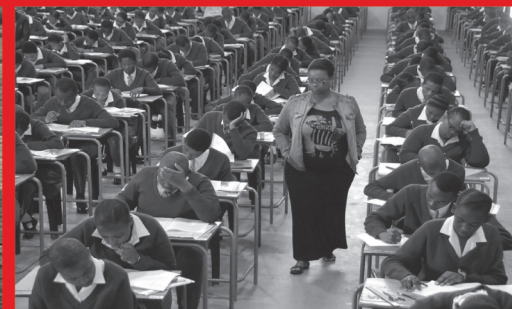


# 2015

## NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION EXAMINATION REPORT

# NSC



Working together to move South Africa forward



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA







**National Senior Certificate**  
*Examination Report*  
**2015**





# 20 Years Of Exams

*Twenty years of National Examinations in the Republic of South Africa*

As the young democracy shrug off its shackles of inequality, discrimination and repression, and evolved as the champion of human dignity, equity and fairness, so to every system and organizational structure in the country metamorphosed, transformed and flourished. The Public examination system which is a critical end-point assessment in the schooling system, has developed in leaps and bounds over the last twenty years to entrench its position as a custodian of educational standards and as a beacon of administrative rigour, and resilience.

The Senior Certificate (SC) now National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations commonly referred to as “*matric*” has become an annual event of major public significance. It not only signifies the culmination of twelve years of formal schooling but the NSC examinations is a barometer of the health of the education system. This examination which attracts attention from all sectors of society has made significant progress over the last twenty years, since the first formal examination was conducted in South Africa, There were separate education departments for the different population groups, which were divided further into ethnic groups, with racially segmented examining bodies leading to problems relating to control and standards.

The first national examination, under the newly elected democratic government was administered in November 1996, following a highly decentralized approach. The Provincial Education Departments set all question papers, operating under the quality assurance banner of the South African Certification Council (SAFCERT). There were serious concerns about whether the system was indeed a single national system. SAFCERT adopted a selective approach to monitoring standards and of adjusting standards for different racial groups. Since then there has been significant progress in the development of a national examination system, that sets high quality question papers and administers a rigorous and robust examination.

Under the democratic dispensation there were significant improvements in the administration of the national examinations and this included:

- (a) Development of a sound legislative framework to regulate all examination processes.
- (b) Development of robust business systems to give effect to the legislated processes.
- (c) High degree of collaboration and corporation between the nine PEDs and national department of Education.
- (d) Establishment of a common examination standard based on high quality national question papers for all subjects.
- (e) The establishment of a Quality Assurance Council, with an expanded quality assurance mandate, to serve as the external independent watchdog of examinations

The DBE has over the years built on the gains and good practices of the past in establishing a national examination system that is credible and one that can withstand public scrutiny. Public examinations in this country have not arrived, a long road to get to the ultimate realization of a fully-fledged national examination system, that is globally recognized, still needs to be traversed.

We salute all those that have toiled and persevered, over the last twenty years, to maintain and sustain a high quality public examination system.



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## FOREWORD



As we celebrate 20 years of public examinations in South Africa, I am pleased to release the National Senior Certificate Examination Report for the Class of 2015. The class of 2015 entered the education system in 2004 at the onset of our journey into the second decade of free citizenry in South Africa. We value this societal freedom and remain driven by the values of Nelson Mandela of creating a better life and opportunity for all.

The bedrock in the democratic era has been an improving education system committed to the pursuit of quality basic education. Government's strategy of improving basic education quality has been articulated in the *National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030*. Improving the quality of education requires careful management, support from all interested parties and time. The education enterprise is a highly complex activity where the outcome is based on a multiplicity of factors. Hence, the quantification of improvements in the system is an extremely challenging task. The outcome of the NSC

is one of the most critical indicators of progress made in the system.

The Quality Assurance Council, Umalusi, which plays a critical role in protecting the integrity of the NSC examination, has after rigorous verification of all examination processes, declared the 2015 NSC examinations "free, fair and credible." Umalusi commended the Department of Basic Education for implementing a world class curriculum, and for having presented a comprehensive Evidence Based Report, as well as having drastically reduced irregularities especially involving group copying. This achievement has been attributed to an examination and assessment system that has engineered a high degree of precision in its administrative systems and processes, set papers that are internationally comparable, improved its marking processes so that high-quality markers are appointed and trained, and introduced robust quality assurance measures to improve the quality of marking. It must be further acknowledged that these processes have been consistently upheld and strengthened over the past 20 years and are therefore trusted by employers, higher education institutions and the South African public.

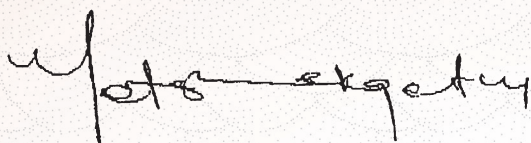
Although the achievement rate decreased from 75,8% in 2014 to 70,7% in 2015, there has been a significant increase in the number of learners achieving the NSC. The class of 2015 is the largest cohort of learners in the history of education in South Africa. The significant increase of 117 798 candidates in the 2015 enrolment confirms a higher throughput rate of learners, a challenge which the sector has been dealing with during the last few years. The increase in the number of learners achieving the NSC, from 403 874 in 2014 to 455 825 in 2015, (an increase of 51 951 learners), attests to an improved efficiency of the system. The increase in the number of learners qualifying for admission to Bachelor Studies, from 150 737 to 166 263, is also extremely encouraging and points to quality improvements in the system.

The performance in Mathematics and Physical Science, which are priority subjects, have also shown an increase in the number of passes, although the pass percentage in these subjects has decreased. The number of learners passing Mathematics has increased from 120 523 to 129 481, while the number of learners passing Physical Science has increased from 103 348 to 113 12.

We have indicated in our plans and strategies within the sector, that the Matric Examination is not an end in itself and the results of systemic indicators such as the Annual National Assessment (ANA) have pointed to learning gaps that start much earlier in the system and we must continue to strengthen our interventions and support in earlier grades of the system. It must also be borne in mind that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was implemented for the first time in 2014 in Grade 12 and teachers and learners are still becoming familiar with its content.



Congratulations to the Class of 2015 and I encourage you to see this achievement as an important milestone to even greater success in furthering your life opportunities in higher education, the workplace and as valuable citizens in a democratic South Africa. I also thank parents, teachers, principals, teacher unions, communities, district and provincial officials, and social partners for supporting the Class of 2015. We urge the matriculants of 2016 to strive for improved quality of teaching and learning. This is the only way to a better life for all.



**MRS AM MOTSHEKGA, MP**  
**MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION**  
**05 JANUARY 2015**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Africa is a far better place today than it was pre-1994. In the National Development Plan (NDP) it appropriately states that: “In 1994 we began to tell a new story then. We have lived and renewed that story along the way”. As we celebrate 20 years of public examinations in South Africa, Government has remained unwavering in its commitment to prioritising quality basic education. The National Senior Certificate (NSC) Report is one of the crucial sources of data to indicate whether quality education is in fact being realised. It is a robust and credible barometer of success over twelve years of schooling.

The NSC and the Annual National Assessment (ANA) are key indicators of measuring progress in achieving the set targets as outlined in the Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of the Schooling 2030, and the NDP. The following three targets are directly measured through performance in the NSC:

- (a) Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a university;
- (b) Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass Mathematics; and
- (c) Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass Physical Science.

The examination processes followed this year have been completed with a high degree of precision and its administrative systems and processes are internationally comparable with resilient quality assurance measures

The Class of 2015 is the second cohort to write the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination that is aligned with the internationally benchmarked national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum. This cohort has benefited from the maturity of the system garnered over the last eight years. The new curriculum is more streamlined than its predecessor and is a high knowledge curriculum that emphasises subject content and assessment as the centre-piece of curriculum implementation.

The Class of 2015 recorded the highest enrolment of Grade 12 learners in the history of education in South Africa. The total number of candidates who registered for the November 2015 Examinations was 799 306 written by 667 925 full-time candidates and 131 381 part-time candidates. Of the full-time candidates who wrote the examination, 455 825 candidates attained the National Senior Certificate, which constitutes a 70.7 pass rate. The table below provides a summary of the achievements of the nine provinces:

Province	2015		
	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	% Achieved
Eastern Cape	87 090	49 475	56.8
Free State	31 161	25 416	81.6
Gauteng	108 442	91 327	84.2
Kwazulu-Natal	162 658	98 761	60.7
Limpopo	101 575	66 946	65.9
Mpumalanga	54 980	43 229	78.6
North West	33 286	27 118	81.5
Northern Cape	11 623	8 064	69.4
Western Cape	53 721	45 489	84.7
<b>National</b>	<b>644 536</b>	<b>455 825</b>	<b>70.7</b>



The other notable achievements of the 2015 National Senior Certificate examination are the following:

- (a) There was a significant increase of 117 798 candidates in the 2015 enrolment;
- (b) The number of learners achieving the NSC, increased from 403 874 in 2014 to 455 825 in 2015;
- (c) The number of learners passing Mathematics has increased from 120 523 in 2014 to 129 481 in 2015;
- (d) The number of learners passing Physical Science has increased from 103 348 in 2014 to 113 121 in 2015;
- (e) 166 263 learners qualified for Bachelor Studies at Higher Education Institutions (25.8%);
- (f) 183 720 learners qualified for Diploma studies at Higher Education institutions (28.5%);
- (g) 90 027 female learners qualified for Bachelor Studies at Higher Education Institutions (25.7%);
- (h) 2631 schools attained a pass percentage of 80% and above (38.8%);
- (i) 470 schools attained a pass percentage of 100% (6.9%);
- (j) 463 schools from quintile 1 attained a pass percentage of 80% and above (7.5%);
- (k) 80 038 learners from quintiles 1, 2 and 3 schools qualified for Bachelor studies at Higher Education Institutions.
- (l) 59 of the 81 districts attained a pass rate of 60% and above; and 29 of them achieved a pass rate of 80% and above. The district that achieved the highest pass rate was Sedibeng East from Gauteng (90.4%).

The Department of Basic Education has noted that although the achievement rate has decreased in 2015, there has been a significant increase in the number of learners achieving the NSC. The decrease in the overall achievement rate may be attributed to the higher enrollment which has placed severe pressure on the resources of the sector, a higher standard of question papers in the 2015 NSC examination, the introduction of the policy on progressed learners which has allowed more borderline learners to be transferred to Grade 12, and other factors that impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The positive achievement nonetheless is the improved throughput rate of the schooling system, a challenge that has presented itself over many years. However, further investigation in this regard will be undertaken by the Department, to establish the exact status of the output of the system. A much greater effort by all in the sector will be needed to improve on the results of the 2016 cohort. The Department will make every effort to support the 2016 cohort in attaining an excellent performance.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Public examinations have played a major role throughout the history of modern education in South Africa. Historically, they have provided a specification of clear goals and standards for teachers and candidates, helping to ensure that all schools teach to the same standards. The National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination is in its eighth year of implementation and 2015 signifies 20 years of successful administration of public examinations in South Africa. The NSC replaced the Senior Certificate in 2008 as an exit certificate, and its qualification is firmly located as a crucial indicator of achievement on quality learning outcomes in the education system over 12 years of schooling. The results enable the education sector to, on an annual basis, take cognizance of successes and review deficiencies of various strategies and interventions that have impacted on participating candidates.

The NSC examination is multi-fold in its purpose. It is premised on providing valuable data to education planners, institutional role players and decision makers in the sector to improve the quality of basic education. There is also a certification role, confirming candidate attainment of expected learning outcomes. It also has an important diagnostic role in assisting education stakeholders to identify areas of weakness and strength in each of the subjects offered in the qualification.

This report outlines the purposes, national imperative and improvements in the national schooling system as the backdrop against which the 2015 NSC results should be read and understood. Included in this report are pertinent details on the NSC and its significance, unique features relating to the Class of 2015, and the methodology of examination and administration processes followed this year. The presentation of results is preceded by a detailed account of enhancements on the integrity and credibility of the NSC examinations while noting certain limitations of public examinations. The analysis of results is presented graphically and in tabular format and covers national, provincial and district contexts. The analysis covers the results of both full-time and part-time candidates. A summary of key findings follows the analysis.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The National Senior Certificate Examination Report is a comprehensive account that is published annually after the results of the NSC examinations are finalised. It highlights to the reader relevant policy mandates and documents, as well as the systems and processes that enable a high degree of precision in the administration of the examination. The principal part of the report is the results of the Grade 12 learners from the Class of 2015, presented in national, provincial and district contexts.

This report provides aggregated learner performance data on the Class of 2015 at the different levels of the system, subject data at national and provincial levels, and presents an analysis of data in terms of the gender of candidates and quintile rankings in which schools are categorised. This report is the first in a compilation of four reports covering the NSC examinations. In addition to the National Senior Certificate Examination Report, the following three reports will be published:

- (a) National Schools Report that presents the overall school results per school over the last three years;
- (b) National Subject Report which provides the results of selected subjects per individual school; and,
- (c) National Diagnostic Report which analyses learner performance in the gateway subjects, identifies the areas of poor performance and recommends appropriate remedial measures in each of the subjects.

This report will provide the education sector with valuable data on learner performance after 12 years of schooling and empirical evidence on the performance of the basic education system on quality learning outcomes. Findings listed in the report provide an evaluation of national achievements against set targets of the sector and further assists in understanding existing disparities for future planning.



### 3. THE NATIONAL IMPERATIVE OF BASIC EDUCATION AS A SECTOR

*The apex priority of Government is quality basic education*

The Government of the Republic of South Africa esteems the provision of quality basic education free of discrimination as its apex priority and as a national imperative advanced by citizenry and provided for in the *Constitution*. It duly recognises the Department of Basic Education (DBE) as the authority responsible for guiding this national imperative into reality for more than 12 million learners from reception (Grade R) to matriculation (Grade 12). The Minister directs that standards of education provision, delivery and performance of learners be monitored and evaluated by the Department annually or at other specified intervals, with the object of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the *Constitution* and with national education policy.

Improving the quality of basic education has been articulated in the *National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030*. Medium term plans and strategies of the Department have been framed by the NDP while it accelerates new strategies that are meant to take education to greater heights. The Department will, over the next five years, through its *Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030*, speed up planning and implementation of identified projects through Operation Phakisa, a methodology adopted by the Cabinet of Government to fast-track delivery of priorities encompassed in the NDP. In support of sector partnerships advocated by the NDP, the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) launched in 2013, was developed by a range of public-private stakeholders, and takes forward Government's commitment to prioritise basic education.

In 2015, the basic education cohort had 12 814 473 learners in ordinary public and independent schools in South Africa, who attended 25 691 schools and were served by 416 093 educators. Within this cohort, a total of 799 306 candidates participated in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination. Within the *Action Plan*, the NSC and the ANA are considered valuable indicators of measuring quality basic education. They provide a snapshot of the quality of basic education in a range of key performance areas within the DBE and across relevant transversal departments within the public service. The Department uses these results to mentor poor performing districts with the intention of ensuring that results improve. They also provide evidence for building specific strategies that would transform the basic education sector.

In terms of the *Action Plan*, the output goals focusing on minimum quality standards in the Further Education and Training (FET) band include:

- (a) Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a university;
- (b) Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass Mathematics; and
- (c) Increase the number of Grade 12 learners who pass Physical Science.

The output goals focusing on improving average performance include improving the access of youth to FET strands beyond Grade 9. A key indicator in the programme performance measures (PPM) for provincial education departments is the total number of secondary schools that has achieved an average pass of 60% and above in the NSC.

The performance against these indicators indicates how well the Department is performing against its aims and objectives in relation to the national imperative. Credible performance information helps identify what policies and processes work and why they work. Therefore, making the best use of available data and knowledge is critical for improving the quality of basic education and for the Department to better understand the issues involved.



## 4 IMPROVEMENTS IN THE NATIONAL SCHOOLING SYSTEM

In 2014, South Africa celebrated 20 years of flourishing democracy in governance, fashioned on values of the late Nelson Mandela, focusing on the enhancement of peace, reconciliation and justice for all, and the demonstration of humility, empathy and *Ubuntu*. The cornerstone of the democratic era has been the institutionalisation and enhancement of quality basic education, which was seen by Mandela as a great equaliser and gateway for better “life opportunities”. In 2015, this pursuit of quality was signposted when the education Ministry completed 20 years of national examinations in the democratic dispensation producing a Grade 12 national examination standard that is cognitively sound and robust in assessing higher order thinking skills, aligned to further education and workplace demands successively each year.

