



UGANDA NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD

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STATEMENT ON RELEASE OF 2015 UCE EXAMINATION RESULTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Honourable Minister of Education and Sports, with pleasure, the Uganda National Examinations Board presents to you Results for the year 2015 Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) Examination for release to the public, in accordance with Section 4(2) of the UNEB Act, Cap 137, Laws of Uganda. The examination was conducted between 12th October and 17th November, 2015 under the theme 'Embracing Innovations in Technology for Quality Assessment'.

Hon. Minister, I am glad to report to you that the 2015 UCE examination was conducted successfully throughout the country. There were no leakages of the examination.

2. CANDIDATURE

Candidature increased by **2,748** (0.9%) from 310,414 in 2014 to **313,171** in 2015. Of these, **143,746** (45.9%) were USE beneficiaries. In keeping with the 2015 Theme, 310,266 candidates (99.0%) were registered through the e-Registration process. UCE examination centres which presented candidates increased from **3,020** in 2014, to **3,329**, an increase of **309** centres.

In 2015, **306,507** candidates appeared for the examination compared to **306,165** candidates who appeared for the examination in 2014. This is a slight increase of 0.9 per cent over 2014. Female candidates who appeared for the examination were **156,750**. This is **half** of total candidates who sat meaning that about the same number of girls appeared for the examination, as did the boys. The gap in enrolment between females and males has been closing in recent years. The USE programme has also enabled many, otherwise, disadvantaged children, who would not have managed to reach Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) level, to do so.

Statistics of the number of candidates who registered for, and those who sat the UCE examination for the last 5 years are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Registration over the last Five Years

Year	Candidates Registered	Candidates Who sat	Absentees	% Absent
2015	313,162	306,507	6,655	2.1
2014	310,414	306,185	4,229	1.4
2013	295,494	288,738	6,756	2.3
2012	268,906	262,987	5,903	2.2
2011	273,363	267,024	6,357	2.4

Absenteeism of candidates increased from 1.4 per cent in 2014 to 2.1 per cent. More boys were absent than girls.

A total of 325 Special Needs Education candidates registered for the 2015 UCE examination, an increase from 236 in 2014. These consisted of the **blind (42)**, those with **low vision (43)**, the **deaf (90)**, the **dyslexics and physically handicapped (53)**. There were **98** others with minor form of disability that only needed to be given extra time. The Board made arrangements, which included modification of questions, provision of questions written in Braille form, and having support personnel for the handicapped and dyslexics, and translators for the deaf. Candidates with low vision received question papers with enlarged print to enable them read more easily. All SNE candidates were allowed extra 45 minutes in each paper.

UNEB maintains an examination centre at Luzira Prisons for the inmates. The centre registered 38 candidates, all males. Their results show that they all passed; four in Division 1; nine in Division 2; 12 in Division 3 and the other 13 in Division 4. The best candidate scored an aggregate of 20.

3. GENERAL PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES IN 2015 UCE COMPARED TO 2014 UCE EXAMINATION

Performance of candidates who sat in 2015 and 2014 in terms of Division passes is compared in Table 2 below.

Table 2: General Performance in 2015 compared to 2014

Division	2015				2014			
	No. ofCands	%age	Cumm no. ofCands	Cumm %	No. OfCands	%age	Cumm no. ofCands	Cumm %
1	25,750	8.5	25,750	8.5	23,450	7.7	23,450	7.7
2	48,642	16.0	74,392	24.5	46,595	15.3	70,045	23.0
3	70,413	23.1	144,805	47.6	66,282	21.8	136,327	44.8
4	130,058	42.7	274,863	90.3	147,695	48.6	284,022	93.4
9	29,593	9.7	304,456	100	20,167	6.6	304,189	100

NB: Figures do not include withheld results.

There are more candidates passing in the higher Divisions 1, 2 and 3.

Performance of candidates in 2015 in various subjects is compared to the 2014 performance of candidates in the same subjects in Table 3. (The figures do not include withheld results).

