

# 99.7% PASS UCE, 428,000 QUALIFY FOR S5

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The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) has announced a 99.7% pass rate in the 2025 Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examinations, marking a significant improvement in overall performance.

While releasing the results at State House Nakasero in Kampala, UNEB executive director Dan Odongo revealed that 428,628 candidates (99.69%) out of the 429,949 who sat the examinations at 3,975 centres across the country attained Result 1. This is the required standard to qualify for the UCE certificate and proceed to Senior Five (S5).

The results were officially released by the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni.

## IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

The 2025 results reflect continued improvement. A total of 78,482 more candidates attained at least Result 1 compared to 2024, when 350,146 candidates (98.1%) met the required standard.

Candidates who did not fulfil all conditions for the award of the UCE certificate (Result 2) numbered 1,191 (0.2%), while only 130 candidates (0.03%) scored below the basic level (Result 3) in all subjects. This represents a sharp drop from 2024, when 1.9% of candidates failed to meet the conditions for award of the certificate.

"The percentage of candidates that do not qualify for the UCE certificate has dropped very significantly from 1.9% to only 0.31%," Odongo said, explaining that Result 2 indicates failure to meet all certification requirements.

Some of the affected candidates



Janet Museveni, First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports displays the 2024 UCE results at State House Nakasero on February 13

PHOTO BY MIRIAM NAMUTEBI

lacked project scores or sat for fewer subjects than required.

## INCREASED ENROLMENT

A total of 432,163 candidates from 3,975 centres registered for the 2025 examinations, up from 359,417 in 2024. This represents an increase of 72,746 candidates (20.2%).

Female candidates constituted the majority, with 227,871 (52.7%), while 204,292 (47.3%) were male. Of the total, 154,642 (35.8%) were beneficiaries of the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme, while 277,521 (64.2%) were non-USE candidates.

UNEB reported that 2,214 candidates (0.5%) were absent, slightly lower than the 2,297 (0.6%) recorded in 2024.

The format for reporting performance has changed to align with the lower secondary Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Achievement levels are now graded as 'A' for exceptional

performance, 'B' (outstanding), 'C' (satisfactory), D (basic) and 'E' (elementary or below basic).

UNEB reported improved performance at higher achievement levels, particularly in Christian Religious Education (CRE), geography and English language. In English language, about 3% of candidates scored an A; CRE recorded 3.6% at grade A, while geography had 3.4%.

"More candidates have achieved higher levels of C and above in 2025 compared to 2024. This is quite encouraging in the sciences, where the percentages of candidates who have not achieved at least the D level have dropped significantly," Odongo noted.

Despite improvements, examiners observed that many candidates still struggle to interpret scenarios, connect experimental results to real-life situations and demonstrate creative problem-solving skills.

## GENDER PERFORMANCE

Female candidates outperformed males in English Language and CRE. In other subjects, including history and Political Education, geography, mathematics, agriculture, physics, chemistry and biology, male candidates slightly outperformed females at the exceptional and outstanding levels, though overall performance was largely comparable.

Overall, 3.6% of female candidates scored A in English compared to 2.5% of males. In CRE, 3.9% of females attained an A, compared to 3.2% of males. In Agriculture and chemistry, fewer than 1% of candidates attained grade A, though performance improved significantly at grade B.

## SPECIAL NEEDS

A total of 708 Special Needs Education (SNE) candidates registered for the examinations, compared to 743 in 2024. They comprised candidates who were

blind, deaf, dyslexic, physically disabled, or had other medical conditions requiring special consideration. They included 342 males and 366 females.

Only four SNE candidates (0.6%) were absent. Of those who sat, 695 (98.2%) qualified for the UCE certificate. At Luzira Upper Prison, 39 of the 40 registered candidates sat for the examination and all qualified for the certificate. At Mbarara Main Prison Inmates' Secondary School, all 12 registered candidates sat and passed.

## MALPRACTICES

UNEB reported only 63 cases of examination malpractice, mainly in mathematics and science practical papers, where some candidates were allegedly given experimental results to copy.

Board chairperson Prof. Celestino Obua said a UNEB study found that learners under the Competency-Based Curriculum demonstrate improved research skills, creativity, innovation and communication abilities. However the study also identified challenges such as limited library and internet access, large class sizes and high project costs.

To maintain standards, Obua said UNEB will intensify monitoring and evaluation to ensure adherence to examination guidelines and safeguard the integrity of scores. In a survey of 36,546 candidates from 118 districts, 96.3% said the exam items were within the syllabus, 74.7% found the time allocated adequate and 88.2% said the papers were clearly presented. While 66.4% described the exams as fair, 28.8% found them difficult and 4.7% said they were easy. The findings, UNEB noted, align with overall performance trends, with most candidates attaining the "C" (Satisfactory) competency level.