The 2015 Grade 12 cohort, who entered the education system in 2004, in the tenth year of democracy, have been beneficiaries of significant improvements in the National Schooling System. As the education system has matured over the last 20 years, the democratic dispensation has created, for learners, greater access to schooling with conditions that support the pursuit of quality education. These conditions include higher participation rates, gender parity, improved infrastructure to support teaching and learning, enhancing the curriculum and improved provisioning of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM). The following specific system-wide improvements in these areas are notable:

- (a) **Higher participation rate:** There has been expanded access to Early Childhood Development (ECD) with universal access to ECD within reach, while 87% of 5 year old children attend educational institutions with Grade R. Compulsory education for 7 to 13 year old children has been practically achieved and has remained significantly high at 99% for the last 3 years, with 91% of learners in secondary education. The participation of 16 to 18 year old children in the Further Education and Training (FET) Band currently stands at 86% with the number of learners not attending school dropping from 17% in 2002 to 14% in 2014. There were 288 083 fewer children (as a whole) who were out of school in our country in 2014 than in 2002.
- (b) **Gender parity:** Alongside high participation rates, gender parity has been achieved in the schooling system, with more female learners completing Grade 12 than male learners.
- (c) **Improved Infrastructure:** Significant progress has been made in ensuring that more schools comply with the basic level of infrastructure. Through the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) project, designed to bring about dignity in education, the eradication of a high number of mud and unsafe school structures has taken place across the nine provinces, together with building of new schools with ultra-modern designs and facilities. To date 82 schools have been completed through ASIDI.
- (d) **Enhanced Curriculum:** Whilst the curriculum has undergone revisions since its inception in 1998, there has been a smooth transition from the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) introduced in 2004 to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) phased-in, in 2012. CAPS is more streamlined than the RNCS, and have provided teachers with clearer guidance on what should be taught per quarter, and how the assessment of learning should be conducted.
- (e) **Improved provisioning of LTSM:** Great strides have been made to improve the provision of textbooks to learners through the development and distribution of workbooks throughout South African schools. In 2014, learner access to Language Workbooks had increased to 96% and their access to Mathematics Workbooks was approximately 97%. The provision of workbooks has been aligned to, and assisted the implementation of CAPS. Since 2011, Grade R to 9 Language and Mathematics workbooks have been printed and delivered twice a year. A total of 204 million workbooks have been delivered to date.



Our internal assessments and international benchmarking assessments confirm that significant progress has been made in the last 20 years on improving access, equity and redress in the education sector. The challenge remains on improving the quality of the national schooling system and this emphasis is outlined in the NDP and reflected in the strategic frameworks and plans of the current administration.

## **5. THE NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE**

### **5.1 The NSC as an Indicator of the Achievements of the National Imperatives**

*Examination outcomes quantify the health of an education system.*

The imperatives listed in the NDP and the targets listed in the *Action Plan*, are all directed towards the attainment of high quality education. The system is output driven with one of the key outputs being the NSC. The performance of candidates in the NSC ranks as one of the key indicators of quality with regard to the performance of the schooling system as a whole. The NSC is the qualification that is offered to learners in the Further Education and Training Band (i.e. Grades 10, 11 and 12) and therefore the achievement of this qualification signifies the readiness of learners for higher education and the world of work. The number of learners that attain this qualification and the level of performance of learners in this qualification, especially the type of NSC certificate achieved, is therefore a strong indicator of the performance of the education system.

Over the last few years, the analysis of performance in the NSC examinations has focussed on the extent to which the system has achieved the targets set in terms of the number of learners eligible for the study of a Bachelor programme at university, the number of passes in Mathematics and the number of passes in Physical Sciences. These targets, together with the number of subject passes at 40% and 50%, and improving achievements in all gateway subjects, will continue to be the focus of the Department in 2015 and in subsequent years.

In addition to the focus on these targets, quality learning outcomes are linked to the performance of learners in specific content areas of the curriculum. A diagnostic analysis of learners' responses to each question in the NSC assessment instruments reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the learners' knowledge and skills and this serves to structure the learning programme and remediation for the next cohort of learners.

### **5.2 Structure and Format of the National Senior Certificate**

#### **5.2.1 General Requirements of the National Senior Certificate**

*To obtain a National Senior Certificate a candidate must achieve 40% in three subjects, one of which is an official language at Home Language level, and 30% in three subjects*

In order to pass the NSC, a candidate must offer seven approved subjects and provide evidence of school based assessment (SBA) for each of the subjects. The minimum duration of the NSC qualification, is three years, namely Grades 10, 11 and 12.

For a candidate to obtain a National Senior Certificate qualification, he or she must:

- (a) Complete the programme requirements for Grades 10, 11 and 12 separately, and obtain the stipulated outcomes and associated assessment requirements of all three years; and
- (b) Comply with the internal and external assessment requirements for Grade 10, 11 and 12.



The qualification is structured according to specific categories of subjects and rules of combination. The minimum requirements for a candidate to obtain a NSC are that a candidate should:

- (a) Achieve 40% in three subjects, one of which is an official language at Home Language level and 30% in three subjects; and
- (b) Provide full evidence in the SBA component in the subjects offered.

**5.2.2 Admission to Higher Education Institutions**

The NSC is accepted internationally as a qualification of high standard. It is also the gateway for further study at higher education institutions. For this purpose, Universities South Africa, formerly known as Higher Education South Africa (HESA), has developed minimum requirements based for admission to higher education institutions, namely, studies leading to a Higher Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor’s Degree.

**(a) Higher Certificate**

The minimum admission requirement is a National Senior Certificate with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution as certified by Umalusi. Institutional and programme needs may require additional combinations or recognised NSC subjects and levels of achievement.

**(b) Diploma**

The minimum admission requirement is the National Senior Certificate with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution as certified by Umalusi, coupled with an achievement rating of 3 (moderate achievement, 40% - 49%) or better in four (4) recognised 20-credit subjects. Institutional and programme needs may require additional combinations of recognised NSC subjects and levels of achievement.

**(c) Bachelor’s Degree**

To meet the minimum admission requirements to a Bachelor’s Degree study at a higher education institution, a candidate must obtain, in addition to the National Senior Certificate, an achievement rating of 4 (Adequate Achievement, 50% - 59%) or better in four designated subjects chosen from the following recognised 20-credit bearing subjects:

Accounting	Information Technology
Agricultural Sciences	Languages
Business Studies	Life Sciences
Consumer Studies	Mathematics
Dramatic Arts	Mathematical Literacy
Economics	Music
Engineering, Graphics and Design	Physical Sciences
Geography	Religion Studies
History	Visual Arts

In addition to the above entrance requirements for a Higher Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor’s Degree study, Universities South Africa will require over and above the minimum requirements, a pass of 30% in the First Additional Language, if that language is the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution.



### 5.2.3 Minimum promotion requirements for awarding the NSC to candidates with Special Needs

Candidates registered for the Endorsed NSC only need to offer five subjects, and the candidate is expected to achieve a minimum of 30% in the five subjects.

FET learners who experience barriers to learning enrolled in Grade 10-12 are allowed to follow alternative pathways to obtain the National Senior Certificate.

The Endorsed National Senior Certificate is for candidates who cannot, despite the concessions granted in the policy, meet the stipulated requirements. Barriers to learning identified in the policy include visual, aural and hearing impairment, aphasia, dyslexia, and mathematical disorders such as dyscalculia. Candidates registered for the Endorsed NSC only need to offer five subjects, namely, First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, Life Orientation and two subjects selected from Group B.

A candidate is expected to achieve a minimum of 30% in the five subjects to be awarded the Endorsed National Senior Certificate.

## 6. THE CLASS OF 2015

### 6.1 The Profile of the 2015 NSC Class

*The Class of 2015 was introduced to the high knowledge, high skills curriculum from Grade 1*

The Class of 2015 is the eighth cohort of learners to sit for the NSC since its inception in 2008. The Class of 2015 entered the formal schooling system in January 2004, when an important curriculum revision was implemented. The so-called Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) for GET simplified and clarified Curriculum 2005, and it attempted to shift from a skills based and context-dependent body of knowledge towards a more coherent, explicit and systematic body of knowledge suitable for a national curriculum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It specifically set out to develop a high knowledge, high skills curriculum, resulting in a fundamental but necessary departure from Curriculum 2005. The RNCS was completed in 2002 and was implemented in January 2004. This implies that that the Class of 2015 was introduced to the high knowledge, high skills curriculum from Grade 1.

In 2002, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for the FET phase was developed and this was followed by the development of supporting policies and guidelines which included the Subject Frameworks and Subject Assessment Guidelines. The NCS for the FET phase was introduced in 2006 in Grade 10 and in 2007 in Grade 11, and then in 2008 for the first time in Grade 12. The NCS was further streamlined and packaged as the CAPS, which was phased in at Grade 10 in 2012 and implemented in Grade 12 for the first time in 2014. The Class of 2015 is therefore the product of the RNCS and the CAPS.

The 2015 cohort had written the NSC examinations at a time when the standard and quality of the public examinations system was considered to be maturing and stabilising.



## 6.2. Scope and Size of the Class of 2015

*The enrolment in 2015 has been the highest since the first examination under the democratic dispensation in 1996.*

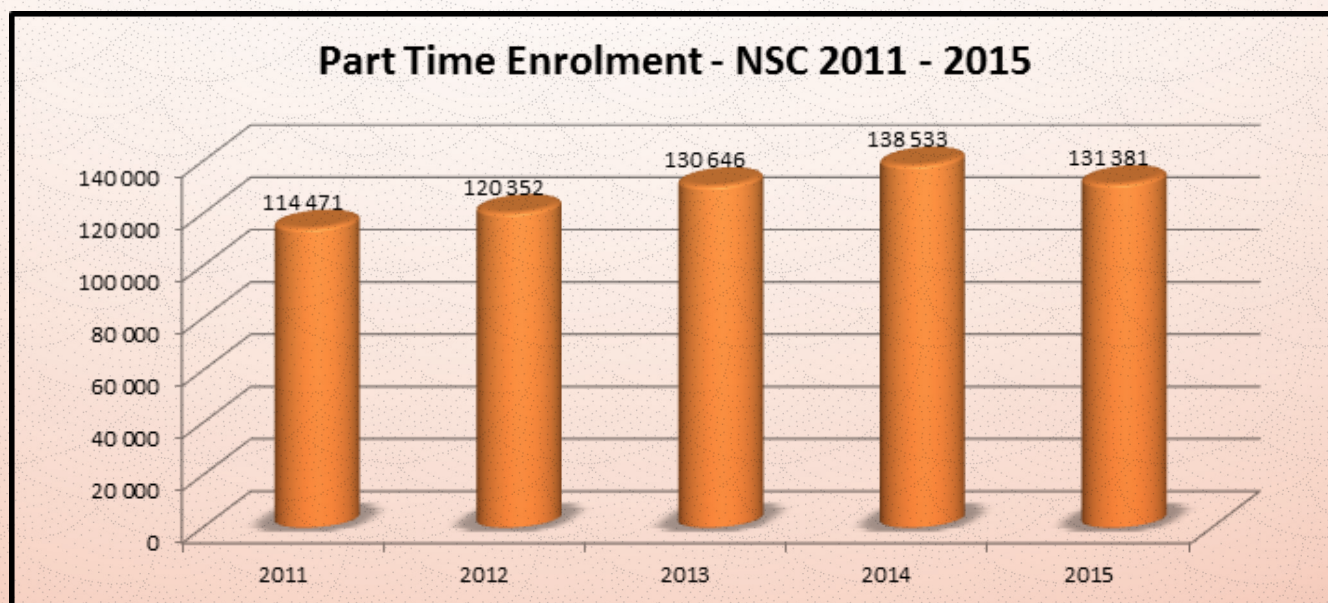
The number of learners that wrote the examination in 2015 has been the highest in the 20 year history of public examinations. The provincial enrolments for 2014 and 2015 are indicated in the table below:

**Table 6.1: NSC Enrolments per province for 2014 and 2015**

Province	2014			2015			Increase in full time candidates 2014 to 2015
	Full Time	Part Time	Total	Full Time	Part Time	Total	
Eastern Cape	69,736	21,397	<b>91,133</b>	89,740	19,312	<b>109,052</b>	20,004
Free State	26,833	3,041	<b>29,874</b>	35,209	3,470	<b>38,679</b>	8,376
Gauteng	101,284	42,375	<b>143,659</b>	112,064	39,181	<b>151,245</b>	10,780
KwaZulu-Natal	147,605	26,570	<b>174,175</b>	169,769	31,176	<b>200,945</b>	22,164
Limpopo	73,542	19,673	<b>93,215</b>	102,618	16,137	<b>118,755</b>	29,076
Mpumalanga	45,967	7,776	<b>53,743</b>	55,945	5,569	<b>61,514</b>	9,978
North West	26,382	3,797	<b>30,179</b>	33,845	3,386	<b>37,231</b>	7,463
Northern Cape	9,504	2,111	<b>11,615</b>	12,173	1,838	<b>14,011</b>	2,669
Western Cape	49,274	11,793	<b>61,067</b>	56,562	11,312	<b>67,874</b>	7,288
<b>National</b>	<b>550,127</b>	<b>138,533</b>	<b>688,660</b>	<b>667,925</b>	<b>131,381</b>	<b>799,306</b>	<b>117,798</b>

Across all nine provinces there was an increase in the enrolment of full-time candidates. The decrease in the part-time enrolment can be explained by the offering of the Senior Certificate examination in June 2015, which is an examination that is similar to the NSC examination, but with no SBA requirement, thus making this a more attractive option for adult part-time candidates. The number of part-time candidates enrolled between 2011 and 2015 is indicated in **Figure 6.1**.

**Figure 6.1: Part-time candidates enrolled: 2011 – 2015**





### 6.3. NSC subject enrolment: 2011 to 2015

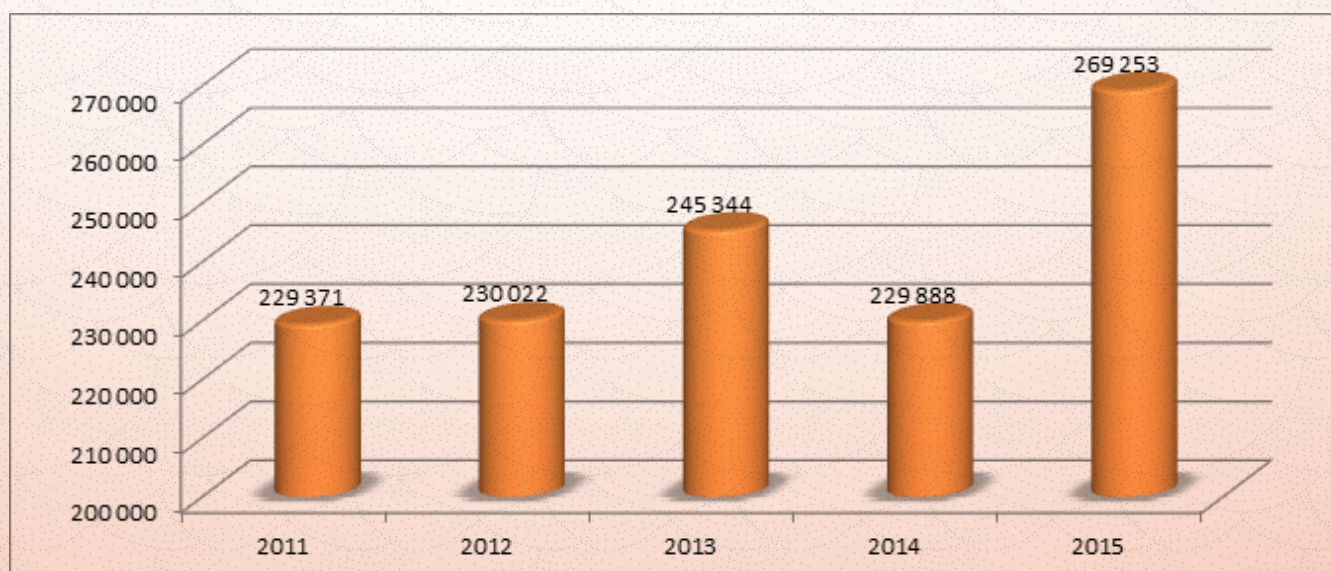
Increase in enrolment in all subjects in 2015. There has been a steady increase in the full-time subject enrolment since 2011, and in 2014, there was a decline in all subject enrolments, except History. The increase in overall enrolment in 2015 has resulted in an increase in the enrolment of all subjects. In **Table 6.2**, the subject enrolments from 2011 to 2015 are indicated:

**Table 6.2: Subject Enrolments - 2011 to 2015**

Subjects	Entered 2011	Entered 2012	Entered 2013	Entered 2014	Entered 2015
Accounting	140 849	137 587	147 950	128 779	143 962
Afrikaans First Additional Language	69 287	76 841	88 672	83 866	88 069
Agricultural Sciences	79 680	79 963	85 234	80 194	106 183
Business Studies	191 850	199 506	222 928	212 147	254 188
Economics	136 652	137 645	153 340	140 860	169 937
English First Additional Language	424 346	430 897	464 377	443 145	554 565
Geography	203 805	218 048	244 121	241 321	310 300
History	88 290	96 550	111 459	118 575	158 451
Life Sciences	270 540	283 811	307 062	290 580	355 614
Mathematical Literacy	281 613	297 514	330 329	318 994	398 632
Mathematics	229 371	230 022	245 344	229 888	269 253
Physical Sciences	184 052	182 126	187 109	171 549	197 047

English First Additional Language and Mathematical Literacy have had the biggest increases with their numbers going up by 114 420, and 79 638, respectively in 2015. There was also 39 365 more candidates taking Mathematics in 2015 than in 2014 (see Figure 6.2).

