ntsangani – A/CES
Examinations Policy Compliance, SBA Irregularities Management and Monitoring	040 602 7039 060 530 3756	Mrs F Bikitsha - CES
Marking Processes Management	040 602 7067 060 523 6670	Mr Z Lolwana - CES



IMPORTANT DATES OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The **Cluster Chief Directors and District Directors** and other stakeholders are reminded of the following important dates related to the NSC examination operations:

#	ACTIVITY	DATE
1.	Life Orientation CAT Re-write	12/10/2022
2.	Pledge Signing by NSC Nov 2022 candidates	21/10/2022
3.	Computer Applications Tech P1 (3hrs) Practical	25/10/2022
4.	Information Technology P1 (3hrs) Practical	26/10/2022
5.	SBA (incl. LO CAT) marks capturing for NSC Nov. 2022.	31/10/2022
6.	Start of the NSC Examination	31/10/2022
7.	Monitoring of the writing of the NSC Nov 2022 exam	31/10/ - 07/12 2022
8.	SBA & LO CAT marks capturing for NSC Nov 2022 concluded	18/11/2022
9.	Re-writing of CAT & IT	07/12/2022
10.	Conclusion of the NSC Nov 2022 Examinations	07/12/2022
11.	Conclusion of monitoring of Examinations	07/12/2022
12.	NSC Marking	04 – 22 /12/2022
13.	Closing date for subject changes - NSC 2023 Gr 12 candidates	15/12/2022
14.	Release of NSC 2022 Results by Minister	19/01/2023
15.	Release of NSC 2022 Results to candidate	20/01/2023
16.	Closing date for NSC Nov 2022 Re-mark applications	03/02/2023



CONCLUSION

Educational standards related to examinations include both content and achievement standards. They facilitate the setting of learning goals, assessment of student learning, and reporting of student achievement. Content standards summarize the knowledge, skills, and understandings expected of examination candidates. Examination achievement standards, on the other hand, describe how the candidate performed on the examination in summary terms.

Although members of the public and policy makers may use examination results to monitor changes in achievement levels over time it is inadvisable to do so, as many factors affect examination results, some of which are unrelated to a student's true achievement level.

These efforts may be regarded as worthwhile if they add to the transparency of examinations and if this, in turn, has a positive impact on student learning

We are confident of the logistical and administrative readiness of all the districts.

There are adequate contingency plans in place to reasonably respond to emergency situations.

We sincerely hope that, together we can conduct, manage and administer a credible National Senior Certificate Examination in 2022. We depend on your unconditional support to be provided to over 114 000 candidates who will be participating in the 2022 National Senior Certificate Examinations.

If all of us can put our shoulders to the wheel, we can achieve and do more.

Yours in Quality Education

MR MD QWASE
A/HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION

DATE: 06 OCTOBER 2022



**URGENT REQUEST FOR FOCUSED SUPPORT DURING THE CONDUCT, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF
2022 NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) EXAMINATIONS**

RECOMMENDED /NOT RECOMMENDED

COMMENTS:

MR EM MABONA
CHIEF DIRECTOR: EXAMINATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

2022-10-06

DATE

RECOMMENDED / NOT RECOMMENDED

COMMENTS:

MR R TYWAKADI
DDG: CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

06/10/22

DATE

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

A/ HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION
MR M.D. QWASE

06 October 2022

DATE