

Press release: IEB National Senior Certificate 2022

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[18 Jan 2023]: The 2022 NSC pass rate is 98.42%, slightly higher than last year's pass rate of 98.39%. All candidates who passed achieved a pass that grants access to tertiary study at one of the three levels:

- 89.32% of the cohort achieved entry to degree study, compared to 89.2% in 2021.
- 7.52% qualified for entry to diploma study, compared to 7.82% in 2021.
- 1.57% achieved entry for study at the Higher Certificate level, compared to 1.37% in 2021.

12 580 full-time and 945 part-time candidates from 232 examination centres writing in 262 venues across Southern Africa wrote the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations in October and November 2022. This is fewer than the 12 857 full-time candidates and 968 part-time candidates in 2021.

This is primarily because some 500 candidates from neighbouring SADC countries of Eswatini, Mozambique and Namibia who previously wrote the NSC examinations offered by the IEB, were enrolled for and wrote the inaugural examinations for the IEB's International Secondary Certificate (IEB ISC). The ISC was developed by the IEB in response to recent changes in South Africa's regulatory framework for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) which meant that the NSC would no longer be available to independent schools outside of the borders of South Africa. Locally, the number of candidates who wrote the IEB NSC examinations grew by some 200 candidates in South Africa because of new schools and an increase in the number of candidates within schools that write the IEB examinations.

"The performance of the 2022 cohort of students has been outstanding. There is enough credible research on the impact of Covid-19 on the educational aspects of children to provide insight into where we are at, in coming out of the pandemic almost three years later. It is fair to say that it is the 2022 cohort of learners that were hardest hit by the impact of the pandemic when it broke in 2020 in their grade 10 year. Various strategies have been employed to try and mitigate these – moving teaching online, pen and paper distance education, catch-up programs, weekend school lessons and so on – some more successful than others," explains Anne Oberholzer, CEO of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB).

"While the class of 2022 has seen how previous Grade 12 classes of 2020 and 2021 managed to adapt to a new reality, this was the class that missed out the most in their Grade 10 and Grade 11 years which are fundamentally important to success in their grade 12 performance. They have had to work hard to maintain their drive and perseverance to succeed and in many respects, dig deep to play catch up in terms of lost time and experiences. The social and emotional impact of the pandemic on learners cannot be overlooked - the impact of lockdown, the absence of normal social interaction with friends and engagement in the social activities of teenagers should not be under-estimated. The dedication of the teaching community to implement various strategies to support their classes during this black swan event is exemplary. The IEB congratulates the candidates, their teachers and parents for a job extraordinarily well done," concludes Oberholzer.

The closing date for the application for remarking is Tuesday 31 January 2023 and the results from re-marking will be released on Wednesday 1 March 2023. Applications for the learners who qualify to enrol for the May/June examinations will be open from 1 March to 15 March 2023.

Addressing the Critical Importance of External Quality Assurance for the NSC and ISC

The IEB ISC (offered in neighbouring countries) including the Further Studies courses is externally quality assured by Stellenbosch University Unit for International Credentialling (SU-UIC). Their role is comparable to the very important role that Umalusi plays for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) here in South Africa.

“External quality assurance processes provide assurance to society that standards of demand in examinations are consistent over time and that one cohort of learners is not unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged. The quality assurance processes also ensure that the conduct of the examinations is carried out with integrity at every step. The examination process is complex and its oversight is not only extensive, but requires people who are knowledgeable and experienced in the theory and practical aspects of examination conduct,” explains Anne Oberholzer, CEO of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB).

Formal examinations have developed technical systems and a body of theory that date from the 6th century when they were introduced in Imperial China. There, the Civil Service examinations were introduced with the specific purpose of selecting bureaucrats to serve in the state bureaucracy on the basis of merit rather than by birth, as had been the practice.

“It is not surprising then that formal external examinations, independent of arbitrary influences such as birth, status in society, politics and religion, are universally used for the purpose of selection. It is also a mark of formal examinations that hold credibility, that there is an external oversight function exercised by an entity or entities that are independent from influence and operate free of fear or favour.

“The ability of any system to provide reliable and credible results to society is dependent on people who know and understand the field and who operate with the deepest integrity. The candidates, the education system and society at large deserve results that they not only trust but also can use to guide important decision making in the lives of children and also the management of human resources, the most valuable resource a society has. The oversight role of Umalusi for the NSC and of Stellenbosch University on the ISC provides this critical assurance for our society – the candidates, the schools, the parents, the voting public, the institutions and employers that will enroll or employ successful candidates,” concludes Oberholzer.

Combined Abitur-NSC 2022

The Combined Abitur-NSC is a qualification offered by the German Schools in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria. The qualification consists of three subjects assessed by the IEB and seven subjects assessed by the German Education authorities. Through this government-to-government agreement, successful learners in the Combined Abitur-NSC are recognised by German education authorities for entry to German universities and by the South African education authorities for entry to South African universities. Of the 73 candidates who offered this qualification, 95.9% passed with entry to degree study. The IEB sees its involvement with

this qualification as a means of keeping South African students in touch with global standards and developments.

Background for media

- The IEB had 12 580 full-time and 945 part-time candidates in Grade 12 in 2022, registered at 232 IEB examination centres across the country.

Province/Country	Number of schools		Number of learners (incl. part-time)	
	2021	2022	2021	2022
Eastern Cape	14	14	596	617
Free State	5	5	158	174
Gauteng	117	125	7720	8071
KwaZulu-Natal	37	36	2258	2131
Limpopo	13	12	430	479
Mozambique	1	-	70	-
Mpumalanga	6	7	409	360
Namibia	7	-	183	-
North West Province	8	6	326	248
Northern Cape	2	2	78	88
Eswatini	6	1	294	5
Western Cape	22	23	1302	1352
TOTAL	238	232	13824	13525

- The total number of examination venues was 267 which includes centres that deal only with part-time candidates and centres that host more than one examination venue, namely distance education providers.
- The Gauteng numbers include learners registered with four distance-learning institutions which have their head offices in Gauteng. These institutions have both full-time and part-time learners who live in areas across the country. They are registered with the distance-learning institution which manages their lesson delivery as well as the assessment requirements, and in Grade 12 these adhere strictly to the NSC requirements and their site-based assessment as well as oral and practical work are moderated and verified by the IEB.

About the IEB

The IEB is an independent assessment agency, separate from State and Provincial examination boards, operating within the constraints of national legislation and provisions of the national quality assurance body, Umalusi. Umalusi has granted the IEB accreditation for the assessment of the National Senior Certificate and adult examinations at NQF Level 1. The IEB offers examinations for client schools at the Grade 12 level, in line with national policy, based on the National Curriculum Statements and using various forms of assessment, including final summative examination and continuous assessment – i.e. orals, practicals and portfolios. The School Section acts in accordance with Umalusi prescriptions and the provisions of Higher Education, using professional educationalists who are practising teachers in the various subject disciplines. These teachers are active members of IEB Subject User Groups which engage with the curriculum and make recommendations on assessment practice based on real school experience. The IEB offers assessments including international benchmarking tests at other levels to participating schools.

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