Province of the
EASTERN CAPE
EDUCATION

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

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT CHIEF DIRECTORATE

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ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTION NO 43 OF 2026

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

DATE: **28 SEPTEMBER 2026**

EXCLUSION OF CANDIDATES FROM WRITING THE 2026 OCTOBER/NOVEMBER NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS(NSC)

1. In previous years, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) has received and noted with great concern numerous complaints of the intentional exclusion of selected Grade 12 learners from writing the October/November National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations by school principals.

2. The reports include the following:
   a) Disallowing candidates who are at risk of failing the examination from writing the examination as a strategy to present better overall school results.
   b) Disallowing candidates from writing the examination due to disciplinary issues, including non-payment of school fees.
   c) Delaying candidates from entering the examination room on time due to attention being given to other matters, including those that are administrative in nature.

3. Exclusion of Candidates with the sole purpose of boosting the Overall School Performance

3.1 School principals are warned that denying registered candidates access to the writing of the NSC examinations based on their poor performance constitutes an act of misconduct.

3.2 This is tantamount to some School Principals implementing the Policy on Multiple Examination Opportunity (MEO) which was abolished may years ago. It has also come to the attention of the Department that candidates are being asked to be absent from the examination on the grounds of ill-health, and medical certificates are being arranged to legitimise absenteeism. Any principal reported to exclude learners for devious reasons will be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Denying Learners access to the Writing of the Examinations due to Disciplinary reasons or other illegitimate reasons.

4.1 School Principals are reminded that it is contrary to Policy to deny candidates access to the writing of the examination as a punitive measure to correct learner ill-discipline or due to unpaid school fees. The payment of school fees is a contractual arrangement between the parent and the school, and the learner cannot be denied access to education, in this case, the writing of an examination, due to a parental obligation. In the case of ill-discipline on the part of the learner, this must be managed in terms of the School's Disciplinary Code of Conduct pertaining to Learners.

5. Delaying candidates from entering the examination room due to late coming

5.1 Numerous reports have been received of candidates being kept out of the examination room due to late coming. In some instances, these candidates are only allowed to start writing after the commencement time of the question paper. This is a serious violation of the Examination Regulations and needs to cease with immediate effect, as candidates are being unfairly disadvantaged.

5.2 Regulation 10(c) *of the Regulations Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate Examinations* indicates how to manage late coming after the commencement of the examination:

10(c) Late arrival at the examination centre

(a) A candidate must not be admitted to the examination room should he or she arrive after the first hour of the commencement of the examination. (without valid reason)

(b) A candidate who arrives within the first hour of the commencement of the examination must be allowed into the examination room but will not be allowed any additional writing time.

6. It needs to be noted that "commencement of the examination" as indicated in the regulations refers to the scheduled starting time of the paper (i.e. 09:00 or 14:00), not the time that candidates are scheduled to be seated in the examination room. Chief Invigilators must arrange to admit candidates who arrive late in terms of the seating time but are on time for the commencement of the examinations, without disrupting the pre-writing proceedings and without disadvantaging these candidates. One option is to place candidates who arrive late for the pre- writing procedures in a classroom close to the examination venue so that an invigilator can take them through the pre-examination procedures, and these candidates are then admitted to the examination room before the ten-minute reading time commences. Candidates who arrive during the first hour of the commencement of the writing must be admitted into the examination room immediately as they arrive.

7. The Eastern Cape Department of Basic Education appreciates the committed efforts of School Principals and invigilators in ensuring the efficient management and administration of the October/November 2026 NSC examinations that contribute to the credibility and integrity of the examination.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL: CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT
MR TJZ MTYIDA

29 September 2026
DATE