Table 3: Comparison of 2015 and 2014 performances in selected subjects

Subject	2015				2014			
	No. of Cands.	Percentage at			No. of Cands.	Percentage at		
		2	6	8		2	6	8
English Language	304,004	2.4	56.1	82.3	303,891	3.2	46.6	74.7
Christian RelEduc	187,475	5.8	58.3	88.0	189,402	3.8	50.7	84.5
Islamic RelEduc	23,162	22.1	79.5	92.5	20,307	14.9	74.9	90.8
History	302,590	6.2	46.8	68.1	302,889	8.4	56.6	75.0
Geography	303,581	1.7	46.4	77.5	303,709	0.3	27.9	49.8
Mathematics	304,055	3.0	32.2	79.2	303,893	1.8	21.3	65.6
Agriculture	199,704	0.5	43.4	82.7	195,167	2.3	49.1	77.1
Physics	303,237	0.5	15.4	41.7	303,213	0.4	11.8	34.8
Chemistry	302,792	1.3	13.9	42.8	303,293	1.4	11.7	34.0
Biology	303,458	0.3	13.0	40.7	303,292	0.5	28.4	66.9
Art	66,199	1.3	25.9	72.0	127,472	0.5	96.6	99.9
Art (IPS)	30,929	0.3	65.5	90.0	-	-	-	-
Commerce	171,685	6.2	52.6	71.4	173,600	5.5	48.9	65.1

NB: Figures do not include withheld results.

In English language and the Humanities, overall pass levels have improved, except in History where a drop is recorded. In the Sciences and Mathematics, performance improved, except in Biology where the drop is significant. Agriculture declined at the Distinction and Credit levels but improved overall. However, despite improvement in Physics and Chemistry, the percentage pass levels remain low, with almost 60 per cent of the candidates unable to demonstrate the minimum competency required to be graded.

4. COMPARISON OF FEMALE AND MALE PERFORMANCE

Table 4 compares performance of female and male candidates in selected subjects expressed in terms of cumulative percentages at the indicated levels:

Table 4: Performance of Females and Males Compared

Subject	PERCENTAGE AT					
	GRADE 2 (Distinction level)		GRADE 6 (Credit level)		GRADE 8 (Pass level)	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
English Lang.	2.7	2.0	57.4	54.9	83.3	81.4
CRE	5.7	5.9	58.4	58.3	88.2	87.9
IRE	18.9	25.4	78.4	80.6	92.3	92.7
History	4.5	7.8	41.1	52.2	66.3	76.1
Geography	1.1	2.1	41.3	51.3	74.2	80.5
Mathematics	1.7	4.1	26.7	37.4	77.3	80.9
Agriculture	0.3	0.7	33.6	52.2	77.1	87.6
Physics	0.2	0.7	10.8	19.6	35.5	47.6
Chemistry	0.8	1.9	10.6	17.4	39.5	46.3
Biology	0.2	0.4	9.6	16.3	35.7	45.7
Art	1.0	1.5	22.0	29.3	68.3	75.2
Art (IPS)	0.1	0.5	63.4	67.3	90.0	90.1
Commerce	4.3	7.8	46.1	58.3	66.3	75.9

NB: Figures do not include withheld results.

Female candidates performed better than males in English Language and also slightly better in Christian Religious Education, while the male candidates performed better in all the other large entry subjects. This is the trend that has been observed over the years.

Percentage passes at the different divisions are compared in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Percentage Divisional Passes Compared

Gender	Division 1	Division 2	Division 3	Division 4	Division 9
Males	10.2	18.1	23.5	39.1	9.1
Females	6.3	13.2	22.7	44.5	10.0

NB: Figures do not include withheld results.

Table 5 confirms better overall performance by male candidates at the higher grades.

