EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

2025 SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS REPORT

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Foreword

The School Certificate Examination marks an important milestone in learners' academic journey. It signifies the completion of secondary education and the transition to tertiary education. The examination also provides system-level feedback on learning achievement, useful for improving teaching and learning processes. The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) therefore produces performance review reports after each examination cycle to provide feedback and detailed analysis of learning achievement. The reports provide information on learners' achievements, strengths, weaknesses, trends, and challenges. Furthermore, they identify best practices, gaps, and areas for improvement in teaching and learning processes.

This report provides information and analysis of the 2025 School Certificate Examination. It is our hope that this report will serve as a valuable resource for research and development, benchmarking, and improved learner achievement levels.

Dr. Michael M. Chilala

Executive Director

Examinations Council of Zambia

Acknowledgements

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Examinations Council of Zambia

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1.0. Introduction

This report presents the key highlights of the 2025 School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination, segmented into two sections.

The first section provides an overview of examination results, focusing on candidature statistics, including entries, the number of candidates who sat the examination, and absenteeism rates. It further presents performance based on certificate awards, subject mean scores, grade classifications, as well as statistical information relating to candidates with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The second section provides a detailed analysis of subject-specific performance across 33 subjects. For ease of interpretation, the subjects are categorised into five broad learning areas: Literature and Languages, Business Studies, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Practical Subjects. The analysis highlights key performance trends, strengths, and areas requiring improvement to inform decision-making and support quality enhancement within the education system.

2.0. Examination Results Highlights

2.1. Candidature

2.1.1. In 2025, a total of 1,733 centres, 96 more compared to 1,637 in 2024, presented candidates for the School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination. One of these centres, St. Jeff College, is in Gauteng, South Africa, while the remaining centres are all Zambian schools.

2.1.2. A total of 197,690 candidates from the Zambian centres registered for the 2025 examination, reflecting a 14.35 percent increase compared to the 2024 figure of 172,880 candidates. Of these candidates, 94,446 (47.77%) were boys, and 103,244 (52.23%) were girls.

2.1.3. The number of candidates registering for the School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination continued to grow in 2025, with boys increasing by 13.37 percent and girls by 16.56percent. This indicates a notable rise compared to 2024, when registration for boys increased by 2.43 percent and girls by 5.20 percent.

2.1.4. At St. Jeff College, 87 candidates registered for the 2025 examination, with 43 (49.43%) being boys and 44 (50.57%) being girls.

2.1.5. Compared to 2025, the number of registered candidates decreased by 10.31 percent, dropping from 97 in 2024 to 87 in 2025. The number of registered boys decreased by 6.52 percent, dropping from 46 in 2024 to 43 in 2025, while the number of registered girls decreased by 13.73 percent dropping from 51 in 2024 to 44 in 2025.

2.1.6. Figure 1 presents the trends in candidate registration for the School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination over a four-year period (2020–2025).

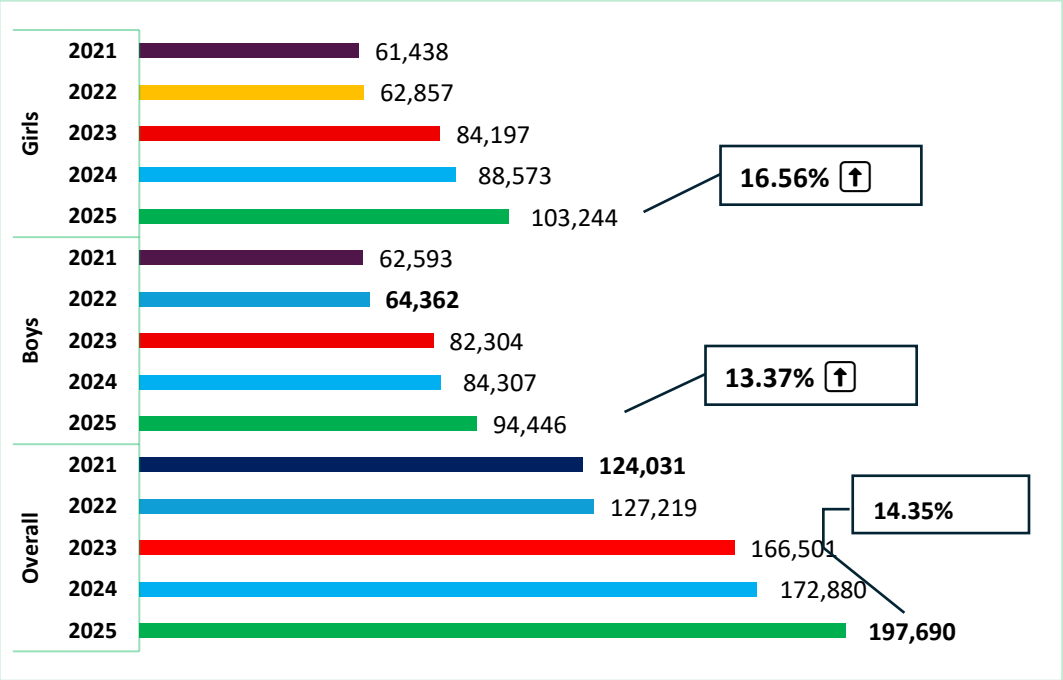


Figure 1: Trends in Candidate Registration for the SC from 2021 to 2025

2.1.7. Out of the total registered candidates from the Zambian schools, 194,069 (98.17%) sat the examination. This included 92,585 (98.03%) boys and 101,484 (98.30%) girls.

2.1.8. In 2025, the proportion of candidates sitting the examination marginally increased by 0.15 percentage points compared to 2024, when it dropped by 0.12 percentage points. For boys, it increased by 0.07 percentage points and for girls by 0.20 percentage points.

2.1.9. Of the total registered candidates from St. Jeff College, 79 (90.80%), comprising 39 (90.70%) boys and 40 (90.10%) girls, sat the examination.

2.1.10. In 2025, the proportion of candidates sitting the examination at St. Jeff College dropped by 7.14 percentage points, with boys decreasing by 7.13 percentage points and girls by 7.99 percentage points.

2.1.11. With regards to absenteeism, the rates in the Zambian schools decreased by 0.15 percentage points from 1.98 percent in 2024 to 1.83 percent in 2025 indicating a

slight reversal of the upward trends observed in the previous two years. Specifically, girls recorded a higher decrease in absenteeism rate (0.21 percentage points), dropping from 1.91 percent in 2024 to 1.70 percent in 2025. The absenteeism rate for boys marginally dropped by 0.07 percentage points from 2.04 per cent in 2024 to 1.97 percent in 2025.

2.1.12. Figure 2 presents the trends in the absenteeism rate for the School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination over four years (2021–2025).

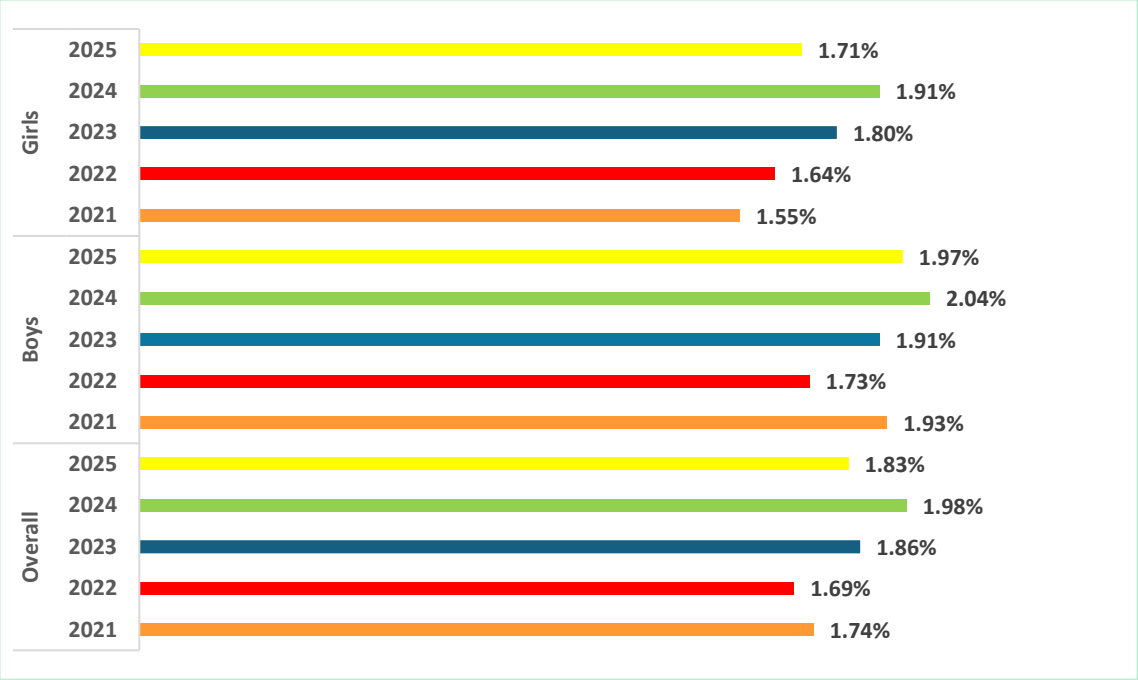


Figure 2: Trends in the absenteeism rate for the SC Ordinary Level Examination (2021 to 2025)

2.1.13. An analysis of absenteeism by province revealed that Eastern Province recorded the lowest rate at 1.26 percent, followed by Southern Province at 1.27 percent. In contrast, North-Western Province had the highest absenteeism rate at 3.09 percent, with Muchinga Province recording the second highest at 2.33 percent.

2.1.14. Four provinces—Eastern (1.26%), Southern (1.27%), Copperbelt (1.80%), and Central (1.61%)—recorded absenteeism rates lower than the national rate of 1.83 percent. The remaining six provinces, including St. Jeff College, had absenteeism rates higher than the national rate.

2.1.15. Over the past five years, Copperbelt, Eastern, Lusaka, and Southern provinces have consistently maintained absenteeism rates below the national rate (see Figure 3).

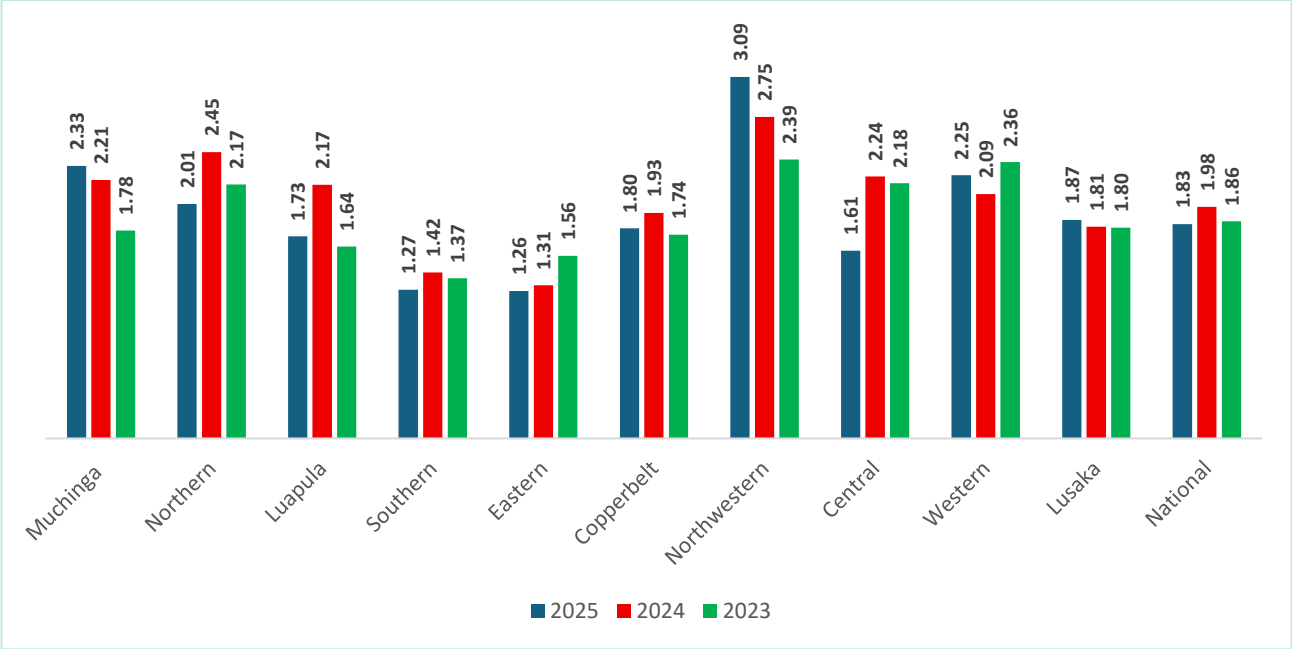


Figure 3: Trends in the absenteeism rate for the SC Ordinary Level Examination by Province

2.2. Certification for the School Certificate Examinations

The School Certificate Examination Ordinary Level Certificate awards are categorised into School Certificate, General Certificate of Education and Fail (see table 2).

2.2.1. A School Certificate (SC) is awarded to a candidate who, at one sitting and during the same examination;

i. Passes in at least six subjects, including English Language, with credit in at least one of them; or

ii. Passes in five subjects, including English Language, with credit in at least two of them.

2.2.2. A candidate who obtains GRADE ONE TO EIGHT in at least one subject but fails to meet the School Certificate requirements is awarded a Statement of results.

2.2.3. A candidate who scores Grade 9 in all subjects will have failed the examination:

Table 1: Grading System for SC and G.C.E

Range	Grade	Grade Description
75% - 100%	Grade 1	Upper Distinction
70% - 74%	Grade 2	Lower Distinction
65% - 69%	Grade 3	Upper Merit
60% - 64%	Grade 4	Lower Merit
55% - 59%	Grade 5	Upper Credit
50% - 54%	Grade 6	Lower Credit
45% - 49%	Grade 7	Upper Satisfactory
40% - 44%	Grade 8	Lower Satisfactory
0% - 39%	Grade 9	Fail (Unsatisfactory)

2.3. Performance

This section analyses the performance in the 2025 School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination by looking at the certificate awards, subject mean scores, and the distribution of grades across subjects.

2.3.1. Performance according to Certificate Awards

2.3.1.1.

Table 2: Proportions of Candidates in the School Certificate Category (2021 to 2025)

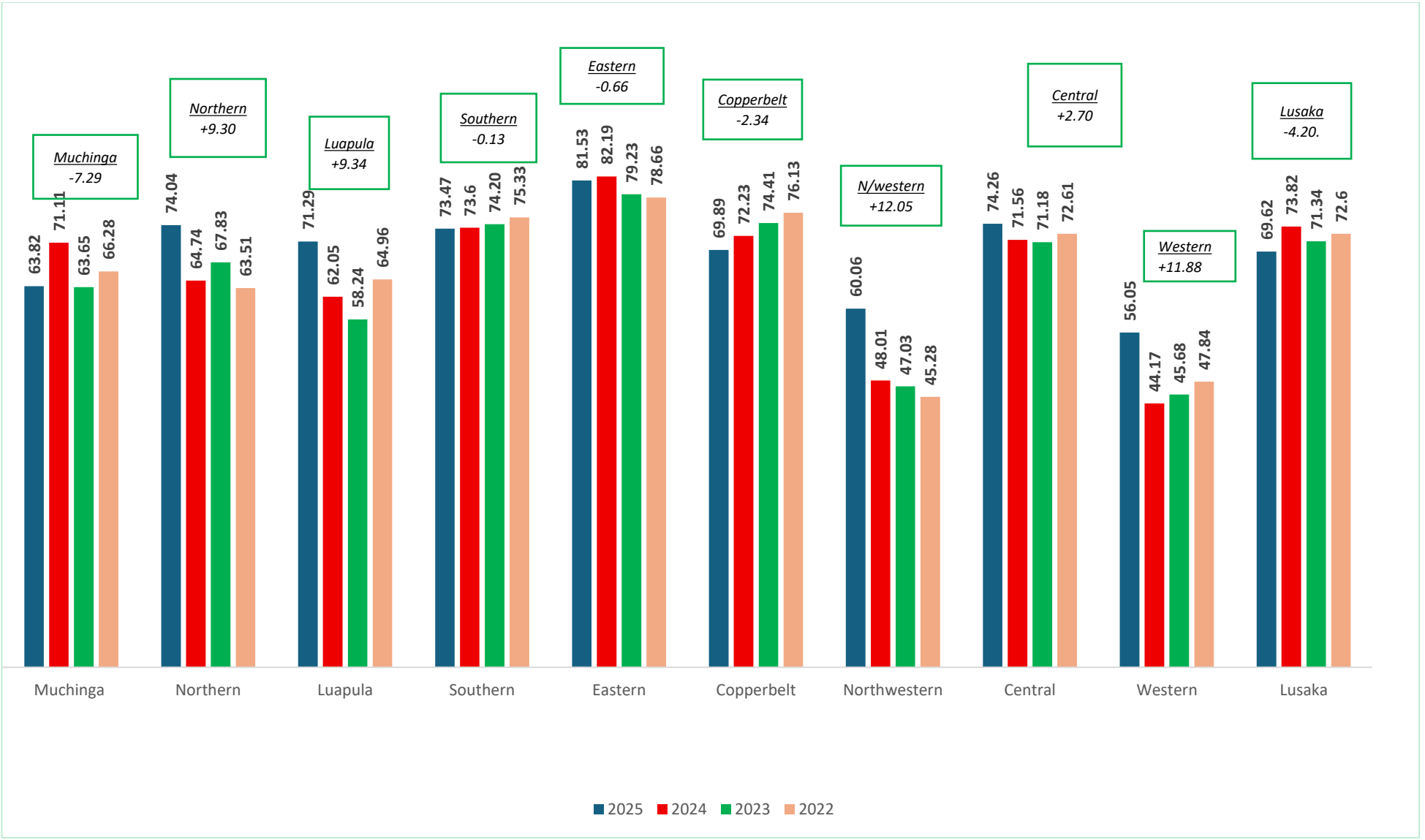
Year	Girls (%)	Boys (%)	Overall (%)
2021	66.76	67.54	67.00
2022	69.27	69.31	69.29
2023	68.30	67.75	68.03
2024	67.83	68.54	68.17
2025	70.10	70.44	70.26

2.3.1.2. An analysis of the proportion of candidates obtaining a School Certificate across provinces showed that five provinces, Northern (9.30 pp), Luapula (9.24 pp), Northwestern (12.05 pp), Central (2.70 pp) and Western (11.88 pp), recorded an increase compared to the previous year

2.3.1.3. Northwestern Province recorded the largest increase from the previous year with a rise of 12.05 percentage points.

2.3.1.4. In contrast, four provinces, Muchinga (7.29 pp), Southern (0.134 pp), Eastern (0.66 pp), Copperbelt (2.34 pp) and Lusaka (4.20 pp) recorded a decrease in the proportion of candidates obtaining a School Certificate, with Muchinga Province recording the largest decline of 7.29 percentage points.

2.3.1.5. Similar to 2022,2023 and 2024, Eastern Province recorded the highest proportion of candidates obtaining School Certificates in 2025 at 79.87 percent, while Northwestern Province had the lowest proportion at 59.53 percent (See figure 5).


Muchinga -7.29
Northern +9.30
Luapula +9.34
Southern -0.13
Eastern -0.66
Copperbelt -2.34
N/western +12.05
Central +2.70
Western +11.88
Lusaka -4.20.
63.82 71.11 63.65 66.28
74.04 64.74 67.83 63.51
71.29 62.05 58.24 64.96
73.47 73.6 74.20 75.33
81.53 82.19 79.23 78.66
69.89 72.23 74.41 76.13
60.06 48.01 47.03 45.28
74.26 71.56 71.18 72.61
56.05 44.17 45.68 47.84
69.62 73.82 71.34 72.6
Muchinga
Northern
Luapula
Southern
Eastern
Copperbelt
Northwestern
Central
Western
Lusaka
2025 2024 2023 2022

2.3.1.6. In the 2025 SC Ordinary Level Examination, the proportion of candidates obtaining a Statement decreased by 1.52 percentage points, from 29.74 percent in 2024 to 28.22 percent. This decline may be associated with the increase in the proportion of candidates obtaining School Certificates, which has led to a corresponding reduction in the proportion of those obtaining Statements.

2.3.1.7. Six provinces, Northern, Luapula, North- Western, Central, Western and Southern, recorded a reduction in the proportion of candidates obtaining Statements compared to 2024. Western Province saw the largest decrease, with a drop of 13.70 percentage points, while Muchinga Province recorded the highest increase, with a rise of 4.26 percentage points.

2.3.1.8. Similar to 2024, Eastern Province had the lowest proportion of candidates obtaining Statements, with 19.68 percent, while Western Province reported the highest proportion at 39.55 percent.

2.3.1.9. In 2025, a higher percentage of girls (28.56%) obtained Statements compared to boys (27.86%). This is similar to 2024, when more girls (30.29%) obtained Statements than boys (29.16%).

2.3.1.10. Table 3 presents the proportion of candidates who obtained a Statement across the 10 provinces from 2022 to 2025.

Province	2025			2024			2023			Change from 2024	
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total		
National	27.86	28.56	28.22	29.16	30.29	29.74	29.98	29.86	29.92	-2.07	Reduced
Muchinga	33.4	33.79	33.59	26.14	28.93	27.46	33.63	33.93	33.78	4.66	Increased
Luapula	24.53	30.5	27.36	32.75	39.03	35.54	36.66	40.94	38.52	-11.67	Reduced
Eastern	18.18	18.11	18.15	16.97	17.95	17.42	20.53	20.03	20.3	0.2	Increased
Lusaka	29.62	29.23	29.4	24.57	25.66	25.16	27.56	27.74	27.65	3.74	Increased
North-Western	36.79	37.09	36.95	46.13	47.27	46.71	47.75	47.28	47.51	-10.32	Reduced
Central	24.78	24.13	24.44	26.44	26.47	26.46	27.17	26.84	27	-2.03	Reduced
Southern	24.84	25.93	25.4	24.6	25.81	25.22	25.06	25.13	25.1	-0.41	Reduced
Western	38.08	39.95	39.08	47.11	52.78	50.13	46.44	48.45	47.48	-13.7	Reduced
Copperbelt	28.84	28.56	28.69	26.9	25.47	26.12	25.17	23.75	24.41	3.22	Increased
Northern	23.52	26.04	24.72	32.5	33.8	33.06	29.77	29.79	29.78	-9.08	Reduced

2.3.2. Performance according to Subject Mean Scores

This section provides an analysis of candidate performance based on mean scores across various subjects. The analysis covers individual subjects as well as broader

subject groupings. To ensure comparability of performance across subjects, raw scores were converted to a standardised scale of 100 (See figure 6 and 7).

2.3.2.1. In the 2025 School Certificate Examination, the highest mean score was recorded in Food and Nutrition at 70.07 per cent, while the lowest mean score was in science at 25.06 percent. In contrast to 2024, the highest mean score was recorded in Additional Mathematics at 68.35 percent and the lowest in science at 25.01 percent.

2.3.2.2. When comparing mean scores across subject groupings in the 2024 examination, Practical Subjects recorded the highest mean at 63.04 percent, followed by Literature and Languages at 51.56 percent. This trend was consistent with 2023 and 2024. Commercial Subjects, however, had the lowest mean score, at 39.06 percent.

2.3.2.3. In the Literature and Languages category, candidates recorded the highest mean in Luvale, showing an improvement of 14.22 percentage points compared to 2024. Conversely, Silozi experienced the largest decline, with a decrease of 2.36 percentage points in comparison to 2024.

2.3.2.4. In the Practical Subjects group, the performance of candidates improved in six out of the total seven subjects when compared to 2024. Candidates showed significant improvement in Food and Nutrition by a 3.86 percentage point increase, while Fashion and Fabrics marginally declined by 0.98 percentage points.

