



The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni (centre), receives the 2025 UACE results from (left-right) the permanent secretary of the ministry of Education and Sports, Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda; Minister of State for Primary Education Dr Joyce Kaducu Moriku; the UNEB executive director, Dan N. Odongo; UNEB chairperson Prof. Celestino Obua; state minister for Higher Education Dr John C. Musingo; and Minister of State for Sports Peter Ogwang at State House Nakasero on Friday

OVER 113,000 QUALIFY FOR UNIVERSITY

BY JOHN MASABA

More than 68% of candidates who sat for the 2025 Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) examinations have qualified for university admission, with 98.9% passing the exams.

The results show a significant rise in university eligibility: 113,291 candidates, representing 68.6% of those who sat for the exams, obtained the required two principal passes.

According to the results released by the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, at State House Nakasero in Kampala on Friday, this marks an improvement from 65.5% (about 92,273 candidates) recorded in 2024.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) reported that 165,172 candidates sat for the examinations, including 72,374 females and 92,798 males, representing a 17.2% increase in enrolment compared to 2024.

Further analysis shows that eligibility for post-secondary education is even higher when technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions are considered. At least 145,129 candidates, representing 87.9% of those who sat for the exams qualify for admission into TVET institutions after obtaining at

least one principal pass and two subsidiary passes.

UNEB executive director Dan Odongo highlighted the rapid growth in the number of students reaching the final stage of secondary education. He said the post-pandemic period has seen a 71% increase in candidature, rising from 96,557 in 2022 to more than 165,000 candidates this year.

SUBJECT TRENDS

The results show a shifting trend in subject performance, with science subjects registering a strong recovery compared to the humanities, reflecting a growing interest in science-based subjects by learners.

For example, UNEB noted that entries for science subjects and mathematics attracted 70,132 candidates. Of these, 37,134 sat for chemistry, 35,660 for biology and 21,302 for physics.

At the principal pass level, significant improvements were recorded in mathematics, chemistry, biology and agriculture, alongside geography and economics.

However, entrepreneurship education, Christian religious education and fine art registered noticeable declines in performance.

"While recognising the indispensable role of the humanities in nation-building, the board reiterates the strategic importance of mathematics

GENDER PERFORMANCE

Although females accounted for only 43.7% of candidates (72,764) compared to 56.3% males, female candidates performed better proportionally.

The percentage of passes at the upper levels (three and two principal passes) was higher among females.

Specifically, 72.8% of female candidates obtained at least two principal passes compared to 65.3% of males.

However, males continue to dominate science subjects, where female participation remains relatively lower. Physics, in particular, recorded the lowest number of female candidates. Female entries in the subject have also fluctuated over time.



SOME VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS RECORDED DECLINING INTEREST.

and the sciences in driving innovation, industrialisation and technological advancement," Odongo said.

He added that sustained investment in science infrastructure, teacher capacity and laboratory resources remains critical to strengthening the pipeline into tertiary education programmes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

"Although enrolment in STEM subjects shows

a gradual upward trend, deliberate multi-sectoral interventions will be required to achieve national targets in science and technology development," he said.

CONCERNS

Despite the improved overall performance, UNEB expressed concern about students' ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations.

In the humanities, examiners noted that many candidates struggled with interpreting questions correctly, while inadequate practical exposure remained a major challenge in the sciences.

"The constant factor in candidates' work across all subjects is the failure to relate knowledge acquired in class to real-life situations," Odongo said.

He added that some teachers appear to be

skipping critical topics such as physical chemistry, which affects performance.

LARGE ENTRY

There was also a notable increase in candidature for core science subjects. Mathematics entries rose sharply from 58,495 in 2024 to 70,132 in 2025, while candidates taking biology increased from 24,853 to 35,660.

Performance quality improved significantly as well. The proportion of candidates scoring an "A" in mathematics jumped from 3.6% to 12.9%, while biology rose from 1.1% to 5.9%. This suggests that students are achieving higher proficiency in STEM subjects despite growing class sizes.

In contrast, some humanities and vocational subjects recorded declining interest and performance.

Entrepreneurship education saw one of the sharpest drops in candidature from 55,909 candidates in 2024 to 30,245 in 2025. Its pass rate (A-E) also declined from 65.2% to 49.5%.

Similarly, history and Christian religious education recorded slight decreases in the proportion of top "A" grades.

SUBSIDIARIES

General Paper remained the largest entry subject with 165,154 candidates. Although the overall pass

rate improved from 81.9% to 87.7%, the proportion of candidates scoring top "A" grades declined from 8% to 4.9%.

Meanwhile, subsidiary information and communication technology registered growth in both candidature and performance, with "A" grades increasing from 4.4% to 7.9%, reflecting the growing importance of digital literacy.

PRISON CANDIDATES

The board also registered 70 candidates from Uganda Government Upper Prison, Luzira (66 males and four females), compared to 49 candidates in 2024. Of these, 68 candidates (64 males and four females) sat for the examinations.

RESULTS ACCESS

The 2025 UACE examinations were conducted between November 10 and December 5 at 2,452 centres across the country, up from 2,255 centres in 2024.

Odongo said examination malpractice remained low, with 351 cases (0.2% of candidates) reported from 47 centres. The cases mainly involved possession of unauthorised materials and receiving assistance during practical examinations.

"Those results will be withheld pending completion of investigations, in accordance with the UNEB Act," he said.