5. FIELD CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATION

The conduct of the UCE examination in the field was generally quite smooth and peaceful except for the *El Nino* rains and the bad roads resulting from the rains, which affected the distribution of examination papers and the movement of examination supervisors and scouts. However, the main challenges were:

Setting up of the Science practical examination

There is a serious shortage of science teachers, especially in the rural schools. This affected the setting up of the apparatus and mixing of the solutions necessary for the examination in many centres, as field reports indicated that many teachers had to move to more than a centre to carry out the preparations. Practical examinations started late in the majority of centres.

Examination malpractice

The Board made strenuous efforts to control examination malpractice. No leakages occurred anywhere but other forms of malpractice occurred inside the examination rooms due to acts of omission or commission by invigilators, subject teachers and school heads. Cases of impersonation, collusion, some external assistance and smuggling of unauthorized materials into the examination rooms were detected by scouts. The examiners in the course of marking the scripts discovered most of the cases of external assistance.

Evidence available indicates that, as in the past year, candidates received assistance mainly in science practical papers, theory papers and Mathematics.

Prevalence of malpractice in sciences and Mathematics points out to very poor teaching in these subjects. Science practical papers are most affected, meaning that teaching of practical skills is inadequate in many schools. There is evidence that the advance confidential information sent by UNEB to schools to aid the preparation of the practical examination is deliberately disclosed to candidates, especially in Biology. There is further evidence that teachers, upon seeing the confidential information for Biology, went ahead to speculate on the kind of questions expected. Candidates ended up giving wrong and irrelevant answers based on the speculations of the teachers. According to the Examiners, this accounted for the sharp drop in performance in Biology this year.

In the cases of impersonation that were discovered, the suspects were arrested and charged. At Boston High School, Entebbe, the two suspects were convicted and sentenced to a fine of US\$ 500,000/- or eight months imprisonment. Other cases are in court in Kasese and Kitgum.

The Board worked closely with a team of senior Police Officers seconded by the Inspector General of Police, and a senior officer from the Directorate of Public Prosecution to follow up on investigations for the on-going cases in the field.

In accordance with Section 4 (3) of the UNEB Act, Cap 137, the Board is withholding results of 2,060 candidates from 86 examination centres (0.6 % of candidature), to allow for completion of investigations and accord the suspected persons a hearing. Those candidates who will be found culpable will have their entire results cancelled. Criminal proceedings will be instituted against teachers and invigilators who will be found to have abetted the malpractice. UNEB will further recommend to relevant authorities to take administrative action against those teachers. Action against schools will include withdrawal of their examination centre status and de-registration.

The list of names of centres from which results of significant numbers of candidates are being withheld and the actual number of candidates is attached. The nature of malpractice suspected will be communicated to them as they pick the rest of the results.

6. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

The UCE examination had the objective of testing the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the various learning areas tested. Papers were designed to test knowledge and understanding, application and analytical skills, manipulation of scientific apparatus, science process skills of making observations, recording observations and other data, drawing inferences or conclusions from observations,

data presentation and interpretation among others. Papers also tested application of knowledge in problem solving and in novel situations.

Those candidates awarded Division 1 and 2 were able to demonstrate high levels of knowledge and skills in the subjects they took. Division 3 represents a moderate level of competence. Candidates at this level demonstrate knowledge but are not able to deal with the higher order level skills; while Division 4 represents the basic (minimum) level of competence. Candidates at this level showed the ability to understand elementary concepts and skills only. Those who are awarded Division 9 have not achieved the basic level of competency required to be graded.

The overall candidate performance improved this year at the higher Divisions (1-3), implying that teachers could have put in efforts to address the areas of weaknesses pointed out in the previous reports. The following problems still persist, and are responsible for poor performance by the candidates in the lower grades. These problems have persisted as they have been reported before:

(i) Language deficiency

Candidates showing limited English proficiency had difficulty in understanding the meaning of essential/key words used in questions, leading to misunderstanding questions; failing to draw meaning from passages or make summaries. Problems have been reported in the use of correct grammar, including spellings, tenses, punctuations and paragraph use in compositions. The cramming and reproduction of passages in composition writing reported in the last three years reduced and fewer cases were seen. Some teachers of English are still giving candidates prepared passages to cram instead of preparing them to write compositions imaginatively and creatively.