2.3.2.5. For Natural Sciences, candidates showed improvement in Computer Studies by 5.87 percentage points, followed by biology by 3.85 percentage points when compared to 2024. Additional Mathematics candidates recorded the largest decrease in performance in the subject grouping, with a decline of 10.15 percentage points from 2024.

2.3.2.6. In Commerce and Principles of Accounts, candidates' performance marginally declined in Commerce by 0.68 percentage points and marginally improved in Principles of Accounts by 0.50 percentage points when compared to 2024.

2.3.2.7. In Social Sciences, student performance decreased in four out of the total five subjects, leading to an overall decline in percentage points. Christian Religious Education saw the most significant drop, with a decrease of 4.32 percentage

points. On the other hand, Civic Education experienced the largest improvement, with an increase of 4.61 percentage points compared to 2024.

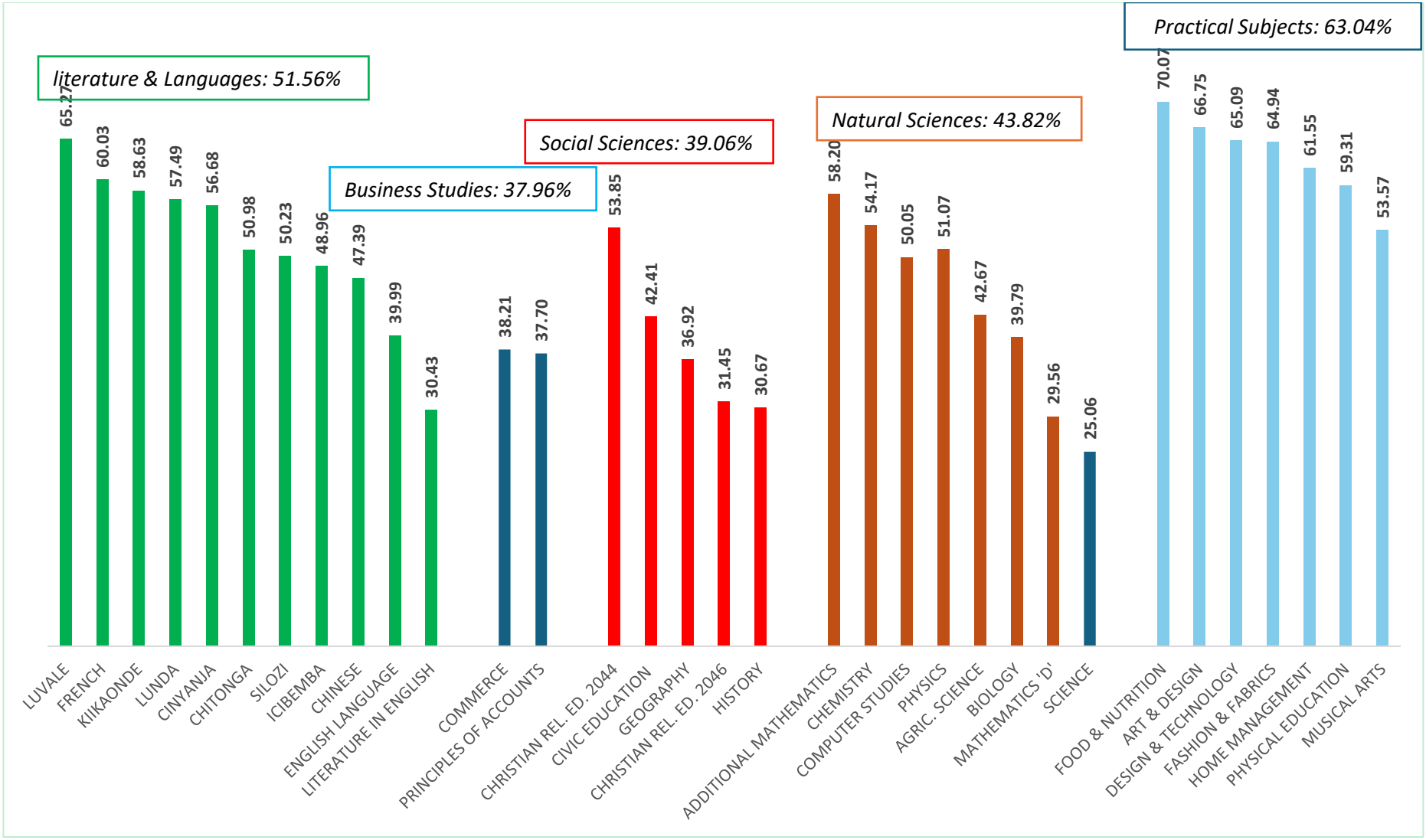


Figure 3: 2025 Mean Scores (%) in all Subjects

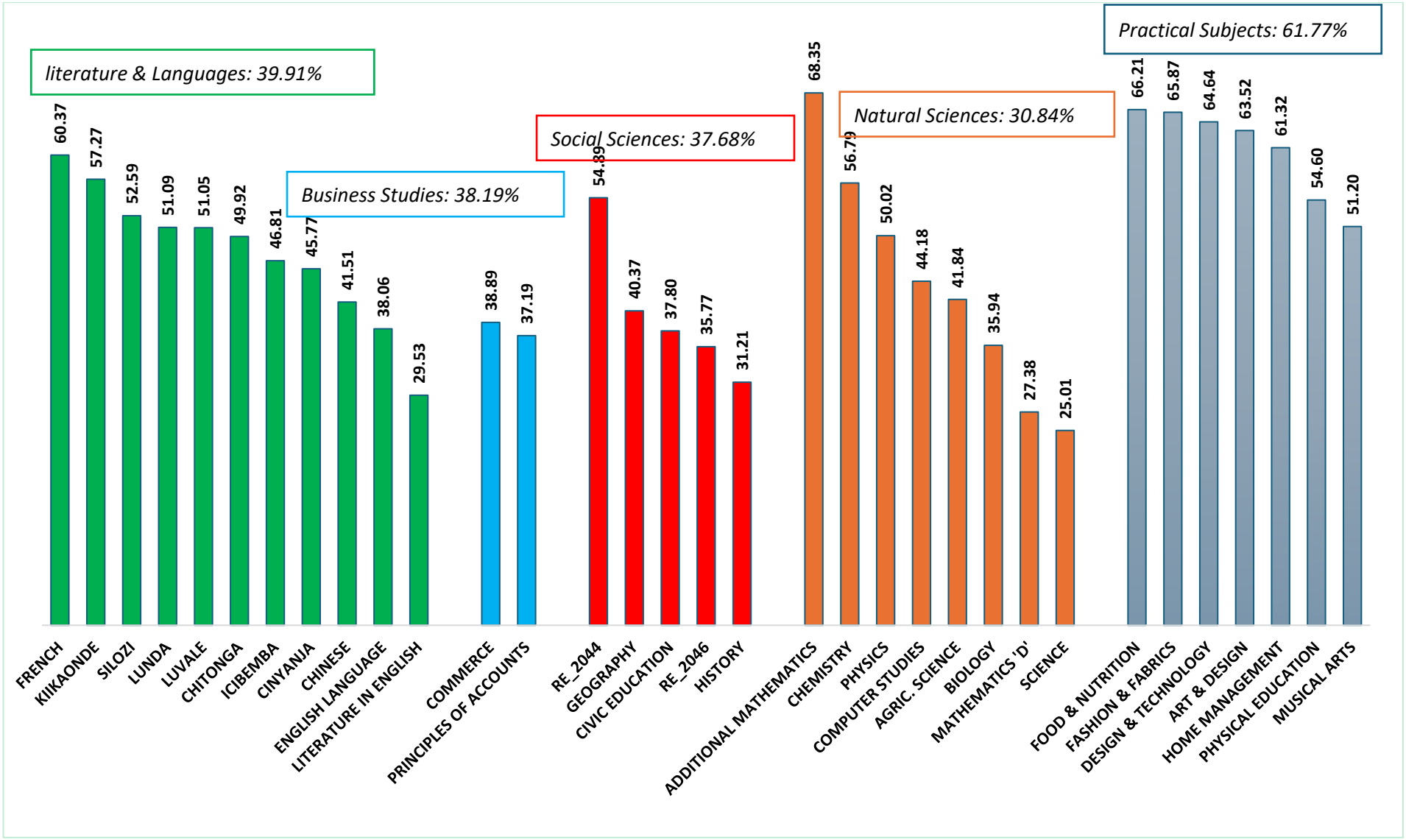


Figure 4: 2024 Mean Scores (%) in all Subjects

2.3.2.8. Candidates' performance by sex across subject groupings showed distinct trends.

2.3.2.9. Within the Literature and Languages group, girls outperformed boys in most subjects, while boys showed higher performance in Icibemba, Lunda, Luvale, and Silozi. Overall, the performance differences between sexes were minimal in most subjects (see Figure 8)

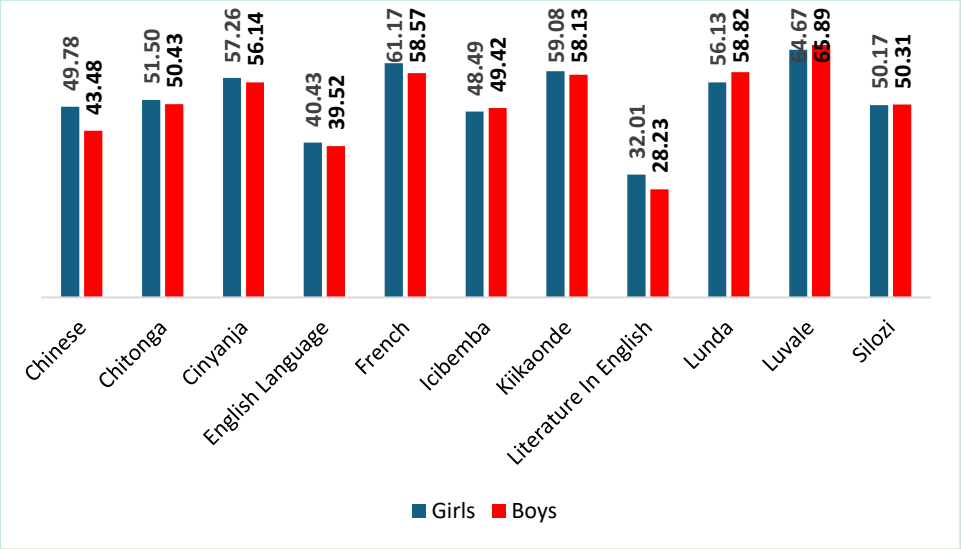


Figure 5: 2025 Mean Scores (%) in Literature & Languages by Sex

2.3.2.10. Within the Business Studies group, boys recorded marginally higher mean scores than girls in both Commerce and Principles of Accounts, however, the differences were minimal (see Figure 9).

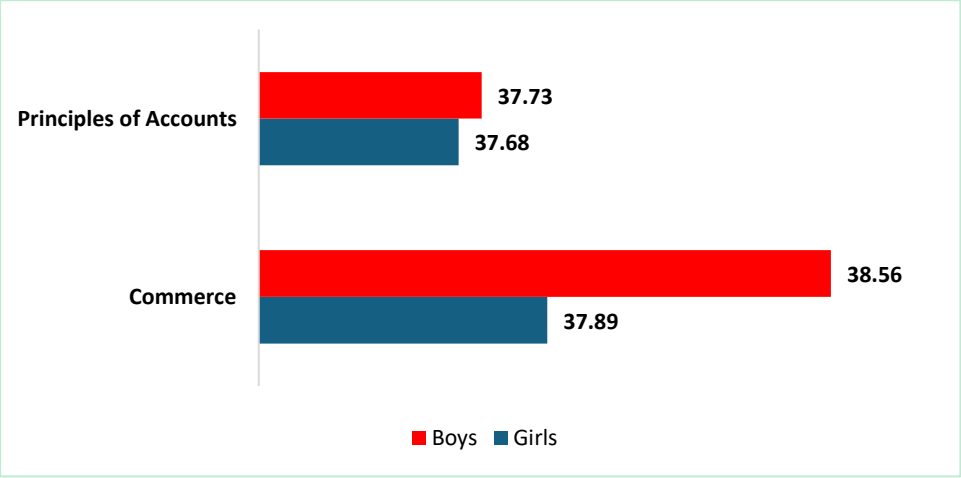


Figure 6: 2025 Mean Scores (%) in Business Studies by Sex

2.3.2.11. Within the Social Sciences group, girls and boys recorded nearly identical mean scores in Civic Education, with girls at 42.33 percent and boys at 42.50 percent, indicating comparable performance (see Figure 10).

2.3.2.12. Boys outperformed girls in Geography and History. In contrast, girls performed substantially better than boys in Religious Education (2044 and 2046).

2.3.2.13. A similar pattern was observed in the 2024 School Certificate examination.

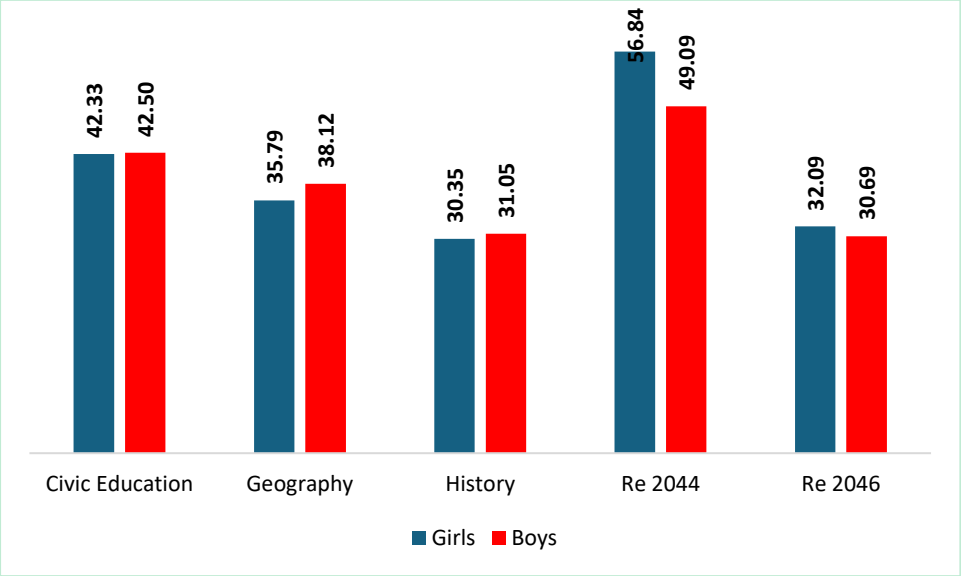


Figure 7: 2025 Mean Scores (%) in Social Sciences by Sex

2.3.2.14. In the Natural Sciences group, boys recorded higher mean scores across all subjects. The widest performance gap was observed in Additional Mathematics, where boys outscored girls by 4.44 points. Notable differences were also recorded in Mathematics D with a 4.17 percentage point gap and Physics with a 2.65 percentage point gap (see Figure 11).

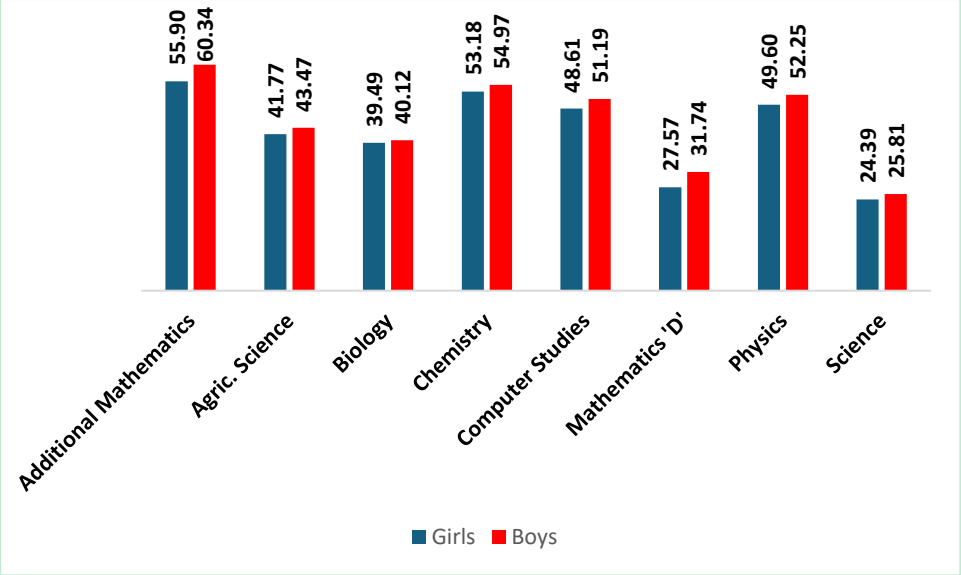


Figure 8: 2025 Mean Scores (%) in Natural Sciences by Sex

2.3.2.15. For Practical Subjects, the performance by sex was relatively balanced. Girls recorded higher mean scores in subjects like Fashion & Fabrics and Food & Nutrition, while boys performed slightly better in Design & Technology and Physical Education. The performance gaps were small, indicating that both genders showed comparable academic achievement in this category (Figure 12).

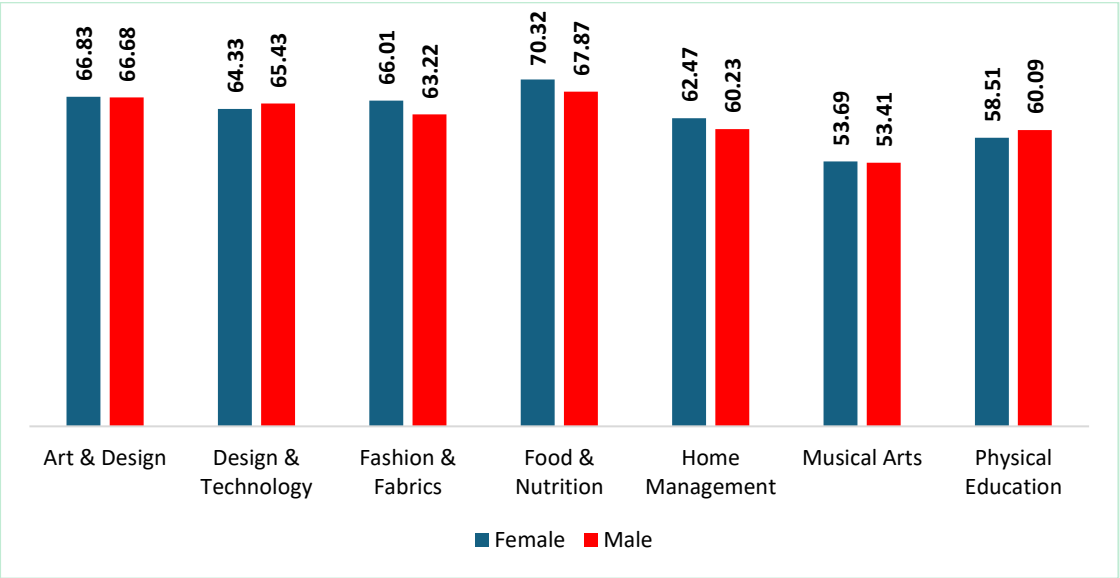


Figure 9: 2025 Mean Scores (%) in Practical Subjects by Sex

2.3.2.16. Table 3 presents the mean scores by school type across selected subjects. Overall, the results indicate clear performance differences among Grant-Aided, Private, GRZ (government), and Community schools, reflecting variations in resourcing, learning environments, and instructional support.

2.3.2.17. Across nearly all subjects, Grant-Aided schools consistently achieved the highest mean scores, closely followed by Private schools. GRZ and Community schools generally recorded lower mean performance, with Community schools typically performing lowest.

2.3.2.18. The observed pattern suggests that school resourcing, teacher availability, class size, and instructional infrastructure likely contribute substantially to performance differentials. Subjects requiring practical facilities (Design & Technology, Sciences) showed especially large advantages for Private and Grant-Aided schools. Meanwhile, foundational subjects such as Mathematics and English also reflected similar inequalities, indicating systemic differences in learning environments.

Table 1: 2025 Mean Scores (%) in Selected Subjects by School Type

Subject	Grant Aided	Community	GRZ	Private
English Language	50.98	39.89	38.95	47.77
Mathematics 'D'	48.51	29.02	27.96	38.62
Agric. Science	50.49	-	41.41	49.73
Biology	49.76	39.31	38.91	45.74
Science	31.80	25.98	24.42	30.83
Design & Technology	72.92	54.37	64.30	74.34
Commerce	48.83	33.21	36.93	43.31
Principles of Accounts	49.21	38.66	36.09	48.36

2.3.3. Performance according to Grade Distributions by gender

The grade distribution patterns for 2025 show slight shifts in candidate performance across grades. Overall, both girls and boys recorded modest improvements in higher grade attainment and reductions in lower grade attainment, indicating a gradual upward movement in performance in terms of grade distribution.

2.3.3.1. Among girls, the proportion attaining grade One increased from **5.05 percent** in 2024 to **5.46 percent** in 2025, reflecting an improvement in the top level. Increases were also observed in grades Four, Five and Six, with grade Six

recording the largest gain. Conversely, slight declines were noted in grades Two, Three, Seven, Eight and Nine. The reduction in grade Nine from **23.86 percent** to **23.24 percent** suggests a marginal decrease in the proportion of girls at the lowest level. Taken together, these shifts indicate a mild overall improvement in girls' performance in 2025.

2.3.3.2. For boys, grade One attainment increased from 6.08 percent in 2024 to 6.40 percent in 2025, confirming an improvement in high end performance similar to that observed among girls. Increases were also recorded in grades Four, Five and Six. However, small declines were evident in grades Two, Seven, Eight and Nine. Notably, the proportion of boys in grade Nine fell from 22.29 percent to 21.85 percent, indicating fewer candidates at the lowest grade in 2025. This pattern suggests a slight upward shift in boys' overall performance distribution.

2.3.3.3. A gender comparison shows that boys consistently recorded a higher proportion of candidates in grade One in 2025 just like it was observed in 2024. On the other hand, girls recorded slightly higher proportions in the upper middle grades (Grades Seven and Eight), suggesting greater concentration in this performance range. Encouragingly, both genders experienced reductions in grade Nine proportions in 2025, reflecting a general improvement in performance.

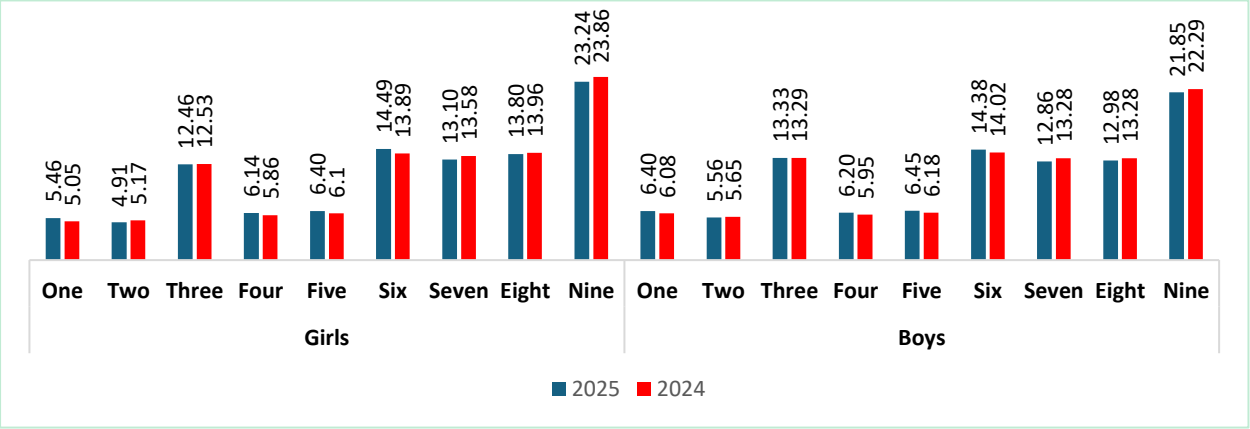


Figure 10: 2025 Performance According to Grade Distributions by Sex

2.3.4. Performance according to Grade Distributions across Subject Groupings

2.3.4.1. Literature and Languages

Literature and Language Subject grouping comprises English, French, Literature in English and the seven Zambian languages (Chitonga, Cinyanja, Icibemba, Kiikaonde, Lunda, Luvale and Silozi). Below is the analysis of performance for this category:

2.3.4.1.1. Table 4 presents the distribution of grades by gender across language and literature subjects, highlighting **quality pass rates (Grades 1–6)** and **overall pass rates (Grades 1–8)**. The analysis reveals both subject-level performance patterns and gender-based differences in achievement.