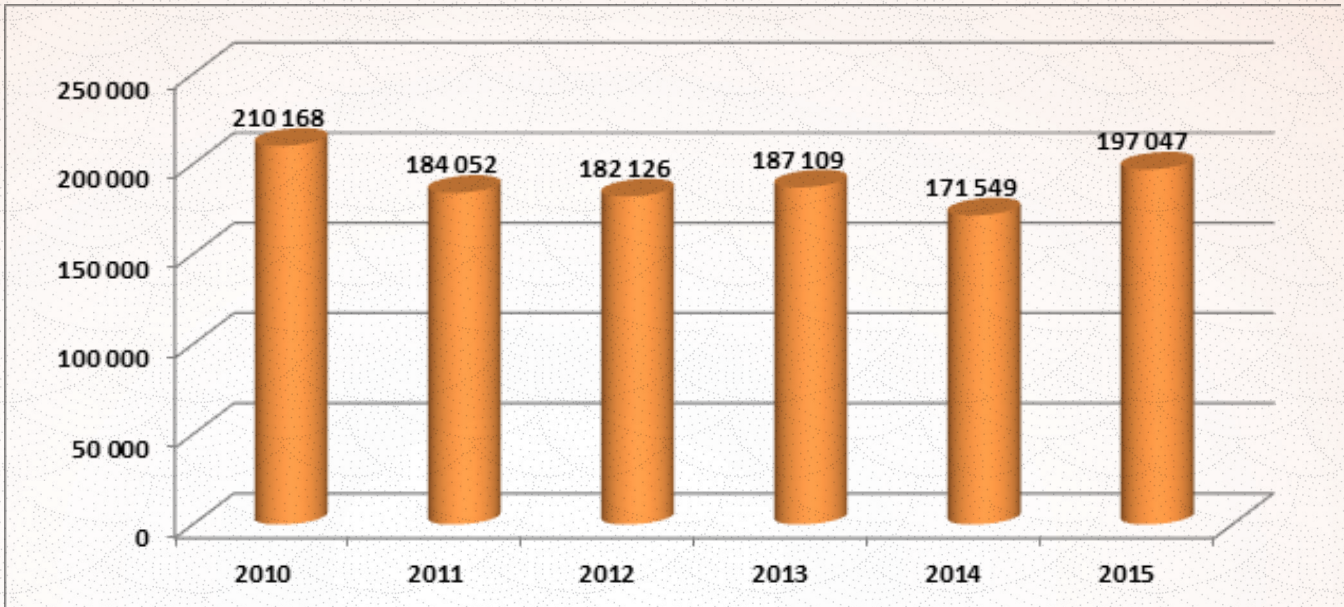
**Figure 6.2: Mathematics Full-Time Enrolments**



Since 2011 the enrolment in Physical Sciences has been fluctuating.



Figure 6.3: Physical Sciences Full-Time Enrolments



Enrolment in Physical Sciences has grown by 15 098 since 2011. The 2015 total represents the largest number of learners taking Physical Sciences.

#### 6.4. NSC enrolments in terms of Gender

The NSC enrolments on gender are indicated in Table 6.3. with more female learners completing Grade 12 than male learners.

Table 6.3: Enrolments in terms of Gender

Provinces	Male	Female	Male %	Female %
Eastern Cape	40 830	48 910	45.5	54.5
Free State	16 314	18 895	46.3	53.7
Gauteng	50 550	61 514	45.1	54.9
KwaZulu-Natal	79 743	90 026	47.0	53.0
Limpopo	46 401	56 217	45.2	54.8
Mpumalanga	25 015	30 930	44.7	55.3
North West	15 394	18 451	45.5	54.5
Northern Cape	5 593	6 580	45.9	54.1
Western Cape	24 319	32 243	43.0	57.0
National	304 159	363 766	45.5	54.5

The ratio between girl learners and boy learners has remained constant at 55:45.

#### 6.5. Intervention programmes targeting the Class of 2015

In 2015, all provinces continued with the implementation of the National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA) which is a comprehensive transversal strategy to co-ordinate provincial improvement plans and steers the sector towards optimal performance of all learners, from Grades R-12. The NSLA is based on sound educational principles and on the philosophy that all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds, can succeed. The key objectives of the NSLA include:

- (a) Sustained improvement in learner outcomes or performance;
- (b) Enhanced accountability at all levels of the system;



- (c) Greater focus on basic functionality of schools;
- (d) Protecting time for teaching and learning;
- (e) Improved support for teaching and learning; and
- (f) Increased efforts on time on task.

The NSLA implemented in 2015, was strengthened through the drafting of Provincial Improvement Plans (PIP), District Improvement Plans (DIP) and School Improvement Plans (SIP). Schools and districts reported to the province on a monthly basis and the provinces, in turn, reported to the DBE on a quarterly basis on progress with the implementation of the NSLA. The reports were interrogated and feedback was provided to provinces for remedial action and improvement.

### **6.5.1 Language proficiency**

To promote greater proficiency in Language, the DBE developed the Framework for Strengthening the Teaching and Learning of Languages to act as an overarching guide to improve language proficiency in all languages, including English FAL. To support the implementation of English across the Curriculum, the DBE printed and distributed the *Strategy on Teaching English Across the Curriculum (EAC)* as well as *A Teachers' Manual to implement EAC* in all subjects, in 2015. Each school received 20 copies of the EAC Strategy and 5 copies of the EAC Manual. In total 153 950 manuals and 548 800 copies of the EAC Strategy were distributed respectively.

### **6.5.2 Learning and Teaching Support Material(LTSM) coverage and utilisation**

The 2015 cohort has been provided with adequate relevant textbooks for their gateway subjects. The delivery of books in line with the universal coverage target i.e. one textbook per learner per subject, per grade was strongly advocated and monitored. Provinces administered different provisioning models in achieving this objective. The 2015 cohort was provided with the necessary textbooks across the phase since the implementation of CAPS in Grade 10. The current cohort was also the beneficiary of Mathematics and Physical Sciences Siyavula textbooks in 2013, whilst they were in Grade 10.

### **6.5.3 Information and Communication Technology support (ICT)**

The DBE has developed a repository of electronic curriculum aligned/enriched content resources including study guides, interactive workbooks, free core textbooks and videos. Resources are provided to Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) for distribution to schools through ICT initiatives. The provision of high quality teaching materials, such as videos, interactive content (electronic) through the Internet or a local area network (School Connectivity Projects) or through television channel (DBE TV channel, broadcasting on OVHD & DSTV), has the potential to move to paperless classrooms. In this regard ICT programmes will assist to:

- (a) Minimise the negative impact of shortage of teachers, especially Mathematics and Physical Science teachers;
- (b) Contribute to the shortage of learning material such as textbooks for teachers and learners;
- (c) Improve the quality of education by providing improved informational content and learning approaches;
- (d) Facilitate and promote the development of 21st Century skills in learners such as critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity which have the potential to increase learning outcomes; and
- (e) Provide learners with resources to collaborate, and raise motivation levels and enthusiasm among learners and teachers.



#### 6.5.4 Broadcast media

One of the key focus areas of the DBE High School Channel is to support Grade 12 learners in preparation for their final exams. The Exam Revision programme is sponsored by the MTN SA Foundation and included the following campaigns:

- (a) Winter School
- (b) Spring School
- (c) Exam School

These campaigns included a combination of pre-recorded and live broadcasts in which experienced teachers focus on areas that have been identified as weaknesses from the November 2014 examinations. Teachers discuss strategies and skills required to answer exam questions. Learners are able to interact with the teachers in the studio by completing assessments using mobile devices and by asking questions on social media platforms. These programmes were broadcast on DSTV 319, Openview HD 201 and Star Sat 309.

**The Winter School Broadcast Programme** was presented from 29 June to 03 July 2015 from 10:00 until 19:00. Lesson notes for all revision lessons were available for downloading from the Mindset website (<http://learn.mindset.co.za/xtra/revision/winter-school>). Videos of the pre-recorded lessons could be watched online. The live broadcasts were uploaded to the website.

**The Spring Broadcast School** was dedicated to Grade 12 learners and broadcast from 05 to 09 October 2015. The Grade 12 programme was repeated in the evening and over the weekend of 10 to 11 October 2015. The live lessons focused on previous exam paper questions including a review of questions adapted from 2015 Preliminary examination question papers.

**The Exam School** offered a combination of live and pre-recorded lessons to assist Grade 12 learners review their preliminary exams and prepare for the final examinations. This programme ran from 12 October to the end of November 2015. The objective was to ensure that learners reviewed the Preliminary examination responses and did not make the same mistakes in the final examination.

#### 6.5.5 Management Support

The DBE has come up with a programme to train school principals on curriculum management. The purpose of the training is to ensure that principals are in a position to effectively lead, manage and monitor curriculum delivery in their schools and to empower them to support their school management teams (SMTs). The programme encompassed carefully selected topics designed to empower principals to monitor and support curriculum delivery in their schools. A total of 8 020 school principals in 27 Districts were trained.

#### 6.5.6 Subject specific interventions and support

Provinces developed and implemented targeted subject specific interventions to improve learner performance in the eleven (11) key subjects. All interventions were grounded in the 2014 Diagnostic Report and the 2015 Improvement Plan. The provinces used a variety of criteria to identify and select schools that participated in the intervention programmes:



**(a) The 2014 Diagnostic Report and 2015 Subject improvement Framework**

The Diagnostic Report is part of the on-going initiative by the DBE to improve the use of the National Senior Certificate results as a diagnostic source of information for improving learning and teaching. In this report, a qualitative analysis is undertaken in the 11 key subjects, which attempts to determine the extent to which the Class of 2014 achieved the learning outcomes and fulfilled the academic requirements of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The report evaluates learner performance in selected subjects by highlighting the areas of weakness in each of the subjects and articulating the remedial measures to be adopted at the school level to improve performance in these subjects.

The report is based on qualitative data that is drawn from the subject reports compiled by the chief markers, internal moderators and subject specialists post the marking process. This report therefore served as a catalyst for improved planning at all levels of the system so that the quality of teaching and learning can be elevated to the next level. Over the last few years, this report has established itself as a valuable resource for Grade 12 teachers as well as for curriculum planners and curriculum implementers.

This National Diagnostic Report on Learner Performance provides teachers, subject advisors, curriculum planners and curriculum implementers with a picture of learner performance in each of the selected subjects. The DBE commenced with support for subjects by conducting day-long diagnostic report mediation sessions in eight of the nine provinces. Provincial visits were done to ensure that subject-based diagnostic analysis will inform the pedagogical practice not only at national level, but also at provincial, district and school levels.

In addition to the National Diagnostic Report, focusing mainly on the eleven high enrolment subjects offered by the majority of learners in the system, a Framework for Subject Improvement, (2015), that addressed all twenty nine subjects were developed by the DBE. The Subject Improvement Framework provides pragmatic responses for each level of the system and addresses the issues per subject highlighted in the Diagnostic Report. These played a critical role in the development of Subject Improvement Plans at provincial, district and school levels and moreover, it informs teacher development and other support programmes.

**(b) Schools that achieved below 60% pass rate in the 2014 NSC examination**

Post the analysis of the NSC results by districts, all schools that performed below 60% in one or more of the key subjects were selected to participate in a special intervention programme. These schools were supported during school holidays and weekends. Special intervention materials were developed by subject specialists and reviewed by subject advisors, for use during these intervention programmes.

**(c) Schools that enrolled more than 100 learners for a subject in 2015**

Schools that had high learner enrolment in one or more of the key subjects were also selected for extra support. These learners were categorised according to their Grade 11 results. Learners were divided into three categories, as follows:

- (i) Category 1: learners who failed a key subject but passed Grade 11 in 2014 final exam.
- (ii) Category 2: learners who passed any of the key subjects by 40% or less.
- (iii) Category 3 was for high-flyers whose Grade 11 results were above 60% in one or more of the key subjects. These learners were supported to sustain or improve their high performance.



(d) **Schools that enrolled more than 50 learners in 2015, but performed below 70% in the 2014 NSC examinations**

This criterion was used for schools with results that were below 70% in the 2014 NSC results. The schools had enrolled 50 or more learners for a key subject in 2015. The schools were supplied with extra materials for the identified subjects. Learners were taught during school holidays and weekends. Teachers organised morning and afternoon classes from the first term.

(e) **Schools that included a large number of high-risk learners including learners that were progressed to Grade 12**

These are schools that have learners that have not passed a particular subject from Grade 10, but they were able to move to the next grade based on the Policy on Progression. The learners were categorised as high-risk learners and they were given special attention. They were taught by expert teachers and attended extra tuition during the first three terms of the year.

### **6.5.7 DBE monitoring of Extra Tuition**

Extra classes were one of the most commonly planned interventions in 2015 to improve and strengthen Grade 12 learner performance in all public schools, and in particular, the under-performing schools. In most provinces it referred to schools that performed below 60% in the 2014 National Senior Certificate (NSC). The reasons for conducting extra tuition included the following:

- (a) Closing the content gaps;
- (b) Topics that were identified as problematic by the analytical moderators in the 2014 examinations;
- (c) New content that was introduced by the CAPS;
- (d) First quarter assessment results; and
- (e) Revision.

The DBE's Subject Specialists monitored and supported the winter and spring school programmes.

### **6.5.8 Support for Progressed Learners**

DBE and PEDs provided support to the progressed learners due to the cumulative deficit in knowledge acquisition. Provinces identified progressed learners and provided them with additional and differentiated support programmes. To ensure that each learner has the best possible opportunity to obtain an NSC in 2015, provinces embarked on a rigorous support programme for progressed learners in addition to the programme offered to other learners. Intensive support programmes developed and implemented for High Enrolment Subjects across provinces included:

- (a) Differentiated teaching and revision;
- (b) Extra classes with emphasis on work done in earlier grades to close the gaps;
- (c) Administration of common standardised tests and examination;
- (d) Emphasis on topics that carries a higher weight in the curriculum, e.g. Functions (Trigonometric and Algebraic) and Euclidian Geometry;
- (e) Provision of worksheet on practice exercises on Euclidian geometry (circle geometry);
- (f) Administration of weekly short tests in preparation for formal ones;
- (g) Provision of exemplars tasks to schools;
- (h) Emphasizing cumulative assessment;
- (i) Utilisation of past papers; and
- (j) Autumn and winter camps.



### 6.5.9 Tracking Learner Performance

Provinces track learner performance through various modes to improve learner performance including:

- (a) Comparisons with previous cohorts; and
- (b) Comparing the cohort's performance from Grade 10 – 12.

## 7. EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

*The DBE and the PEDs are jointly responsible for the conduct, administration and management of the NSC examinations.*

The administration of public examinations is a joint responsibility between the DBE and the nine Provincial Education Departments. The DBE has a responsibility to set national standards and to coordinate and monitor the administration of the examinations across the nine PEDs. This the DBE does by the development of national policy for the conduct, administration and management of national examinations and the setting of national question papers in all subjects. The DBE also co-ordinates the administration of the public examinations, through a sub-committee of HEDCOM, the National Examinations and Assessment Committee (NEAC) and monitors the entire examination cycle from its inception to its conclusion. The PEDs are responsible for the administration of the examination, which includes, the registration of centres and candidates, the printing, packing and distribution of question papers, the writing of the examination, the marking of the examination answer scripts and the capture of the marks on the Integrated Examination Computer System (IECS). The DBE takes final responsibility for the processing of the results, together with the standardisation of the results, a process which is the mandatory responsibility of the Quality Assurance Council, Umalusi.

### 7.1. Registration of centres and candidates

The NSC examinations may be administered at public or independent schools. Public schools, by virtue of their status as a public school, are deemed to be registered and are allowed to conduct the NSC examinations, unless they have been implicated in serious examination irregularities, in which case the examination administration will be taken over by the provincial office. These public schools must be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that they comply with the requirements for the administration of a credible examination. In the case of independent schools, they must be registered with the PED as an institution of teaching and learning, accredited with Umalusi and only then will such an institution be considered for registration as an examination centre. All independent schools must be evaluated by the PED, on an annual basis by October, in the year prior to the examination date, in order to verify that they comply with the criteria relating to the registration of examination centres.

There has been a major challenge with centres that do not offer tuition on a full-time basis, particularly private centres that offer tuition for part-time learners that need to complete one or more subjects to obtain the NSC. These centres have been in the spotlight for violating examination regulations and therefore PEDs established designated examination centres that are managed by district officials, for such repeat candidates. These learners will attend these tuition centres, but will write the examination at these designated centres.



**Table 7.1: The number of examination centres per province - 2015**

Province	Public	Independent	Total
Eastern Cape	878	43	921
Free State	310	18	328
Gauteng	638	215	853
KwaZulu-Natal	1 674	73	1 747
Limpopo	1 360	54	1 414
Mpumalanga	509	36	545
North West	369	14	383
Northern Cape	130	5	135
Western Cape	376	65	441
<b>National</b>	<b>6 244</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>6 767</b>

All learners wishing to write the NSC examination must register to write the examination. Registration is conditional to a learner producing evidence that he/she has completed the outcomes of Grades 10, 11 and 12 and he/she has satisfied the School Based Assessment requirements of Grade 12. These learners are registered for the 2015 National Senior Certificate (NSC) as full time candidates, if they attend school on a full-time basis or part-time candidates, who were unsuccessful in one or more subjects in the previous NSC examinations. These are repeater candidates who are attached to an institution only for examination purpose and are allowed to enrol for subjects they did not pass in previous examinations. Repeater candidates may carry over their SBA marks to the subsequent year of registration and therefore are not compelled to re-do their SBA, which is valid for a period of three years.

To ensure that access to examination is extended to all candidates including Learners with Special Needs (LSEN) the LSEN learner may register for the Endorsed NSC, which allows Grade 12 candidates to obtain the NSC based on offering five subjects in the NSC examination. The Department also further accommodates learners with barriers to learning by granting them special concessions. These special concessions include, braille for blind learners, adapted question papers for the deaf, extended time duration for specific learning difficulties, scribe for candidates that are unable to write, amanuensis for candidates that need to have the question paper read and answers written. All of these concessions are offered based on stringent criteria so as to ensure that the credibility of the NSC is not compromised.