(ii) In Humanities, answers to questions requiring explanations or descriptions suffer from the language deficiency already mentioned. Higher order questions and those that require candidates to draw from their knowledge and experiences were badly answered. Geography suffers from poor map and sketch drawing skills, inability to deal with statistical problems and representing such statistics using line or bar graphs and pie charts.

Chief examiners have continued to raise the issue of the continued use of pamphlets by teachers and the candidates and the negative effects this has had on candidates' performance. Where an explanation or a description is required, candidates write answers in outline form as in the pamphlets, and

lose marks as a result. There is evidence that many teachers, in preference to the pamphlets, are avoiding the use of prescribed textbooks in teaching.

- (iii) Performance in Sciences continues to be poor for the majority of candidates. As can be seen from Table 3, only about 45 % (on average) in reach the minimum competency level. In Mathematics, poor performance has been consistently shown in the areas of construction of graphs, solving of simultaneous equations, skills of geometrical construction, vectors, the set theory, fraction expressions and computation of compound interests, among others. We have reported this in previous statements.

In Sciences, there is evidence of lack of practical teaching despite the tremendous efforts made by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports in supplying laboratory equipment to schools and the SESEMAT programme. Candidates found problems in handling of apparatus during the practical tests as well as making and recording observations and drawing conclusions from those observations; tabulation of experimental results and interpretation of the results, among others. The lower achievers found difficulties with questions requiring explanations, description of experimental procedure, use of chemical symbols and formulae, writing of units and dealing with tasks that require practical experience.

UNEB will issue detailed reports on the Work of Candidates to highlight these areas of concern in each subject area and make suggestions on how to handle them. Heads of centres are encouraged to obtain copies of these reports from UNEB Publications outlets and make them available to teachers.

7. GRATITUDE

I wish to, very sincerely, thank you, Hon Minister, and the Ministry for provision of funds that enabled the Board to complete this exercise; the Inspector General of Police, Gen. Kale Kayihura, who put the resources of the Police throughout the country at UNEB's disposal during the examination period.

I wish to thank all those who participated in monitoring the field conduct of the examination as scouts. I further thank the Area Supervisors, heads of examination centres and invigilators, who conducted the examination in accordance with the Board's regulations. I also thank members of the public who volunteered useful information and the Press who covered the field conduct of the examination.

I thank the examiners whose hard work ensured that the marking ended on schedule. I am grateful to the heads of the institutions that allowed UNEB to use their premises as marking centres.

I congratulate all the candidates who passed the examination and thank their parents and guardians for their support. I encourage those who did not do well to try again.

Finally, in a very special way, I thank my staff at the UNEB Secretariat for their total dedication, commitment and the personal sacrifices they made to ensure the release of these results. They have continued to uphold the credibility of the examination system, in keeping with the Board's Vision "*To be a leading centre of Assessment for Quality Education*".

8. COLLECTION OF RESULTS

In keeping with the Theme of embracing innovations in technology, results have been uploaded on school portals. Heads of UCE examination Centres can download the results from the comfort of their offices. However, result lists are still available and may be collected from UNEB offices at Ntinda starting today 29th January, 2016 from 2:00 pm. Apart from the school result lists, no individual results will be available from UNEB offices.

Candidates, their parents and any other person wishing to access results may do so through their mobile phones. Go to the 'Message' menu and type **UCE**, leave space, then type the correct index number of the candidate; e.g. U0001/001. Send to **6600** on the MTN, WARID, AIRTEL and ORANGE networks.

It should be noted that results obtained by this method are for notification only, and cannot be tendered as official. Result slips and certificates remain the only authentic proof of performance, and candidates should collect these from their schools where they registered.

At the request of school heads, UNEB has not put on the SMS the results of those candidates who were allowed to sit the examination without paying fees and have not paid to date.

M.B.B. Bukenya
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY