

# Press release: Independent Examinations Board (IEB) National Senior Certificate Examinations 2023

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[18 Jan 2024]: The Independent Examinations Board (IEB) attained an overall pass rate of **98.46%** in the 2023 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. The pass rate is slightly higher than the 2022 NSC pass rate of 98.42%. All candidates who passed the IEB 2023 NSC examination achieved a pass that grants access to tertiary study at one of the three levels:

- **88.59%** of the cohort achieved entry to **degree study**, compared to 89.32% in 2022.
- **8.31%** qualified for entry to **diploma study**, compared to 7.52% in 2022.
- **1.57%** achieved entry for study at the **Higher Certificate level**, same as the 1.57% in 2022.

13 967 full-time and 1213 part-time candidates, a total of **15 180** wrote the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) NSC examinations in October and November 2023 at 275 examination centres. This is more than the 12 580 full-time candidates and 945 part-time candidates, a total of 13 525 in 2022.

The significant increase of 1 655 results from the 17 new schools, comprising a total of 960 candidates, that wrote the IEB for the first time in 2023. The 17 comprised of 12 brick and mortar schools and 5 online providers.

The IEB is very pleased to announce that the 2023 NSC examination session was conducted free of any irregularity that may have undermined the integrity of this examination.

Confidence Dikgole, CEO of the IEB says that along the learners' 5-year journey, there may have been interruptions and challenges – notably the significant disruption to teaching and learning brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic – but for the most part we do believe that this cohort were well placed to succeed in the 2023 NSC examination session. The impressive performance of the class of 2023 amid these challenges reflects the dedication and tenacity of both learners and the entire teaching community.

“What however is not often talked about, is the tremendous pressure brought to bear on learners by society. Schools' experience with young people points to the escalating mental health issues, which is perhaps one of the greatest challenges our youngsters face and does impact their ability to perform at their peak in a high stakes examination.

“Mental wellbeing is directly linked to the stress society is placing on our young people to perform, to get top results and secure spots in top tertiary institutions. The competition is huge, and this is a global issue, not just unique to the South African context. Research also points to a correlation between a learner's independence and their overall wellbeing,” says Dikgole.

“Schools are faced with a challenge to grow and nurture confident, courageous, and independent young people – this is directly linked to wellbeing and ultimately their ability to achieve and succeed. This is a journey together with parents, who in the current times have become either not involved or far too protective of their children, sadly to the detriment of their own wellbeing and success. Most of all, we need learners to know that the world of education does not end after Matric, on the contrary, it is only the start of a myriad of doors and

opportunities. There are many educational routes – not all of them necessarily need to lead to a university degree – that releases their talents and their enthusiasm to be the very best they can in a field that has captivated their interest. We need to remove this pass-rate obsessed lens of competition, so we – and they – can start to see the success of their achievement with different eyes,” concludes Dikgole.

In line with its inclusive approach to assessment and examinations, the IEB provided Accommodations and Adapted Papers for learners who required these. Accommodations and Adaptations aim to ensure equitable access to the examination content while maintaining the integrity and fairness of the NSC examinations. This practice is standard internationally, reflecting a commitment to providing equal opportunities for all learners to demonstrate their knowledge and skills, regardless of their individual circumstances. It aligns with the principles of inclusive education and supports a more comprehensive and equitable approach to assessment on a global scale.

**Accommodations** were approved for 10.42% of candidates, totalling 1 583 out of 15 185 candidates, for the 2023 NSC Examination session.

**Question papers were adapted as follows:**

- a) **Hearing Impairment:** Sixteen subjects underwent adaptations for five candidates with hearing impairment. These adaptations included techniques such as bolding, underlining, use of white space, and embedded glossary.
- b) **Visual Impairment:** Adaptations were made for two candidates with visual impairment in nine subjects. Adaptations involved techniques such as replacing an image/picture/diagram with a written description, supplementing an image/picture/diagram with a written description, and removing an unnecessary image/picture/diagram.
- c) **Brailed Papers for Visual Impairment:** Six subjects were transcribed into Braille, for a candidate with visual impairment.
- d) **Physical Impairment:** An adaptation was implemented for Engineering Graphics and Design (Paper 1 & Paper 2) for one candidate with physical impairment, specifically cerebral palsy.

