basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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TO: HEADS OF DEPARTMENT
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL EXAMINATIONS
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
TEACHER UNIONS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY ASSOCIATIONS
NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CIRCULAR NO. 1 OF 2026

MARK ADJUSTMENT AND CONDONATION DISPENSATION FOR LEARNERS IN GRADES 4–9

1. The purpose of this circular is to outline the special mark adjustment and condonation dispensation for leamers in Grades 4—9 in 2026.
2. Mark adjustments and condonations are also applicable to learners in special schools and Schools of Skill that offer technical or occupationally oriented subjects.
3. As was done in 2025, the attention of school principals and education managers is once again drawn specifically to the dispensation that **mark adjustments** of between 1% and 5% will be applicable to marks that are in the following mark ranges, **depending on the minimum achievement levels of the subject:**
   (a) between 25% and 29%
   (b) between 35% and 39%
   (c) between 45% and 49%

4. It is also important to note that the **mark adjustments** will be applicable to a **maximum of three subjects,** that lie within the mark ranges as stated in paragraph (3) and therefore need to be adjusted.

5. In addition to mark adjustments, a **condonation** dispensation can also be implemented in terms of this circular. **Condonation** refers to a situation where the learner satisfies all the minimum achievement requirements but is short of one requirement. In such a case the learner can be condoned and transferred to the next grade.

   After the mark adjustment process has been completed, a learner may be short of one requirement for promotion to the next grade. The learner may present one of the following scenarios:

   (a) below 35% in Mathematics; or
   (b) below 35% in the First Additional Language; or
   (c) below 25% in two other subjects (excluding Home Language).

   Such a learner can be condoned in **one subject category only, i.e. (a) OR (b) OR (c),** so that the learner can progress to the next grade.

6. Schools are reminded that **the sequence of processes** to be followed and described in this circular are as follows:

   (a) Step 1: Apply the **progression policy,** if applicable to the learner
   (b) Step 2: Apply the dispensation on **mark adjustments**
   (c) Step 3: Apply the **condonation** dispensation

7. Note that in the case of **condonations**, the mark obtained by the learner in the affected subject must be reflected in the mark schedule and the letter "C" must be inserted next to the mark to indicate that the mark has been condoned. The same will apply in the way the mark is reflected in the signed school schedule and on the learner's report card and must be accompanied by the following statement:

   "(List the name of the subject) mark has been condoned and the learner is progressed to the next grade"

8. **Verification of schedules** is required at both school and circuit level and must confirm that:

   a) The learner's original marks correspond with the teacher's schedule.
   b) Subject teachers must verify captured marks.

c) Heads of Department must verify schedules.
d) All learner marks must be captured on SA-SAMS.
e) Progression, where applicable for a learner, was considered separately and the decision is motivated by evidence of ongoing support or a specific, structured, targeted intervention implemented for the learner throughout the academic year.
f) Mark adjustments were correctly implemented.
g) Condonation decisions were correctly implemented.
h) No unauthorised changes were made to the learner's marks.
i) The marks presented on the learner's report are correct and corresponds with the final, signed off schedule.
j) The comments pertaining to promotion, progression or retention recorded on SA-SAMS are correct and correspond for every learner.

9. **Before learners' reports are issued by schools:**
   - Principals must approve and sign off final promotion schedules.
   - Principals and circuit managers must ensure that manual alterations after approval are prohibited.
   - Schools must generate promotion reports directly from SA-SAMS.

10. **Evidence of learner support:** School principals must work closely with the School Based Support Teams (SBST) to ensure that there is available evidence for learners who were identified as being at risk of retention from the beginning of the 2026 academic year. This includes verifiable evidence of approved accommodations or concessions for learners, that parents/guardians were kept fully informed throughout the school year, that the necessary support/intervention was provided, and the impact of the support on learner performance was tracked and recorded.
    Where there is evidence that retention does not serve the best interest of the learner, the principal and SBST should ensure that the learner is progressed to the next grade with the required support.

11. **Mediation, monitoring and support** should be provided by the Provincial Head Office to districts and schools to ensure the correct interpretation and implementation of applicable policy prescripts. As such PEDs are required to convene meetings in a modality of choice, with districts and schools to discuss

how this circular is implemented at school level, and to outline the support to schools that have queries or request additional assistance. This must be done before the final school schedules are signed off and learner's reports are issued at the end of Term 4.

12. **Refer to Annexure A** for the prescribed promotion requirements that apply in the Intermediate and Senior phases respectively, and for possible common scenarios that can occur at schools to illustrate how mark adjustments and/or condonations can be determined.

13. Enquiries regarding this circular can be directed to Dr M Chetty from the National Assessment unit at the Department of Basic Education via email at Chetty.M@dbe.gov.za or to provincial assessment coordinators.

14. Your support and cooperation in ensuring compliance with the policy prescripts and contents of this circular is greatly appreciated.



MR HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 21/10/2026

ANNEXURE A: POLICY FRAMEWORK AND POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR ADJUSTMENT AND/ OR CONDONATION OF LEARNERS' MARKS

A. POLICY FRAMEWORK

The National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (as amended), issued in terms of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 and the South African Schools Act, 1996, prescribes the promotion, progression, recording and reporting of learner performance at public schools.