2.3.4.1.2. Across subjects, pass rates were generally high, exceeding 88 percent in most subjects. However, quality pass rates varied considerably, indicating differences in depth of achievement.

2.3.4.1.3. Lunda recorded the highest quality pass rate at 75.33 percent, with a strong overall pass rate of 90.92 percent.

2.3.4.1.4. Candidates also performed well in English Language, with a quality pass of 68.86 percent and a pass rate of 92.40 percent.

2.3.4.1.5. Kiikaonde and Luvale achieved quality pass rates above 64 percent (67.08% and 64.46%, respectively), alongside very high pass rates above 91 percent.

2.3.4.1.6. With regards to gender performance pattern, across most subjects, girls recorded slightly higher quality pass rates than boys, while overall pass rates were broadly comparable between the two groups. This suggests that although both genders generally succeed in attaining minimum pass requirements, girls tend to achieve higher-grade passes more consistently in language-related subjects.

Table 2: 2025 Grade 12 Proportion of Candidates by Grade and Sex in Literature & Language

Subject	Gender	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Quality Pass	Seven	Eight	Pass Rate	Nine
Chinese Language	Females	13.51	0.00	8.11	2.70	8.11	27.03	**59.46**	40.54	0.00	**100.00**	0.00
	Males	4.76	0.00	9.52	0.00	0.00	14.29	**28.57**	28.57	28.57	**85.71**	14.29
	Total	***10.34***	***0.00***	***8.62***	***1.72***	***5.17***	***22.41***	***48.28***	***36.21***	***10.34***	***94.83***	***5.17***
Chitonga	Females	5.80	8.23	18.38	7.65	6.95	13.19	**60.20**	22.95	10.95	**94.10**	5.90
	Males	5.73	6.50	16.27	6.84	7.53	13.92	**56.79**	23.73	11.79	**92.30**	7.70
	Total	***5.77***	***7.39***	***17.36***	***7.26***	***7.23***	***13.54***	***58.56***	***23.32***	***11.35***	***93.23***	***6.77***
Cinyanja	Females	2.56	6.28	19.51	10.29	9.09	16.70	**64.42**	22.48	9.74	**96.64**	3.36
	Males	2.03	5.88	18.80	9.24	8.14	16.80	**60.89**	23.16	11.33	**95.38**	4.62
	Total	***2.29***	***6.07***	***19.14***	***9.75***	***8.60***	***16.75***	***62.60***	***22.83***	***10.56***	***95.99***	***4.01***
English Language	Females	5.63	5.71	16.99	11.81	10.14	20.40	**70.68**	13.50	9.02	**93.20**	6.80
	Males	5.36	5.74	15.75	10.86	9.28	19.88	**66.86**	14.42	10.24	**91.52**	8.48
	Total	***5.50***	***5.72***	***16.40***	***11.35***	***9.73***	***20.15***	***68.86***	***13.94***	***9.60***	***92.40***	***7.60***
French	Females	11.45	4.38	10.77	4.04	4.04	8.59	**43.27**	29.29	22.90	**95.45**	4.55
	Males	6.64	4.42	9.73	3.54	4.42	8.63	**37.39**	32.52	23.23	**93.14**	6.86
	Total	***9.37***	***4.40***	***10.33***	***3.82***	***4.21***	***8.60***	***40.73***	***30.69***	***23.04***	***94.46***	***5.54***
Icibemba	Females	2.72	5.20	16.68	6.20	7.98	15.78	**54.56**	15.62	13.60	**83.78**	16.22
	Males	3.72	7.04	18.82	6.21	8.13	14.25	**58.16**	14.37	11.81	**84.34**	15.66

Subject	Gender	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Quality Pass	Seven	Eight	Pass Rate	Nine
	Total	***3.22***	***6.13***	***17.77***	***6.20***	***8.06***	***15.00***	***56.39***	***14.99***	***12.69***	***84.06***	***15.94***
Kiikaonde	Females	4.67	9.93	21.18	10.47	7.60	14.18	**68.04**	15.38	8.74	**92.16**	7.84
	Males	3.57	8.48	22.15	9.36	8.22	14.21	**65.99**	15.82	9.97	**91.78**	8.22
	Total	***4.15***	***9.25***	***21.64***	***9.95***	***7.89***	***14.20***	***67.08***	***15.59***	***9.32***	***91.98***	***8.02***
Literature in English	Females	3.26	5.48	14.08	8.11	5.90	15.16	**51.99**	11.11	9.97	**73.06**	26.94
	Males	1.93	3.59	10.56	6.45	5.27	13.92	**41.71**	10.99	11.07	**63.76**	36.24
	Total	***2.71***	***4.70***	***12.62***	***7.42***	***5.64***	***14.64***	***47.72***	***11.06***	***10.42***	***69.21***	***30.79***
Lunda	Females	4.97	12.59	28.52	6.70	7.51	12.01	**72.29**	8.43	7.51	**88.22**	11.78
	Males	4.68	15.72	31.10	6.69	8.03	12.04	**78.26**	9.70	5.57	**93.53**	6.47
	Total	***4.82***	***14.18***	***29.84***	***6.69***	***7.77***	***12.02***	***75.33***	***9.08***	***6.52***	***90.92***	***9.08***
Luvale	Females	1.12	5.87	23.47	7.49	8.86	16.48	**63.30**	25.47	6.87	**95.63**	4.37
	Males	2.08	9.10	25.88	7.02	8.19	13.39	**65.67**	21.07	8.45	**95.19**	4.81
	Total	***1.59***	***7.45***	***24.65***	***7.26***	***8.54***	***14.97***	***64.46***	***23.31***	***7.64***	***95.41***	***4.59***
Silozi	Females	4.38	7.71	20.19	9.07	8.41	14.99	**64.76**	14.10	9.76	**88.62**	11.38
	Males	5.87	9.07	19.89	6.90	7.46	13.39	**62.59**	15.38	11.37	**89.34**	10.66
	Total	***5.06***	***8.33***	***20.06***	***8.09***	***7.98***	***14.27***	***63.78***	***14.68***	***10.49***	***88.95***	***11.05***

2.3.4.2. Social Sciences

Social Science subjects comprise Civic Education, Christian Religious Education (2044 and 2046), History and Geography. An overview of learner performance follows below.

2.3.4.2.1. Consistent with 2023 and 2024, Geography recorded the highest pass rate in 2025 at 86.64 percent, followed by Civic Education at 79.59 percent.

Table 3: 2025 Grade 12 Proportion of Candidates by Grade and Sex in Social Studies

Subject	Gender	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Quality Pass	Seven	Eight	Pass Rate	Nine
Christian Religious Education 2044	Females	8.47	12.34	22.41	7.11	6.61	10.49	**67.42**	6.71	6.29	**80.42**	19.58
	Males	5.26	8.63	16.75	5.85	5.85	10.12	**52.46**	6.70	7.64	**66.80**	33.20
	Total	***7.23***	***10.90***	***20.22***	***6.62***	***6.31***	***10.35***	***61.64***	***6.71***	***6.81***	***75.16***	***24.84***
Christian Religious Education 2046	Females	7.59	4.63	11.48	5.71	6.20	11.43	**47.04**	14.46	15.80	**77.30**	22.70
	Males	6.62	4.34	10.87	5.26	5.91	10.60	**43.60**	14.16	16.11	**73.87**	26.13
	Total	***7.15***	***4.49***	***11.20***	***5.51***	***6.07***	***11.05***	***45.46***	***14.32***	***15.94***	***75.73***	***24.27***
Civic Education	Females	7.13	6.87	15.33	7.76	6.16	14.63	**57.88**	11.59	10.09	**79.56**	20.44
	Males	7.26	7.17	15.70	7.64	6.04	14.07	**57.88**	11.59	10.14	**79.61**	20.39
	Total	***7.19***	***7.01***	***15.51***	***7.70***	***6.10***	***14.36***	***57.88***	***11.59***	***10.11***	***79.59***	***20.41***
Geography	Females	1.75	2.76	9.46	6.32	5.92	18.08	**44.28**	19.33	21.35	**84.96**	15.04
	Males	2.94	4.18	12.56	7.71	7.24	19.53	**54.16**	17.63	16.64	**88.43**	11.57
	Total	***2.32***	***3.44***	***10.95***	***6.99***	***6.56***	***18.78***	***49.05***	***18.51***	***19.08***	***86.64***	***13.36***
History	Females	4.72	4.27	11.08	5.39	6.07	14.90	**46.43**	12.10	14.96	**73.49**	26.51
	Males	5.08	5.02	12.76	6.18	6.74	14.55	**50.34**	11.34	12.83	**74.51**	25.49
	Total	***4.88***	***4.61***	***11.83***	***5.74***	***6.37***	***14.75***	***48.18***	***11.76***	***14.01***	***73.95***	***26.05***

2.3.4.3. Business Studies

Business Studies group comprised Commerce and Principles of Accounts. An overview of learner performance follows below:

2.3.4.3.1. Principles of Accounts recorded the highest pass rate in 2024, at 83.62 percent. This was the case in 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Table 4: 2025 Grade 12 Proportion of Candidates by Grade and Sex in Social and Business Studies

Subject	Gender	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Quality Pass	Seven	Eight	Pass Rate	Nine
Commerce	Females	2.72	4.50	13.98	4.83	6.96	16.80	**49.80**	4.39	7.16	**61.35**	38.65
	Males	2.32	4.93	15.22	5.15	7.41	17.18	**52.21**	4.44	6.69	**63.34**	36.66
	Total	***2.53***	***4.71***	***14.58***	***4.99***	***7.18***	***16.98***	***50.96***	***4.42***	***6.93***	***62.31***	***37.69***
Principles Of Accounts	Females	4.46	4.96	11.41	4.19	5.18	11.89	**42.09**	18.81	23.00	**83.90**	16.10
	Males	4.91	5.09	11.88	4.01	4.94	11.32	**42.15**	18.39	22.77	**83.31**	16.69
	Total	***4.68***	***5.02***	***11.64***	***4.10***	***5.07***	***11.62***	***42.12***	***18.61***	***22.89***	***83.62***	***16.38***

2.3.4.4. Mathematics and Science Subjects

The subjects under this grouping include Computer Studies, Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Agricultural Science and Science. The performance of learners in this category was as follows:

2.3.4.4.1. Computer Studies recorded the highest pass rate within this subject grouping at 90.35 percent, maintaining this position since 2020.

Table 5: 2025 Grade 12 Proportion of Candidates by Grade and Sex in Natural Sciences

Subject	Gender	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Quality Pass	Seven	Eight	Pass Rate	Nine
Mathematics	Females	5.57	4.50	9.83	4.21	4.84	12.35	**41.30**	6.73	8.58	**56.61**	43.39
	Males	8.36	6.35	12.39	4.84	5.09	12.37	**49.39**	6.23	7.56	**63.18**	36.82
	Total	***6.90***	***5.38***	***11.05***	***4.51***	***4.96***	***12.36***	***45.15***	***6.49***	***8.09***	***59.74***	***40.26***
Additional Maths	Females	11.22	11.11	17.13	6.67	6.02	12.78	**64.92**	6.67	7.18	**78.77**	21.23
	Males	17.85	13.32	19.33	5.34	6.19	10.56	**72.59**	5.71	4.79	**83.10**	16.90
	Total	***14.65***	***12.25***	***18.27***	***5.98***	***6.11***	***11.63***	***68.89***	***6.18***	***5.94***	***81.01***	***18.99***
Agricultural Science	Females	3.34	5.49	15.42	6.21	9.11	16.52	**56.11**	12.00	11.17	**79.28**	20.72
	Males	5.21	7.14	18.35	6.27	9.87	15.72	**62.56**	10.75	9.65	**82.95**	17.05
	Total	***4.33***	***6.37***	***16.98***	***6.25***	***9.51***	***16.10***	***59.53***	***11.33***	***10.36***	***81.23***	***18.77***
Physics	Females	15.31	8.15	15.09	4.36	4.97	12.67	**60.55**	13.12	10.41	**84.08**	15.92
	Males	23.82	9.55	15.73	3.84	4.63	9.47	**67.04**	11.33	9.04	**87.41**	12.59
	Total	***20.01***	***8.93***	***15.44***	***4.07***	***4.78***	***10.90***	***64.14***	***12.13***	***9.65***	***85.92***	***14.08***
Chemistry	Females	11.06	8.71	16.71	4.54	5.82	13.35	**60.18**	11.92	11.73	**83.83**	16.17
	Males	14.56	10.21	16.70	5.66	5.66	12.17	**64.96**	10.50	10.32	**85.77**	14.23
	Total	***12.99***	***9.54***	***16.70***	***5.16***	***5.73***	***12.70***	***62.82***	***11.13***	***10.95***	***84.90***	***15.10***
Biology	Females	6.15	3.93	10.09	4.06	6.58	14.63	**45.43**	13.52	17.50	**76.45**	23.55
	Males	7.07	4.39	11.38	4.39	6.57	14.77	**48.57**	12.81	16.47	**77.85**	22.15

Subject	Gender	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Quality Pass	Seven	Eight	Pass Rate	Nine
	Total	***6.59***	***4.15***	***10.70***	***4.21***	***6.58***	***14.70***	***46.92***	***13.18***	***17.01***	***77.11***	***22.89***
Science	Females	4.10	2.60	6.36	2.32	3.61	9.86	**28.85**	15.24	23.01	**67.10**	32.90
	Males	6.43	3.52	8.12	2.77	4.08	10.53	**35.46**	14.87	20.37	**70.69**	29.31
	Total	***5.20***	***3.03***	***7.19***	***2.53***	***3.84***	***10.18***	***31.97***	***15.06***	***21.76***	***68.80***	***31.20***
Computer Studies	Females	9.81	5.57	12.52	5.94	6.48	12.63	**52.95**	18.42	16.11	**87.48**	12.52
	Males	11.75	7.93	15.32	7.32	7.44	12.45	**62.22**	16.73	13.69	**92.65**	7.35
	Total	***10.89***	***6.88***	***14.07***	***6.71***	***7.01***	***12.53***	***58.10***	***17.48***	***14.77***	***90.35***	***9.65***

2.3.4.5. Practical Subject

Practical subjects include Art and Design, Musical Arts Education, Design and Technology, Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Home Management and Physical Education.

2.3.4.5.1. Consistent with 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024, all practical subjects in the 2025 examination recorded pass rates above 90 percent.

Table 6: 2025 Grade 12 Proportion of Candidates by Grade and Sex in Practical Subjects

Subject	Gender	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Quality Pass	Seven	Eight	Pass Rate	Nine
Art And Design	Females	2.66	6.87	22.38	11.92	9.28	22.04	**75.15**	20.73	3.40	**99.29**	0.71
	Males	2.82	7.76	23.50	12.16	9.52	19.28	**75.03**	19.98	4.01	**99.01**	0.99
	Total	***2.74***	***7.33***	***22.96***	***12.05***	***9.40***	***20.60***	***75.09***	***20.34***	***3.72***	***99.14***	***0.86***
Musical Arts Education	Females	4.11	6.21	17.28	7.94	6.91	13.08	**55.53**	29.01	14.15	**98.69**	1.31
	Males	4.31	8.56	18.19	8.13	7.00	12.13	**58.31**	27.81	12.31	**98.44**	1.56
	Total	***4.20***	***7.22***	***17.67***	***8.02***	***6.95***	***12.67***	***56.72***	***28.50***	***13.37***	***98.58***	***1.42***
Design And Technology	Females	7.23	9.48	17.09	7.31	8.72	18.92	**68.75**	18.07	8.80	**95.62**	4.38
	Males	10.34	10.91	21.26	7.97	7.85	15.41	**73.74**	13.82	7.42	**94.98**	5.02
	Total	***9.36***	***10.46***	***19.94***	***7.76***	***8.12***	***16.52***	***72.16***	***15.16***	***7.86***	***95.18***	***4.82***
Fashion And Fabrics	Females	8.36	6.55	24.00	5.27	6.55	15.45	**66.18**	19.82	9.82	**95.82**	4.18
	Males	4.79	7.78	20.36	2.40	6.59	15.57	**57.49**	22.75	14.07	**94.31**	5.69
	Total	***7.01***	***7.01***	***22.62***	***4.19***	***6.56***	***15.50***	***62.90***	***20.93***	***11.43***	***95.25***	***4.75***
Home Management	Females	4.34	8.18	24.06	9.15	8.83	17.74	**72.30**	17.90	7.33	**97.52**	2.48
	Males	2.56	6.28	19.81	8.14	8.99	18.81	**64.58**	22.38	9.51	**96.47**	3.53
	Total	***3.61***	***7.41***	***22.32***	***8.73***	***8.89***	***18.18***	***69.14***	***19.73***	***8.22***	***97.09***	***2.91***
Physical Education	Females	7.90	6.14	13.74	8.28	5.98	11.51	**53.54**	25.05	15.98	**94.58**	5.42
	Males	11.17	7.52	14.74	7.89	5.59	11.46	**58.36**	23.24	13.64	**95.24**	4.76
	Total	***9.56***	***6.83***	***14.24***	***8.08***	***5.78***	***11.48***	***55.98***	***24.14***	***14.80***	***94.92***	***5.08***
Food & Nutrition	Females	7.79	9.17	21.73	8.82	9.11	14.76	**71.39**	22.04	5.59	**99.02**	0.98
	Males	3.38	6.25	18.28	9.25	9.89	16.81	**63.87**	27.68	7.25	**98.80**	1.20
	Total	***6.17***	***8.10***	***20.46***	***8.98***	***9.40***	***15.51***	***68.63***	***24.11***	***6.20***	***98.94***	***1.06***

3.0. Subjects Specific Performance Analysis

Candidates' performance was evaluated through qualitative and quantitative analysis, which involved reviewing sample scripts and Chief Examiner's reports, and results statistics. The analysis categorized candidates' characteristics into three categories based on their level of performance, namely, High Performing, Average Performing, and Low Performing candidates. This method offers a thorough understanding of candidates' strengths and weaknesses, enabling teachers to design interventions that meet their specific needs and improve overall performance.

3.1. Literature and Languages

The Literature and Languages category is composed of English Language, French, Literature in English, and seven Zambian languages: Chitonga, Cinyanja, Icibemba, Kiikaonde, Lunda, Luvale, and Silozi.

3.1.1. English Language (1121)

The School Certificate English Language examination assesses candidates' proficiency in the effective use of English in line with the 2013 Curriculum learning outcomes. It evaluates candidates' ability to comprehend, interpret, and produce written English accurately and appropriately across a range of communicative contexts.

Through the two examination papers, candidates are assessed on key language competencies, including reading comprehension, writing, grammar and usage, vocabulary, and functional communication, with emphasis on clarity, coherence, and appropriate language use for different audiences and purposes.

Paper 1-(1121/1)

General observations

The general performance of candidates in Paper 1 indicated notable challenges in the application of functional writing skills, particularly in Report Writing (Section B). Candidates were required to prepare a report on the increase in cases of wild animals attacking people within their communities, demonstrating knowledge of the structural and stylistic conventions of report

writing. These included the use of an appropriate title and subheadings, third-person narration, passive voice, chronological presentation of events, coherent paragraphing, and the inclusion of practical recommendations. However, many candidates demonstrated limited mastery of these conventions.

A common misconception observed was the confusion between report writing and formal letter writing. Some candidates presented their responses entirely as formal letters, while others structured reports correctly but concluded them using letter-style signoffs. In addition, the frequent use of informal language and numerous grammatical errors affected clarity and overall communication effectiveness. These weaknesses suggest gaps in candidates' understanding of audience, purpose, and appropriate writing format, highlighting the need for greater emphasis on functional writing skills and language accuracy during instruction.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Excellent linguistic proficiency, evidenced by the use of a wide variety of accurate and well-structured sentences.
- Effective use of an extensive vocabulary appropriate to context and purpose.
- Well-organised work with clear and logical paragraphing.
- Accurate spelling and correct application of punctuation marks.
- Correct interpretation of questions, including those requiring metaphorical or figurative understanding.
- Clear understanding of task requirements and appropriate application of relevant writing skills.
- Production of coherent, cohesive, and fully developed compositions within the required word limit.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Moderate number of grammatical, vocabulary, and expression errors.
- Fair organisation and arrangement of ideas in written responses.

- Satisfactory treatment of attempted questions, though lacking depth or precision in expression.
- Limited use of varied sentence structures.
- Frequent spelling errors and inappropriate vocabulary choices.
- Fair but inconsistent use of punctuation.
- Use of contracted forms such as can't, would, and doesn't, contrary to formal writing conventions.
- Generally stronger performance in narrative, informal letter writing, and discursive compositions compared to other writing tasks.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Frequent grammatical and expression errors throughout written responses such as, incorrect tense usage, especially shifting between past and present tense within the same essay.
- Poor sentence construction resulting in unclear meaning or "broken English."
- Misinterpretation or misunderstanding of question requirements.
- Inadequate development and treatment of subject matter.
- Poor organisation of ideas, with writing often appearing disorganised or muddled.
- Failure to attempt certain questions, particularly report writing tasks, with some responses containing writing that was not recognisable as standard English.
- Frequent infringement of rubric instructions, including answering more than the required number of questions.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should prioritise the explicit teaching of composition writing skills rather than focusing on testing composition. Instruction should emphasise writing processes, structure, and language use.
2. The teaching of composition should be aligned with relevant language structures. For example, grammatical components such as adjectives and adverbs should be adequately taught before learners undertake descriptive composition tasks.

3. All composition genres and topics prescribed in the syllabus should be comprehensively covered to ensure learners are adequately prepared for examination requirements.
4. Teachers should regularly identify challenging learning areas and learners experiencing difficulties and provide targeted remedial support to address identified gaps.

Paper 2-(1121/2)

General observations

The general performance of candidates in English Language indicated notable challenges in the application of key grammatical concepts and reading comprehension skills. One of the areas that proved difficult for many candidates was the correct use of relative pronouns. A common misconception observed was the substitution of conjunctions or adverbs, particularly "when," in place of the relative pronoun "that." This reflected limited understanding of clause formation and confusion between grammatical functions of adverbs and pronouns. The difficulty suggests gaps in learners' mastery of sentence structure and the appropriate use of cohesive devices in written communication.

Candidates also demonstrated weaknesses in transformational grammar, particularly in the inversion of the subject and verb. Many learners failed to change the normal sentence structure from subject–verb (S+V) order to verb–subject (V+S) inversion as required by the question. Responses frequently retained the standard sentence order, indicating inadequate familiarity with inversion rules and limited exposure to transformational sentence exercises.

