

# TOP SCHOOLS RAISE SENIOR FIVE CUT-OFF POINTS

PHOTO BY MPALANYI SSENTONGO

By Vision Reporters

The 2025 Senior Four leavers must have exceptionally performed well in the key subjects to secure a subject combination in Uganda's top secondary schools.

While most rural schools will admit a candidate who scored at least 3Cs in a science subject combination, those in top and traditional schools have set a triple A for the same.

While rural schools will admit learners with at least 2Cs and 1D for an arts subject combination, top public and private schools will demand not less than a triple B for arts in most cases.

For instance, the girls who will be admitted at Mt. St. Mary's College Namagunga will be required to have a triple A in any of the subjects that make up a science combination, while their arts counterparts will have at least 2As and 1B.

This implies that candidates admitted for physics, chemistry and mathematics (PCM), will need only As in each of the three subjects.

Those who will be admitted for history, economics and geography (HEG) must have at least 2As in two of these subjects, while the worst done subject must have a B.

Sr. Regina Nabawanuka, the headteacher of Mt. St. Mary's Namagunga, said the performance in the just released Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) was by far better than that of 2024.

This, she said, explains why students will be required to have performed exceptionally well in each of the subjects to be given a subject combination.

"The candidates performed very well and that explains why



Some of the school heads participating in the Senior Five learners' placement exercise at UMA multi-purpose hall in Kampala yesterday

they will need to have stronger grades for one to take up either sciences or arts," she said.

Nabawanuka said at least 120 UCE stars will be admitted to Namagunga for Senior Five.

She made the remarks yesterday in an interview with *New Vision* during the first day of the Senior Five selection exercise underway at the Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) showgrounds in Kampala.

The event, which attracted about 1,000 secondary schools, was officially opened by Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Frances Atima, the chairperson of the education ministry placement committee, said at least 120,340 candidates will be placed at 866 government secondary schools, while 164,280 others will enrol

## MINISTRY'S ADVICE

While the education ministry is happy with the learners' interests in sciences, Dr Turyagyenda asked schools to ensure that they offer career guidance to candidates before they are given science combinations.

"It's good news that many of our children are now appreciating sciences. Over the years, we were registering very few numbers of students taking on sciences at post-secondary school level, but now we are seeing a change," she said.

"These are the benefits of a competence-based curriculum. Sciences are easy when taught right and the learners are demonstrating just this," she added.

However, Turyagyenda noted that the ministry will analyse the trends on admission and advise the schools accordingly on how to handle the numbers going forward.

at 1,369 private schools.

"For candidates who will not be absorbed in secondary school, we have a Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) pathway and they will be skilled there," she

said.

The situation at Mt. St. Mary's Namagunga is not any different from other top schools such as King's College Budo, Gayaza High School, Seeta High School, St Julian Gayaza, Namilyango

College and Trinity College Nabbingo.

At Nabbingo, a total of 110 learners will be admitted for Senior Five from the government selection exercise.

However, Alex Kigozi, the deputy headteacher, said learners will be required to have attained only a triple A in both arts and science subject combinations.

"If you want to take PCB [physics, chemistry and biology] or HEG [history, economics and geography], the candidate must have scored an A in each of those subjects. That is how tight it is," he said.

At Maryhill High School in Mbarara district and Bweranyangi Girls Secondary School in Bushenyi, the learners must have scored a minimum of 2As and 1B in the three core subjects for either arts or science combination.

## SCIENCE VS ARTS CHALLENGE

While many candidates qualify for either sciences or arts subjects at A'level, schools are struggling to convince children to take on arts.

Most of the schools are reserving just 20% of the admission slots for candidates who will study arts.

Robinah Katongole Kizito, the Gayaza High School headteacher, said it is now a trend that candidates demand sciences and not arts.

"For instance, at Gayaza High School, the last person on the admitted list is a candidate who scored 5As and 4Bs. This candidate can do both sciences and arts," Kizito said.

However, Kizito said they will admit some candidates who will enrol for arts subject combinations.

## WHAT A, BS MEAN

Under the new secondary school curriculum assessment, UNEB adopted five letter grades A, B, C, D and E, replacing a nine-figure grading of 1-9, which covered distinction (D), credit (C), pass, and fail (F).

Under the new grading system, letter grade A is the highest score a candidate can score in a subject, whereas E is the lowest.

Each of the letter grades demonstrate a certain degree of competence for each candidate in that particular.

According to UNEB, letter grade 'A' is given to exceptional candidates who demonstrate an extraordinary level of competence by applying innovatively and creatively acquired knowledge and skills in real life situations.

In addition, letter grade 'B' is awarded to outstanding candidates in a subject who demonstrate a high level of competence by applying the acquired knowledge and skills in real life situations.

This is followed by letter grade 'C' for candidates who are satisfactory and have demonstrated an adequate level of competence by applying the acquired knowledge and skills in real life situations.

On the other hand, letter grade 'D' which is basic, is awarded to candidates who demonstrate a minimum level of competence by applying the acquired knowledge and skills in real life situations.

The last letter grade 'E' is elementary, awarded to candidates who demonstrate below the basic level of competence in applying the acquired knowledge and skill in real life situations.