## 7.2. Setting of question papers

The setting of examination question papers is underpinned by national standards which are embodied in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and accompanying guideline documents. Developing high quality, error-free national question papers is the core responsibility of the DBE.

Question papers are set and moderated by a panel of experts with the highest level of knowledge and skills. The selected examiners are constituted into specialist teams convened per paper comprising of a minimum of 3 examiners, a chief examiner and a team of two internal moderators based on their expertise and experience. This ensures that the required expertise is carefully distributed and balanced in the setting of each paper.

A total of 280 examiners and 65 internal moderators were utilised for the setting and moderation of the 2015 question papers. Each panel of examiners and moderators are thoroughly trained prior to the commencement of the setting process to ensure that they are clear about their scope of work and their roles and responsibilities as a panel.



The setting process commences with the development of a test specification, which shows details of the distribution of the subject content according to the topics and skills to be assessed, the weighting, the cognitive skills, levels of difficulty and mark allocation. This ensures that a balanced question paper is set. A variety of questions assessing a wide range of skills, including critical thinking and problem solving skills, are included in all the question papers. Each question paper is developed with an accompanying memorandum and test specification grid.

Rigorous internal moderation processes ensure that the items included in the papers are valid and the standard of the question paper is commensurate to the Grade 12 level. Once the chief examiner and the panel have completed setting the question paper, accompanying marking guidelines and the test specification grid are submitted to the internal moderator for scrutiny.

The internal moderator reviews the questions against a set of agreed criteria and, where necessary, the question papers are restructured in line with the internal moderator's comments. Once the papers are approved by the internal moderator, they are submitted to Umalusi, the external quality assurance council, for external moderation and subsequent approval.

External moderators verify, evaluate and approve all the question papers for the November and March NSC examination concurrently to ensure comparable standards in both examinations. The rigorous external moderation process contributes to ensuring that the question papers are of a high quality and appropriate standard for Grade 12 learners.

The final quality assurance of the NSC question papers consist of a fairness review process coupled with a four-tier editing process. Once the question papers and accompanying marking guidelines are approved, a panel of reviewers are convened to review the papers in relation to any representation of bias, stereotypes and language accessibility. The fairness review is conducted by independent subject specialists and language editors. All question papers are reviewed by the fairness review team.

The review process is followed by the quality assurance process which includes editing, correlation between English and Afrikaans versions, proofreading and quality control. A four-tier approach is utilised in the final quality assurance process. Once the DBE editors have completed the editing, a team of selected editors from different provinces are required to conduct an edit and proofread of the question papers. This is followed by final proofreading and approval by the internal and external moderators. Prior to the release of the question papers to PEDs for printing, DBE Assessment Specialists also proofread the question papers and accompanying marking guidelines. The multi-step approach ensures that the question papers are error free.

### **7.3. Printing, packing and distribution**

Printing, packaging and distribution of question papers is done by the PEDs. All PEDs have developed efficient, secure and well managed in-house printing facilities with the exception of the Limpopo Education Department which uses the Government Printing Works (GPW) in Pretoria. An in-house printing facility allows for full control by the department and minimizes the risk of compromise. In a few of the PEDs printing is done by a reputable service provider, under the direct supervision of the PED.

Provincial examination directorates are responsible for distributing question papers to district offices, based on a detailed plan. In most provinces, question papers were delivered to schools on a daily basis.

### **7.4. Writing of the examination**

The 2015 National Senior Certificate Examination (NSC) commenced on Monday, 26 October 2015 and terminated on Friday, 27 November 2015 and the examination was administered across 6 767 examination centres. The management of the writing of the examination contributes significantly to the credibility of the examinations as a whole.



In preparation for the 2015 NSC examination extensive training of chief invigilators and invigilators was conducted. To enhance the training process and ensure that the same information is communicated during training, the DBE organised a national session where all managers responsible for training of invigilators from PEDs were invited. At this training session the National Invigilation Manual was discussed and standardised so that all training in the PEDs was carried out against this National Invigilation Manual.

To ensure that question papers are not compromised, strict security is maintained in the storage and distribution of question papers and all examination stationery. PEDs audit their storage sites to ensure that they comply with the required security standards. The collaborative structure, which was established in 2013 with the South African Police Service (SAPS), Crime Intelligence and Disaster Management services, the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS), was also operationalised in 2015. During the writing of the examination, discreet, general surveillance was also provided by the SAPS, ensuring that storage and writing centres are closely monitored. The Provincial Joint Committees (PROVJOINTS) ensures that support is provided in terms of disaster management if required and in cases where there were social unrests, the SAPS ensured that the question papers reached the affected centres on time and scripts are safely returned to district offices after the writing concluded.

At the examination centres where there were recurrent or serious irregularities, the PED appointed a private invigilator or utilised a district official to serve as a Chief Invigilator.

To curb any possible irregular practices, and answer scripts being kept for too long at the examination centres, the PEDs were required to determine, based on their distances between the examination centres and distribution points and or nodal points, a norm time for collection and return of scripts. In most provinces, except the Western Cape and some areas in the Northern Cape where the question papers are not delivered and answer scripts returned on a daily basis, question papers were collected and returned on a daily basis and according to their determined norm time collected or returned from/to nodal points or distribution points.

#### **7.5. Marking of the examinations**

The reliability of the marking process is directly informed by the professional and technical capacity of appointed markers to make accurate judgements in their marking of candidates' responses. Marker reliability is further enhanced by the previous marking experience and teaching experience in the subject being marked.

The standardisation of the marking guideline, the quality and duration of the training of markers and the moderation and quality assurance of the marking all need to be implemented in an integrated manner to produce accurate, reliable and valid marking of the examinations. To this end, the DBE continued to scale up the three year improvement plan (2014-2016) that enunciates the specific short, medium and long term goals for the ongoing improvement in the quality and standard of the marking of the 2015 NSC examination in the following five key areas:

- (a) Development of Norms and Standards for marking that has been incorporated into the draft Standard Operating Procedures manual developed in 2015;
- (b) Quality assurance of the systems and processes required for the appointment of suitably qualified markers, senior markers, deputy chief markers, chief markers and internal moderators;
- (c) Strengthening of the national standardised marking guideline meetings hosted by the DBE;
- (d) Improvement in the quality, duration and intensity of marker training; and
- (e) Strengthening of the moderation of marking from the senior markers up to the level of internal moderator.



### **7.5.1. Appointment of markers**

PEDs recruited and appointed markers according to the criteria prescribed in Chapter E of the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM). The PAM criteria for the appointment of markers include the following:

- (a) A recognised three year post school qualification which must include the subject concerned at second or third year level or other appropriate post matric qualifications;
- (b) Appropriate teaching experience, including teaching experience at the appropriate level, in the subject concerned;
- (c) Language competency; and
- (d) In addition to the above criteria, preference is given to serving educators who are presently teaching the subject concerned.

The above criteria, together with a report on the performance of the prospective marker as a teacher in the classroom and his/her performance in previous marking sessions are strictly applied, thus ensuring that the most suitable educators are appointed.

However, there may be markers that are erroneously appointed given the size and magnitude of the markers. Such erroneous appointments are immediately identified at the marking centre and are corrected.

After markers were shortlisted and recommended for appointment by each PED, the DBE conducted an audit of marker selection to ensure compliance with the PAM criteria and that only suitably qualified and experienced markers are appointed. Where there was evident non-compliance with the appointment of markers, the province was requested to revisit the recommended list accordingly.

Due to the increased enrolment for the 2015 NSC examination all provinces had to have sound recruitment strategies in place to ensure that the 49 000 markers selected across the nine provinces were able to mark the estimated 10.5 million scripts by 14 December 2015. Nineteen additional marking centres were established this year to accommodate the increased enrolment of candidates that wrote this year. KwaZulu-Natal province had the most marking centres (30) and Northern Cape had the least marking centres (3).

### **7.5.2. National Marking Guideline Standardisation Meetings and Training of Chief Markers and Internal Moderators**

Between 26 October and 27 November 2015, the DBE hosted 130 national marking guideline standardisation meetings which is an assembly of the chief markers and internal moderators for each subject from each of the provinces. At these meetings the marking guidelines were discussed extensively and a common understanding of its application was established.

Two day meetings were convened for each subject in which the first day of the marking guideline meeting was dedicated to the standardisation of the marking memorandum through the participation and inputs from all provincial representatives and the external moderators. In preparation for their inputs into finalising the marking memorandum, Chief Markers and Internal moderators were required to pre-mark 20 sampled scripts and present provincial reports on the learner performance trends in the sample pre-marked.



The standardisation of the marking guideline was followed by training and authorisation (on the second day) of the chief markers and internal moderators who will take responsibility for the marking in the province. The training included the use of six dummy scripts. Three scripts were used for the standardisation of marking and three for the authorisation of Chief Markers and Internal Moderators if they were able to adhere to the established Tolerance range set at a per question or at a whole paper level. Where a Chief Marker or Internal Moderator could not adhere to the tolerance range in more than 50% of the scripts they were not authorised. The DBE subsequently deployed an onsite moderator to support the marking process and to quality assure the moderation of marking in cases where the chief marker was not authorised.

To encourage the active use of marker performance data to monitor, support and quality assure the marking of the examination, the DBE introduced a Senior Marker recording tool. Senior Markers were required to randomly select 10 scripts per day, record the mark awarded by each marker and the marks they had awarded on the same question. This was to enable the Senior Marker to constantly keep track of variances in marking, intervene where these variances deviated from the agreed mark, and take corrective action to ensure reliable marking. In an attempt to standardise the capture of marker performance data during marker training and during marking, the DBE provided the Chief Markers with a set of electronic tools which lent themselves to being adapted within each subject. This data assisted senior markers in evaluating their marker performance more effectively. It was envisaged that this marker evaluation data will provide PEDs with crucial information to support the reappointment of markers in 2016.

On completion of the DBE training, the final changes were effected to the marking memorandum, then jointly signed off by the DBE and Umalusi before being disseminated to provinces. Clear protocols were established at the national marking guideline meetings to prevent any unilateral changes to the marking memoranda at any marking centres during the marking session.

### **7.5.3. Marking of the examination**

To preserve the reliability of the marking process, and to ensure that markers were not under excessive pressure due to the increased volume of scripts this year due to increased enrolment, provinces opted for and implemented a staggered marking approach to accommodate the marking of selected high enrolment subjects by the respective marking teams. All 121 marking centres were able to complete the marking of the examinations within the allocated number of days.

#### **(a) Organisation of marking**

The markers at each marking centre are organised in the form of a pyramidal hierarchy which includes five tiers of quality control and quality assurance. Scripts are marked by the marker and then moderated by the Senior Marker, who is in turn overseen by the Deputy Chief Marker and the final quality control is the responsibility of the Chief Marker. In addition to these four levels of quality management, an internal moderator serves as the final judge of marking standards for that subject at that centre.

The DBE and Umalusi also appointed independent external moderators to ensure external quality checks on the marking process.

#### **(b) Training of markers**

The uniform interpretation, understanding and application of the marking memorandum across all learners' scripts is required to ensure reliability in marking, hence standardised training at all 121 marking centres in the country was required to ensure this. The Chief Markers and Internal Moderators that were trained by the DBE were required to replicate the standardised training in their respective subjects and papers during the training of markers in each province.



A full day's training was required for markers. Following their memo discussion meeting, markers were then trained using six dummy scripts and the training conducted at the DBE was replicated across PEDs.

The first three training scripts were used to standardise the marking at a whole script level. These training scripts were moderated by the senior marker so that he/she was able to identify any variations in marker reliability and then to identify markers' strengths so that they could be allocated accordingly to the question or questions to be marked. Next the markers were required to mark the question to which they had been allocated. They were authorised based on their adherence to the established Tolerance Range at a per question level. The Tolerance Range which was piloted in seven key subjects in 2014, was scaled up to all subjects in 2015. This intervention attempted to ensure that marking memorandum is accurately and consistently applied by all markers to enhance the reliability and quality of marking across all provinces. Markers that required additional intervention and support were provided with ongoing feedback and support throughout the training process until they achieved the required level of accuracy. In cases where a marker was still not able to adhere to the agreed Tolerance Range, these markers were retrained or redeployed to questions where they were more competent.

The DBE deployed teams of onsite moderators and officials to monitor and support the training of markers, as well as, quality assure the entire marking process in selected subjects across all PEDs.

### **(c) Centralised marking**

Since the piloting of centralised marking in 2014, the DBE scaled up the centralised marking of small subjects at a national level to include Agricultural Technology, Agricultural Management Practice, Dance Studies and Music (except for KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape that marked their own music scripts). Centralised marking enabled the DBE to pool marking expertise in these small enrolment subjects to ensure credible and reliable marking. Siswati and isiNdebele Home Language, First Additional Language and Second Additional Language were also centrally marked in Mpumalanga. This ensured that all learners' scripts in these subjects were exposed to the same quality and rigour of marking.

#### **7.5.4. Moderation of Marking**

Together with the team of Deputy Chief Markers and Senior Markers, the Chief Marker and Internal Moderator form the moderation tiers. Senior Markers are responsible for a team of 5 markers. They conduct moderation at a per question level. Deputy Chief Markers conduct moderation at a whole script level. The Chief Marker and Internal Moderator moderate at a whole script level. The sample of scripts moderated by the Chief Marker and Internal Moderator must include both moderated and un-moderated scripts to ensure marking is accurate and that each level of marking and quality assurance is operating optimally to produce reliable results for every candidate. The Internal Moderator remains the arbiter of the quality and standard of the marking process.

The DBE deployed a team of onsite moderators across all provinces in selected key subjects to provide support to the Chief Markers who had not been authorised during the DBE training, as well as to quality assure the moderation of the marking in those subjects and papers. They also conducted further moderation on a sample of completed batches of scripts which included moderated and un-moderated scripts to establish adherence to the Tolerance Range and to monitor variances and its impact on the accuracy of judgment at each level of moderation. Regular feedback was given to the Chief Marker to ensure that corrective action was taken, and that the minimum of 10% of moderation at each level of moderation was adhered to. The DBE onsite moderation process included scripts from more than 400 examination centres. The quality of marking was found to be reliable in the centres sampled.



### **7.5.5. Investigative Marking**

An additional layer of quality assurance of marking was prompted by irregularities identified during monitoring of the writing of the examination.

To rule out malpractice, and to protect the credibility of the examination, investigative marking was instituted in selected subjects, papers across all provinces in a bid to identify any anomalous trends. The ten high enrolment subjects comprised the pool of subjects in which investigative marking could be conducted. Completed batches from the centres suspected to have been involved in irregular conduct, identified by either the PED or the DBE were remarked to confirm or refute evidence of any malpractice. The leakage that occurred in the Life Sciences paper in one province required that the marking of scripts in selected subjects at all implicated centres be audited to ascertain if any other subjects, papers or centres were implicated. The outcome of the investigative marking in 183 centres confirmed that the leakage was confined to selected centres in a single district. In total 565 centres were audited during the investigative marking process across all PEDs and only 6 centres warranted further investigation by the DBE before release of their results.

## **7.6 Resulting and Standardisation**

### **7.6.1 Data Capturing and Processing of Results**

After the marking process is completed, marks from the answer scripts are transferred onto the mark sheets. Examination Assistants (EAs), appointed mainly for quality assurance purposes, verify and check that the marks have been accurately transferred to the mark sheet, before the mark sheets are captured on the Integrated Examination Computer System (IECS).

In terms of the capturing process, all SBA, oral marks, practical examination marks and written examination marks are subjected to a double capture process. This double capture entails that every mark is captured independently by two separate individuals and if the mark captured by the second individual is different from the first, the system disallows the mark. A third official then verifies the captured mark before it is finally accepted onto the system. The verification of marks by three independent persons ensures that there is high accuracy in the capture of marks and

Final marks are computed from the combining of the different components of the subject. It is a requirement that all components of the subject are aggregated to obtain a final score. A subject will therefore not be resulted if a component is missing.

Umalusi adjustment decisions from the standardisation process described in 10.2. are applied to the each subject's data on the examination mark. SBA marks are also statistically moderated. The final exam mark and the SBA mark are then combined to obtain a final score for the subject. The final marks are verified and checked before statements of results are generated and printed for each candidate.

### **7.6.2. Standardisation**

Standardisation is a process used in large scale public examinations to mitigate the fluctuations in learner performance caused by factors outside the learners' knowledge and aptitude. Undesirable fluctuations in examination processes such as variations in the standard of question papers and variations in the standard of the marking are addressed during the process of standardisation.

This therefore ensures that a cohort of learners is not unduly advantaged or disadvantaged by undesirable fluctuations in the examination processes, and the system produces a relatively constant quality of output from one year to the next. Historical data on learner performance for a period of five years is used to determine the norm to which current performance is compared. Umalusi makes adjustments where there



are anomalies in the performance trends. Qualitative input from the marking process in terms of reports from marking is also considered in making recommendations for adjustments.

Umalusi hosted the 2015 NSC standardisation meeting on 23 December 2015. The process was observed by members of the Portfolio committee on Basic Education, Teacher Unions as well as representatives from the Lesotho Examinations Councils.

### **7.6.3. Final Approval of Results**

As mandated by the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act, final approval and declaration on the credibility of the results is the prerogative of Umalusi, the Council for Quality assurance in the General and Further Education and Training Bands.