Reading comprehension, especially vocabulary-related questions requiring candidates to deduce word meanings from contextual clues, posed a significant challenge, particularly for low- and average-performing candidates. Many responses showed incorrect or unrelated word substitutions, suggesting difficulties in analysing passages and referencing contextual information effectively. These challenges were largely attributed to weak reading comprehension skills and limited practice in inferential reading strategies, which affected candidates' ability to interpret meaning accurately within a given context.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- High level of knowledge and understanding of most structural items.
- Ability to apply structural items accurately and appropriately in their written work.
- Excellent command of the English language, particularly in transformational sentence construction.
- Strict adherence to the rules of summary writing, including the use of grammatically correct sentences and compliance with the prescribed word limit (not exceeding 125 words).
- Produced cohesive and coherent prose summaries, showing strong organisation and clarity of ideas.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Limited knowledge of some structural items.
- Difficulties in applying certain structural rules correctly in sentence construction.
- Fair ability in the use of English Language.
- Managed summary writing tasks reasonably well; however, some responses exceeded the prescribed word limit by approximately 10 words, indicating partial adherence to rubric requirements.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Poor or fragmented use of English.
- Failed to accurately copy or reproduce words provided in the question paper.
- Demonstrated limited or no understanding of comprehension and summary passages and the associated questions.
- Exhibited high levels of rubric infringement, particularly in comprehension and summary tasks.
- Showed little or no knowledge of most structural items and were consequently unable to apply them correctly in sentence construction.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should ensure comprehensive coverage of all structural items prescribed in the syllabus and provide learners with regular and varied practice exercises to strengthen understanding and application.
2. Teachers should actively participate in and promote School-Based Continuing Professional Development (SB-CPD) activities to collaboratively strengthen pedagogical content knowledge, particularly in structural areas identified as challenging in this report.
3. Teachers should explicitly teach reading comprehension and summary writing skills, including both prose and note summaries, while guiding learners on the key requirements, techniques, and common pitfalls associated with effective summary writing.
4. Teachers should collaborate with school management to facilitate learner support programmes, such as inviting experienced examiners or chief examiners to provide learners with practical examination techniques and strategies for responding effectively to English Language Paper 2.
5. Teachers should consistently encourage and model the use of English in learners' everyday academic activities, promoting active use of the language in both spoken and written communication within and beyond the classroom.
6. Teachers should identify learners experiencing learning difficulties early and provide targeted remedial instruction and continuous academic support to address identified gaps in language skills. These interventions are expected to contribute to improved learner performance in future examinations.

3.1.2. Literature in English (2011)

The Literature in English Examination evaluates candidates' performance based on the competencies outlined in the Literature in English Syllabus for Grade 10-12 (CDC, 2013). Specifically, it aims to assess candidates' understanding and application of literary terminologies and devices within various contexts, including poetry, drama, and prose. Candidates must interpret literary forms, recognize genres, and explain figures of speech.

Additionally, the examination evaluates candidates' comprehension of contexts by assessing their ability to read, extract relevant information, and make inferences. Furthermore, it emphasizes the analysis and synthesis of information through essay writing, which involves distinguishing between fact

and fiction, analysing elements of set books, and evaluating various writing styles found in plays, prose, and poems, such as humour, satire, and irony.

Literature demands critical and aesthetic thinking, expecting candidates to appreciate stories and understand societal dynamics. It covers diverse subjects like politics, religion, and marriage, requiring critical analysis and interpretation. Candidates should discuss, analyse, interpret, and deduce the texts' underlying meanings effectively.

General observations

A number of candidates demonstrated adequate understanding of the prescribed texts and basic literary concepts, particularly in questions that required recall and narration. Many candidates performed relatively well on questions that required simple definitions or straightforward explanations, as well as on questions based on popular texts such as Animal Farm and Shaka Zulu.

However, performance was weaker in areas that required deeper analysis, interpretation, sequencing of events, and application of literary terminologies. Many candidates struggled to define and illustrate literary devices such as onomatopoeia and alliteration, and some failed to attempt these questions altogether. Difficulties were also observed in questions that required recall of specific textual details, accurate sequencing of events, and analytical essay writing.

In Paper 2, while most candidates attempted questions on popular texts, many responses lacked depth and clear alignment with the requirements of the question. Some candidates provided generalized or "pedestrian" responses that merely retold parts of the story without addressing the specific demands of the question.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong understanding of literary concepts and terminologies.
- Accurately defined and explained literary terms and provided relevant examples from the texts.

- Clearly understood the requirements of questions and responded to all parts of the questions.
- Demonstrated strong knowledge of the prescribed texts through accurate references and detailed explanations.
- Successfully sequenced events and recalled specific details from the texts when required.
- Demonstrated strong analytical skills when discussing themes, characters, and literary techniques.
- Produced well-structured and coherent essay responses with clear introduction, development of ideas, and conclusion.
- Exhibited good linguistic proficiency, including appropriate vocabulary and use of connectives to organize ideas.
- Demonstrated the ability to interpret themes and underlying meanings in literary texts.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated basic understanding of literary concepts and texts.
- Were able to answer straightforward knowledge-based questions correctly.
- Showed partial understanding of literary terms but often failed to provide accurate examples.
- Answered only part of multi-part questions, leaving out important components.
- Demonstrated limited ability to sequence events correctly in texts.
- Produced responses that lacked sufficient detail and explanation.
- Often gave generalized or "pedestrian" answers by narrating parts of the story rather than addressing the specific question.
- Demonstrated limited analytical skills in interpreting themes and literary devices.
- Showed moderate weaknesses in grammar, organization of ideas, and clarity of expression.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated very limited knowledge of literary terminologies and concepts.
- Failed to define basic literary devices or provide relevant examples.
- Showed little or no knowledge of the prescribed texts.
- Struggled to understand question requirements and often left questions unanswered.
- Provided incomplete, inaccurate, or irrelevant responses.
- Displayed inability to sequence events or recall important details from the texts.
- Produced answers containing serious grammatical errors and poor sentence construction.
- Wrote disorganized responses with run-on sentences and unclear meaning.
- Included imaginary details or incorrect characters not found in the texts.
- Left many blank spaces, indicating lack of preparation or confidence.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should systematically teach and reinforce literary terms such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, metaphor, and rhyme across Grade 10 to Grade 12.
2. Learners should be encouraged to read the prescribed texts regularly to develop deeper understanding of characters, themes, and events.
3. Teachers should guide learners in analysing themes, characters, and literary techniques rather than simply narrating storylines.
4. Teachers should demonstrate how to structure literary essays, including writing clear introductions, developing arguments, and concluding effectively.
5. Learners should regularly practice responding to examination questions to understand how questions are structured and what is expected in responses.
6. Learners should be trained to support their responses with relevant references and examples from the texts.
7. Schools should ensure that learners have adequate access to the prescribed literature texts to support independent reading and study.

8. Exposure to literary texts and literary devices should begin early in secondary school to build foundational knowledge and appreciation of literature.

3.1.3. French (3016)

The Senior Secondary School French examination assesses candidates' language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It consists of two components: Paper 1 (60 marks) and Paper 2 (40 marks). Paper 1 assesses composition, translation, structure, reading comprehension, and summary skills. Paper 2, a school-based assessment, assesses listening comprehension and contextual communication skills in aural and oral assessments. The examination aims to comprehensively assess candidates' proficiency across various language skills and objectives.

General Observations

The performance of candidates in the 2025 French exam varied across learning areas. While top performing candidates performed well in grammar, comprehension, translation, and composition, many others had significant challenges.

Common weaknesses among lower-performing candidates included poor grammar (especially with gender and pronouns), limited vocabulary, and weak comprehension and writing skills. Some candidates even failed to complete entire sections, like the composition, affecting their overall scores.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong mastery of French grammar and language structures.
- Correctly applied grammatical rules such as possessive pronouns, personal pronouns, relative pronouns, and passive voice.
- Correctly used the infinitive form after prepositions such as sans.
- Showed clear understanding of gender and number agreement in nouns, adjectives, and pronouns.
- Demonstrated excellent ability to select appropriate parts of speech in cloze tests.

- Exhibited strong translation skills between French and English.
- Demonstrated good reading comprehension and accurately interpreted information from passages.
- Successfully summarized information from texts and filled in missing information correctly.
- Wrote well-structured compositions with clear ideas and logical flow.
- Correctly used French tenses such as the present tense, past tense (passé composé), and near future.
- Used appropriate vocabulary and correct subject–verb agreement.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated basic understanding of French grammar and language structures.
- Correctly used some parts of speech such as personal pronouns and possessive pronouns but with occasional errors.
- Showed partial understanding of grammatical gender and number agreement.
- Demonstrated moderate ability to complete cloze tests but struggled with some grammatical forms.
- Exhibited limited translation skills and occasionally misinterpreted simple sentences.
- Showed some understanding of comprehension passages but struggled to interpret certain questions correctly.
- Had difficulty understanding interrogative words such as où (where).
- Demonstrated moderate ability to summarize information from texts.
- Displayed weaknesses in composition writing, including incorrect tense usage and spelling errors.
- Occasionally used English words instead of French vocabulary.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated poor understanding of French grammar and language structures.
- Struggled to identify and correctly use pronouns, articles, and adjectives.
- Had difficulty applying grammatical rules related to gender and number agreement.

- Failed to correctly use verbs after prepositions such as sans.
- Demonstrated very limited vocabulary and poor understanding of basic French words.
- Performed poorly in cloze tests due to limited knowledge of parts of speech.
- Showed very weak translation skills between French and English.
- Had difficulty understanding comprehension passages and interpreting questions.
- Struggled to understand interrogative words and question requirements.
- Wrote incomplete or incorrect answers to comprehension questions.
- Demonstrated poor composition writing skills, including weak sentence construction, poor spelling, and incorrect punctuation.
- Some candidates copied passages from comprehension sections instead of writing original compositions.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should emphasize the teaching of grammatical structures such as pronouns, articles, adjectives, and verb forms beginning in Grade 10 and reinforce these concepts through Grade 12.
2. Teachers should help learners develop a strong understanding of the masculine and feminine forms of nouns, adjectives, and pronouns.
3. Learners should be given frequent cloze test exercises to strengthen their understanding of parts of speech and sentence structure.
4. Teachers should provide more translation exercises between French and English to improve learners' vocabulary and comprehension.
5. Learners should be exposed to a variety of reading materials, including passages related to everyday situations, to improve comprehension and interpretation skills.
6. Teachers should regularly assign composition exercises such as narrative, descriptive, and letter writing tasks and provide timely feedback to learners.
7. Learners should be encouraged to read French texts aloud in class to improve pronunciation, vocabulary, and reading fluency.
8. Teachers should mark learners' work regularly, discuss corrections in class, and guide learners on how to improve their language skills.

3.2. Social Sciences

The following subjects comprise the Social Sciences subject grouping: Civic Education (2030/1), Religious Education (2044/1), Religious Education (2046/1), History (2167), and Geography (2218).

3.2.1. Civic Education (2030)

The assessment of candidates in Civic Education at School Certificate level aims to evaluate the extent to which learners have acquired the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary for responsible and active citizenship in a democratic society. Specifically, the assessment seeks to determine learners' understanding of Zambia's political, socio-economic, cultural, and technological systems, as well as their appreciation of democratic governance, human rights, and the rule of law.

The assessment further measures learners' ability to critically analyse civic issues, participate meaningfully in democratic processes, and demonstrate respect for national values, traditions, and cultural diversity. It also evaluates learners' problem-solving and decision-making skills in addressing social and economic challenges, including responsible financial management and ethical conduct.

General Observation

Candidates demonstrated varied levels of performance across topics in Civic Education. A number of candidates experienced notable challenges in key areas such as the Constitution, Culture of Peace, Citizenship, and Culture. Many struggled to identify specific provisions within the Zambian Constitution, particularly those relating to citizenship acquisition, indicating limited familiarity with the structure and organisation of constitutional documents. In topics related to Culture of Peace, candidates had difficulties interpreting diagrams and explaining concepts such as positive peace, mediation, negotiation, and problem-solving approaches to inequality. Similarly, performance in Culture revealed gaps in understanding core components such as values and norms, beliefs, symbols, traditions, and social institutions, suggesting inadequate analytical practice and limited exposure to real-life cultural analysis.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong understanding of concepts and recognised patterns and relationships between components, especially in cultural topics.
- Applied critical thinking skills effectively when analysing cultural practices and societal issues.
- Supported responses with diverse and relevant real-life examples, particularly on topics such as child abuse, corruption, poverty, and teenage pregnancies.
- Provided factual evidence to support arguments in essay responses.
- Produced well-structured essays with clear introductions, logically developed main bodies, and concise conclusions.
- Maintained clear links between explanations and question requirements.
- Presented organised, coherent, and clearly articulated points.
- Used correct terminology and key Civic Education concepts appropriately.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated partial understanding of Civic Education concepts but experienced difficulties relating knowledge to question requirements.
- Often included irrelevant or weakly connected points that did not directly address the questions.
- Some candidates misinterpreted concepts or confused related topics and examination items.
- Displayed limited understanding of subject content, resulting in incomplete responses or failure to answer some questions.
- Provided few or poorly explained examples or supporting evidence, particularly in essay responses.
- Experienced difficulties identifying key concepts, including parts of the Constitution.
- Showed limited ability to recognise interconnections between cultural components.
- Rarely used relevant real-life examples to support their arguments.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated limited content knowledge and struggled to generate relevant points in response to questions.
- Experienced difficulties identifying, describing, distinguishing, comparing, or contrasting concepts.
- Showed poor application of knowledge and weak explanation of ideas.
- Produced poorly organised responses that did not follow the Civic Education marking rubric or expected structure.
- In some cases, left questions unanswered.
- Performance challenges were largely associated with limited practice, weak conceptual understanding, and inadequate skills in organising and presenting responses.

Recommendations

1. Promote interactive teaching approaches by using real-life scenarios and case studies to illustrate constitutional and civic concepts. This enhances learner engagement and improves retention of content.
2. Emphasise application of knowledge by encouraging learners to analyse how constitutional principles apply within the Zambian context. Practical activities such as simulated elections using ballot boxes can help learners understand democratic processes.
3. Encourage critical thinking skills by posing analytical questions that require learners to evaluate laws, governance practices, and policies in relation to constitutional principles and issues such as corruption, while remaining sensitive to the prevailing political environment.
4. Utilise teaching aids such as charts, diagrams, timelines, and visual organisers to simplify complex concepts and improve conceptual understanding.
5. Incorporate case study methods using relevant real-life examples, including landmark court cases in Zambia, to help learners understand constitutional and legal processes.
6. Promote classroom debates on topics such as governance, human rights, and freedom of expression to develop analytical reasoning and communication skills.
7. Use role-play activities such as mock court sessions or simulated parliamentary proceedings to allow learners to apply concepts practically.

8. Organise educational field visits, where feasible, to institutions such as Parliament or courts of law to provide experiential learning opportunities.
9. Integrate current affairs into lessons by linking classroom discussions to contemporary national events and societal issues in Zambia to make learning more relevant and meaningful.

3.2.2. History (2167)

The assessment of learners in History aims to evaluate their understanding of the historical development of human societies and the processes that have shaped modern day events. This enables learners to appreciate current realities and develop informed perspectives on future societal developments. The assessment at this level consists of two components, Paper 1 and Paper 2, each marked out of 100.

General observations

The overall performance of candidates in History reflected varying levels of attainment across topics and cognitive skills, with strong performance observed in areas that required factual recall, interpretation of historical events, and application of analytical skills. Candidates generally demonstrated good understanding of indigenous communities, which emerged as the simplest topic. Many were able to correctly identify characteristics of centralised societies and demonstrate sound knowledge of historical developments such as the Luba–Lunda migrations, the exploration of Central Africa, and colonial transitions in Northern Rhodesia.

However, challenges were prevalent in more complex thematic areas, particularly European Settlers in Central Africa and World History topics relating to the Inter-War period, especially Russian History.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates were able to identify centralised societies. They showcased knowledge of the Luba-Lunda empires of Congo by correctly naming the founder of the Luba. Kingdom and its capital. They further exhibited understanding of how the Luba-Lunda states migrated into Zambia by distinguishing the state that migrated from the Lunda Empire of Congo

into the Western part of Zambia through the mention of the leader who led the Luyi into Bulozi in about 1650

- Candidates demonstrated understanding of the topic on the exploration of Central Africa. They were able to discuss David Livingstone's three journeys in Central Africa and the challenges he encountered during his journeys. Candidates were able to mention the period he embarked on each journey, and they brought out the aims of each journey. The challenges were clearly outlined. They paid attention to the allocation of marks, and they gave as many points as they should. However, they should not bring out the results of David Livingstone's journeys.
- Candidates displayed high comprehension levels and were able to deduce what the passage required of them. They had knowledge of the topics and were able to recall the specific outcome of the topic as they brought to the aspect of the transition from traditional rule to company administration. They were able to state the reasons that led to organised protests among Africans in Northern Rhodesia and named the chief who aligned himself with colonial masters during the occupation.
- They were able to exhibit knowledge of the topic of European settlers in Africa and to recall specific names of the weapons used, for example, a candidate explained how the "introduction of long shields protected the body of the Zulu warrior from being easily stabbed during the war", this showed understanding of the reforms introduced by Shaka and was able to apply this understanding coherently. They exhibited high level ability to analyse how the introduction of certain military weapons, namely the "assagai", enabled Shaka's fighting transition from a "throwing spear" to a "stabbing spear" which changed the nature of warfare. They were also able to explain how military reforms such as the cow horn formation was used by the Zulu warriors to " completely encircle their enemies."
- Candidates demonstrated good knowledge of the topic (indigenous communities and European settler communities) they were able to narrow down and identify the specific sub-topics to which the questions were referring, such as the Anglo-Boer war and they were able to recall historical facts about the collision between Boer nationalism and British imperialism. They showed understanding of the complex motives behind

the struggle for the Witwatersrand in that they were able to clearly state the reasons.

- Candidates did not attempt to answer on the majority rule which mainly came under Section D as an essay, they opted for the other topics as an option of choice which may either indicate the knowledge gap or misconception that the topic is difficult hence their common choice of question selection.
- candidates demonstrated understanding and exhibited knowledge on Germany by clearly highlighting the intended specific outcome of analysing Bismarck's foreign policy. They were able to clearly and correctly bring out points answering why and how Britain abandoned its policy of splendid isolation. There was coherent flow of points indicating high analytical skills and the ability to compare and contrast events that prompted Britain to abandon the policy, and this enabled them to get full marks, for example, Candidates who attempted to answer the essay question from Section C on this topic obtained total (20) marks.
- Under the topic of Rivalry Among Major World Kingdoms and Nations, candidates were able to correctly identify from which sub-topic the questions covering this topic were extracted from which helped them mention terms and to answer the follow-up questions with ease. They showed understanding of why and how Africa was partitioned; they were able to mention the name of the conference where the European powers divided Africa and where the Conference was held. They equally had knowledge of the African states that remained independent throughout the colonial period.
- They were able to accurately interpret and analyse charts displaying events after the First World War. They were able to provide correct responses exhibiting knowledge on the following; the Versailles Peace Conference and its proceedings, the Weimar Republic, the rise of Adolf Hitler and Bennito Mussolini and countries who signed the Nazi-Soviet Pact. High achievers were able to comprehend passages which tested key skills and competencies such as critical analysis and interpretation skill, and their ability to provide historical facts by clearly defining terms

such as " De-Stalinisation" and stating how the programme of De-Stalinization was carried out displayed such skills.

- Demonstrated the ability to accurately match the UN agencies with their functions. They were able to interpret data from the table which is specific to the topic. High achieving candidates were able to attain specific outcomes of discussing the origins, aims, and membership of NATO and Non-Aligned Movement.
- Displayed understanding of the establishment, aims, composition, membership, its organisational structure, the year in which OAU changed its name to the current and the date on which its former members celebrate African Freedom Day. This accurate knowledge of historical facts enabled them to get high marks as most of them managed to answer questions under this topic correctly.
- Were able to apply higher-order cognitive skills by applying historical knowledge to understand geopolitics and complex international conflicts such as the Arab- Israeli war of 1967, understanding its causes and consequences. They were able to list areas that the Israelis gained from the Arab countries during the war and named the Arab country that lost the biggest territory to Israel in the war

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Could not recall historical facts pertaining to a specific Sub-topic "Luba-Lunda Migrations", which made them fail to identify the Lozi Kingdom based on the diagram, which was presented to them, for example in Section B, question 2. They should not correctly state the role of the Mulongwanji council on the diagram revealing their inability to describe the political structure of the Lozi kingdom, a knowledge gap to the specific outcome under this topic. This affected their overall performance on this topic.
- Often failed to clearly explain the objective of the journeys of David Livingstone, which was to spread Christianity, Civilisation and Commerce. While they were able to mention places like Ujiji, they should not describe them. They failed to analyse on the challenges that David Livingstone encountered, and this led to them losing marks.

- Could not give reasons for the organised protests among Africans in Northern Rhodesia and should not further recall why mine owner's liked migrant labourers. They failed to identify key roles which the chiefs played in the transition from traditional rule to colonial administration.
- Most candidates were not consistent and did not bring out many points as required, which made them not to get more marks, while some Candidates only provided generalized statements rather than specific use of the reforms that were introduced by Shaka as an example stated.
- Candidates did not attempt to answer questions on the majority rule which mainly came under Section D as an essay, they opted for the other topics as an option of choice which may either indicate the knowledge gap or the misconception that the topic is difficult hence their common choice of question selection.
- Candidates should list the factors for the policies in national building but should not explain the interconnectivity between them. Average achievers knew the Boer War happened, but they failed to explain why it ended isolation. While they mentioned Germany, they struggled to explain how the German Naval Laws directly forced Britain into the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902) and later the Entente Cordiale (1904).
- Candidates were able to cite the absence of the USA as one of the reasons why the League of Nations failed in the 1930s, revealing their understanding of the failures of the League. Similarly, they were able to discuss and analyse the successes of the league. The only weakness was that they did not write many points to this which affected their marks.
- Candidates were able to recall the aims of the OAU and identify Dr. Kenneth Kaunda as the former Zambian President who participated in the formation of OAU.
- Candidates lacked historical facts and understanding of the topic. They should identify the Arab country that lost the biggest territory to Isreal in the war nor list areas that the Israelis gained from the Arab countries during the war.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates misinterpreted the questions based on a map from the Sub-topic "Luba-Lunda Migrations", showing lack of understanding of the topic; for example, in Section A, question 1, candidates should not mention the name for Kalonga's capital. They should not correctly identify the Luba and Lunda kingdoms from the map, while other should not contrast between the two kingdoms.
- Some candidates misplaced points in David Livingstone's three journeys by placing a point or two found in the third journey writing it in the first journey, this showed a knowledge gap and lack of understanding of the topic. While some candidates should not recall the aims, routes David Livingstone took on the journey and nor clearly state the periods on which he embarked on each journey.
- Most candidates should not give reasons for the organised protests among Africans in Northern Rhodesia and should not further recall why mine onwers liked migrant labourers. They failed to identify key roles which the chiefs played in the transition from traditional rule to colonial administration.
- On the topic of indigenous communities and European settler communities, most candidates lacked understanding of what was required of them; they focused more on writing information that was not needed, therefore, lost marks. Others showed a knowledge gap in this topic as they jumbled points with explanations that were unrelated to what they were required of then revealing their lack of comprehension and ability to recall. They wrote distorted points which lacked historical facts. They should not correctly name the weapons Shaka introduced. Their explanations on most parts were incoherent.
- Candidates were also able to clearly state the reasons behind the Anglo-Boer war.
- Candidates did not attempt to answer on this topic on majority rule which mainly came under Section D as an essay, they opted for the other topics as an option of choice which may either indicate the knowledge gap or misconception that the topic is difficult hence their common choice of question selection.