The IEB monitored the writing of the 2023 NSC examinations at all the 275 examination venues through real-time electronic video monitoring systems. Physical monitoring was also conducted at 114 examination centres. The purpose of monitoring the writing of the examinations is to ensure integrity and security of the examination process, and it also allows for the identification and resolution of any irregularities that could compromise the validity of the examination results.

The 2023 IEB NSC examinations were quality assured by Umalusi, the Quality Assurance Council for the General and Further Education and Training. The quality assurance entailed moderation of question papers, monitoring of the writing of the examinations, verification of marking, standardisation of marks. The aim of quality assurance conducted by Umalusi on the IEB examinations is to ensure the credibility, fairness, and consistency of the assessment processes and outcomes. By reviewing and accrediting the IEB assessments and examinations, Umalusi ensures that the examinations meet national standards and uphold the integrity of the education system. This process helps maintain public trust in the qualifications awarded by the IEB, contributing to the overall quality and reliability of education in South Africa.

In approving release of the 2023 IEB NSC results, Umalusi indicated that having studied all the evidence presented to them by the IEB, *“the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council concluded that the examinations were administered largely in accordance with the Regulations Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration, and Management of the National Senior Certificate Examinations. The irregularities identified during the writing and marking of the examinations, were not systemic and therefore did not compromise the overall credibility and integrity of the November 2023 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations administered by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB).”*

The IEB and its Board conveys a hearty congratulations to the NSC class of 2023. Congratulations also to their teachers, parents, guardians and all those who have supported these learners in their studies. Despite any challenges that the class of 2023 may have faced, their performance attests to the fact that diligence, persistence and perseverance form the key ingredients for achieving success. To those who have not succeeded, do not despair. The beauty of our education system in South Africa is that it has different avenues and options available for learners to succeed in their educational journey. We urge learners to familiarise with these avenues and options to ensure success in their educational pathway.

**Special announcement for the candidates:**

The closing date for the application for remarking is 1 February 2024 and the results from re-marking will be released on 1 March 2024. The closing date for learners who qualify to enrol for the May/June examination is 15 March 2024.

**Additional information**

**Combined Abitur-NSC 2023**

The Combined Abitur-NSC is a qualification offered by the German Schools in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria. The qualification consists of five subjects assessed by the IEB and seven subjects assessed by the German Education authorities. Through this government-to-government agreement, successful learners in the Combined Abitur-NSC are recognised by German education authorities for entry to German universities and by the South African education authorities for entry to South African universities. Of the 84 candidates who offered this qualification, 98.81% passed with entry to degree study. The IEB sees its involvement with this qualification as a means of keeping South African learners in touch with global standards and developments.

## Background for media

- The IEB had **13 967** full-time and **1 213** part-time candidates in Grade 12 in 2023. A total of **15 180** candidates writing at 275 IEB registered examination centres across the country as follows:

Province/Country	Number of schools		Number of learners (incl. part-time)	
	2022	2023	2022	2023
Eastern Cape	14	15	617	667
Eswatini	1	0	5	0
Free State	5	5	174	178
Gauteng	126	135	8071	9124
KwaZulu Natal	36	38	2131	2285
Limpopo	12	12	479	413
Mpumalanga	7	9	360	504
North West Province	6	6	248	305
Northern Cape	2	2	88	97
Western Cape	23	26	1352	1607
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>13525</b>	<b>15180</b>

The total number of examination venues 275, includes centres that deal only with part-time candidates and centres that host more than one examination venue, namely distance education providers.

### About the IEB

The IEB is an independent assessment body, separate from the public examinations body; the National Department of Basic Education. The IEB operates within the constraints of national legislation and provisions of the national quality assurance body, Umalusi.

The IEB is accredited by Umalusi; Quality Assurance Council for the General and Further Education and Training to offer examinations in the schooling and adult education sectors for the Grade 12 examinations and the GETC ABET (NQF Level 1) examinations respectively.

The IEB offers examinations for the IEB registered schools at the Grade 12 level, in line with national policy, based on the National Curriculum Statements and using various forms of assessment, including final summative examination and continuous assessment – i.e. orals, practicals and portfolios. The IEB examinations are quality assured by Umalusi to ensure standards are maintained, and that the examinations are fair, valid and reliable.

The IEB is committed to ensuring a system that maintains high quality standards in the interest of South African learners for whom education is a constitutional right.

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**Issued on behalf of: MS Confidence Dikgole**

Chief Executive Officer

Independent Examinations Board (IEB)

**Date:**

18 Jan 2024