The Umalusi Council approved the 2015 National Senior Certificate examinations on Tuesday, 29 December 2015. In approving the results the chairman of Umalusi council Prof. Volmink said, “.....Umalusi is satisfied that nothing has compromised the integrity or credibility of the examinations process. Notwithstanding the areas of concern requiring improvement we are satisfied that the examinations on the whole were fair, valid and credible.”

## **7.7. Viewing, Remarking and Rechecking of Results and the Appeal Processes**

A candidate may apply for the re-checking or re-marking of his or her examination answer script within 21 days of the official release of results by the Minister of Basic Education. This applies to both the October/November and Supplementary examinations. If the candidate is still not satisfied with the outcome of the remark, the candidate or his/her parent may apply to view the examination answer script within 7 days of the release of the re-marked results and must provide clear reasons for the request.

## **7.8. Supplementary Examinations**

The supplementary examination is a special examination, which provides learners with an additional opportunity to write the NSC examination based on certain pre-determined conditions. For this purpose, the end-of-year and the supplementary examinations are regarded as one examination sitting.

A candidate who did not write or complete the end-of year examination with a valid reason has the opportunity to write the supplementary examination for the specific examination question paper that he/she did not write in the end-of-year-examination. The School Based Assessment mark for the Grade 12-year will be used, including practical or oral assessment marks where applicable, in order to meet the School Based Assessment and external examination requirements.

A supplementary examination will be granted under the following conditions to a full-time, repeat or part-time candidate:

- (a) If a candidate has not met the minimum promotion and certification requirements, but requires a maximum of two subjects to obtain the National Senior Certificate;
- (b) If a candidate is medically unfit and, as a result, is absent from one or more external examinations, he or she may register for the supplementary examination;
- (c) A candidate that does not satisfy the minimum higher education requirements, higher education faculty requirements or the requirements for the specific occupation in the end-of-year examination, may be allowed in terms of the following to register for a maximum of two subjects in the supplementary examination provided the candidate is:
  - (i) one requirement short in meeting the minimum admission requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's degree programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate; or
  - (ii) provides documentary evidence that he or she qualifies for admission to a higher education institution



or for an occupation, but does not satisfy the higher education faculty requirements or the requirements for the specific occupation.

- (d) If there is a death in the immediate family of a candidate, or other special reasons which meets the approval of the head of the assessment body for the candidate's absence, he or she may register for the supplementary examination; and
- (e) In a case where an irregularity is being investigated, provisional enrolment for the supplementary examination may be granted to the candidate concerned, pending the outcome of the investigation.

## 8. MONITORING OF THE EXAMINATION CYCLE

The DBE has the responsibility to ensure that all PEDs are monitored and supported in order that they deliver credible examinations. Systems and processes relating to the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations must be constantly monitored to ensure that a national standard is maintained across the country.

The 2015 monitoring adopted a seven-pronged approach comprising the following components:

- (a) Audit of the examination centres;
- (b) Audit of marker appointments;
- (c) Support and monitoring of the invigilator training;
- (d) Evaluation of the provincial monitoring system;
- (e) Evaluation of the system's readiness to administer the 2015 NSC examinations;
- (f) Monitoring of the writing of the examinations; and
- (g) Monitoring of the marking.

In terms of the audit of the examination centres, PEDs categorised their centres according to low, medium and high-risk centres based on a set of pre-determined criteria. The DBE had provided PEDs with an audit instrument which was utilised in the evaluation and categorisation of all centres registered for the 2015 NSC. On the basis of the information received from the provincial audits, the DBE deployed its part-time monitors to conduct a sample audit of selected centres, and this exercise was done between 10 and 30 August 2015.

The DBE also conducted an audit of marker appointments in all PEDs, to establish whether the PED's adhered to the appointment criteria as stipulated in the PAM document. The outcome of this audit was communicated to the PED and where there were shortcomings identified, these were corrected.

The DBE also monitored the training of invigilators on a small scale, to ensure that the national invigilator training standards were complied with. There has been a positive response from all PEDs regarding the intensity and quality of invigilator training conducted in 2015. This can also be attested to by the reduction in the number of irregularities in the writing of the 2015 NSC examination.

To assist PEDs with the implementation of their monitoring systems, the DBE developed a monitoring framework which advised and directed PEDs in terms of what needed to be monitored and how this could be done. The monitoring programme for each PED had to address the district state of readiness, monitoring of the writing of the examinations by the provincial office, the district office and monitoring of the marking. The PEDs submitted to DBE their monitoring programmes based on the framework provided. The DBE evaluated the monitoring programmes and provided feedback to PEDs.

Finally, the DBE visited all the nine PEDs and conducted an evaluation of the state of readiness (SOR) of the provincial system to administer the 2015 NSC examinations. Information gathered from previous monitoring activities were utilised as the point of departure, to assess the extent to which issues raised in previous visits were addressed. This evaluation exercise was successful in identifying the critical risks that needed to be attended to, prior to the commencement of the examinations.



In the case of the monitoring of the writing of the examinations, DBE officials, 80 DBE part-time monitors, and School Improvement Support Coordinators (SISCO), were utilized for this process. The PEDs also deployed their monitoring teams at district and provincial level. This ensured an increased presence at examination centres, thereby discouraging malpractices. In preparation for this monitoring exercise, all monitors were trained nationally. A monitoring instrument, which had been reviewed, was provided to these monitors.

For the monitoring of the marking, the DBE officials and part-time monitors (in selected provinces) were deployed to monitor the marking of the 2015 NSC examinations. A revised monitoring instrument was utilised for this exercise which focused on various issues including the marking centre organisation, security at the marking centre, training of markers, marking approach, moderation, handling of irregularities, flow of scripts, utilisation of examination assistants (EAs), capturing of marks and monitoring of the marking processes. In addition to the monitoring of the marking systems and processes, officials from DBE also focused on how irregularities are dealt with at the marking centre.

## **9. SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT**

School Based Assessment (SBA) comprises forms of assessment which are conducted by the teacher at the school level. This includes assignments, projects, simulations, research, demonstrations, role plays, listening exercises, homework pieces, class work pieces, tests and examinations. In subjects with a practical component and in the case of languages with an oral component, SBA includes assessment of the practical skills and in the case of languages, assessment of the oral skills.

SBA constitutes 25% of the final promotion mark in all the subjects offered as part of the National Senior Certificate (NSC). In the case of the subjects with a practical component and the languages, the weighting of SBA is higher than 25%. In the case of Life Orientation the assessment is totally school based (i.e. 100% SBA).

As a result of varying standards across schools and provinces, the quality and range of tasks that are developed by teachers varies across schools as well and are administered in less standardised and stringent conditions than the examination itself. It is therefore imperative to ensure that the marks generated from the SBA processes are accurate, fair, valid and reliable.

The quality assurance model of the DBE relating to school based assessment has three components and these include:

- (a) Audit of the SBA systems in the province;
- (b) Moderation of the SBA assessment tasks and marking of the learner evidence; and
- (c) Moderation of the Marking of the Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs).

### **9.1 Audit of the SBA Systems in the province**

In July 2015, the DBE conducted an audit of the SBA systems at the provincial focusing on the provincial system and the system in two sampled districts. The audit of SBA systems sought to identify and understand how provinces manage and administer SBA, conduct the moderation at district and school level, and to understand the roles of Curriculum and Assessment officials at a provincial and district level.

The key findings from the audit of the SBA systems are as follows:

- (a) Provincial and district structures relating to the management of SBA vary according to their respective organizational structures;
- (b) The shortage or absence of subject advisory capacity has limited the professional teacher development and quality assurance of tasks; and



- (c) There was little evidence of monitoring and support of schools to improve the quality of pre and post moderation of tasks at school level.

## 9.2 Moderation of SBA

The moderation of the SBA entailed the moderation of the assessment tasks designed by the teacher and those developed by the district or the provincial head office and the moderation of the marking of the learner evidence. Across the nine provinces, 18 districts and 180 schools were sampled in 2015. From this moderation exercise, which entailed the services of 83 moderators, it was evident that the moderation system was beginning to take root and some improvements were noted in certain provinces.

The moderation of assessment tasks revealed that, recommendations from previous year's moderations were slowly being implemented. There was notable improvement in the compliance with policy documents as well as the technical quality and design of the assessment tasks across provinces. Steady improvement in the cognitive level of questions in a number of the assessment tasks moderated was also evident although questions assessing critical thinking are still limited. Evidence of pre-moderation was observed in a few schools which is an indication that assessment tasks are moderated before they are administered. A general improvement in marking quality was also noted.

However there are still areas that require further support and intervention to improve the quality and standard of SBA. These include the following:

- (a) Over dependence on common tests produced by the district/province stifles professional development of teachers in the area of developing quality assessments which is integral to successful learning and teaching;
- (b) SBA is still dominated by tests and examinations and does not emphasize the alternative forms of assessment;
- (c) Some assessment tasks are still of very poor quality although improvements were observed in some PEDs;
- (d) There was no evidence of the pre-moderation of tasks set by the district or province, hence errors on marking guidelines are not identified and corrected and this impacts on the validity of the assessment tasks; and
- (e) Constructive feedback from district moderation to teachers requires strengthening.

## 9.3 Moderation of Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs)

Practical/Performance Assessment Tasks are a compulsory assessment component in the 16 NCS subjects which have a practical component. PATs also contribute 25% to the final examination marks in the 16 subjects.

The DBE commenced with a pilot moderation of PATs in four of the 16 subjects that have a practical component in 2015. The moderation conducted by the DBE, focused on the administration of the PAT, and the marking and moderation of the PATs. The subjects that were part of this pilot included: Agricultural Technology, Agricultural Management Practices, Dance Studies and Visual Arts. Two of the four subjects, with the higher enrolment were sampled and moderated per province.

The national moderation revealed that PATs that were developed at the school, complied with the National PAT guidelines, and were of a good standard. In Agricultural Management Practice, for example, learners had been exposed to the correct and appropriate farming environment for the subject and in Agricultural technology and Visual Arts the models/artefacts/drawings were generally of a satisfactory standard. Some provinces recorded the performance tasks in Dance Studies which made it easy for performances to be moderated and verified at different levels.

However, the following areas were identified as needing improvement:



- (a) Assessment systems to support the implementation of PATS at provincial and district levels were inadequate and monitoring of the implementation of PATs at the school level was almost non-existent;
- (b) Much needed support from the Subject advisory and Teacher Support services was lacking and schools were not receiving the support and guidance required;
- (c) Too many learners were observed at once in some Agricultural Technology workshops and hence some learners were left unattended during PAT classes due to the large number of learners;
- (d) Safety was not prioritised in these workshops. This was confirmed by the lack of safety signs on the walls to warn learners of dangerous areas or remind them of safety rules; and
- (e) Dedicated funding is not provided by provinces to enable schools to buy materials required to build the models and artefacts required for the PAT project. The lack of funding impacted negatively on the quality and size of some of the artefacts and models that candidates produced.

## **10. ENHANCEMENT OF THE INTEGRITY AND CREDIBILITY OF THE NSC EXAMINATIONS**

The Department continually strives to improve the systems and processes relating to public examination administration, so as to enhance the integrity and credibility of the national examinations. An annual review of all processes is conducted and this culminates in the development of improvement plans that target both short and long term goals. The following are some of the more critical interventions that have been introduced over the last few years:

### **10.1 Setting of question papers**

- (a) To ensure that the question papers that are set are appropriate for the designated target group, a sample of the question papers are subjected to pre-writing. Pre-writing entails the writing of the question paper under examination conditions by a teacher who has had adequate exposure and experience in teaching the subject at the Grade 12 level. Responses from the pre-writing of the question paper are factored into the question papers and this intervention has helped eliminate issues pertaining to ambiguity in the wording of questions, cognitive demands and difficulty levels of specific items.
- (b) The issue of fairness and absence of bias in the NSC question papers, has been prioritised by the DBE. Reviewers were appointed to look at the language level of the question paper. Simplification in the wording of questions, where necessary; ensures that no topic or content area creates bias and unfairness to particular groups of learners.
- (c) The strengthening of the examining panels by establishing separate panels in subjects where there are two papers and also appointing a separate internal moderator for each of these panels. This has allowed for focused expertise to be brought to each of the question papers.

### **10.2. Writing of the Examination**

- (a) In light of the cases of group copying and teacher assistance that was identified in the 2014 examinations, all examination centres were categorised in accordance with their risk profiles and the invigilation was customised to address the risk profile of the centre. Where the risk profile was high, the management of the examinations at the centre was taken over by the district office.
- (b) Invigilation at the examination centre has been identified as an area of weakness in the system, hence national training of provincial officials who are involved in invigilator training was convened. This national training session was preceded by the development of a National Invigilator Manual, which served as the basis of the training and was utilised in the training at provincial level. This has contributed immensely to improved invigilation and the subsequent reduction of examination irregularities.
- (c) There has been an intensification of the monitoring of the writing of the examinations to ensure that all examination centres are under the constant and regular vigilance of the district, provincial or national officials. The DBE stationed a monitor at each of the 81 districts and this helped to collect information on the writing



of the examination from each of the 81 districts and this was consolidated into a national report.

### 10.3 School Based Assessment

- (a) The national moderation of SBA was extended to include Grade 11 in 2015 as a way of progressively impacting all grades in the system. This will ensure that the culture of developing good quality assessment tasks and efficient moderation systems and processes are entrenched throughout the FET phase including Grades 10 and 11.
- (b) The DBE moderates the preparatory examination question papers set by the PEDs so as to ensure that the standard of the preparatory examination is comparable to the final examination question papers. The moderation was conducted in seven (7) critical subjects namely Accounting, Geography, History, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences and English First Additional Language.
- (c) A Common Assessment task for Life Orientation is set nationally and this is followed by a national Marking Guideline Standardisation meeting, convened to standardise the marking guidelines for the Common Assessment Task, prior to the marking of the task across PEDs. This intention of this initiative is to set a national standard in Life Orientation, which in the main is based on assessment that is conducted at the school level and hence the variation from one school to the other is significant.
- (d) Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs) are set nationally for the 16 subjects with a practical component, and in 2015 the National moderation of the marking of the learner evidence was piloted in four of the 16 subjects, across all PEDs. This is the first step towards standardizing the implementation and assessment of PATs across PEDs.

### 10.4 Marking

- (a) The compliance with the national criteria for the appointment of markers across the nine provinces has always been an area of concern. The DBE therefore conducts an audit of marker appointments across all PEDs. The recommended lists of all Deputy Chief Markers, Chief Markers, Internal Moderators and markers are audited by the DBE, focusing specifically on verifying whether the recommended persons comply with the national criteria. After the audit, feedback is provided to PEDs and on marker appointments that do not comply and should be corrected.
- (b) The maintaining of national standards across the marking centres in the country is always a challenge, hence the centralised marking of small enrolment subjects was piloted in two subjects in 2014 and in four subjects in 2015. This has revealed a number of valuable lessons that will be utilised in the building of a centralised model of marking in the country, in subjects that lend themselves to such a model.
- (c) The implementation of the Tolerance Range in marking is a vital mechanism in limiting variation during the marking process. The establishment of a Tolerance Range was managed at the national marking guideline discussion, and this was implemented across marking centres in the seven key subjects in 2014 and in 2015. This has assisted in reducing the margin of error in the marking process.

### 10.5 Management of Irregularities

- (a) Examination irregularities that occur on a large scale have the potential of compromising the examinations as a whole and the DBE has strengthened its management of irregularities by:
  - (i) Developing a National Guideline for the conduct of investigations and hearings;
  - (ii) Amending policy so as to ensure that the investigation relating to all irregularities are concluded prior to the release of results so as to ensure that only cases that are backed by solid evidence, will result in results being blocked;
  - (iii) Strengthening the sanctions that will be imposed on irregularities so that there is a common understanding of the sanction and its application across all PEDs; and
  - (iv) Streamlining the roles and responsibilities of the National Examination Irregularities Committee (NEIC) and the Provincial Examination Irregularities Committee (PEIC).



## 11 EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES

Examination irregularities occur during most examinations and the critical factor is the extent and the scope of the irregularity and whether such an irregularity is detected timeously and attended to appropriately, such that it does not compromise the examination as a whole. The National Examination system has an effective system of reporting irregularities, irrespective of whether it is administrative in nature or an act of dishonesty or a behavioural offence.

The 2014 NSC examination was tarnished by the cases of group copying in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. The following measures were introduced to strengthen the examination system so that preventative and early detection mechanisms are installed to minimise these irregularities:

- (a) Intensive Monitoring;
- (b) Categorisation of exam centres in accordance with risk profile;
- (c) Accreditation of independent centres;
- (d) Registration of public centres;
- (e) Standardisation of training of invigilators and manuals National Invigilator training; and
- (f) Policy Review.

The above measures have contributed to the significant reduction in the number of serious irregularities reported in the 2015 NSC examination. The leakage of the Life Sciences paper in Limpopo, was an unfortunate occurrence which was confined to the Vhembe District. This leakage was contained due to the swift action taken by the DBE and the Limpopo Provincial Education Department (PED). The re-writing of the Life Science paper ensured that the contamination of the examination was neutralised and the integrity of the examination was restored. The irregularities reported were in the main administrative in nature, which related to unregistered candidates; candidates' marked present while absent/vice versa, computer related problems; late start of the examination and shortage of answer books.

