



CHIEF DIRECTORATE: EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

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ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTION 23 OF 2026

**TO: DEPUTY DIRECTORS-GENERAL
CHIEF DIRECTORS
HEAD OFFICE DIRECTORS AND DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
DEPUTY CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
SENIOR EDUCATION SPECIALISTS
PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (GRADE 12)
TEACHER UNIONS/ORGANISATIONS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES**

DATE: 18 MARCH 2026

**GRADE 12 MULTILINGUAL PREPARATORY EXAMINATIONS (ISIXHOSA AND SESOTHO)
VERSIONING OF SELECTED QUESTION PAPERS FOR 2026**

1. Around 25 different languages are spoken in South Africa, of which 11 have been granted official status in terms of section 6 of the Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996) on the grounds that their usage includes about 98% of the total population.
2. In 2020, the Eastern Cape Department of Education was mandated by Council of Executive Ministers (CEM) to provide Grade 12 Multilingual Preparatory Examinations. It has been the Eastern Cape Department of Education's decision to version Grade 12 Preparatory Question Papers and Marking Guides into isiXhosa and Sesotho for Quintile 1- 3 schools as question papers for Quintile 4 and 5 schools are in English and Afrikaans. The NSC Grade 12 learners in these schools (1-3) will be offered the question papers in English and IsiXhosa or English and Sesotho. Therefore, the versioning of these question papers and marking guidelines serves the purpose of supporting the Language in Education Policy (1997) implementation.
3. Listed below are some of the legislations that underpin and guide the implementation of multilingual education in schools:
 - South African Constitution (Clause 29)
 - National Education Policy Act (Act no.27 of 1996)
 - South African Schools Act (Act no. 84 of 1996)
 - National Curriculum Statement
 - National development Plan (Chapter 15)

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- National Language Policy Framework
- Department of Education Language Policy (1997)

Iphondo leMpuma Kapa: Isebe leMfundo
 Provinsie van Oos Kaap: Department van Onderwys
 Provense ya Kapa Botjhabela: Letapha la Thuto

4. SELECTED SUBJECTS IN 2026.

The following are the selected six (6) subjects that will be offered for multilingual question papers for the September Preparatory Examinations.

- Accounting P1 and P2
- Agricultural Sciences P1 and P2
- Physical Sciences P1 and P2
- History P1 and P2
- Life Sciences P1 and P2
- Mathematics P1 and P2

5. The above subjects' papers will be available for NSC Grade 12 Preparatory Examinations in the following Language format:

- isiXhosa and English
- Sesotho and English

6. PROJECT TARGET QUINTILE SCHOOLS FOR 2026

The following learners and quintiles will be targeted in 2026 for the Preparatory examinations:

- Grade 12 learners in Quintile 1 schools
- Grade 12 learners in Quintile 2 schools
- Grade 12 Learners in Quintile 3 schools

7. LANGUAGE CHOICE OF WRITING PREPARATORY EXAMINATIONS

The following conditions must be adhered to:

- A learner may select isiXhosa/Sesotho/English as a preferred language during the Preparatory Examinations when answering questions.
- Learners are allowed to read questions in two languages as the papers will be in a bilingual format.
- Learners will however be allowed to switch between any language - that is write one question in one language for example in isiXhosa /Sesotho/English and then write the other questions in English, if deemed necessary to do so.
- A learner may not be penalised in any manner for using different languages in answering questions within the same answering script/answer book.
- The aim is to ensure that the learners' language needs are accommodated.

8. MARKING OF ANSWER SCRIPTS

- Schools, in conjunction with the Curriculum Section in districts must draft a plan to mark the scripts of learners in these multilingual examinations in the selected subjects.
- If a teacher is unable to mark any of the scripts of a particular subject, schools within the same cluster can be approached for assistance.
- The moderation of scripts must also be catered for.
- Any plans made must ensure that the credibility of the marking process and the examination process must not be compromised.

9. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Districts and schools will be required to monitor the implementation of the goals of the Project and provide feedback. The feedback is vital as it will provide the means to do a diagnostic analysis of the success of the project as well as the areas that need to be improved. The appropriate diagnostic and monitoring tools will be made available to schools before the Preparatory Examinations commences.

10. The goal of the project is to initiate a fresh approach to multilingualism in South Africa and to strongly encourage the utilisation of the African Indigenous languages as official languages to foster and promote national unity. It considers the broad acceptance of linguistic diversity, social justice, the principle of equal access to public services and programmes, and respect for language rights.
11. The heads of educational institutions should ensure that the content of this Assessment Instruction is distributed to all Grade 12 teachers, learners, subject advisors, and other relevant stakeholders.

Yours in Quality Education



MR TJZ MTYIDA
DDG: CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND DELIVERY

23 March 2026

DATE