- Candidates exhibited a high knowledge gap as most of them did not attempt to answer questions on this topic. This revealed that the candidates lacked comprehension, lacked critical thinking skills, hence their failure to even attempt answering which ultimately affected their performance as they left black spaces in their answer sheets.
- They demonstrated a high knowledge gap as most of them did not attempt to answer questions on rivalry among major world kingdoms and nations. They should not recall any information from this topic and opted to leave blank spaces which made them lose out on marks.
- They showed limited understanding of the importance of the Versailles peace conference, why it was held and the statesmen present at the Conference. This knowledge gap resulted in loss of marks and reflected non-attainment of expected specific outcomes intended for this topic.
- They exhibited a high knowledge gap on the functions of the specialised agencies under the UN, resulting to their lack of ability to recall information pertaining to the topic, thereby affecting their ability to apply their critical thinking skill, which was needed to match the agencies to their functions on the table. Candidates left blank spaces
- They revealed a high knowledge gap as most of them did not attempt to answer questions in this topic, resulting in a show of other possible incompetence's such as lack of comprehension, lack of critical thinking skills which ultimately reflects non-attainment of expected specific outcomes. They left black spaces and lost out on marks.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should use "Blind Maps" (unlabeled maps) where candidates manually plot the routes and label states as well as practice questions that ask candidates to "Shade the area of Luba influence" or "Use an arrow to show the direction of Chinyama's migration."
2. Teachers should ensure candidates recall at least three successes and three failures in political disputes after the lesson and should randomly ask them to recall throughout the course of the term.
3. Leaners to be provided with a map showing only major rivers (Zambezi, Shire, Lualaba). Have them trace the routes by hand. Create cards where one side has an event (e.g., "Meeting H.M. Stanley") and the other has the Journey Number (3) and Year (1871).

4. Teachers should use visual matching tests, and students must match the name of the weapon to its physical description and tactical purpose. Teachers should also enforce a strategy of the "Point, Evidence, Explanation, Link" method for every paragraph regarding Shaka's reforms.

5. Replace generalized statements with "Technical Substitutes." for example, a teacher should provide candidates with a "Vague vs. Specific" table where they must practice replacing the "Vague" sentence with a "Syllabus Specific" one. General statements to attract loss of marks while specific statements to gain marks.

6. Teachers should provide candidates with a 15-minute skeleton outline for high probability essay questions. The goal is to show them that a 20-mark essay is just 4 or 5 well-explained points. If they can remember the 5 points, they can write the essay. Teachers should also link the avoided topic to a popular one.

7. To stop candidates from just "listing," they should be encouraged to use conjunctions of causality. Teachers should provide students with two facts and encourage candidates to connect them using "Because" "Consequently," or "As a direct result of."

8. Teachers should provide a completely shaded map of colonial Africa and ask candidates to un-shade the areas that remained independent. The physical interaction with the map should help them locate Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa and Liberia on the West Coast, ensuring they don't just "list" them but "place" them. They can also use the "Why They Stayed Free" table and conduct a deep-dive comparison between the two independent nations to make them stick in memory.

9. Teachers should ensure Candidates recall at least three successes and three failures in political disputes after the lesson and should randomly ask them to recall throughout the course of the term. Since candidates already know the dates and names, in order to push the performance even higher, teachers should also explain on the ideological shift and explain why the focus moved from Decolonization (OAU) to economic integration and peacekeeping (AU/Constitutive Act). The focus should be on the contrast between the OAU's principle of "non-interference" and the AU's principle of "non-indifference" (the right to intervene in member states for human rights).

10. Teachers should provide candidates with two maps, one of the Middle East on June 4, 1967, and one on June 11, 1967, and task them to manually shade the "New Territories" and label them with the country they were taken from. Candidates to explicitly label Egypt as the "Biggest Loser", for example, losing the massive Sinai Peninsula.

11. Teachers should apply more emphasis and always explain why it is called "Weimar." since most Candidates revealed failure to recall the Weimar
12. Most candidates showed a fair understanding of the topic, they were able to name the major powers who attended the Berlin conference (1884-85) (Britain, France, Germany). They often correctly identified the "Bismarck factor." Nevertheless, they struggled to mention the African states that remained independent throughout the colonial period.
13. Teachers should provide a completely shaded map of colonial Africa and ask candidates to un-shade the areas that remained independent. The physical interaction with the map should help them locate Ethiopia in the Horn of Africa and Liberia on the West Coast, ensuring they don't just "list" them but "place" them. They can also use the "Why They Stayed Free" table and conduct a deep-dive comparison between the two independent nations to make them stick in memory.
14. The content should reflect Ethiopia's modernization and military victory at the Battle of Adwa (1896) against Italy and Liberia's unique status as a republic for formerly enslaved people from the United States and its diplomatic ties.

3.2.3. Geography (2218)

Geography aims to measure the learners' the understanding of the physical, Social, cultural, and economic developments and their impact on spatial patterns. Candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to identify, understand, apply, evaluate, and synthesize information.

Geography consists of three components – Paper 1, Paper 2, and Paper 3. Paper 1 consists of MCQs while Paper 2 consists of structured questions. Paper 3 is a school-based assessment (field project).

General Performance

The overall performance of candidates in Geography 2025 was mixed. Candidates performed well in topics such as Population and Settlement Studies, Latitudes and Longitudes, Energy and Power, Weathering, and Environmental Hazards. However, low performance was observed in topics like Climatic Regions, Volcanism, Agriculture, and Tropical Cyclones. Weaknesses across all levels included poor map skills, limited conceptual understanding, and difficulty linking theory to practical or real-life examples.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Clearly understood questions and topics, providing detailed and logical explanations.
- Accurately explained concepts like forest conservation, indigenous vs. exotic trees, hydro-power development, settlement patterns, and urban sprawl.
- Able to relate theoretical knowledge to practical or real-life examples.
- Used correct geographic terms and demonstrated analytical skills in comparing countries and evaluating energy sources.
- Displayed good map skills, though some minor errors in locating sub-regional features were noted.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Showed moderate understanding of concepts, answering most questions but with limited depth.
- Could explain settlement patterns, factors affecting settlements, and sources of energy in Zambia, though incomplete or partially correct.
- Had difficulty recalling all energy sources or explaining their uses accurately.
- Struggled with cross-country comparisons and understanding conditions for hydro-electricity development.
- Demonstrated basic map skills but with occasional misplacement of features.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Poor comprehension of questions, often misinterpreting or omitting key points.
- Could not locate places of economic activity on maps of Zambia or the Sub-Region.
- Lacked knowledge of energy sources, their uses, and requirements for power station development.
- Struggled to explain the importance of conservation, tourism, or industrial factors in the Sub-Region.

- Demonstrated very weak map skills and minimal ability to apply geographic concepts to real-life situations.

Recommendations

1. Syllabus Coverage and Conceptual Understanding
    - Ensure comprehensive coverage of all topics, particularly Climatic Regions, Volcanism, Agriculture, and Tropical Cyclones.
    - Teach concepts before facts; encourage understanding over memorization.
    - Use comparison tables to clarify differences, e.g., features of volcanic landforms or types of agriculture.
2. Map Skills and Spatial Awareness
    - Use real maps, globes, wall charts, and digital maps to teach location skills.
    - Teach step-by-step skills: direction, grid references, latitude, and longitude.
    - Encourage learners to draw and label sketch maps regularly.
    - Practice locating towns, rivers, energy sites, and other key features.
3. Link Theory to Real Life
    - Use local examples for energy use, settlements, and conservation issues.
    - Demonstrate hydro-power station requirements using diagrams or visual mnemonics (e.g., W-S-C-F-T-M for water, slope, capital, etc.).
    - Relate settlement patterns and urban sprawl to local towns to enhance understanding.
4. Teaching Methods
    - Employ interactive methods: discussion, group work, and hands-on activities.
    - Use 3D and visual teaching tools for complex topics like volcanism and tropical cyclones.
    - Reinforce key terms and vocabulary in geography for clarity in answers.
5. Assessment and Practice
    - Regular formative assessments, including map exercises and structured questions.
    - Encourage learners to practice answering questions in full paragraphs and provide complete explanations.

- Use drills for naming, explaining, and locating features in Zambia and the Sub-Region.

6. Memory Aids and Concept Reinforcement
    - Use acronyms, charts, and tables to help learners remember categories and requirements (e.g., energy types, hydro-power station needs).
    - Emphasize the reasoning behind processes and patterns rather than rote memorization.

3.2.4. Religious Education (2044)

The Christian Religious Education 2044 examination evaluates spiritual, moral, religious, and cultural values from four main religious traditions in Zambia: Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian beliefs, and Islam. The syllabus requires candidates to demonstrate skills in identifying, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and synthesizing knowledge across various topics.

General observations

The overall performance in RE 2044/1 was moderate. Candidates generally performed better on topics that were easy to teach and grasp, such as Leisure in a Changing Society, Service in Society, Justice in Society, Courtship and Marriage, and Family. These topics allowed even average and lower-performing candidates to provide some responses.

However, candidates struggled on topics requiring application of knowledge and values in real-life situations, particularly in the fifth theme "Man's Evasion of God". Many candidates failed to extract information directly from the books or syllabus and could not apply religious concepts effectively to practical scenarios. Misconceptions and poor comprehension further contributed to low performance.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following strengths:

- Demonstrated excellent understanding of questions in all parts (a(i), b(i), b(ii)).
- Used correct concepts and content from books and syllabus accurately.
- Applied faith and religious knowledge effectively to real-life scenarios.
- Showed strong analysis and reasoning skills.
- Provided structured, clear, and relevant answers.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following strengths:

- Showed reasonable grasp of concepts, especially in recall-based questions (a(i)).
- Struggled with application of knowledge to real-life scenarios (b(ii)).
- Demonstrated some familiarity with Bible passages (b(i)), though details were sometimes incomplete.
- Answers were partially structured, with gaps in content and examples.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Lacked understanding of core concepts and Bible passages.
- Gave incomplete or incorrect responses; sometimes attempted wrong passages or mixed passages.
- Could not apply religious knowledge to real-life situations.
- Skipped or failed to attempt some parts of questions.
- Responses were poorly structured and showed minimal knowledge.

Recommendations

1. Expose learners to multiple scenario-based questions to practice application of concepts to real-life situations.
2. Conduct exercises, home assignments, and mock tests simulating final exam questions to enhance familiarity and confidence.
3. Teach foundational religious concepts clearly, ensuring learners understand content expected in exams.
4. Guide learners on how to answer structured questions effectively, emphasizing clarity, sequence, and supporting examples.
5. Train learners to manage exam time efficiently by simulating timed practice tests for specific topics.
6. Emphasize accurate recall and interpretation of Bible passages, linking content to themes and questions.

3.2.5. Religious Education (2046)

The 2046 Christian Religious Education syllabus in Zambia focuses on assessing candidates' understanding of spiritual, moral, and cultural values across four major religious traditions: Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian beliefs, and Islam.

The various topics within these traditions, including Jesus' teachings and actions, the significance of the Last Supper and crucifixion, the concept of the Kingdom of God, challenges faced by Jesus, and Christian perspectives on work, government, money, and possessions.

Beyond knowledge acquisition, the syllabus emphasizes critical thinking skills: identifying key information, comprehending its meaning, analysing different perspectives, evaluating their merits, and forming their own informed conclusions.

General Observations

The overall performance of candidates in the 2025 School Certificate Religious Education (2046) Examination was varied. A number of candidates demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the subject content and were able to respond correctly to several questions that required recall and basic explanation of biblical events and Christian teachings. In particular, candidates performed relatively well in topics such as Jesus' attitudes to people, Baptism, the Early Church, and Leadership.

However, many candidates had challenges in questions that required narration of biblical events, comparison of religious beliefs, and interpretation of biblical passages. Topics such as Judgement, the Birth and Infancy of John the Baptist and Jesus, Opposition to Jesus, the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, and Christian attitudes to sex and marriage proved challenging for many candidates. In many cases, candidates failed to accurately narrate biblical stories, misinterpreted passages, or provided incomplete responses.

Furthermore, some candidates demonstrated weaknesses in applying higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, comparison, and explanation, particularly when questions required them to compare and contrast teachings from different religions or to relate biblical teachings to moral and spiritual values in society.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Followed examination instructions carefully and avoided rubric infringements.
- Demonstrated clear and accurate knowledge of Religious Education concepts and biblical teachings.
- Presented neat, legible, and well-organized responses.
- Applied a range of skills including recalling, explaining, analysing, and evaluating information.
- Correctly interpreted and responded to all parts of the questions.
- Demonstrated strong understanding of biblical events and teachings.
- Provided relevant and well-developed explanations supported by appropriate examples.
- Demonstrated the ability to apply religious teachings to moral and social issues.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated basic understanding of Religious Education concepts and teachings.
- Attempted most questions but responses often lacked sufficient detail and depth.
- Showed fair use of language but sometimes constructed unclear or incomplete sentences.
- Narrated biblical stories using their own interpretations rather than accurate biblical accounts.
- Demonstrated some misconceptions in interpreting biblical passages.
- Struggled to compare and contrast beliefs or teachings from different religions.
- Showed moderate ability to describe and explain religious concepts.
- Handwriting and presentation were sometimes unclear or poorly organized.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Limited knowledge and understanding of Religious Education content.
- Frequently misinterpreted or incorrectly narrated biblical stories and events.
- Displayed several misconceptions about key religious teachings.
- Failed to follow examination instructions, resulting in rubric infringements.
- Provided incomplete or incorrect responses to many questions.
- Struggled to apply knowledge, analyse information, or interpret religious teachings.
- Poor writing skills, including unclear handwriting and weak sentence construction.
- Left several questions unanswered, indicating lack of preparation or understanding.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should guide learners in accurately narrating biblical events and passages using appropriate references from recommended Bible versions.
2. Learners should be taught how to compare and contrast religious beliefs, practices, and teachings across different religions.
3. Teachers should emphasize understanding the spiritual and moral lessons derived from biblical passages and how these teachings apply to modern society.
4. Learners should be exposed to different types of examination questions that require narration, explanation, analysis, and comparison.
5. Teachers should help learners develop clear writing and communication skills to express their ideas effectively in written responses.
6. Activities such as storytelling, discussions, role plays, and presentations can help learners better understand biblical events and religious teachings.
7. Teachers should use Bible passages, religious texts, and other learning materials to help learners develop deeper understanding of the subject.
8. Schools may organize field visits or invite religious leaders and community members to discuss religious practices and values with learners.

3.3. Business Studies

Business Studies comprises Commerce (7100) and Principles of Accounts (7110).

3.3.1. Commerce (7100)

The examination in commerce serves to assess learners in academic and entrepreneurship skills, evaluating their proficiency in fundamental commerce knowledge including production vs. the environment, home trade, international activities, stock exchange, business units, aids to trade, and procedures and documents used in daily business operations.

General observations

The overall performance of candidates was below average. Candidates generally performed well on simple questions requiring identification, listing, or definition of terms, and many demonstrated good language and grammar skills in their responses.

However, many candidates struggled with questions that required detailed explanations, discussions, and application of concepts, indicating limited understanding of some topics. Performance was particularly weak in areas such as Stock Exchange and Business Units, which were either poorly understood or insufficiently covered. Some candidates were also affected by unclear wording in certain questions.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Most candidates were able to correctly identify what was not an example of tertiary production.
- Candidates were able to recall information easily (questions at knowledge level). However, they performed poorly on questions related to production. In some cases, they failed to identify the three branches of production and were also unable to define direct production correctly.
- A small number of candidates failed to identify the components of consideration.

- The calculation question on buying and selling goods was successfully completed by most candidates. The wording of the question made it difficult to award marks for the different steps involved in solving it.
- Candidates generally performed very well on questions related to international trade. They were able to distinguish between total exports and total imports of goods and correctly match the terms with the given statements.
- Many candidates were able to identify the disadvantages of partnerships in the multiple-choice section and state the three sources of capital for a private limited company.
- The Stock Exchange question in the multiple-choice section (knowledge level) was answered correctly by most candidates. However, the Section B question on the same topic was poorly attempted, with only one candidate responding to it, suggesting low interest or limited understanding of the topic.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates generally demonstrated the ability to recall basic knowledge. For example, they were able to identify the three branches of production, recognize non-tertiary services, and state the meaning of direct production.
- Candidates in this category seemed to perform better in multiple-choice and short-answer questions, where they are required to identify or select correct answers rather than explain concepts in detail.
- Although candidates exhibited basic knowledge, many struggled to provide detailed explanations or comprehensive responses. This is evident in extended-response questions where important points were often omitted.
- Candidates exhibited limited ability to apply concepts and analyse questions, particularly in topics such as organisation of business units, insurance, and communication.
- Knowledge acquisition varied across topics in this category of candidates. They performed well in areas such as transport, warehousing, banking, and the stock exchange, suggesting these topics were better understood. However, topics such as communication,

insurance, home trade, and organisation of business units were poorly understood, indicating possible gaps in teaching, learning, or syllabus coverage.

- Some candidates in this category struggled with calculation questions, such as those on buying and selling.
- Candidates were more willing to attempt questions on topics they were confident in, while questions on less familiar topics were sometimes avoided completely.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates appeared to have basic awareness of some Commerce topics, as they were able to attempt questions in areas such as Production, Stock Exchange, and Warehousing. However, their performance was often below average, suggesting that while they may have been exposed to the content, their understanding is not sufficiently developed.
- Candidates demonstrated better performance in some structured or guided questions, particularly in certain Section B questions such as those on Contracts, Foreign Trade, and Communication, where pass rates were relatively higher.
- Many candidates had difficulty applying concepts and using appropriate examination techniques. For example, candidates often failed to use the appropriate action verbs in their responses, and in some cases misunderstood questions entirely. This shows that students may have limited practice in interpreting examination questions and presenting answers according to the required instructions.
- Candidates had weak understanding of several key topics, including Buying and Selling, Banking, Insurance, Organisation of Business Units, Advertising, and Transport, where performance was generally poor. In some instances, such as Insurance and Buying and Selling, candidates scored extremely low or zero, indicating that these topics were either not well understood, insufficiently taught, or not adequately practiced.
- Candidates appeared to struggle with conceptual understanding and differentiation of related concepts, as seen in their inability to clearly distinguish terms such as Balance of Trade or correctly apply insurance

terminology. This indicates gaps in conceptual learning and deeper comprehension of the subject matter.

Recommendations

1. There is need to have more questions for home trade to be incorporated into the testing structure.
2. Learners should be encouraged to attempt questions that they feel they understand and can work out better.
3. Extra work must be given as homework, assignments or classwork so that pupils are always abreast with their speed in learning.
4. The given homework, assignments or classwork should be marked as quickly as possible to give morale to the candidates.
5. Remedial work should be given to slow learners to keep them attuned to the classroom activities.
6. The whole syllabus should be covered with every topic being taught.
7. Take learners of tours of industries and workplaces which are under the topics in the syllabus e.g. the banks, factories, SEC, the Post Office, etc.

3.3.2. Principles of Accounts (7110)

Principles of Accounts aims to assess learners on their fundamental knowledge and practical skills related to financial transactions and management, which are crucial for making economic decisions and generating reports in the business sector, whether for personal or professional purposes.

General observations

Many candidates demonstrated limited understanding of key accounting concepts and procedures. Most candidates struggled with fundamental topics such as Books of Prime Entry, Trial Balance, Capital and Revenue Expenditure, and Bank Reconciliation, indicating weak mastery of basic accounting principles.

Many candidates had difficulties recording transactions correctly, particularly in identifying the appropriate source documents and books of original entry. In several cases, students reversed debit and credit entries, suggesting a lack of understanding of the double-entry principle. Additionally, some candidates

failed to properly present accounting statements, such as the trial balance, where items were incorrectly arranged or placed in the wrong columns.

Performance was particularly poor in challenging topics such as provision for doubtful debts, depreciation and disposal of assets, correction of errors through journal entries, control accounts, and bank reconciliation statements. Many candidates were unable to complete these questions correctly, and a significant number did not attempt them at all, leaving blank responses.

Candidates also experienced difficulties in preparing partnership final accounts and accounts for non-profit-making organisations, with many failing to complete the required statements or leaving the questions unanswered.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong mastery of accounting concepts and principles.
- Showed the ability to handle complex topics such as partnership accounts and club accounts.
- Were able to prepare a complete set of final accounts correctly.
- Successfully prepared appropriation accounts and calculated the share of residual profit.
- Displayed good understanding of financial statement preparation.
- Attempted and completed challenging questions that many other candidates avoided.
- However, some experienced minor challenges adjusting the partnership income statement, particularly in adjusting drawings at selling price and calculating interest on drawings correctly.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated partial understanding of accounting concepts but lacked consistency in application.
- Were able to attempt some questions, particularly those requiring basic accounting procedures.
- Showed some ability to prepare partnership accounts, including appropriation accounts.
- Had difficulty applying adjustments correctly in financial statements.

- Sometimes omitted important items, such as long-term liabilities in financial statements.
- Attempted questions on some topics but did not complete them fully or accurately.
- Displayed basic procedural knowledge but struggled with more complex calculations and adjustments.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated limited understanding of fundamental accounting concepts.
- Failed to identify source documents and books of original entry correctly.
- Had difficulty recording business transactions in the correct books of prime entry.
- Frequently reversed debit and credit entries, indicating poor understanding of the double-entry principle.
- Struggled to correctly prepare and present a trial balance, including placing items on the correct side.
- Showed poor understanding of capital and revenue expenditure and related receipts.
- Could not prepare provision for doubtful debts, depreciation accounts, or disposal accounts.
- Were unable to make journal entries to correct errors or prepare a suspense account.
- Failed to prepare cash books and bank reconciliation statements.
- Demonstrated little understanding of control accounts and account balances.
- Many did not attempt difficult questions, leaving several sections blank.
- Struggled to prepare partnership final accounts and accounts for non-profit making organisations.
- Showed weak ability to identify which accounts to debit or credit and to follow correct accounting procedures.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should provide learners with more guided practice on how to calculate adjustment amounts (such as depreciation, provisions, and accruals) and correctly apply these adjustments in the preparation of financial statements. Emphasis should be placed on understanding the purpose of adjustments and how they affect different accounts.
2. More instructional time should be devoted to complex areas such as club and non-profit organisation accounts, limitations of the trial balance, and provision for doubtful debts. Teachers should use step-by-step demonstrations, worked examples, and regular exercises to help learners build confidence in these topics.
3. Teachers should cover all topics across Grades 10–12 thoroughly, avoiding the practice of focusing only on selected topics. Comprehensive coverage will help learners develop a complete understanding of the subject and better prepare them for examination questions drawn from any part of the syllabus.
4. Teachers should consistently refer to the syllabus and its learning outcomes when planning lessons to ensure that all required knowledge, skills, and competencies are adequately addressed during instruction. This will help prevent the omission of key concepts and skills that learners are expected to master.

3.4. Mathematics and Natural Sciences

The subjects in this category include Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Computer Studies, Physical Science Subjects (Physics, Chemistry & Science) and Biological Science Subjects (Agricultural Science & Biology).

3.4.1. Mathematics (4024)

The Grade 12 Mathematics assessment tests the candidates on the competencies specified in the O-level Mathematics syllabus Grade 10 -12. These competencies are knowledge and understanding, application and problem solving, and analysis and evaluation. The candidates are expected to demonstrate their ability to: recognise, estimate, and use mathematical procedures, language, and symbols; use units, calculations, concepts, and skills in various situations, such as daily life, shapes, word problems, algorithms, and diagrams; and present, interpret, and use information in different forms, present logical arguments, and form generalisations from patterns and structures.