The procedure followed when irregularities are identified, is clearly stipulated in the Regulations. In the case of the 2015 NSC examinations, the reported irregularities were investigated detailed reports were then submitted to the Provincial Examination Irregularity Committee (PEIC), and subsequently to the National Examination Irregularities Committee (NEIC), so that they are dealt with in a consistent manner across the PEDs.

The NEIC interrogated these irregularities and where there was a need for further investigation or a review of the action taken or sanction imposed, recommendations were made to the respective PEICs. The PEICs and NEIC have ensured that all irregularities are dealt with and finalized timely so that no learner's results are blocked and delayed unnecessarily.

The reduction in the number of irregularities is extremely encouraging and is confirmation that the system more vigilant and alert to any incident that may compromise the credibility of the examination. The Department will ensure that all these gains are maintained in subsequent years.

## 12. LIMITATIONS

The Quality Assurance Council, Umalusi, plays a critical role in protecting the integrity of the NSC examinations. After the Council has completed a rigorous verification of all examination processes, it declares the examination free and fair. However, the NSC has certain limitations that must be borne in mind when reading the Report.

### (a) Limited pre-testing of items

The NSC is a public examination utilising secure test items unseen to candidates. The risk of test item exposure does not allow for pre-testing of items. Examination panels comprising of subject experts do not make use of



statistical information on test item discrimination and difficulty levels to refine question papers. Instead they are assisted by intensive post-test analyses of the previous year's (2014) NSC question papers and international benchmarking exercises. Examination panels carefully consider the analyses conducted by Umalusi and other independent assessment experts in the setting of question papers. Pre-test writing of question papers in key subjects by independent subject experts provides feedback on the face-validity of questions. Using this information, the question papers are further refined.

**(b) Subjectivity in determining cognitive and difficulty levels**

The construct of question papers is based on test specifications, which shows the details of the cognitive and difficulty levels. Examination panels use pre-determined cognitive levels and difficulty levels listed in subject assessment guidelines to classify items to a test specification grid. This is done according to specific assessment weightings to ensure that balanced examination papers are set comprising a variety of critical thinking and problem solving skills. There is currently a lack of explicit criteria in CAPS to exemplify and differentiate the various categories used to describe cognitive and difficulty levels. Examination panels use their individual subject expertise to match test items to listed categories and this process allows for potentially different analyses of test item classifications by different individuals. The DBE has initiated a process of enhancing assessment guidelines to provide further clarity on this matter.

**(c) Marker competency**

The reliability of the marking system is primarily dependent on the professional competency and calibre of markers. Uniform and consistent application of the marking guidelines across all learners' scripts is required to ensure reliability of marking. Intensive training of all appointed chief markers and internal moderators is done to ensure an acceptable "Tolerance Range" is reached on marking each examination question and any discrepancy is closely monitored by the Examination panel. It is expected that the same level of intensity is conducted in the training of markers at provincial level. Where markers are not able to achieve scores aligned to the acceptable tolerance range, they have to be retrained or reassigned to mark a different set of questions. Inappropriate marker competency delays the marking process and disrupts the marking organisation on specific questions. The introduction of the tolerance range in the marking system has reduced the number of discrepancies identified by external moderators in previous years.

**(d) Limited presentation of data**

The national report presents only a snapshot of data analysis at national, provincial and district levels. The analysis is restricted to full-time candidates that have written six or more subjects. The results of part-time candidates who usually only register for one or more subjects are not considered in the same way as full-time candidates and is limited to subject performance. The results of the 2015 cohort are compared in relation to performance levels of the three previous years. The data is presented to provide an aggregated national picture on the number of NSC passes, qualification type, gender, school performance, quintile, national subjects, special needs education and district performance. It does not provide pedagogical information on learning gaps. A national diagnostic report on specific subjects at a later stage will provide input to teaching and learning at classroom level.

The above limitations are typical of internationally conducted "high stakes" public examinations and are not unique to the NSC.



### 13. ANALYSIS OF THE 2015 NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) EXAMINATION RESULTS

This section of the report provides the analysis of the data at national, provincial and district levels. The report will focus on full-time candidates that have written seven or more subjects, therefore will be based on the **644 536** candidates listed in Table 12.1.1

The performance of a total of 91 063 Part-Time candidates is included in Table 12.5.1, and will be analysed separately, as these candidates register for one or more subjects, and in most cases these are less than the full package of seven subjects. Therefore their results cannot be analysed in the same way as those for the full-time candidates. The results of these candidates i.e. part time candidates will be analysed in terms of subject performance and an overall pass rate for part-time candidates cannot be calculated. This section will focus on the following analyses:

- (a) National pass rates and pass rate trends over the last four years;
- (b) Analysis of provincial performance;
- (c) Comparison of NSC passes by type of qualification;
- (d) Comparison of NSC passes by gender;
- (e) Analysis of school pass rates with different percentage categories;
- (f) Analysis of subject performance;
- (g) Analysis of school performance by quintile ranking;
- (h) Performance of learners with special needs;
- (i) Analysis of district performance; and
- (j) Subject performance of part-time candidates.

#### 13.1 Overall Results

**Table 13.1.1: Overall performance of candidates in the 2015 NSC examination**

Province	2015		
	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	% Achieved
Eastern Cape	87 090	49 475	56.8
Free State	31 161	25 416	81.6
Gauteng	108 442	91 327	84.2
Kwazulu-Natal	162 658	98 761	60.7
Limpopo	101 575	66 946	65.9
Mpumalanga	54 980	43 229	78.6
North West	33 286	27 118	81.5
Northern Cape	11 623	8 064	69.4
Western Cape	53 721	45 489	84.7
<b>National</b>	<b>644 536</b>	<b>455 825</b>	<b>70.7</b>

The overall achievement rate for 2015 is **70.7%**. This is a decrease of **5.1%** percentage points from the 2014 pass rate. Although there is a decrease it is worth mentioning that the pass rate is still above **70%**.



Figure 13.1.2 : Comparison of NSC performance, 2008 to 2015

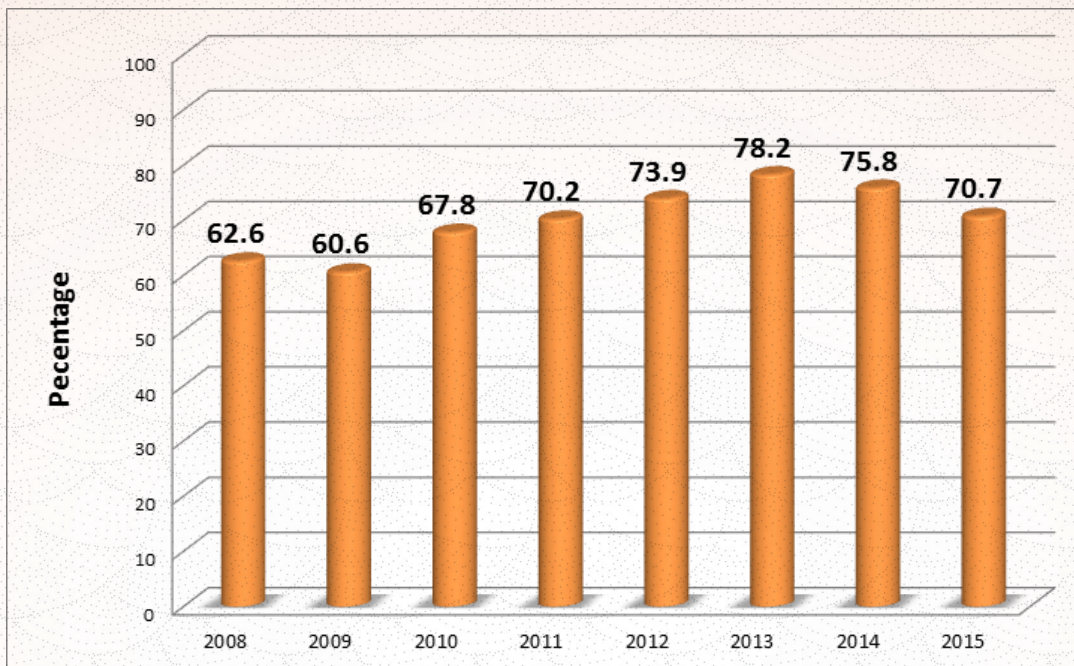


Figure 13.1 shows a significant increase in the pass rate from **60.6%** in 2009 to **78.2 %** in 2013 and then down to **70.7%** in 2015.



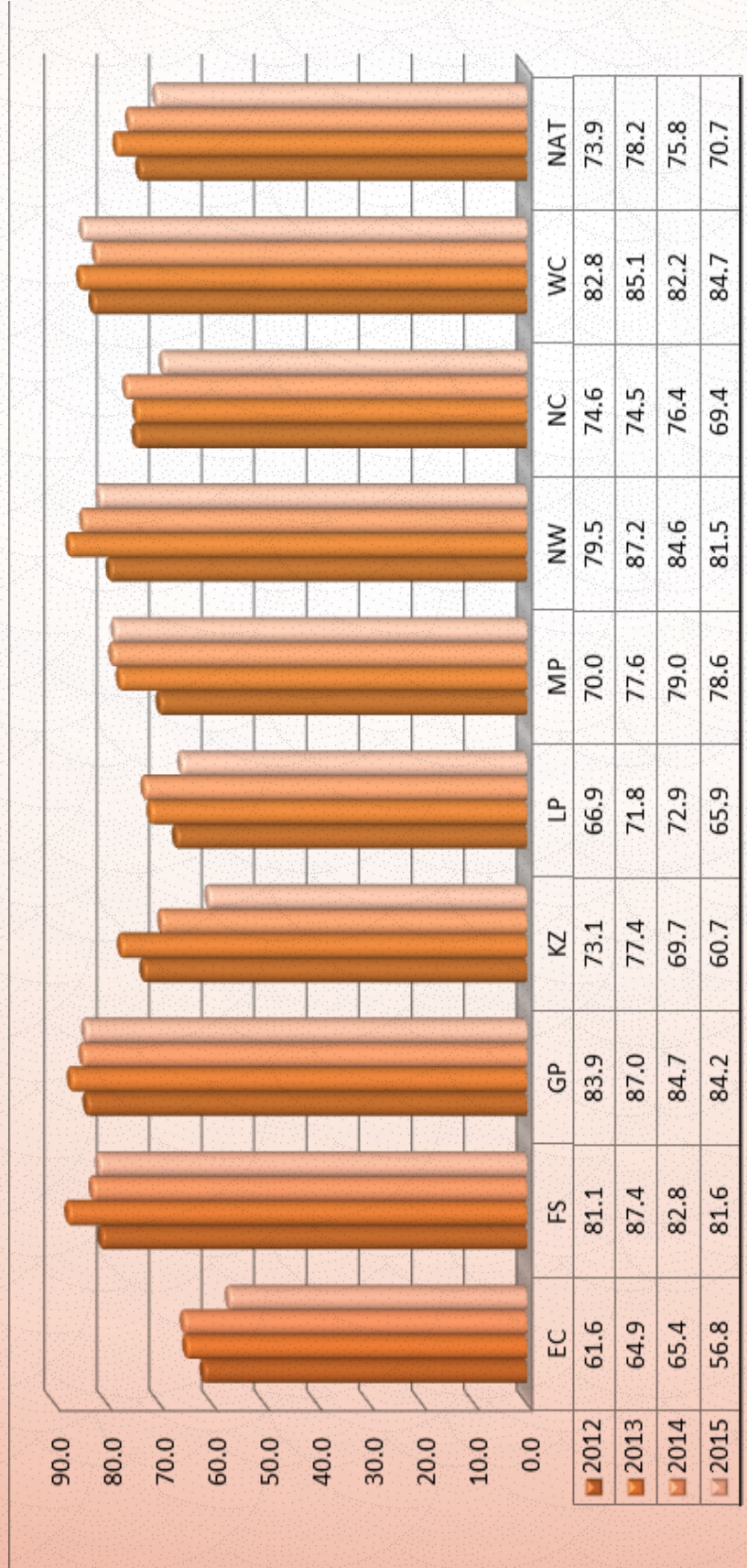
Table 13.2 Comparison of NSC passes by province, 2012 to 2015

Province	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	% Achieved	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	% Achieved	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	% Achieved	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	% Achieved
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	63 989	39 443	<b>61.6</b>	72 138	46 840	<b>64.9</b>	66 935	43 777	<b>65.4</b>	87 090	49 475	<b>56.8</b>
<b>Free State</b>	24 265	19 676	<b>81.1</b>	27 105	23 689	<b>87.4</b>	26 440	21 899	<b>82.8</b>	31 161	25 416	<b>81.6</b>
<b>Gauteng</b>	89 627	75 214	<b>83.9</b>	97 897	85 122	<b>87.0</b>	99 478	84 247	<b>84.7</b>	108 442	91 327	<b>84.2</b>
<b>Kwazulu-Natal</b>	127 253	93 003	<b>73.1</b>	145 278	112 403	<b>77.4</b>	139 367	97 144	<b>69.7</b>	162 658	98 761	<b>60.7</b>
<b>Limpopo</b>	77 360	51 745	<b>66.9</b>	82 483	59 184	<b>71.8</b>	72 990	53 179	<b>72.9</b>	101 575	66 946	<b>65.9</b>
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	47 889	33 504	<b>70.0</b>	50 053	38 836	<b>77.6</b>	45 081	35 615	<b>79.0</b>	54 980	43 229	<b>78.6</b>
<b>North West</b>	27 174	21 609	<b>79.5</b>	29 140	25 414	<b>87.2</b>	26 066	22 061	<b>84.6</b>	33 286	27 118	<b>81.5</b>
<b>Northern Cape</b>	8 925	6 661	<b>74.6</b>	10 403	7 749	<b>74.5</b>	8 794	6 715	<b>76.4</b>	11 623	8 064	<b>69.4</b>
<b>Western Cape</b>	44 670	36 974	<b>82.8</b>	47 615	40 542	<b>85.1</b>	47 709	39 237	<b>82.2</b>	53 721	45 489	<b>84.7</b>
<b>National</b>	<b>511 152</b>	<b>377 829</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>562 112</b>	<b>439 779</b>	<b>78.2</b>	<b>532 860</b>	<b>403 874</b>	<b>75.8</b>	<b>644 536</b>	<b>455 825</b>	<b>70.7</b>

The number of candidates who passed the NSC examinations increased from **403 874** in 2014 to **455 825** in 2015. Though the pass rate dropped, it is noteworthy that more learners passed than any other Grade 12 cohort since 2012.



Figure 13.1.2 Comparison of NSC passes by province, 2012 to 2015



Western Cape has the highest pass rate of **84.7**. Provinces that recorded pass rates of above **80%** are, Gauteng, North West, Free State and Western Cape. All Provinces except Western Cape had a decrease ranging from **0.4%** to **9.0%**.



Table 13.1.3 NSC passes by type of qualification, 2015

Province	Total Wrote	Bachelor		Diploma		Higher Certificate		NSC		Total Achieved	% Achieved
		Achieved	% Achieved	Achieved	% Achieved	Achieved	% Achieved	Achieved	% Achieved		
Eastern Cape	87 090	15 291	17.6	20 055	23.0	14 119	16.2	10	0.0	49 475	56.8
Free State	31 161	9 277	29.8	11 026	35.4	5 102	16.4	11	0.0	25 416	81.6
Gauteng	108 442	38 760	35.7	37 375	34.5	15 191	14.0	1	0.0	91 327	84.2
Kwazulu-Natal	162 658	34 751	21.4	39 799	24.5	24 180	14.9	31	0.0	98 761	60.7
Limpopo	101 575	20 992	20.7	25 434	25.0	20 513	20.2	7	0.0	66 946	65.9
Mpumalanga	54 980	13 497	24.5	18 675	34.0	11 046	20.1	11	0.0	43 229	78.6
North West	33 286	8 865	26.6	11 554	34.7	6 699	20.1	0	0.0	27 118	81.5
Northern Cape	11 623	2 451	21.1	3 306	28.4	2 306	19.8	1	0.0	8 064	69.4
Western Cape	53 721	22 379	41.7	16 496	30.7	6 614	12.3	0	0.0	45 489	84.7
<b>National</b>	<b>644 536</b>	<b>166 263</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>183 720</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>105 770</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>455 825</b>	<b>70.7</b>

Of the 644 536 learners who wrote the NSC examination in 2015, **166 263 (25.8%)** qualified for admission to Bachelor studies.



**Table 13.1.4 Comparison of the NSC performance by type of qualification from 2011 to 2015** When comparing the NSC performance by type of qualification.