The following promotion requirements apply in the respective phases and form the basis for schools to verify that learners have met the promotion requirements, and to identify where mark adjustments and condonation may be applied in the best interests of the learner.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS: INTERMEDIATE PHASE (GRADES 4-6)	**PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS: SENIOR PHASE (GRADES 7-9)**
• Home Language: at least 50% (Level 4) • First Additional Language: at least 40% (Level 3) • Mathematics: at least 40% (Level 3) • **One other** recognised subject: at least 40% (Level 3) • **Two other** recognised subjects: at least 30% (Level 2)	1. Home Language: at least 50% (Level 4). 2. First Additional Language: at least 40% (Level 3). 3. Mathematics: at least 40% (Level 3). 4. **Any three** (3) other subjects: at least 40% (Level 3) in each subject. **5. The remaining two** (2) subjects: at least 30% (Level 2)

B. POSSIBLE COMMON SCENARIOS

The following scenarios, illustrate the most common examples of marks presented by learners, that require an adjustment and/or condonation.

As such, scenarios 1-4 are generic to both phases, and scenarios 5-7 are phase specific.

Note that these scenarios do not cover all possibilities that may arise at schools but are intended to assist school principals and circuit mangers to ensure that the promotion requirements are interpreted and implemented correctly.

A reminder, and as indicated in paragraph (5) of National Assessment Circular 1 of 2026, is that **condonation** can only be done **once** in respect of the following:

(d) below 35% in Mathematics; or

(e) below 35% in the First Additional Language; or

(f) below 25% in two other subjects (excluding Home Language).

Scenario 1: Illustration: Mark adjustment

Subject	Original	Adjusted	Adjustment	Motivation
Afrikaans FAL	37%	40%	3%	The three subjects are below 40% as per requirement and the rest meet the requirement. An adjustment of between 1% and 5% will be done only on these subjects to a mark of 40%. The adjusted mark should not exceed 40%
Social Science	35%	40%	5%	
Technology	39%	40%	1%	

Scenario 2: Illustration: Condonation in one subject only

Subject	Original	Adjusted	Adjustment	Motivation
EMS	37%	40%	3%	In this case, the four subjects are below 40%. The learner's marks in the three subjects will be adjusted. The learner will then be condoned in Mathematics only.
Social Science	35%	40%	5%	
Technology	39%	40%	1%	
Mathematics	25% ©	25%	No adjustment	

Scenario 3: Illustration: Mark adjustment but no condonation in same subject

Subject	Original	Adjusted	Adjustment	Motivation
Mathematics	35%	40%	5%	In this case, the 3 subjects below 40% include Mathematics. The learner's marks will be adjusted in all three subjects. There is no need for a condonation in Mathematics.
Social Science	36%	40%	4%	
Technology	38%	40%	2%	

Scenario 4: Illustration: Mark adjustments

Subject	Original	Adjusted	Adjustment	Motivation
Home Language	46%	50%	4%	In this case the learner does not meet the pass requirements in three subjects. However, the learner's marks can be adjusted as illustrated.
Social Science	37%	40%	3%	
Technology	28%	30%	2%	

Scenario 5 – Illustration: Intermediate Phase: Condonation in Mathematics

Subject	Original	Adjusted	Adjustment	Motivation
Home Language	57%	None	No adjustment	In this case the learner in the Intermediate Phase meets the minimum requirements of all subjects except for Mathematics where the mark achieved is below 35%. The learner will then be condoned in Mathematics.
Afrikaans FAL	45%	None	No adjustment	
Mathematics	32% ©	None	No adjustment	
Natural Sciences and Technology	46%	None	No adjustment	
Social Sciences	50%	None	No adjustment	
Lifeskills	55%	None	No adjustment	

Scenario 6 – Illustration: Senior Phase: Condonation in 2 subjects below 25%

Subject	Original	Adjusted	Adjustment	Motivation
Home Language	55%	None	No adjustment	In this case the learner in the Senior Phase meets all the subject requirements except in two subjects where the marks are below 25%. The learner will then be condoned in Natural Sciences and Economic Management Sciences.
Sesotho FAL	48%	None	No adjustment	
Mathematics	45%	None	No adjustment	
Life Orientation	56%	None	No adjustment	
Natural Sciences	24% ©	None	No adjustment	
Social Sciences	47%	None	No adjustment	
Economic and Management Sciences	20%©	None	No adjustment	
Technology	46%	None	No adjustment	
Creative Arts	50%	None	No adjustment	

Scenario 7- Illustration: Senior Phase: Condonation in FAL

Subject	Original	Adjusted	Adjustment	Motivation
Home Language	53%	None	No adjustment	In this case the learner in the Senior Phase meets all the minimum achievement level requirements, except in the case of Sesotho FAL, where the minimum achievement level requirement is 40%. The mark obtained by the learner is outside the adjustment range. A pass in FAL is a compulsory requirement. The learner in this case will be retained, only because of not meeting the achievement level requirement in Sesotho FAL. Therefore, this learner will be condoned in Sesotho FAL and promoted to the next grade.
Sesotho FAL	34% ©	None	Condonaton	
Mathematics	43%	None	No adjustment	
Life Orientation	54%	None	No adjustment	
Natural Sciences	32%	None	No adjustment	
Social Sciences	47%		No adjustment	
Economic Management Sciences	35%	None	No adjustment/ No condonation	
Technology	46%	None	No adjustment	
Creative Arts	50%	None	No adjustment	

- Note: An immigrant learner in the GET Band is not required to pass both official languages for promotion. However, the learner must pass at least one official language at FAL level (40% or more) and meet the adjusted promotion requirements in the other subjects.