General observations

Candidates in the 2025 School Certificate Mathematics Examination demonstrated varying levels of achievement across the assessed content areas. Candidates performed well in topics that required routine procedures and direct application of basic concepts such as basic mathematical operations, matrices, probability, and geometric progression (common ratio). These topics largely involved recall of procedures and straightforward computations.

Moderate performance was observed in topics such as quadratic functions, algebraic simplification, geometric progression (sum to infinity), construction of triangles, linear programming, and definite integration. In these areas, some candidates demonstrated partial understanding of concepts but struggled to complete questions accurately or to fully apply the required procedures.

However, candidates had difficulties in topics that required higher-order thinking skills such as transformations, calculus and graphs, flowcharts in computer studies, mensuration and earth geometry, statistics, and equations of the normal. These topics required deeper conceptual understanding, interpretation, and analytical reasoning, which many candidates found challenging.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong understanding of mathematical concepts across different topics.
- Correctly selected and applied appropriate formulae and procedures.
- Accurately interpreted mathematical questions and identified suitable solution methods.
- Organized their work clearly and presented logical, step-by-step solutions.
- Applied trigonometric and other mathematical concepts effectively in solving problems.
- Used calculators correctly and obtained accurate numerical answers.
- Attempted all parts of questions and provided complete solutions.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated partial understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Correctly applied formulae in some parts of questions but made errors in others.
- Interpreted some questions correctly but struggled with more complex items.
- Work was moderately organized, though some steps were unclear or incomplete.
- Applied mathematical concepts with some success but lacked consistency.
- Attempted most questions but only completed some parts correctly.
- Made calculation errors that affected final answers.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated weak understanding of basic mathematical concepts.
- Used incorrect formulae or failed to apply appropriate solution methods.
- Had difficulties in interpreting questions and identifying required procedures.
- Left many questions unanswered or partially attempted.
- Work was poorly organized and lacked clear steps in problem solving.
- Made numerous calculation errors and incorrect assumptions.
- Struggled to apply concepts such as trigonometry and algebra in solving problems.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should emphasize conceptual understanding of mathematical ideas rather than focusing only on procedures and memorization of formulas.
2. Learners should be exposed to questions that require reasoning, interpretation, and problem-solving to develop analytical skills.
3. Teachers should incorporate visual aids, diagrams, models, and technological tools to improve understanding of abstract mathematical concepts.
4. Mathematics lessons should include practical examples and real-life applications to help learners understand the relevance of mathematical concepts.

5. Learners should consistently review previously covered topics and practice solving a variety of problems to reinforce their understanding.
6. Teachers should train learners to carefully read and interpret questions before attempting solutions.
7. Teachers should ensure that all syllabus topics are adequately taught and reinforced through exercises and assessments.
8. Since many learners struggle with these areas, teachers should provide additional practice and targeted support in these foundational topics.

3.4.2. Additional Mathematics (4030)

The purpose of the Additional Mathematics assessments is to measure learner achievements against the set competencies as outlined in the Additional Mathematics Grade 10 to 12 Syllabus. The subject enables the learners to acquire analytical, problem solving and critical thinking skills.

General observations

The overall performance of candidates in Additional Mathematics was average. Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of several key areas of the syllabus. Most candidates performed well in topics such as simultaneous equations, the remainder theorem, quadratic equations, quadratic inequalities, arithmetic and geometric progressions, permutations and combinations, and coordinate geometry. In these areas, many candidates were able to apply the appropriate procedures and arrive at correct solutions.

However, candidates experienced difficulties in several other areas of the syllabus. Notable challenges were observed in calculus, vectors, statistics, kinematics, logarithms, radian measure, and composite functions. In these topics, many candidates demonstrated limited understanding of the underlying concepts and were often unable to apply appropriate methods to solve the questions correctly.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates correctly identified and stated relevant formulae when solving questions.
- Candidates exhibited a high level of computational skill, as reflected in the accuracy and completeness of their solutions.

- There was consistent and appropriate use of correct formulae throughout their responses.
- Candidates presented their work clearly and logically, with well-structured solutions.
- Candidates demonstrated strong procedural understanding by correctly applying sequential steps in solving mathematical problems.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- The ability to correctly state and apply relevant formulae when solving mathematical problems.
- Exhibited a high level of computational accuracy and proficiency, as reflected in the solutions provided.
- Presented solutions in a clear, logical, and well-organised manner, with appropriate working shown.
- Displayed strong step-by-step problem-solving skills, indicating a good command of mathematical procedures and methods.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated limited ability to correctly identify and apply the appropriate formulae, with some candidates only partially recognising the required formula before attempting a solution.
- Provided incomplete or inconclusive solutions, indicating difficulties in carrying the solution process through to the final answer.
- Exhibited moderate computational and problem-solving skills, with attempts made on several questions but with noticeable gaps in the correct application of mathematical procedures.
- Presented solutions that were not always organised in a clear or logical sequence, making it difficult to follow the steps taken to arrive at the answers.
- Produced answers that lacked accuracy, often due to computational errors or incorrect application of methods.
- Experienced difficulties in simplifying algebraic expressions correctly, which affected the correctness and completeness of the final solutions.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should emphasize the correct identification, derivation, and application of mathematical formulae, ensuring that learners understand when and how each formula should be used in solving problems.
2. Instruction should focus on developing learners' step-by-step problem-solving skills, encouraging them to present solutions in a clear, logical, and systematic manner with all necessary working shown.
3. Teachers should provide learners with regular practice in simplifying algebraic expressions and manipulating mathematical expressions, as these skills form the foundation for solving more complex problems.
4. The use of teaching and learning aids, including diagrams, graphs, and visual demonstrations, should be incorporated where appropriate to enhance conceptual understanding.
5. Teachers should integrate real-life applications of mathematical concepts to help learners appreciate the relevance of Additional Mathematics and strengthen their ability to apply concepts in practical situations.
6. Learners should be encouraged to use appropriate mathematical instruments and calculators correctly, including ensuring that calculators are set to the correct mode when solving questions involving trigonometry or circular measure.
7. Teachers should place greater emphasis on accuracy in computations, guiding learners to avoid premature rounding and to maintain precision throughout the solution process.
8. Schools should promote regular practice using past examination papers and structured exercises to familiarize learners with the style, structure, and expectations of examination questions.
9. Continuous assessment and timely feedback should be provided to help learners identify their weaknesses and improve their understanding of challenging topics.
10. Teachers should encourage learners to carefully interpret examination questions and key mathematical terms, ensuring that responses fully address what is required.

3.4.3. Computer Studies (7010)

The School Certificate Computer Studies Examination aims to assess candidates' competencies as outlined in the Grade 10 to 12 Syllabus. It also aims at cultivating interest and foundational skills in Information Technology Careers such as Computer Hardware, Embedded Systems, Computer Programming, Database Management, Computer Networks, Mobile Computing, Web Design, Computer Security, and Forensics.

General observations

The performance of candidates in Computer Studies varied across the topics assessed. Candidates generally performed better in topics involving practical applications of computers, such as the use of computers in hospitals, robotics, and presentation packages. In these areas, many candidates demonstrated good recall of factual knowledge and were able to relate concepts to real-life situations.

However, candidates had challenges in topics that required deeper conceptual understanding and procedural skills, such as the System Development Life Cycle (SDLC), operating systems, data representation, and database concepts. Some candidates were able to recall basic information but struggled to explain processes or apply concepts accurately.

In addition, challenges were observed in tasks that required diagrammatic representation and logical problem-solving, such as drawing logic circuits, constructing flowcharts, debugging programs, and writing SQL commands. Some candidates also misinterpreted examination questions, providing examples instead of the required explanations or classifications.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong understanding of key computer studies concepts across topics.
- Correctly identified, explained, and applied technical terms and concepts, such as SDLC stages, operating systems, security methods, and database keys.

- Showed the ability to recall factual information accurately, including hardware components, user interfaces, computer applications, and security threats.
- Demonstrated good analytical and problem-solving skills, particularly in areas such as binary operations, logic circuits, programming, and SQL commands.
- Successfully converted algorithms into flowcharts using correct symbols and logical flow.
- Produced accurate diagrams and labelled representations, especially for logic circuits and system processes.
- Demonstrated practical understanding of computer applications, including spreadsheet features, presentation software, and the use of computers in sectors such as health and manufacturing.
- Showed the ability to link theoretical knowledge to real-world applications, such as robotics, automation, and computer-based systems.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated basic understanding of several concepts but with some gaps in depth and accuracy.
- Were able to recall some factual information, such as examples of hardware, user interfaces, and applications of computers.
- Showed partial understanding of technical processes, including operating systems, SDLC stages, and programming concepts.
- Managed to perform some procedural tasks, such as binary operations and flowchart construction, but sometimes with incomplete or inaccurate details.
- Demonstrated limited ability to explain concepts clearly, often providing short or partially correct responses.
- Experienced difficulties in applying knowledge to more complex tasks, such as writing SQL queries, explaining scheduling, or drawing complete logic circuits.
- Occasionally misinterpreted examination questions, for example giving examples instead of types or providing incomplete explanations.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated limited understanding of fundamental computer studies concepts across many topics.
- Experienced difficulties in recalling basic definitions, terms, and examples, such as operating systems, computer applications, and security concepts.
- Showed weak knowledge of system processes, including SDLC stages, implementation methods, and maintenance documentation.
- Were often unable to perform basic technical tasks, such as binary conversions, drawing logic gates, constructing flowcharts, or writing SQL commands.
- Displayed poor ability to interpret examination questions, which resulted in incorrect or irrelevant answers.
- Struggled to link theoretical knowledge with practical applications, such as the use of computers in hospitals, robotics, or spreadsheet functions.
- Demonstrated limited procedural and analytical skills, particularly in programming, databases, and problem-solving tasks.

Recommendations

1. Recommendations for Improving Learners' Performance in Computer Studies
2. Teachers should strengthen learners' conceptual understanding of key topics such as operating systems, system development life cycle (SDLC), data representation, and databases through detailed explanations and structured lessons.
3. More emphasis should be placed on teaching complex processes step-by-step, particularly in areas such as flowchart construction, logic circuits, binary operations, and programming.
4. Teachers should incorporate practical and hands-on activities, especially when teaching application software such as spreadsheets and presentation packages, to help learners develop practical skills.
5. Learners should be given regular practice exercises and assignments in programming, database queries (SQL), and spreadsheet formulas to improve accuracy and confidence in applying these skills.
6. Teachers should use visual teaching aids, including diagrams, screenshots, comparison tables, and demonstrations, to help learners better understand

abstract concepts such as logic gates, operating systems, and data representation.

7. Greater emphasis should be placed on interpreting examination questions and command words correctly, so that learners provide responses that address what the question requires.
8. Teachers should use real-life examples and case studies, such as the use of computers in hospitals, factories, and businesses, to help learners relate theoretical concepts to practical applications.
9. Regular revision and concept mapping activities should be conducted to help learners consolidate knowledge and link related concepts across different topics.
10. Schools should encourage continuous practice using past examination questions, especially for topics that require diagrams, structured answers, or problem-solving.
11. Teachers should provide timely feedback and targeted support to learners who experience difficulties in key areas such as programming, database management, and system development.

3.5. Physical Science

Physical Science Subjects comprises Physics (5054), Chemistry (5070), and Science (5090). Each subject consists of three components – Paper 1, Paper 2, and Paper 3. Science combines elements of Physics and Chemistry.

The Grade 12 assessment in Physical Science Subjects aims to assess candidates' knowledge, understanding, information handling, problem-solving abilities, and experimental skills. Paper 3 for each subject constitutes a School-Based Assessment designed to assess outcomes not easily assessed in a single written examination.

3.5.1. Physics (5054)

The purpose of the Physics assessment is to measure learners' competencies and achievements as outlined in the Grade 10 to 12 Physics syllabus, CDC 2013. The assessment is also used for certification of learners' achievements as well as entry into tertiary institutions and the engagement in Entrepreneurial activities.

General observations

The overall performance of candidates in Physics (5054/2) was average, with noticeable variation in performance across different questions and topics. Many candidates demonstrated reasonable competence in mathematical manipulation and calculations. For example, several candidates were able to correctly calculate quantities such as volume, thickness of paper, circumference of a pulley, frequency, and electrical quantities, often using the correct units. In addition, some candidates were able to apply basic physics principles when solving problems involving concepts such as force, acceleration, velocity, and power.

Candidates also showed ability to plot and interpret graphs. In several cases, graphs were correctly drawn, labelled, and scaled, indicating some understanding of graphical representation of data. However, difficulties were observed in analysing graphs, particularly in topics such as radioactivity where some candidates struggled to use graphical information to determine values such as half-life.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Strong mathematical and computational skills, accurately solving numerical problems and using correct units in calculations.
- Correctly applied fundamental physics principles when solving problems involving concepts such as force, acceleration, velocity, and power.
- Displayed good graphical skills, including correct plotting, scaling, and labelling of graphs.
- Showed broad knowledge of the syllabus, enabling them to attempt and answer most questions, including optional questions.

- Exhibited the ability to integrate theory with problem-solving, indicating a clear understanding of the subject matter.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated a fair understanding of the syllabus and were able to attempt most questions, although some responses were incomplete.
- Showed moderate ability in solving numerical problems, particularly in areas such as volume, frequency, and electricity.
- Displayed basic skills in plotting and interpreting graphs, although with occasional errors or incomplete analysis.
- Experienced difficulties in clearly defining scientific terms and concepts, such as refractive index.
- Had challenges in relating physics concepts to everyday applications, for example identifying practical uses of static electricity.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Limited understanding of basic physics concepts and terminology, resulting in incorrect or irrelevant responses.
- Showed poor mathematical and computational skills, often failing to attempt calculation-based questions or using incorrect formulae and units.
- Displayed weak practical skills, particularly in the use and interpretation of scientific instruments such as the micrometre screw gauge.
- Experienced significant difficulty in plotting and analysing graphs, including interpreting graphical data such as determining half-life in radioactivity.
- Were generally unable to apply physics concepts to real-life situations, indicating weak conceptual understanding of the subject.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should ensure comprehensive coverage of the physics syllabus, particularly in challenging topics such as sound waves, simple machines, electromagnetic induction, and current electricity.
2. Greater emphasis should be placed on integrating practical activities with theoretical lessons so that learners can observe and apply physics principles through experiments and demonstrations.

3. Teachers should provide regular practice in mathematical problem-solving, focusing on correct use of formulae, units, and step-by-step calculations.
4. Learners should be given structured practice in plotting and interpreting graphs, including guided step-by-step instruction and group activities using graph papers.
5. Teachers should emphasize clear understanding and correct use of scientific terminology, encouraging learners to practice defining and explaining key physics concepts.
6. Instruction should incorporate real-life examples and applications of physics, helping learners relate theoretical concepts to everyday situations such as the use of electrostatics or ultrasonic waves.
7. Practical investigations and research-based learning activities should be encouraged, such as exploring real-life applications of ultrasonic echoes and other physics concepts.
8. Teachers should provide more exercises on experimental interpretation, particularly in topics such as heat experiments and measurement techniques, to strengthen learners' analytical skills.

3.5.2. Chemistry (5070/1)

The following are some of the challenges and misconceptions identified from learners' responses in Paper 1. The topics are arranged according to the level of difficulty experienced by learners.

i. Chemistry and Electricity (Electrochemistry)

Possible Challenges and Misconceptions

Electrochemistry is often regarded as one of the most difficult topics in secondary school chemistry because it combines ideas from chemistry, electricity, and mathematical calculations.

From the learners' responses, the following challenges were observed:

- Difficulty balancing ionic and half equations in electrochemical reactions.
- Poor understanding of oxidation and reduction processes occurring at electrodes.
- Confusion about anode and cathode identification in different electrochemical systems.
- Challenges in understanding the flow of electrons and ions in electrochemical cells.

- Inability to correctly interpret electrolysis processes in aqueous solutions.
- Difficulty linking electrical current concepts in physics with chemical reactions in electrochemistry.
- Weak mathematical skills required for calculations involving Faraday's laws and electrochemical equations.
- Misconceptions that electrons flow through the electrolyte or salt bridge, instead of through the external circuit.
- Difficulty visualizing processes because many electrochemical reactions occur at microscopic levels that cannot be directly observed.
- Limited understanding of the function of the salt bridge and electrolyte in maintaining electrical neutrality.
- In some cases, learners relied on memorized rules without understanding the underlying chemical principles.

ii. Chemical Reactions

Challenges and Misconceptions

Although chemical reactions are generally considered less difficult than electrochemistry, some learners still experienced difficulties due to conceptual misunderstandings or lack of careful interpretation of questions. Possible challenges observed include:

- Difficulty identifying types of chemical reactions, such as precipitation, neutralization, redox, and decomposition reactions.
- Inability to write correct balanced chemical equations.
- Limited understanding of reaction conditions such as temperature, catalysts, and concentration.
- Confusion between reactants and products when describing chemical processes.
- Poor understanding of observable changes in chemical reactions, such as colour change, gas formation, or precipitate formation.
- Weak understanding of factors affecting reaction rates.
- Learners sometimes memorize reactions without understanding the underlying chemical processes.

- Some candidates failed to carefully interpret the question requirements due to carelessness or lack of concentration during the examination.

Recommendations

To improve understanding and performance, the following measures are recommended:

1. Teachers should emphasize step-by-step teaching of oxidation–reduction reactions, including identification of oxidizing and reducing agents.
2. Greater attention should be given to writing and balancing half-equations and ionic equations through regular practice exercises.
3. Teachers should integrate practical electrolysis experiments to help learners visualize the processes occurring at electrodes.
4. Diagrams and simulations should be used to illustrate electron flow, ion movement, and electrode processes in electrochemical cells.
5. Learners should be taught the relationship between chemistry and electricity, linking electrochemical concepts with knowledge from physics.
6. Teachers should provide worked examples involving electrochemical calculations to strengthen mathematical application in chemistry.
7. The use of animations, models, and labelled diagrams can help learners understand invisible processes occurring in electrochemical cells.
8. Learners should be encouraged to explain concepts verbally and in writing, rather than memorizing rules.
9. Regular formative assessments should be conducted to identify misconceptions early and correct them promptly.
10. Teachers should emphasize experimental demonstration of chemical reactions under different conditions such as temperature, catalysts, and concentration.
11. Practical experiments should be used to help learners observe evidence of chemical reactions, such as gas evolution, precipitate formation, and colour change.
12. Teachers should regularly engage learners in balancing chemical equations and identifying reaction types.
13. Learners should be encouraged to explain the steps occurring during reactions rather than memorizing equations.

14. Teaching should incorporate laboratory investigations and inquiry-based learning activities.
15. Teachers should use comparison tables and concept maps to help learners differentiate between different types of reactions.
16. Past examination questions should be used to train learners to interpret questions correctly.
17. Continuous practice exercises should be provided to strengthen conceptual understanding and application of reaction principles.

3.5.3. Chemistry (5070/2)

The 5070/2 paper is a chemistry paper referred to as pure chemistry. It is graded as an independent subject.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong mathematical and calculation skills; successfully solved mole concept and other numerical problems.
- Showed excellent knowledge and application of chemical equations, including balanced equations with correct state symbols and ionic equations.
- Attempted all compulsory and optional questions without leaving blanks.
- Accurately interpreted the periodic table and applied periodic trends correctly in their responses.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Exhibited fair knowledge of the syllabus; able to answer most questions but with some struggles.
- Showed moderate mathematical and calculation skills; able to solve some numerical problems such as limiting reactants questions.
- Had partial knowledge of topics such as bond energy; could draw energy profile diagrams, though with minor inaccuracies.
- Struggled with writing chemical symbols, balancing equations, and formulating correct ionic equations.
- Demonstrated average understanding of the periodic table and its applications.

- Showed limited ability to interpret substances and processes in chemical reactions.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Weak mathematical skills; unable to solve numerical problems such as mole concept calculations, often skipping essential steps.
- Poor understanding and interpretation of the periodic table; could not recall or apply basic concepts.
- Struggled to write and balance chemical equations correctly, including state and ionic symbols.
- Provided incomplete answers and demonstrated poor coverage of the syllabus.
- Unable to interpret or construct graphs; struggled with questions involving bond energy and other analytical diagrams.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should ensure all topics are thoroughly taught, emphasizing deep conceptual understanding rather than rote memorization.
2. Use visual aids, simulations, and larger periodic table charts to reinforce learning.
3. Engage learners in sorting exercises, distinguishing metals from non-metals, and identifying trends across groups and periods.
4. Integrate practical experiments for topics such as electrolysis, chemical reactions, and mole calculations.
5. Use simple apparatus like water, electrodes, and batteries for demonstration to reinforce theoretical concepts.
6. Teach balancing of chemical and ionic equations in a structured, stepwise manner.
7. Use coloured beads or counters to visually represent elements in reactants and products.
8. Provide repeated practice exercises to develop accuracy and fluency in balancing equations.
9. Incorporate exercises for reading, interpreting, and drawing graphs, especially for bond energy and reaction profile diagrams.
10. Use group activities and guided practice to reinforce graph-related skills.

11. Provide regular practice of numerical problems such as mole concept calculations, limiting reactants, and stoichiometry.
12. Encourage learners to write all calculation steps clearly and consistently use correct units.
13. Emphasize the connection between theoretical knowledge and real-life applications of chemistry.
14. Use case studies and practical examples to enhance understanding of chemical principles.
15. Conduct formative assessments to identify weaknesses early.
16. Provide feedback on errors in calculations, equations, and conceptual understanding to reinforce learning.

3.5.4. Science (5124)/1

The science paper comprises chemistry and Physics. According to the syllabus it is designed for Grade 10 -12. Physics part is written as Science Paper 1, while the Chemistry Part is written as Science Paper 2.

Science Paper One (1) Physics Components

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong mathematical and calculation skills, correctly applying formulas with appropriate SI units.
- Successfully solved problems on topics such as simple machines, acceleration, speed, velocity, kinetic energy, and heat transfer.
- Exhibited excellent data handling and graphing skills; able to plot graphs accurately with correct scales and labels.
- Applied practical knowledge from SBA tasks to theory questions, e.g., micrometre screw gauge and experimental observations.
- Showed strong understanding of the syllabus, including topics such as radioactivity and wave motion.
- Able to use diagrams effectively to explain concepts and relate them to real-life situations.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Showed moderate proficiency in mathematical calculations; able to solve some numerical problems but with occasional errors.
- Demonstrated partial understanding of key topics; some questions were incomplete or partially correct.
- Struggled with graph plotting due to incorrect scales, missing information, or incomplete labelling.
- Could apply practical knowledge from SBA exercises to theory questions only to a limited extent.
- Showed fair understanding of topics such as simple machines, kinetic energy, and radioactivity.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Displayed poor mathematical skills; often missed essential steps or substituted incorrect data in calculations.
- Unable to plot or interpret graphs correctly; lacked understanding of proper labelling and scaling.
- Struggled to apply scientific methods to solve problems; demonstrated poor analysis and reasoning skills.
- Could not transfer knowledge from practical experiments to theory questions, e.g., micrometer screw gauge.
- Limited understanding of the syllabus; key concepts such as heat transfer, convection, and electromagnetic principles were poorly understood or not attempted.

Recommendations

1. Ensure all topics are taught thoroughly, emphasizing deep conceptual understanding.
2. Topics such as electromagnetic induction and principle of moments should be explicitly taught with real-life examples.
3. Integrate experiments into lessons to reinforce theory, e.g., use a solenoid and magnet for electromagnetic induction, an electric kettle for convection currents, or a seesaw to demonstrate principle of moments.
4. Encourage learners to actively engage in SBA experiments and relate findings to theory questions.

