

Department of Basic Education ready to administer the 2018 National Senior Certificate Examination,  
09 October 2018

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On Monday, 15 October 2018, the first practical examinations in Computer Examinations Technology (CAT) which is part of the 2018 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination, will be administered to 37 340 candidates. This will be followed by the practical examination for Information Technology that will be administered to 4 170 candidates on Tuesday, 16 October 2018. The 2018 NSC examination will get off to a full start on Monday, 22 October 2018 with the writing of the examination in the Non-Official Languages.

The 2018 NSC examination is another large examination comprising a total of 796 542 candidates, writing the examination across 6 888 examination centres in the country. The number of full time candidates is 629 141 and the number of part time candidates is 167 401. The examination extends over five and half weeks and will conclude on 28 November 2018.

The Department has left no stone unturned in its bid to ensure a credible and integrous NSC examination. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has embarked on an intensive review of all its systems and processes and has taken cognisance of the limitations that may have presented a challenge in previous years and all these have been thoroughly addressed. For the first time this year the Department of Basic Education will be administering an examination in South African Sign Language at Home Language level to 58 deaf candidates across ten schools. The question papers will be signed and learners will respond by signing and this will be recorded using the appropriate technology. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has piloted its assessment processes in this regard, and we don't foresee any difficulties with this examination. Another first for the Department, is the writing of the examination in Technical Mathematics and Technical Science. The offering of these two subjects is in sync with the intention of the Department to provide a broader scope of subject offerings for learners, so as to allow for a stronger vocational slant in the curriculum.

A total of 147 NSC question papers have been set, internally moderated by the DBE and approved by Umalusi. The question papers have been adapted for the blind and deaf candidates. Brailing of question papers for the blind and enlargements of font sizes for the partially sighted has also been completed. Printing and packing of the question papers by the provincial education departments is at an advanced stage. An aspect of the system that the Department has honed in on in 2018, is the different points at which the question paper is stored en-route to the school. The Department has audited each of these points and only those points that comply with the stringent criteria are allowed to store question papers. These storage points will be closely

monitored by the Provincial Education Departments and the National Department. The Department has also engaged the services of all the security agencies who will assist in maintaining a presence where necessary and will respond to requests at short notice.

The other strategy employed by Department of Basic Education to strengthen the administration of the examination, is the categorisation of examination centres based on the risk profile of the examination centres and monitoring is customised to suit the risk profile. Examination centres that were implicated in any kind of examination malpractice in previous years, will be monitored by a resident monitor based at the school. In addition the Department has intensified the invigilator training and targeted the standardisation of procedures across districts, which are the drivers of this training. Schools will exercise a zero tolerance in ensuring that any learner that attempts to resort to any unfair practice, will be identified and severely punished. On 12 October 2018 candidates across the country will voluntarily sign a pledge to commit to upholding the integrity of the examinations by not participating in any malpractice.

Markers have been appointed and trained across all nine provinces. Here again the Department has conducted an audit of marker appointments to ensure that only those that satisfy the criteria are appointed. A total of 44 505 markers have been appointed to mark across the 141 marking centres. To ensure that every subject is marked according to a common standardised marking guideline a total of 155 national meetings will be hosted at the DBE, where chief markers and internal moderators from all provinces will assemble to thrash out the marking guideline and ensure that a common understanding is reached in this regard. Marking will commence on 1 December 2018 across most PEDs, except for the larger provinces where marking will start earlier to ensure that all marking is completed by 15 December 2018.

The Department has also ensured that learners are fully prepared for this examination which determines their future life chances. Besides monitoring and supporting schools in ensuring the effective and full coverage of the syllabus, the Department has organised extra support classes in the form of winter and spring schools. There are also on-line support programmes which could still be accessed by learners. Parents must now ensure that learners are supported by ensuring they eat correctly, rest adequately and give of their best. The revision that is done in the last few days prior to the examination, is always extremely critical. Plan your study time table wisely and always make sure that you follow the examination time table correctly. Check and double check with your friends that you are preparing for the right paper. Do not allow yourselves to be tempted in any way to resort to any irregular examination practice and report any trace of anything irregular to your parents or teachers.

The staff of the DBE and the provincial examination teams are working full steam to ensure that nothing will interrupt the smooth flow of the examinations. We have a national hotline and provincial hotlines, the details of which are available on the DBE website where learners and parents must report anything that appears suspicious in this examination. Examination credibility and integrity is the supreme goal in this and all examination processes. The Director-General is indeed grateful to the large number of educators who have spent many hours preparing our learners for this examination and also examination officials who work tirelessly over long hours to see this examination being a success.

The Minister, Deputy Minister and Director-General, wish all Grade 12 learners well over this period and remember you have kept the course over these twelve years, this is now the last mile, give it your best.

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