Province	Year	Total Number Wrote	Bachelor		Diploma		Higher Certificate		NSC		Total Achieved	% Achieved
			Achieved	% Achieved	Achieved	% Achieved	Achieved	% Achieved	Achieved	% Achieved		
Eastern Cape	2011	65 359	10 291	15.7	15 530	23.8	12 102	18.5	74	0.1	37 997	58.1
	2012	63 989	11 246	17.6	16 148	25.2	11 998	18.8	51	0.1	39 443	61.6
	2013	72 138	13 686	19.0	19 179	26.6	13 950	19.3	25	0.0	46 840	64.9
	2014	66 935	13 435	20.1	18 339	27.4	11 958	17.9	45	0.1	43 777	65.4
	2015	87 090	15 291	17.6	20 055	23.0	14 119	16.2	10	0.0	49 475	56.8
Free State	2011	25 932	6 817	26.3	8 371	32.3	4 413	17.0	17	0.1	19 618	75.7
	2012	24 265	6 937	28.6	8 553	35.2	4 181	17.2	5	0.0	19 676	81.1
	2013	27 105	8 961	33.1	10 089	37.2	4 636	17.1	3	0.0	23 689	87.4
	2014	26 440	7 987	30.2	9 754	36.9	4 107	15.5	51	0.2	21 899	82.8
	2015	31 161	9 277	29.8	11 026	35.4	5 102	16.4	11	0.0	25 416	81.6
Gauteng	2011	85 367	30 037	35.2	27 776	32.5	11 394	13.3	9	0.0	69 216	81.1
	2012	89 627	32 449	36.2	30 422	33.9	12 335	13.8	8	0.0	75 214	83.9
	2013	97 897	38 104	38.9	33 716	34.4	13 295	13.6	7	0.0	85 122	87.0
	2014	99 478	36 843	37.0	35 034	35.2	12 295	12.4	75	0.1	84 247	84.7
	2015	108 442	38 760	35.7	37 375	34.5	15 191	14.0	1	0.0	91 327	84.2
Kwazulu-Natal	2011	122 126	27 397	22.4	34 190	28.0	21 331	17.5	283	0.2	83 201	68.1
	2012	127 253	34 779	27.3	36 841	29.0	21 274	16.7	109	0.1	93 003	73.1
	2013	145 278	47 202	32.5	42 760	29.4	22 328	15.4	113	0.1	112 403	77.4
	2014	139 367	35 724	25.6	39 751	28.5	21 544	15.5	125	0.1	97 144	69.7
	2015	162 658	34 751	21.4	39 799	24.5	24 180	14.9	31	0.0	98 761	60.7
Limpopo	2011	73 731	12 946	17.6	18 868	25.6	15 253	20.7	24	0.0	47 091	63.9
	2012	77 360	15 324	19.8	20 103	26.0	16 301	21.1	17	0.0	51 745	66.9
	2013	82 483	18 781	22.8	22 694	27.5	17 695	21.5	14	0.0	59 184	71.8
	2014	72 990	16 325	22.4	20 927	28.7	15 912	21.8	15	0.0	53 179	72.9
	2015	101 575	20 992	20.7	25 434	25.0	20 513	20.2	7	0.0	66 946	65.9

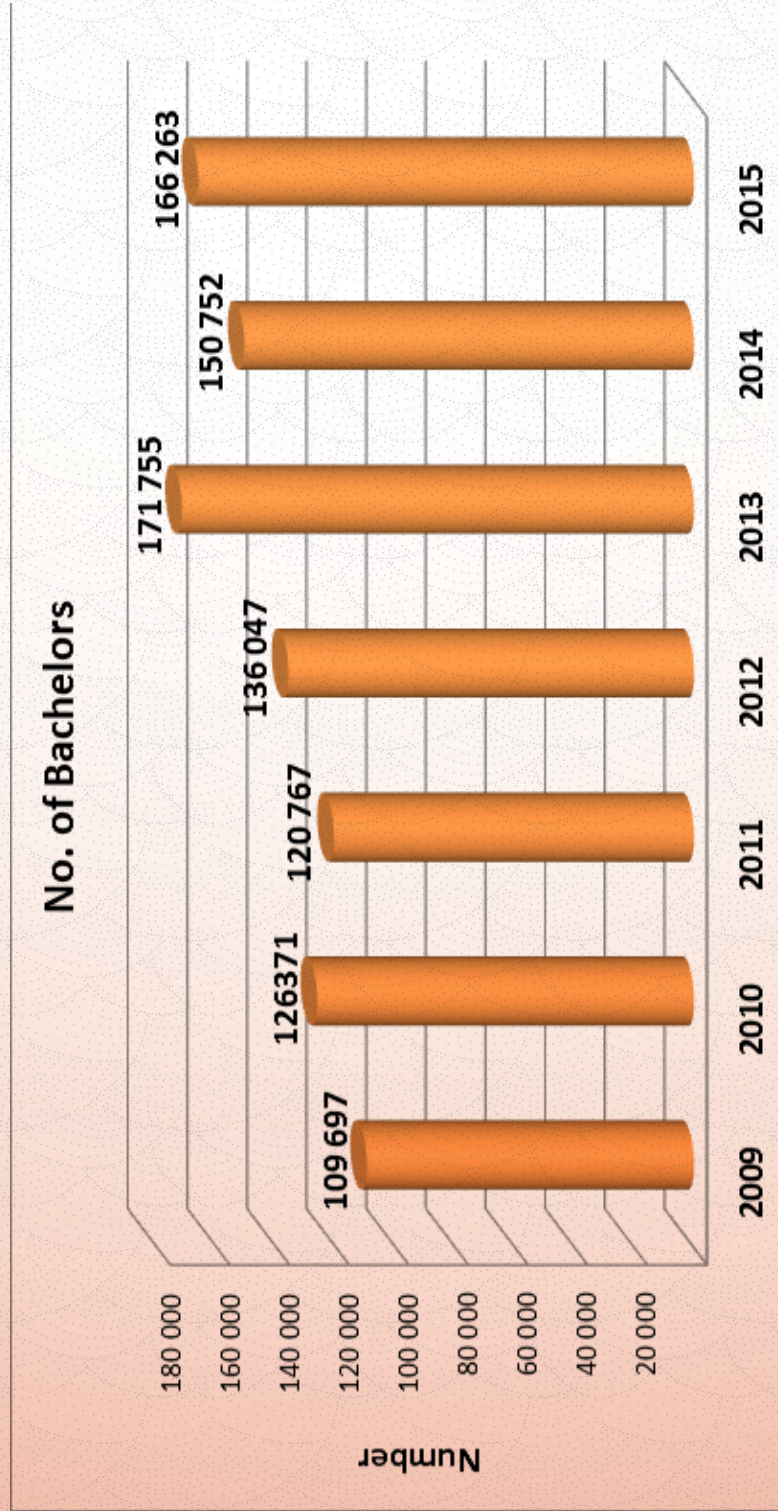


Mpumalanga	2011	48 135	8 866	18.4	13 195	27.4	9 072	18.8	54	0.1	31 187	64.8
	2012	47 889	9 495	19.8	14 277	29.8	9 633	20.1	99	0.2	33 504	70.0
	2013	50 053	12 954	25.9	16 366	32.7	9 507	19.0	9	0.0	38 836	77.6
	2014	45 081	11 229	24.9	15 898	35.3	8 423	18.7	65	0.1	35 615	79.0
	2015	54 980	13 497	24.5	18 675	34.0	11 046	20.1	11	0.0	43 229	78.6
North West	2011	25 364	7 187	28.3	8 373	33.0	4 177	16.5	0		19 737	77.8
	2012	27 174	7 445	27.4	9 151	33.7	5 010	18.4	3	0.0	21 609	79.5
	2013	29 140	10 166	34.9	10 249	35.2	4 998	17.2	1	0.0	25 414	87.2
	2014	26 066	8 509	32.6	9 472	36.3	4 079	15.6	1	0.0	22 061	84.6
	2015	33 286	8 865	26.6	11 554	34.7	6 699	20.1	0		27 118	81.5
Northern Cape	2011	10 116	2 012	19.9	2 871	28.4	2 074	20.5	0		6 957	68.8
	2012	8 925	2 055	23.0	2 787	31.2	1 819	20.4	0		6 661	74.6
	2013	10 403	2 424	23.3	3 207	30.8	2 118	20.4	0		7 749	74.5
	2014	8 794	2 176	24.7	2 941	33.4	1 596	18.1	2	0.0	6 715	76.4
	2015	11 623	2 451	21.1	3 306	28.4	2 306	19.8	1	0.0	8 064	69.4
Western Cape	2011	39 960	15 214	38.1	12 410	31.1	5 480	13.7	6	0.0	33 110	82.9
	2012	44 670	16 317	36.5	14 599	32.7	6 053	13.6	5	0.0	36 974	82.8
	2013	47 615	19 477	40.9	15 032	31.6	6 029	12.7	4	0.0	40 542	85.1
	2014	47 709	18 524	38.8	14 573	30.5	6 108	12.8	32	0.1	39 237	82.2
	2015	53 721	22 379	41.7	16 496	30.7	6 614	12.3	0		45 489	84.7
National	2011	496 090	120 767	24.3	141 584	28.5	85 296	17.2	467	0.1	348 114	70.2
	2012	511 152	136 047	26.6	152 881	29.9	88 604	17.3	297	0.1	377 829	73.9
	2013	562 112	171 755	30.6	173 292	30.8	94 556	16.8	176	0.0	439 779	78.2
	2014	532 860	150 752	28.3	166 689	31.3	86 022	16.1	411	0.1	403 874	75.8
	2015	644 536	166 263	25.8	183 720	28.5	105 770	16.4	72	0.0	455 825	70.7

The table shows that the number of candidates qualifying for Bachelor studies has increased from **120 767** in 2011 to **166 263** in 2015.



Figure 13.1.3 Number of Bachelor passes, 2009 -2015



The number of Bachelor passes increased from 150 752 in 2014 to 166 263 in 2015, an increase of 15 511 compared to 2014.



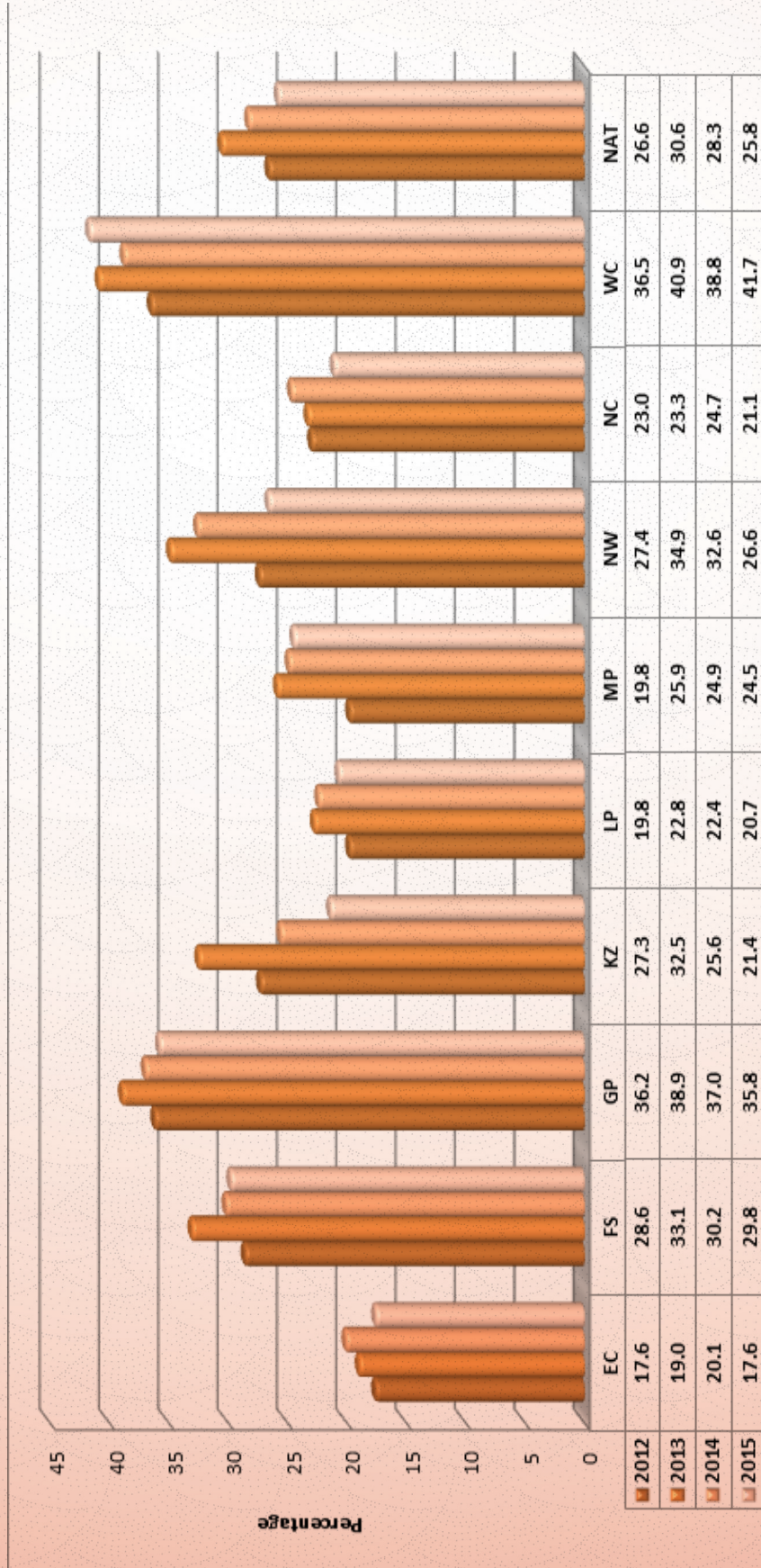
Table 13.1.5 Comparison of Bachelor's passes by province between 2012 and 2015

Province	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Number Wrote	Number Achieved with Bachelor	% Achieved with Bachelor	Number Wrote	Number Achieved with Bachelor	% Achieved with Bachelor	Number Wrote	Number Achieved with Bachelor	% Achieved with Bachelor	Number Wrote	Number Achieved with Bachelor	% Achieved with Bachelor
Eastern Cape	63 989	11 246	17.6	72 138	13 686	19.0	66 923	13 435	20.1	87 090	15 291	17.6
Free State	24 265	6 937	28.6	27 105	8 961	33.1	26 382	7 987	30.3	31 161	9 277	29.8
Gauteng	89 627	32 449	36.2	97 897	38 104	38.9	99 321	36 843	37.1	108 442	38 760	35.7
Kwazulu-Natal	127 253	34 779	27.3	145 278	47 202	32.5	139 365	35 724	25.6	162 658	34 751	21.4
Limpopo	77 360	15 324	19.8	82 483	18 781	22.8	72 973	16 325	22.4	101 575	20 992	20.7
Mpumalanga	47 889	9 495	19.8	50 053	12 954	25.9	45 081	11 229	24.9	54 980	13 497	24.5
North West	27 174	7 445	27.4	29 140	10 166	34.9	26 069	8 509	32.6	33 286	8 865	26.6
Northern Cape	8 925	2 055	23.0	10 403	2 424	23.3	8 794	2 176	24.7	11 623	2 451	21.1
Western Cape	44 670	16 317	36.5	47 615	19 477	40.9	47 679	18 524	38.9	53 721	22 379	41.7
<b>National</b>	<b>511 152</b>	<b>136 047</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>562 112</b>	<b>171 755</b>	<b>30.6</b>	<b>532 587</b>	<b>150 752</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>644 536</b>	<b>166 263</b>	<b>25.8</b>

Western Cape (Province) has the highest percentage of learners who qualify for admission to Bachelor studies at (41.7%); followed by Gauteng at 35.7 %.



Figure 13.1. 4 Comparison of Bachelor's passes by provinces, 2012 - 2015



There has been a decrease compared to 2014 Bachelor passes by 2.5 percentage points even though the number of Bachelor passes increased.



Table 13.1.6 Bachelor passes by Gender, 2014-2015

Province Name	Gender	2014			2015		
		Total Wrote	Total Achieved Bachelors	% Achieved Bachelors	Total Wrote	Total Achieved Bachelors	% Achieved Bachelors
Eastern Cape	Male	30 106	6 104	20.3	39 644	7 307	18.4
	Female	36 829	7 331	19.9	47 446	7 984	16.8
Free State	Male	12 320	3 632	29.5	14 474	4 277	29.5
	Female	14 120	4 355	30.8	16 687	5 000	30.0
Gauteng	Male	44 700	15 686	35.1	48 812	16 738	34.3
	Female	54 778	21 157	38.6	59 630	22 022	36.9
Kwazulu-Natal	Male	64 647	16 194	25.0	76 725	16 061	20.9
	Female	74 720	19 530	26.1	85 933	18 690	21.7
Limpopo	Male	33 737	8 323	24.7	46 013	10 608	23.1
	Female	39 253	8 002	20.4	55 562	10 384	18.7
Mpumalanga	Male	20 511	5 394	26.3	24 682	6 527	26.4
	Female	24 570	5 835	23.7	30 298	6 970	23.0
North West	Male	12 111	4 012	33.1	15 148	4 126	27.2
	Female	13 955	4 497	32.2	18 138	4 739	26.1
Northern Cape	Male	3 983	935	23.5	5 352	1 114	20.8
	Female	4 811	1 241	25.8	6 271	1 337	21.3
Western Cape	Male	20 950	7 767	37.1	23 099	9 478	41.0
	Female	26 759	10 757	40.2	30 622	12 901	42.1
National	Male	243 065	68 047	28.0	293 949	76 236	25.9
	Female	289 795	82 705	28.5	350 587	90 027	25.7
	Both	532 860	150 752	28.3	644 536	166 263	25.8

There is a very small difference of about 0.2% in the percentage of male and female candidates qualifying to register for Bachelor studies.