5. Teach a step-by-step approach: study the data, select appropriate scale, label axes, plot points, and draw lines/curves accurately.
6. Use multiple practice exercises with guided supervision to build accuracy and confidence.
7. Use diagrams, charts, and everyday examples to explain concepts such as wave motion, force, and energy transformations.
8. Encourage learners to relate scientific principles to daily experiences to enhance retention and understanding.
9. Provide regular practice problems on numerical calculations, ensuring learners write all steps and use correct SI units.
10. Reinforce unit conversions and problem-solving strategies for physics calculations.
11. Encourage learners to consistently link practical experiments to theory questions.
12. Reinforce the understanding of experimental apparatus, measurements, and observations to improve application skills.
13. Conduct frequent quizzes and practice exercises to identify weak areas early.
14. Provide timely feedback on errors in calculations, graphing, and conceptual understanding to reinforce learning.

3.5.5. Science (5124)/2

The Science assessment aims to measure learners' competencies and achievements in accordance with the syllabus and serves as a certification for further education and entrepreneurship.

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated a good understanding of scientific concepts. For example, they were able to explain that metals have high melting points and could relate Brownian motion to kinetic theory.
- Exhibited strong computation skills, accurately applying scientific facts to calculate figures, such as in mole concept questions.
- Showed good knowledge of the periodic table, including writing group numbers in Roman numerals and correctly identifying elements.
- Were able to construct balanced chemical equations with correct state symbols.

- Successfully related practical questions to theory, as seen in their responses on the preparation of salts.
- Displayed understanding of organic chemistry by correctly drawing the structural formulas of organic compounds.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Lacked a deep understanding of basic chemistry concepts. For example, they could not explain why metals have high melting points or describe Brownian motion.
- Exhibited poor computation skills and were unable to solve calculation-based questions. Questions on the mole concept were often left blank and attempts typically used incorrect formulas.
- Were unable to construct or balance chemical equations or write correct state symbols.
- Had limited knowledge of the periodic table, which was evident in their inability to answer related questions.
- Showed a lack of understanding of organic chemistry, as they could not draw the displayed formulas of organic compounds.

Recommendations

1. Balancing equations topic: Start with the basics in chemistry. Explain the symbols on the periodic table and emphasise word equations as the foundation for chemical equations. When teaching balancing, stress the law of conservation of mass. Use concrete models to represent atoms—for example, use different coloured beads to represent atoms in an equation like $H_2 + O_2 \rightarrow H_2O$ (e.g., red beads for hydrogen, white for oxygen). Ensure a clear, step-by-step method is followed when balancing equations.

2. Diffusion and Brownian motion: Explain diffusion in line with Brownian motion using everyday experiences, such as spraying air freshener in one corner of the classroom to demonstrate how gas particles spread. If a microscope is available, use it to show the movement of pollen grains in water.

3. Mole concept: Link this topic to familiar counting units, e.g., 12 items = 1 dozen. Explain that just as a dozen represents 12 items, a mole represents a fixed number of particles. Use simple, step-by-step formula practice and

group work to help learners solve problems and address common misconceptions from the start.

4. Acids, bases and salts: Introduce this topic using everyday examples of acids (vinegar, lemon juice) and bases (baking soda, soap solution). Allow learners to discuss observable characteristics. Use hands-on activities with indicators to explain the pH scale and colour changes. Demonstrate neutralisation and salt preparation by giving learners reactants to prepare a salt through neutralisation. Teach the formation of salts step by step.

5. Chromatography: To ensure understanding of locating agents, give learners background experience with chromatography. Use a real locating agent to make colourless substances visible.

6. Organic chemistry: Teach key words and encourage learners to identify and underline important terms. Use hands-on activities with molecular models to help learners understand bonding.

3.6. Biological Sciences

The Biological Science Subjects include Biology (5090) and Agricultural Science (5037), each consisting of three components: Paper 1, Paper 2, and Paper 3. Biology's Paper 1 is multiple choice, whereas Agricultural Science is structured. For Paper 2, Biology is structured, while Agricultural Science is a field project. Paper 3 for both Biology and Agricultural Science is practical.

The Grade 12 assessment in Biological Science Subjects aims to assess candidates' knowledge, skills and values about the living world, their acquisition of skills useful in their daily life.

Both the field project and practical components are school based designed to assess outcomes not easily assessed in a single written examination.

3.6.1. Biology (5090)

General observations

The general performance revealed that while candidates possessed a degree of theoretical knowledge, they lacked the practical application and analytical skills necessary to excel. Performance was particularly poor in topics requiring the synthesis of information, such as interpreting diagrams, graphs, and keys, or

applying knowledge to unfamiliar scenarios. The widespread difficulty in identifying structures and relating them to their functions suggests that teaching has often been theoretical and not sufficiently reinforced with hands-on, visual, and practical learning experiences.

Characteristics of Candidates

iv. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Correctly identified characteristics of living things and distinguished them from non-living things.
- Accurately identified nutrients in food sources and related dietary needs to different people.
- Applied knowledge of plant transport systems; identified root structures and predicted water and mineral movement.
- Investigated and described the internal structure of the eye and other sense organs.
- Demonstrated understanding of genetics, including inheritance of sex-linked traits (e.g., hemophilia).
- Analysed homeostasis and osmoregulation, identifying key organs and mechanisms.
- Compared red and white blood cells accurately, including clotting processes.
- Described the menstrual cycle, hormone roles, and contraceptive methods correctly.
- Correctly explained responses of plants to light and gravity; distinguished types of germination.
- Defined population and conservation and explained their relevance.

v. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Partially identified characteristics of living things; had difficulty distinguishing some living from non-living things.
- Struggled to relate food sources to specific nutrients; had limited understanding of a balanced diet and deficiency diseases.
- Showed partial understanding of plant transport; identification of root structures and water/mineral movement was incomplete.

- Had difficulty investigating the internal structure of the eye and other sense organs.
- Partially demonstrated inheritance in genetics; some errors in genetic diagrams.
- Incomplete analysis of homeostasis and thermoregulation; struggled to explain the role of organs.
- Poor comparison of red and white blood cells; blood clotting process partially described.
- Limited understanding of the menstrual cycle and contraceptive methods.
- Poor explanation of plant responses to light and gravity; could not describe primary and secondary tissues.
- Could not explain the economic importance of conservation clearly.

vi. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Failed to identify characteristics of living things or distinguish them from non-living things.
- Could not identify nutrients in food sources, explain balanced diets, or relate deficiency diseases.
- Could not identify root structures or predict movement of water and minerals.
- Could not identify parts of the eye or other sense organs.
- Could not demonstrate genetic inheritance or write genetic diagrams.
- Lacked understanding of homeostasis and thermoregulation mechanisms.
- Could not explain differences between red and white blood cells or describe blood clotting.
- Could not describe the menstrual cycle, hormone roles, or contraceptive methods.
- Could not explain plant responses to light and gravity; unable to describe germination types.
- Lacked understanding of population and conservation concepts.

Recommendations

1. Practical Exposure and Hands-On Activities
    - Use school gardens and laboratory setups to help learners identify living things, plant structures, and nutrient sources.
    - Demonstrate plant responses to light and gravity using real plants (phototropism and geotropism).
    - Conduct staining of roots and cross-sections to show internal structures.
    - Use food tests to identify nutrients in different foods.
2. Use of Models, Charts, and Visual Aids
    - Employ eye models, charts, and videos to teach sense organs and internal structures.
    - Use diagrams and animations to illustrate blood clotting, menstrual cycle, and homeostasis.
    - Create visual aids for plant transport, genetic inheritance, and hormonal regulation.
3. Step-by-Step Guided Instruction
    - Teach complex processes like genetics, menstrual cycle, blood clotting, and thermoregulation in clear, sequential steps.
    - Reinforce key terminology and concept words before introducing diagrams and practicals.
4. Relating Theory to Real-Life Examples
    - Connect plant responses, homeostasis, and conservation to real-life scenarios.
    - Use local examples for population and conservation, e.g., class population, local forests, or water bodies.
    - Discuss practical implications of nutrition, reproductive health, and ecosystem conservation.
5. Active Learning and Practice
    - Encourage group discussions and problem-solving activities on topics like inheritance, blood physiology, and plant growth.
    - Give repeated practice on drawing and interpreting diagrams, including graphs and cycles.
    - Assign research or project work on conservation and nutrition to deepen understanding.
6. Targeted Support for Challenging Topics

- Emphasize responses, reproduction in humans, and economic importance of conservation, using demonstrations and real-life applications.
- Revisit difficult areas through revision lessons, quizzes, and guided practical sessions.

3.6.2. Agricultural Science (5037)

General observations

The overall performance of candidates in the 2026 Agricultural Science examination was satisfactory, with candidates demonstrating better performance in practical and production-related topics than in theoretical and analytical areas. Most candidates performed well in crop production, farm structures, conservation farming, and livestock production, indicating a good understanding of agricultural practices and principles related to crop and animal management.

Candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of concepts such as the importance of organic matter in improving soil fertility, processes involved in land preparation for crop production, signs of good and poor animal health, and methods of controlling animal diseases.

However, many candidates experienced difficulties in topics that required deeper conceptual understanding and analytical thinking, particularly Agriculture in Zambia (environmental influences of agriculture), farm management, and soil science. In these areas, candidates struggled to apply theoretical knowledge to practical agricultural situations.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong understanding of agricultural science concepts and principles.
- Provided clear and logical explanations when responding to questions.
- Correctly interpreted questions and applied relevant knowledge appropriately.
- Showed good understanding of crop production processes and livestock management.

- Demonstrated knowledge of soil fertility and the importance of organic matter in improving soil productivity.
- Accurately identified signs of good and poor animal health and appropriate disease control measures.
- Organized responses clearly and provided well-developed answers supported by relevant examples.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated moderate understanding of agricultural concepts.
- Were able to answer questions related to familiar and practical topics such as crop production and livestock management.
- Provided partially correct explanations but often lacked sufficient detail.
- Showed some difficulty interpreting questions requiring deeper analysis.
- Demonstrated limited ability to relate theoretical knowledge to practical agricultural situations.
- Made occasional errors when explaining agricultural processes or concepts.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated weak understanding of key agricultural science concepts.
- Struggled to recall important concepts related to soil science, farm management, and environmental influences of agriculture.
- Failed to relate agricultural concepts to real-life farming situations.
- Provided incomplete or incorrect responses to many questions.
- Had difficulty explaining processes such as the nitrogen cycle and its impact on soil fertility.
- Showed poor interpretation of questions and limited problem-solving skills.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should emphasize understanding of key agricultural concepts such as soil processes, environmental factors affecting crop growth, and farm management principles.
2. Agricultural science should be taught using practical examples from real farming situations to help learners relate concepts to everyday agricultural practices.

3. Teachers should incorporate demonstrations, field activities, and practical experiments to reinforce understanding of topics such as soil fertility, crop growth, and livestock management.
4. Learners should be guided step-by-step through processes such as the nitrogen cycle, crop growth stages, and farm management decision-making.
5. Teachers should expose learners to questions that require interpretation, analysis, and application of knowledge rather than simple recall.
6. Visual aids such as diagrams, charts, and models can help learners better understand agricultural processes and systems.
7. Teachers should ensure that all syllabus topics, especially those frequently challenging for learners, are thoroughly covered and reinforced through practice exercises.

3.7. Practical Subjects

This category is made up of seven subjects that include Art and Design, Musical Arts Education, Design and Technology, Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Home Management and Physical Education.

3.7.1. Art and Design (6010)

The Art and Design 6010/1 Examination paper was assessed out of eight (08) topics. These included the following: History of Art, Design on Paper, Crafts, Drawing and Painting from Observations, Still Life Drawing, Drawing or Painting from a Living Person, Composition in colour and Entrepreneurship.

General observations

Candidates performed satisfactorily in the examination. However, common challenges were observed across all performance categories in topics requiring strong conceptual understanding and application of practical skills. Difficulties were noticed in Art, particularly Perspective, where candidates showed limited knowledge of basic terminology and concepts. Similar weaknesses were noted in the History of Zambian Art, as many candidates failed to define or differentiate sculptural techniques despite being provided with guiding information.

Candidates also struggled with Crafts, particularly basket-making techniques, as many were unable to interpret images correctly or distinguish between techniques and functions, suggesting limited practical exposure. In Composition in Colour, candidates demonstrated inadequate understanding of thematic

development, indicating greater emphasis on practical execution than on underlying theoretical principles. Overall, the challenges highlight the need to strengthen both conceptual instruction and practical engagement in the teaching and learning process.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates were able to correctly recall and state definitions and other required responses.
- They demonstrated good understanding of content and concepts, including comparing and distinguishing related ideas, particularly in topics such as Introduction to Art and Design.
- A good number of candidates answered questions on perspective correctly, although some lacked contextual application skills.
- Candidates showed clear understanding of World Art History by correctly linking given statements to relevant art movements.
- They demonstrated strong analytical skills, for example explaining why objects appear smaller in perspective drawings.
- Responses were well organised, clearly presented, and mostly free from errors, especially in questions that required opinions and critical thinking, such as safety measures in the ceramics workshop.
- Candidates used correct subject terminology and avoided common spelling errors in technical terms. For example, they used terms such as mortar and pestle and not motor and pestle, for-ground and not foreground.
- They showed good descriptive writing skills when explaining processes such as sculpture-making techniques.
- Most responses followed the instructions given by command words such as describe, explain, state, and outline.
- Candidates applied critical thinking skills to distinguish between concepts such as two-dimensional and three-dimensional artwork.
- Many were able to analyse art compositions and correctly identify principles such as harmony, unity, and rhythm.

- A good number of candidates attempted technically demanding questions, such as those on lettering and poster work, and performed fairly well.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates showed general understanding of the subject matter but failed to respond correctly to some key concepts, such as distinguishing between a silhouette and a shadow.
- Their ability to recall factual knowledge was limited, as many struggled to state functions of African Art.
- They demonstrated ability to differentiate related concepts, such as two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks, although explanations lacked clarity and depth.
- Many candidates failed to correctly identify techniques shown in craftwork diagrams, particularly in basket-making techniques.
- Spelling weaknesses were prominent, however, most errors were phonetic and did not significantly alter the intended meaning of technical terms.
- A good number of candidates avoided questions on lettering and poster work, suggesting limited knowledge or confidence in these areas.
- Some candidates misinterpreted question requirements and provided detailed but irrelevant responses, for example explaining ceramics generally instead of outlining safety measures in a ceramics workshop.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates could not recall basic knowledge, such as stating types of balance, indicating limited foundational understanding of art principles.
- Many struggled to differentiate related concepts and frequently used incorrect terminology, for example referring to single-faced cards as single-sided cards in card making.
- A number of candidates did not attempt some questions, suggesting inadequate knowledge of topics such as firing methods and patterns.
- Candidates showed difficulty distinguishing between world art movements and their characteristics, indicating general awareness but limited contextual understanding.

- Limited knowledge of paper mache craft was common among this group, as many were unable to suggest alternative materials that could produce similar results.
- Responses revealed several misconceptions, particularly in application-based questions, such as identifying entrepreneurship or income generation as benefits of selling dried vegetables at school.
- Some candidates provided irrelevant or unrelated responses due to poor comprehension of questions, for example misidentifying sketch elements as background in art composition.
- Generally, performance was poor in Section A, especially in fill-in-the-blank questions, reflecting low attainment of basic knowledge and comprehension skills.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should emphasise the correct use and spelling of artistic terminology during instruction. Developing and displaying classroom charts of key art terms and their meanings can serve as continuous reference points for learners.
2. Instruction should incorporate repetitive practice supported by visual and hands-on activities to strengthen memory retention and conceptual understanding. Engaging learners through both visual observation and tactile experiences will enhance mastery of artistic concepts.
3. A demonstrative and learner-centred teaching approach should be adopted. Teachers should facilitate practical demonstrations while allowing learners to actively participate in applying concepts such as balance and composition in artwork.
4. Visual aids should be consistently used when teaching theoretical concepts to help learners understand design processes, symbolism, and the functions of visual identity elements.
5. Equal emphasis should be placed on theory and practical work. Learners should actively participate in processes such as clay preparation to understand procedures like kneading and wedging. The use of locally available materials is encouraged to promote regular and cost-effective practice.
6. Teachers should broaden learners' exposure to artistic forms through educational visits to galleries, museums, or community art spaces where possible. Discussions should focus on the historical, cultural, and functional significance of artworks such as sculptures.

7. Teaching should encourage exploration beyond limited classroom examples by guiding learners to use reliable learning resources that expand their understanding of art concepts and practices.
8. Learners should be exposed to a variety of assessment styles, question formats, and command words to improve interpretation of examination questions and reduce misconceptions.
9. Practical lessons should incorporate a variety of techniques across different art forms, such as diverse basket-making methods and other craft processes, to strengthen practical competence.
10. Teachers are encouraged to adopt exploratory and inquiry-based teaching approaches that promote creativity, critical thinking, and independent learning among learners.

3.7.2. Design and Technology (6045)

The Design and Technology assessment aims to evaluate candidates' attainment of the prescribed competencies, as well as their acquisition of knowledge and problem-solving skills outlined in the syllabus. The assessment measures candidates' performance across key cognitive domains, including knowledge and comprehension, as well as the application and analysis of concepts and skills developed throughout Grades 10 to 12.

General observations

Candidates demonstrated stronger performance in practical and application-oriented areas than in conceptually demanding topics. Performance was generally good in Workshop Practices (Safety), Manufacturing Materials and Equipment, and Graphic Communication, where many candidates showed sound command of technical language, accurate interpretation of illustrations, and the ability to apply practical knowledge to real workshop situations. High-achieving candidates produced orderly drawings, applied correct procedures, and demonstrated good understanding of materials, tools, and safety requirements. However, across performance levels, weaknesses were observed in providing specific explanations, correctly identifying specialised tools and properties, and fully completing drawing requirements using standard techniques.

Candidates experienced challenges in Design and Communication, Systems Technology, Electrical Engineering, and Entrepreneurship. Many struggled to correctly formulate design situations, problem statements, and briefs, interpret

mechanisms and circuit diagrams, apply standard electronic symbols, and link technical knowledge with entrepreneurial concepts. Common weaknesses included limited analytical depth, misconceptions about technical processes, poor sketch rendering among lower performers, and inadequate understanding of theoretical principles underpinning practical tasks. These difficulties suggest gaps in conceptual understanding, integration of theory with practice, and exposure to structured problem-solving and technical drawing standards.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Very good command of technical language and subject terminology.
- Interpreted examination questions correctly and responded directly to task requirements and illustrations provided.
- Effectively applied the design process in problem solving, including research, idea generation and development of solutions.
- Produced orderly, logical and sequential solutions, particularly in graphic communication and design-related tasks.
- Demonstrated strong ability to communicate ideas graphically using appropriate technical standards and conventions.
- Produced high quality sketches and technical drawings supported by clear annotations and appropriate rendering techniques.
- Demonstrated effective use of drawing instruments and answer sheets, applying construction methods accurately.
- Successfully identified and interpreted graphical information, including geometrical solids, symbols and technical illustrations.
- Demonstrated strong competence in handling geometric constructions, including ellipses, polygons and surface developments.
- Effectively applied safety knowledge in workshop situations, correctly identifying hazards, safety concerns and appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Demonstrated ability to apply safety precautions to specific work situations rather than relying on general rules.
- Showed strong understanding of manufacturing materials and their properties, including plastics, metals and wood.

- Correctly classified materials and related them to their uses and physical properties.
- Successfully identified tools, fasteners, joints and manufacturing equipment, including appropriate applications.
- Demonstrated clear understanding of manufacturing processes, including marking out, wasting and finishing operations.
- Demonstrated competence in mechanical and systems concepts, including mechanisms, motion types, principles of moments and energy transformations.
- Accurately described forms and sources of energy, including renewable and non-renewable energy.
- Effectively applied the law of conservation of energy when explaining energy changes.
- Demonstrated sound understanding of electrical principles, including electron flow, conventional current direction and circuit functionality.
- Correctly identified electronic components and explained their functions within circuits.
- Successfully constructed circuit diagrams using correct standard electronic symbols.
- Demonstrated strong understanding of entrepreneurship concepts, including business planning, entrepreneurial activities, start-up costs, fixed costs, and classification of direct and indirect costs.
- Provided appropriate examples of direct and indirect costs within business contexts.
- Demonstrated ability to develop practical solutions based on research findings.
- Showed ability to integrate knowledge across topics, including linking design processes with finishes, manufacturing practices and entrepreneurial applications.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Produced solutions and responses that were generally orderly and structured
- Applied processes (design, problem solving, energy concepts, circuits, manufacturing) partially or incompletely

- Communicated required information adequately but often missed details or annotations
- Interpreted questions correctly in most cases, but sometimes misread or partially addressed them
- Provided possible solutions or examples, though these were sometimes incomplete
- Demonstrated some understanding of principles such as energy conservation, circuit functioning, and manufacturing processes
- Struggled to fully annotate sketches and diagrams.
- Provided incomplete Problem Statement, and Design Brief (missing key elements such as Place, Concern, Activity, Function, User).
- Could identify materials, tools, fasteners, joints, and electronic components but sometimes confused specifics or naming.
- Partly applied marking out, wasting, finishing, and assembly processes in practical tasks.
- Struggled with correct positioning of electronic components in circuit diagrams
- Could explain differences between renewable and non-renewable energy but only partially applied them in examples.
- Produced drawings of acceptable quality but sometimes misidentified geometrical shapes
- Explained importance of exploded views, working drawings, and drawing plans, but not consistently in all cases
- Gave general rather than specific responses to safety questions and lacked complete identification of proper protective equipment
- Ability to state examples of direct and indirect costs in entrepreneurship, with some confusion about indirect costs
- Understanding of concepts but lacked consistency, completeness, and precision in application

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Poorly executed design process solutions; incomplete or misdirected problem statements.
- Sketches and drawings were not neat, proportional, annotated, or rendered. Often, did not respond to the design brief.

- Misinterpreted questions, sometimes influenced by unrelated exercises (e.g., mathematical problems).
- Could not give complete design briefs including Function, User, and Place.
- Limited understanding of energy concepts, unable to identify stability strategies.
- Could not describe electron flow or show correct current direction in circuits.
- Unable to identify electronic components or explain their functions.
- Could not draw circuit diagrams using standard electronic symbols, mixed standard and non-standard symbols.
- Did not link Design & Technology concepts to entrepreneurship activities and failed to give examples of direct and indirect costs.
- Partial or incomplete responses on safety concerns, poor command of technical language.
- Stated safety concerns unrelated to the given illustration; did not consistently state safety rules.
- Confused workspace with workroom.
- Limited understanding of materials' properties, consequently, they could not classify or correctly apply them.
- Could not differentiate physical properties of plastics, metals, and wood.
- Confused manufacturing processes, tools, joints, and adhesives; could not describe preparation of wooden surfaces for painting.
- Misconceptions in tool usage (e.g., crosscut saw vs. ripping saw) and adhesive properties.
- Very poor command of graphic communication; could not identify solid geometrical shapes.
- Ineffective use of drawing paper; only partially used it.
- Could not explain the importance of exploded views, working drawings, or house plans.
- Reproduced drawings freehand instead of using instruments and standard construction methods.
- Wasted time on unnecessary details, such as inserting dimensions.
- Misconceptions about freehand drawings being acceptable unless otherwise stated.

Recommendations

1. Teach candidates to consistently apply portfolio preparation techniques such as phrasing the Situation, Problem Statement, and Design Brief, also in design process questions. The Situation should include Place, Concern, and Activity; the Problem Statement should guide solving the correct issue; and the Design Brief should cover Function, User, and Place.
2. Provide clear guidance on electronic circuits, such as drawing standard symbols correctly and positioning components according to function (e.g., resistor on positive side of battery, followed by LED and bulb).
3. Guide learners on types of soldering (soft soldering, hard soldering, brazing) with practical demonstrations.
4. Integrate entrepreneurship with Design & Technology by linking business ideas to Market research, expert consultation, and risk management. Direct costs clearly tied to product production (timber, glue, nails) and indirect costs to labour (wages, salaries, benefits).
5. Teach and demonstrate workplace safety such as identifying areas of activity, appropriate safety attire, and specific safety precautions.
6. Differentiate safety concerns (risks that could cause injury or equipment damage) from safety rules (binding instructions).
7. Provide hands-on exposure to materials and tools such as bench tools (measuring, marking out, cutting) and their materials.
8. Differentiate tool use by material type (metal, wood, plastic).
9. Explain adhesives clearly (properties vs. Uses.)
10. Demonstrate specific processes (e.g., crosscut vs. ripping saw, preparing wooden surfaces for painting).
11. Ensure learners learn how to distinguish manufacturing processes for different materials.
12. Strengthen graphic communication skills by guiding learners to proper use of drawing instruments instead of freehand.
13. Teach simple house plans, including standard drawing symbols, to support CAD skills and comprehension of exploded views and working drawings.

3.7.3. Fashion and Fabrics (6050)

The Grade 12 Fashion and Fabrics assessment is designed to evaluate candidates' comprehension, proficiency, and values in alignment with the syllabus. It specifically assesses candidates' knowledge and understanding of tools, equipment, sewing machines, stitches, and design processes in Fashion and Fabrics. Furthermore, it evaluates candidates' ability to apply skills in principles, practices, handling, care, construction, and specification of various fabrics, along with utilizing knowledge, resources, and skills to generate income and execute entrepreneurship projects.

General observations

The overall performance of candidates was average. Candidates demonstrated a fair understanding of the subject matter and were generally able to attempt most of the questions. Some responses showed correct application of knowledge, clear explanations, and appropriate use of drawings and labelling where required. In such cases, the work was presented clearly and written using acceptable grammar.

However, many responses lacked sufficient depth, clarity, and detailed explanation. In some instances, candidates provided incomplete answers or did not fully address the requirements of the questions. There were also cases where questions were misinterpreted, leading to responses that did not correspond with what was required.

In addition, some candidates exhibited weaknesses in presentation and subject knowledge in certain topic areas. A number of questions were either poorly answered or left blank, which negatively affected overall performance.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- A clear understanding of examination questions and responded appropriately to the requirements of the tasks.
- Strong knowledge of the syllabus content, particularly in topics such as fibres, fabric construction, needlework equipment, safety, stitches, controlling fullness, fastenings, pressing, and ironing.

- Provided specific and accurate answers and adhered to the required number of responses where applicable.
- Displayed evidence of good recall of information, as reflected by high scores across most sections of the examination.
- Produced clear, accurate, and well-labelled diagrams in topics such as pattern drafting, disposal of fullness, and care/ironing symbols.
- Presented work in a neat and organised manner with clear handwriting, proper spacing, minimal cancellations, and correct numbering of answers.
- Gave consistent and well-structured responses, indicating thorough coverage of the syllabus and strong ability to communicate knowledge effectively.
- Produced answers that were generally consistent in quality across different examination centres.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- A basic understanding of the subject matter but with limited depth and clarity in some responses.
- Displayed moderate knowledge of certain topics, particularly in areas such as safety.
- Provided answers that were partially correct but often lacked detailed explanations and full development of key points.
- Showed partial coverage of required points in questions, resulting in incomplete responses.
- Presented work that was generally neat and legible, although not as well organised or detailed as that of higher-performing candidates.
- Encountered difficulties in some topic areas such as fibres, neckline and collars, needlework tools, fabric construction, and drafting/pattern making.
- Demonstrated challenges in drawing and labelling diagrams accurately and interpreting care labels.
- Showed limited ability to provide comprehensive explanations of concepts, properties of fabrics, and related processes.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Limited understanding of the subject matter and key concepts in the syllabus.
- Attempted few questions, with some questions left unanswered, resulting in low overall scores.
- Provided responses that were very brief and lacked adequate explanation, relevant examples, or correct definitions.
- Displayed poor command of written communication, including weaknesses in grammar and spelling.
- Produced poorly drawn or incorrectly labelled diagrams, particularly in areas such as pattern drafting.
- Experienced significant difficulties in interpreting questions and providing relevant responses.
- Showed inadequate knowledge in several topics including fibres, garments and style features, collars and necklines, needlework tools, machine parts, stitches, and pressing and ironing.
- Demonstrated challenges in performing practical or application-based tasks such as identifying measuring tools, drawing pattern markings, and explaining basic sewing processes.
- Responses frequently contained incorrect information or lacked sufficient detail to demonstrate understanding of the topics assessed.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should ensure comprehensive coverage of the syllabus so that candidates develop adequate knowledge and understanding of all key topics.
2. Greater emphasis should be placed on teaching practical skills, particularly drawing and correctly labelling diagrams in areas such as pattern drafting, pleats, and pattern markings.
3. Teachers should provide more practice in examination-type questions to help candidates become familiar with the format of questions and the level of detail required in responses.
4. Learners should be guided on how to interpret examination questions correctly, especially command words such as define, describe, explain, state, match, and identify.

5. Teachers should emphasize the importance of providing complete and well-explained answers, ensuring that candidates address all parts of a question.
6. Regular revision and practice exercises should be conducted to strengthen candidates' recall and understanding of key concepts such as fibres, fabric construction, needlework tools, stitches, fastenings, and garment features.
7. Teachers should reinforce practical identification skills, including recognising fabrics, measuring tools, machine parts, and different types of stitches and fastenings.
8. Learners should be trained in interpreting care labels, garment features, and textile symbols to improve their ability to respond accurately to related questions.
9. Teachers should encourage candidates to improve presentation of their work, including neat handwriting, correct numbering of answers, proper spacing, and clear diagrams.
10. Learners should be encouraged to attempt all questions in the examination and ensure that responses are clearly separated according to the question numbers.
11. Schools should organise continuous professional development (CPD) meetings for teachers to share effective teaching strategies and address challenging topics within the syllabus.
12. Teachers should provide targeted support and remedial instruction in areas where candidates consistently demonstrate weaknesses.

3.7.4. Home Management (6075)

The purpose of Grade 12 Home Management assessment is to measure candidates' knowledge and understanding and application of skills in both home setup and hospitality industry.

General observations

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

- The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:
- Demonstrated strong understanding of the subject matter, giving accurate facts and reasoning.

- Answered all parts of questions correctly and clearly, using correct home management terms.
- Presented work neatly and legibly, with proper grammar and spelling.
- Related classroom knowledge to real-life situations, providing convincing responses.
- Used structured answers such as points or short responses to present information logically.
- Scored highly in both short response and essay questions due to clear and precise answers.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Showed partial understanding of the subject matter and answered some questions correctly.
- Presented work reasonably well, often in point form with acceptable grammar and spelling.
- Answered only some parts of multi-part questions, leaving parts incomplete.
- Occasionally misinterpreted questions, leading to incorrect or incomplete answers.
- Gave fewer points than required, resulting in partial loss of marks.
- Struggled to recall information from some topics and to write informative paragraphs.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Attempted questions but provided incorrect or irrelevant responses.
- Demonstrated inadequate knowledge of the subject matter and poor comprehension of question requirements.
- Presented work poorly, with unclear handwriting, incorrect spelling, and general or incomplete answers.
- Misinterpreted questions, often writing unrelated information.
- Failed to follow sequences in tasks requiring logical order, such as cleaning, sewing, or cooking.
- Lacked practical skills and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-life situations.

Recommendations

1. Ensure all topics, especially challenging ones like textile and clothing, cleaning agents, and needlework/crafts, are taught thoroughly.
2. Include repeated practice and revision after practical lessons.
3. Train candidates to pay attention to marks allocated and answer all parts of the question.
4. Emphasize answering concisely, clearly, and convincingly.
5. Teach candidates to follow logical sequences for tasks like cleaning, cooking, and crafts.
6. Integrate demonstrations, group activities, and practical exercises to reinforce learning.
7. Provide learning resources such as cleaning agents, visual aids, sewing materials, and other practical equipment.
8. Encourage practice sessions where candidates replicate classroom demonstrations.
9. Ensure candidates understand and correctly use home management terms rather than memorizing definitions.
10. Reinforce key concepts through classroom discussions, demonstrations, and continuous assessment.
11. Provide extra practice work, individual attention, and guided exercises to low performing learners.
12. Use varied teaching methods such as group work, demonstrations, and interactive lessons.
13. Conduct regular checks through quizzes, tests, and continuous assessments.
14. Relate theory to practical, everyday situations to help candidates connect knowledge with experience.
15. Use real examples for topics like meal planning, consumer protection, sanitation, and home safety.
16. Conduct departmental meetings to discuss teaching strategies and address areas where learners struggle.
17. Share best practices for demonstrating practical skills and explaining complex concepts.
18. Encourage teachers to provide random practice tests to evaluate comprehension and application skills.
19. Encourage regular revision of all topics.

20. Review steps in practical exercises, correct mistakes, and ensure learners can replicate tasks independently.

3.7.5. Musical Arts Education (6020)

The assessment of candidates in Musical Arts Education aims to emphasize critical listening skills while also focusing on compositional skills, generating musical ideas, and arranging and harmonizing music.

General observations

Candidates generally performed poorly in topics that required advanced theoretical knowledge and practical musical skills, such as harmony, melody transcription, arranging, and composition. Many candidates did not complete responses to these items, indicating difficulties in applying the required musical concepts and skills. In several instances, candidates were unable to relate the relevant knowledge to the questions, resulting in incomplete or incorrect responses. Additionally, candidates struggled with questions related to aural skills and one-word responses, with many providing incorrect spellings or inaccurate answers. This suggests that candidates may lack sufficient training in pitch recognition, rhythm, and core music theory concepts. Topics that were particularly challenging included matching melody, describing intervals, transcribing melody, identifying chords, modulation, arranging, harmony, and composition.

In contrast, candidates performed well in topics related to music analysis and project work. Most candidates attempted all questions in these areas and demonstrated an adequate understanding of the required knowledge and skills. The projects that received high marks showed evidence of careful preparation and attention to the required components. Many candidates presented their work neatly and submitted it both in written form and on flash drives, indicating that teachers provided appropriate supervision and guidance during the preparation of these projects.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates demonstrated an average level of tonal awareness and aural perception, particularly in melody matching and recognition of musical sounds. They were able to transcribe melodies on the staff with reasonable accuracy, applying the correct key signatures, rhythms, and intervals.
- Candidates showed competence in interval recognition and description, correctly stating both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of intervals.
- Many candidates accurately identified chord progressions and expressed them using Roman numerals or appropriate technical names of the scales. They also demonstrated the ability to recognize the tonal characteristics of major and minor chords, including their inversions, through aural training.
- Candidates were able to identify modulations and recognize the chords involved, correctly naming the modulations using major and minor key terminology.
- Candidates demonstrated skill in melodic writing, including composing melodies that modulate to related keys while applying appropriate key signatures, dynamics, phrase marks, and interval structures. They also showed the ability to assign musical notes to lyrics according to syllabic structure.
- Candidates applied their knowledge of musical theory and terminology when analyzing musical pieces and explaining both prepared and unprepared musical items.
- Candidates demonstrated understanding of arranging music from open scores, compressing scores while maintaining pitch and rhythm, and applying harmonic principles such as avoiding consecutive fifths and using contrary motion.
- Candidates also showed analytical skills in melodic structure, constructing chords from the soprano line and appropriately assigning alto, tenor, and bass parts.

- In music notation, candidates demonstrated knowledge of proper notation practices, including tail direction, note alignment, and the correct use of musical symbols such as notes, key signatures, time signatures, and phrase marks.
- Candidates exhibited knowledge of Indigenous African Contemporary Music, including identifying structural elements, dynamics, texture, and in some cases naming the composer of the studied musical works.
- In project work, candidates demonstrated a broad application of theoretical and practical musical knowledge, incorporating elements such as dynamics, modulation, phrase marks, melodic sense, and appropriate interval movement. Many projects were neatly presented, well organized, and clearly written, reflecting a good understanding of music composition. The projects also showed evidence of teacher guidance and supervision.
- Despite these strengths, some candidates did not complete responses in certain items, and others had trouble recognizing minor chords by ear within chord progressions.
- Several candidates also struggled with harmonizing melodies using figured bass, indicating limited application of higher-level cognitive skills in harmony.
- Additionally, some candidates experienced challenges in explaining and interpreting musical terms and symbols, suggesting the need for improved conceptual understanding in music theory.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates demonstrated an average level of tonal awareness, particularly in matching melodies and recognizing melodic patterns.
- Candidates showed moderate competence in melody transcription, including recognizing musical sounds and notating them on the staff using the correct key, rhythm, and intervals.
- Candidates exhibited varying levels of understanding in identifying and describing musical intervals, with some applying this knowledge effectively.

- Candidates demonstrated the ability to apply theoretical knowledge of musical terminology when analyzing both prepared and unprepared musical excerpts.
- Candidates showed knowledge of Indigenous African Contemporary Music, including identifying elements such as structure, dynamics, texture, and composers.
- Candidates demonstrated average competence in melody composition, applying musical elements such as dynamics, modulation, and phrase marks, though the application of modulation to relative keys was inconsistent.
- Some candidates were able to correctly assign musical notes to lyrics according to syllabic structure and conclude the melody in the original key, while others showed difficulty applying this skill consistently.
- Candidates demonstrated varying levels of competence in arranging and compressing open scores, including maintaining pitch and rhythm, aligning notes, and applying appropriate tail direction.
- Candidates showed moderate analytical ability in interpreting musical concepts and terms, although some had trouble analyzing motives and constructing appropriate harmonic parts from a soprano line.
- In harmony-related tasks, candidates demonstrated inconsistent mastery of harmonic principles, including the correct use of figured bass, avoidance of consecutive fifths, and application of contrary motion.
- Candidates showed limited accuracy in identifying and sequencing chord progressions, and many experienced difficulties recognizing minor chords by ear.
- Candidates also demonstrated limited aural recognition of modulations and cadences, particularly at cadential points within melodic passages.
- In score arrangement tasks, some candidates did not consistently apply correct principles of note alignment and tail direction when producing condensed scores.
- The presentation of work was generally neat, well organized, and legible, and candidates were able to correctly insert musical symbols such as notes, time signatures, and phrase marks.

- Projects generally reflected guidance and supervision from teachers, although in some cases the application of musical concepts, such as modulation in relation to the home key, was not fully accurate.
- Some candidates did not complete all required responses, leaving certain items unanswered.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Candidates demonstrated very limited tonal awareness when matching melodies, with many responses being contrary to the expected tonal patterns.
- Candidates showed little or no competence in melody transcription, as they were generally unable to recognize musical sounds and accurately notate them on the staff using the correct key, rhythm, and intervals.
- Candidates did not demonstrate adequate theoretical understanding of musical terminology when analyzing both prepared and unprepared musical excerpts.
- Candidates exhibited limited knowledge of Indigenous African Contemporary Music, as they were largely unable to identify structural elements, dynamics, texture, or the composer.
- Candidates showed very limited skill in melody composition, with minimal or incorrect application of musical elements such as dynamics, modulation, and phrase marks.
- Candidates demonstrated little understanding of arranging music from an open score to a closed score, with many leaving the item unanswered or submitting incomplete responses.
- Candidates were generally unable to identify chord progressions accurately, and many failed to distinguish between major and minor chords as they occurred in the listening exercise.
- Candidates demonstrated weak aural recognition of minor chords, indicating limited listening discrimination skills.
- Candidates struggled to identify modulations, particularly in recognizing the chord movements involved and determining the new key.
- Candidates showed limited ability to recognize modulations in melodies, often failing to indicate both the original key and the key to which the music modulated.

- In melody composition tasks involving modulation to relative keys, candidates applied accidentals incorrectly, often placing them at inappropriate points or using accidentals inconsistent with the key signature.
- Candidates demonstrated insufficient knowledge of harmonic principles, including the avoidance of consecutive fifths and the correct use of contrary motion.
- Many candidates did not follow the instructions for melody composition, as some did not use the provided lyrics, while others failed to correctly assign musical notes to the syllables of the lyrics.

Recommendations

1. Learners should be given intensive and regular aural training focusing on pitch recognition, melody matching, interval identification, and recognition of chord progressions in both major and minor keys. Practical listening exercises should also include the identification of modulations, cadences, and chord qualities.
2. Teachers should ensure that learners are exposed to a balanced combination of theoretical and practical musical activities. Concepts such as harmony, melody transcription, composition, and modulation should be reinforced through practical demonstrations, listening activities, and notation exercises.
3. Greater emphasis should be placed on basic and advanced rules of harmony, including figured bass, avoidance of consecutive fifths, use of contrary motion, chord progressions, and harmonization of melodies. Learners should also be guided in melody composition, particularly in the use of modulation, key signatures, dynamics, phrase marks, and correct melodic structure.
4. Teachers should provide more practice in melody transcription, notation, and arranging music from open score to closed score. Learners should also be trained to apply correct note alignment, tail direction, rhythm accuracy, and pitch consistency when writing music.
5. Teaching should emphasize clear understanding and correct application of musical terms and symbols, including metre, dynamics, texture, form, chords, modulation, and cadence. Teachers should consistently reinforce these concepts across different topics to improve learners' analytical abilities.

6. Teachers should address common misconceptions by clearly distinguishing between related musical concepts, such as metre and time signature, texture and harmony, and musical form and performance style.
7. Learners should be encouraged to attempt every question in the examination and to complete all responses. Regular practice with past examination questions and timed exercises may help learners develop confidence and examination discipline.
8. Learners should be guided in assigning musical notes to lyrics correctly, paying particular attention to syllabic structure, phrasing, and melodic flow.
9. Teachers should expose learners to a variety of musical styles and listening experiences, including Western and African Indigenous or Contemporary Music. Using music that relates to learners' cultural and generational context may also increase engagement and understanding.
10. Teachers should provide adequate supervision and guidance during project preparation. Sufficient time should be allocated for learners to complete their projects, and audio submissions should be tested before submission to ensure that the files and storage devices function properly.
11. Teachers should follow the logical sequence of topics as outlined in the syllabus, ensuring that new concepts are built on previously learned material. This progressive approach will help learners develop a coherent understanding of musical concepts and skills.

3.7.6. Physical Education (6080)

The purpose of assessing candidates in Physical Education is to measure Physical Education and Spot knowledge skills and values. The assessment will also serve the purpose of certification and placement.

General observations

The overall performance of candidates in Physical Education 5080/1 was mixed, with clear distinctions between high, average, and low-performing candidates. While high achievers demonstrated a strong grasp of both theoretical and practical aspects, most candidates displayed partial understanding, and some struggled with basic concepts, communication, and application of knowledge.

Characteristics of Candidates

i. High Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Demonstrated strong understanding of both theoretical content and practical sporting knowledge.
- Explained concepts logically, with multiple well-structured points.
- Applied skills of recalling, analysing, evaluating, and applying knowledge effectively.
- Attempted all questions thoroughly, providing clear and complete answers.
- Showed ability to link theory with practical examples in sports and physical activities.

ii. Average Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Displayed basic understanding of the subject matter, but lacked depth in some areas.
- Attempted most questions but answers were occasionally incomplete or superficial.
- Limited ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios.
- Language fluency varied, with some grammar and expression errors affecting clarity.
- Demonstrated partial understanding of key physical education concepts.

iii. Low Performing Candidates

The candidates in this category demonstrated the following characteristics:

- Poor comprehension of questions, often misinterpreting them.
- Mishandled information, sometimes including irrelevant points from other topics.
- Provided incomplete answers, especially in paragraph or essay-type questions.
- Struggled with communication, with poor grammar and unclear writing.
- Limited knowledge of core physical education concepts, leaving some questions unanswered

Recommendations

1. Enhanced Exposure to Assessments
    - Provide candidates with regular remedial exercises, tests, and assignments to strengthen understanding and application skills.
    - Include practical assessments to integrate theory with physical activities.
2. Improve Communication Skills
    - Encourage extensive reading and exposure to physical education literature to improve writing and comprehension.
    - Provide guidance on constructing coherent paragraphs and structured responses.
3. Exam Preparation and Practice
    - Expose candidates to past examination papers and teach strategies for answering questions effectively.
    - Emphasize understanding question requirements, especially for essay or paragraph-style questions.
4. Application of Knowledge
    - Reinforce practical application of theoretical concepts through demonstrations, group activities, and real-life sports examples.
    - Encourage linking classroom theory with actual sports practice to enhance comprehension.
5. Targeted Support for Weak Candidates
    - Provide additional guidance and tutoring for candidates struggling with comprehension, writing, or practical application.
    - Use peer learning or mentoring to help weaker candidates learn from high-performing peers.
6. Continuous Feedback
    - Give timely and specific feedback on assignments, practical work, and tests to guide improvement.
    - Focus on correcting misconceptions and reinforcing correct application of concepts.

4.0. Conclusion

The 2025 School Certificate Examination results revealed a mix picture of learner achievement across the Zambian education system. The overall candidature increased by 14.35 percent, reflecting continued growth in access to secondary education, with female candidates (52.23%) outnumbering males. The proportion of candidates obtaining School Certificates improved to 70.26 percent, a 2.09 percentage point increase from 2024, indicating positive gains in overall learner attainment.

Performance patterns across subjects highlight persistent disparities. Candidates continued to record high performance in practical subjects with mean score of 63.04 percent, followed by Literature and Languages (51.56%), while the lowest performance was recorded in commercial subjects (39.06%). These disparities reflect both subject-specific challenges and broader systemic issues in teaching and learning.

Regarding gender analysis, girls outperformed boys in most Literature and Language subjects, while boys demonstrated higher achievement in Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, and Physical Sciences. In Practical Subjects, performance was relatively balanced, with girls excelling in Fashion and Fabrics and Food and Nutrition, and boys showing marginal advantages in Design and Technology and Physical Education. Notably, both genders recorded reductions in Grade Nine (9) attainment, indicating general improvement across the performance spectrum.

Provincial disparities remain a concern. Eastern Province continued to lead with the highest proportion of candidates receiving School Certificate (79.87%), while North-Western Province recorded the lowest (59.53%). Similarly, absenteeism rates varied, from Eastern Province's low of 1.26 percent to North-Western's high of 3.09 percent. These regional differences underscore the need for targeted interventions in underperforming areas.

Analysis by the school running agency revealed persistent inequities. Grant-Aided and Private schools consistently outperformed Government and Community schools across all subject groupings, with performance gaps particularly pronounced in Mathematics, Sciences, and Practical Subjects. This

pattern reflects differential access to resources, qualified teachers, and learning infrastructure, raising important questions about educational equity and quality.

Subject-specific analysis identified common challenges across disciplines. Many candidates demonstrated adequate recall of factual knowledge but struggled with higher-order cognitive skills, including analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and application of concepts to real-life situations. Weaknesses in foundational skills, such as grammatical accuracy in languages, mathematical problem-solving, experimental interpretation in sciences, and practical application in vocational subjects, were common. The tendency of some candidates to leave questions unanswered, particularly in challenging topics, suggests gaps in syllabus coverage, examination readiness, and learner confidence.

The 2025 School Certificate Examination results demonstrate incremental improvements in learner achievement while highlighting persistent challenges in quality, equity, and instructional effectiveness. The varied performance across subjects, provinces, and school types underscores the need for differentiated interventions that address specific contextual challenges. Strengthening teacher capacity, ensuring comprehensive syllabus coverage, integrating practical and theoretical learning, and providing targeted support to underperforming learners and schools remain critical priorities. The Examinations Council of Zambia remains committed to providing evidence-based feedback that informs policy, improves teaching and learning, and ultimately enhances learner achievement across the nation.