Table 13.1.7 Comparison of number of NSC passes by province and gender from 2012 to 2015

Province	Gender	Total Wrote				Total Achieved				% Achieved			
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015	2012	2013	2014	2015
Eastern Cape	Male	28 438	32 010	30 106	39 644	18 235	21 911	20 397	23 634	64.1	68.5	67.8	59.6
	Female	35 551	40 128	36 829	47 446	21 208	24 929	23 380	25 841	59.7	62.1	63.5	54.5
Free State	Male	11 428	12 588	12 320	14 474	9 477	11 199	10 404	11 883	82.9	89.0	84.4	82.1
	Female	12 837	14 517	14 120	16 687	10 199	12 490	11 495	13 533	79.5	86.0	81.4	81.1
Gauteng	Male	40 274	43 798	44 700	48 812	34 080	38 326	38 218	41 709	84.6	87.5	85.5	85.4
	Female	49 353	54 099	54 778	59 630	41 134	46 796	46 029	49 618	83.3	86.5	84.0	83.2
Kwazulu-Natal	Male	59 399	65 291	64 647	76 725	43 826	50 958	45 648	47 056	73.8	78.0	70.6	61.3
	Female	67 854	79 987	74 720	85 933	49 177	61 445	51 496	51 705	72.5	76.8	68.9	60.2
Limpopo	Male	35 986	38 300	33 737	46 013	25 525	28 982	25 855	32 196	70.9	75.7	76.6	70.0
	Female	41 374	44 183	39 253	55 562	26 220	30 202	27 324	34 750	63.4	68.4	69.6	62.5
Mpumalanga	Male	22 015	23 044	20 511	24 682	15 989	18 359	16 668	20 048	72.6	79.7	81.3	81.2
	Female	25 874	27 009	24 570	30 298	17 515	20 477	18 947	23 181	67.7	75.8	77.1	76.5
North West	Male	12 819	13 056	12 111	15 148	10 470	11 598	10 575	12 719	81.7	88.8	87.3	84.0
	Female	14 355	16 084	13 955	18 138	11 139	13 816	11 486	14 399	77.6	85.9	82.3	79.4
Northern Cape	Male	4 082	4 756	3 983	5 352	3 119	3 603	3 059	3 749	76.4	75.8	76.8	70.0
	Female	4 843	5 647	4 811	6 271	3 542	4 146	3 656	4 315	73.1	73.4	76.0	68.8
Western Cape	Male	19 361	20 628	20 950	23 099	16 335	17 805	17 433	19 723	84.4	86.3	83.2	85.4
	Female	25 309	26 987	26 759	30 622	20 639	22 737	21 804	25 766	81.5	84.3	81.5	84.1
National	Male	<b>233 802</b>	<b>253 471</b>	<b>243 065</b>	<b>293 949</b>	<b>177 056</b>	<b>202 741</b>	<b>188 257</b>	<b>212 717</b>	<b>75.7</b>	<b>80.0</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>72.4</b>
	Female	<b>277 350</b>	<b>308 641</b>	<b>289 795</b>	<b>350 587</b>	<b>200 773</b>	<b>237 038</b>	<b>215 617</b>	<b>243 108</b>	<b>72.4</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>69.3</b>
	Both	<b>511 152</b>	<b>562 112</b>	<b>532 860</b>	<b>644 536</b>	<b>377 829</b>	<b>439 779</b>	<b>403 874</b>	<b>455 825</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>78.2</b>	<b>75.8</b>	<b>70.7</b>

When comparing overall performance of candidates by gender, the male learners performed better than female learners, in 2015 and that is the case across the years in all Provinces.



Table 13.1.8 Pass rates within different percentage categories, 2014 and 2015

Provinces	Total Number of Schools	0 - 19.9%		20 - 39.9%		40 to 59.9%		60 to 79.9		80 to 100%		Exactly 0%		Exactly 100%			
		2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015		
Eastern Cape	Number	921	924	36	47	139	229	228	276	289	209	229	163	4	2	38	37
	%			3.9	5.1	15.1	24.8	24.8	29.9	31.4	22.6	24.9	17.6	0.4	0.2	4.1	4.0
Free State	Number	327	328	0	2	3	0	22	23	78	82	224	221	0	0	50	46
	%			0.0	0.6	0.9	0.0	6.7	7.0	23.9	25.0	68.5	67.4	0.0	0.0	15.3	14.0
Gauteng	Number	835	853	1	6	13	8	50	45	200	212	571	582	1	6	115	144
	%			0.1	0.7	1.6	0.9	6.0	5.3	24.0	24.9	68.4	68.2	0.1	0.7	13.8	16.9
Kwazulu-Natal	Number	1 731	1 748	87	149	196	345	353	450	523	415	572	389	8	12	93	66
	%			5.0	8.5	11.3	19.7	20.4	25.7	30.2	23.7	33.0	22.3	0.5	0.7	5.4	3.8
Limpopo	Number	1 417	1 414	25	32	91	169	261	369	496	475	544	369	3	1	55	29
	%			1.8	2.3	6.4	12.0	18.4	26.1	35.0	33.6	38.4	26.1	0.2	0.1	3.9	2.1
Mpumalanga	Number	543	545	0	2	17	13	67	55	172	167	287	308	0	0	27	24
	%			0.0	0.4	3.1	2.4	12.3	10.1	31.7	30.6	52.9	56.5	0.0	0.0	5.0	4.4
North West	Number	374	383	1	3	5	2	21	32	102	115	245	231	0	0	48	26
	%			0.3	0.8	1.3	0.5	5.6	8.4	27.3	30.0	65.5	60.3	0.0	0.0	12.8	6.8
Northern Cape	Number	125	135	0	1	2	6	20	33	44	39	59	56	0	1	13	9
	%			0.0	0.7	1.6	4.4	16.0	24.4	35.2	28.9	47.2	41.5	0.0	0.7	10.4	6.7
Western Cape	Number	431	442	0	1	3	3	31	27	125	99	272	312	0	0	76	89
	%			0.0	0.2	0.7	0.7	7.2	6.1	29.0	22.4	63.1	70.6	0.0	0.0	17.6	20.1
National	Number	6 704	6 772	150	243	469	775	1 053	1 310	2 029	1 813	3 003	2 631	16	22	515	470
	%			2.2	3.6	7.0	11.4	15.7	19.3	30.3	26.8	44.8	38.9	0.2	0.3	7.7	6.9

A total of **38.9%** of Schools Performed between **80% and 100%**, a decrease of **5.9%** compared to 2014. Western Cape and Mpumalanga are the only two provinces showing an increase in performance in this category.



**Table 13.1.9 School performance categorised by quintiles**

Quintiles	No of Schools					Total
	0 - 19.9%	20 - 39.9%	40 - 59.9%	60 - 79.9%	80 - 100%	
Quintile 1	126	284	418	489	463	1 780
Quintile 2	61	229	405	522	423	1 640
Quintile 3	36	209	334	453	391	1 423
Quintile 4	1	24	63	169	330	587
Quintile 5	0	3	31	94	574	702
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>1 251</b>	<b>1 727</b>	<b>2 181</b>	<b>6 132</b>

Please note: Independent and special schools are not classified in quintiles.

**Table 13.1.10 Number of candidates in schools per percentage interval per Quintile (Q), 2014 – 2015**

% Interval (Schools)	2014										2015				
	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Total	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Total			
	No with 0 to 19.9%	2 778	2 064	593	217	0	5 652	7 435	3 333	2 239	139	0	13 146		
No with 20 to 39.9%	9 022	5 651	6 767	1 176	1 040	23 656	20 481	16 633	17 770	3 547	441	58 872			
No with 40 to 59.9%	20 639	18 802	17 240	6 702	2 090	65 473	33 651	35 226	36 040	8 668	4 055	117 640			
No with 60 to 79.9%	31 918	38 195	37 761	16 998	12 134	137 006	41 712	47 447	55 412	25 114	11 260	180 945			
No with 80 to 100%	29 993	35 739	32 401	30 063	55 938	184 134	35 848	39 611	44 520	39 910	84 826	244 715			
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>94 350</b>	<b>100 451</b>	<b>94 762</b>	<b>55 156</b>	<b>71 202</b>	<b>415 921</b>	<b>139 127</b>	<b>142 250</b>	<b>155 981</b>	<b>77 378</b>	<b>100 582</b>	<b>615 318</b>			



Table 13.1.11 Learners categorized by quintiles and type of qualification, 2014 – 2015

Achievement Status	2014 – No of learners					2015 – No of learners						
	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Totals	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 5	Totals
Achieved Bachelor	16 486	19 677	20 568	15 831	34 843	150 752	23 407	26 098	30 533	21 813	51 997	166 263
Achieved Diploma	26 636	30 018	28 718	19 103	22 070	166 689	35 346	38 228	44 265	26 253	31 057	183 720
Achieved H-Certificate	19 648	20 272	17 208	8 166	6 288	86 022	26 874	27 490	28 052	12 013	8 235	105 770
Achieved NSC	167	72	35	9	5	411	36	17	10	5	1	72
<b>Total Achieved</b>	<b>62 937</b>	<b>70 039</b>	<b>66 529</b>	<b>43 109</b>	<b>63 206</b>	<b>403 874</b>	<b>85 663</b>	<b>91 833</b>	<b>102 860</b>	<b>60 084</b>	<b>91 290</b>	<b>455 825</b>

Please note: Q99 refers to schools that are not classified into quintiles.



### 13.2 National Subject analysis

Table 13.2.1 Candidates' performance in Home Languages (official languages), 2012 – 2015

Subject Name (Home Languages)	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Total Wrote	Achieved 40% & Above	% Achieved	Total Wrote	Achieved 40% & Above	% Achieved	Total Wrote	Achieved 40% & Above	% Achieved	Total Wrote	Achieved 40% & Above	% Achieved
Afrikaans Home Language	48 471	47 650	98.3	50,101	49 058	97.9	48,885	47,363	96.9	53,799	52 366	97.3
English Home Language	95 338	90 821	95.3	110 243	106 715	96.8	105,480	100,279	95.1	111,785	104 875	93.8
IsiNdebele Home Language	3 525	3 523	99.9	4 287	4 281	99.9	3,363	3,360	99.9	4,869	4 861	99.8
IsiXhosa Home Language	72 215	72 112	99.9	79,307	79 193	99.9	74,925	74,788	99.8	95,694	95 356	99.6
IsiZulu Home Language	125 325	124 617	99.4	136 302	135 869	99.7	138,004	137,194	99.4	166,403	165 487	99.4
Sepedi Home Language	60 296	60 081	99.6	65 207	64 960	99.6	58,042	57,643	99.3	79,021	78 508	99.4
Sesotho Home Language	25 151	25 066	99.7	28 243	28 165	99.7	27,794	27,657	99.5	36,555	36 351	99.4
Setswana Home Language	36 698	36 600	99.7	40 719	40 603	99.7	35,939	35,863	99.8	47,206	47 020	99.6
SiSwati Home Language	16 214	16 101	99.3	16 586	16 467	99.3	15,545	15,478	99.6	18,589	18 474	99.4
Tshivenda Home Language	13 607	13 595	99.9	14 914	14 912	100.0	13,952	13,947	100.0	20,301	20 281	99.9
Xitsonga Home Language	20 964	20 797	99.2	21 984	21 882	99.5	19,577	19,471	99.5	24,473	24 349	99.5

Generally, candidates performed well in Home Languages.



Table 13.2.2 Candidates' performance in First Additional Language, 2012 to 2015

Subject Name (1st Additional Languages)	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Total Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved
Afrikaans First Additional Language	75,843	69,880	92.1	87,930	81,662	92.9	82,649	63,383	76.7	86,987	79,882	91.8
English First Additional Language	419,263	410,255	97.9	454,666	449,420	98.8	432,933	358,373	82.8	543,941	528,157	97.1
IsiNdebele First Additional Language	17	17	100.0	23	23	100.0	26	26	100.0	32	32	100.0
IsiXhosa First Additional Language	1,774	1,772	99.9	1,880	1,875	99.7	2,043	2,027	99.2	2,369	2,362	99.7
IsiZulu First Additional Language	12,829	12,768	99.5	15,345	15,254	99.4	15,381	15,215	98.9	17,204	17,069	99.2
Sepedi First Additional Language	397	393	99.0	387	385	99.5	421	411	97.6	545	539	98.9
Sesotho First Additional Language	533	533	100.0	652	648	99.4	702	690	98.3	618	616	99.7
Setswana First Additional Language	244	244	100.0	217	216	99.5	217	216	99.5	162	162	100.0
SiSwati First Additional Language	314	314	100.0	326	326	100.0	362	353	97.5	366	359	98.1
Tshivenda First Additional Language	18	18	100.0	24	24	100.0	21	21	100.0	20	20	100.0
Xitsonga First Additional Language	21	21	100.0	19	19	100.0	13	11	84.6	24	24	100.0

Candidates' performance in all First Additional Languages is **97%** and above except for Afrikaans where performance is **91.8%**.



**Table 13.2.3 Candidates' performance at 30% and above in selected subjects, 2012 – 2015**

Subjects (Full-Time)	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved
Accounting	134 978	88 508	65.6	145 427	95 520	65.7	125 987	85 681	68.0	140 474	83 747	59.6
Agricultural Science	78 148	57 571	73.7	83 437	67 308	80.7	78 063	64 486	82.6	104 251	80 125	76.9
Business Studies	195 507	151 237	77.4	218 914	179 329	81.9	207 659	161 723	77.9	247 822	187 485	75.7
Economics	134 369	97 842	72.8	150 114	110 869	73.9	137 478	94 779	68.9	165 642	112 922	68.2
Geography	213 735	162 046	75.8	239 657	191 834	80.0	236 051	191 966	81.3	303 985	234 209	77.0
History	94 489	81 265	86.0	109 046	94 982	87.1	115 686	99 823	86.3	154 398	129 643	84.0
Life Orientation	522 132	520 502	99.7	569 530	568 311	99.8	542 956	540 810	99.6	660 202	658 308	99.7
Life Sciences	278 412	193 593	69.5	301 718	222 374	73.7	284 298	209 783	73.8	348 076	245 164	70.4
Mathematical Literacy	291 341	254 611	87.4	324 097	282 270	87.1	312 054	262 495	84.1	388 845	277 594	71.4
Mathematics	225 874	121 970	54.0	241 509	142 666	59.1	225 458	120 523	53.5	263 903	129 481	49.1
Physical Science	179 194	109 918	61.3	184 383	124 206	67.4	167 997	103 348	61.5	193 189	113 121	58.6

There has been a decrease in all subjects which is in line with the general decline in performance



Table 13.2.4 Candidates' performance in all non-language subjects, 2012 - 2015

Subjects	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved at 30% & above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved at 30% & above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved at 30% & above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved at 30% & above	% Achieved
Accounting	134,978	88,508	65.6	145,427	95,520	65.7	125,987	85,681	68.0	140,474	83,747	59.6
Agricultural Management Practices	1,223	1,223	100.0	1,417	1,412	99.6	1,615	1,599	99.0	2,040	2,011	98.6
Agricultural Sciences	78,148	57,571	73.7	83,437	67,308	80.7	78,063	64,486	82.6	104,251	80,125	76.9
Agricultural Technology	675	670	99.3	688	687	99.9	705	700	99.3	777	763	98.2
Business Studies	195,507	151,237	77.4	218,914	179,329	81.9	207,659	161,723	77.9	247,822	187,485	75.7
Civil Technology	8,759	8,597	98.2	9,073	8,849	97.5	9,210	8,961	97.3	10,446	10,085	96.5
Computer Applications Technology	44,555	41,183	92.4	44,848	41,348	92.2	40,910	37,379	91.4	41,026	36,778	89.6
Consumer Studies	36,001	34,797	96.7	39,504	39,231	99.3	38,511	37,820	98.2	46,063	45,019	97.7
Dance Studies	435	422	97.0	449	443	98.7	544	543	99.8	528	525	99.4
Design	2,106	2,043	97.0	2,178	2,153	98.9	2,135	2,097	98.2	2,170	2,132	98.2
Dramatic Arts	6,813	6,763	99.3	7,695	7,666	99.6	8,214	8,149	99.2	8,735	8,597	98.4
Economics	134,369	97,842	72.8	150,114	110,869	73.9	137,478	94,779	68.9	165,642	112,922	68.2
Electrical Technology	5,010	4,725	94.3	5,124	4,988	97.3	5,332	5,143	96.5	6,092	5,780	94.9
Engineering Graphics and Design	25,070	23,812	95.0	27,027	26,076	96.5	26,540	24,934	93.9	29,014	27,706	95.5
Geography	213,735	162,046	75.8	239,657	191,834	80.0	236,051	191,966	81.3	303,985	234,209	77.0
History	94,489	81,265	86.0	109,046	94,982	87.1	115,686	99,823	86.3	154,398	129,643	84.0
Hospitality Studies	8,378	8,319	99.3	8,778	8,686	99.0	8,428	8,298	98.5	8,902	8,769	98.5
Information Technology	4,428	4,141	93.5	4,874	4,651	95.4	4,820	4,464	92.6	4,326	4,028	93.1
Life Orientation	522,132	520,502	99.7	569,530	568,311	99.8	542,956	540,810	99.6	660,202	658,308	99.7
Life Sciences	278,412	193,593	69.5	301,718	222,374	73.7	284,298	209,783	73.8	348,076	245,164	70.4
Mathematical Literacy	291,341	254,611	87.4	324,097	282,270	87.1	312,054	262,495	84.1	388,845	277,594	71.4
Mathematics	225,874	121,970	54.0	241,509	142,666	59.1	225,458	120,523	53.5	263,903	129,481	49.1
Mechanical Technology	5,801	5,484	94.5	6,223	5,891	94.7	6,375	6,108	95.8	6,950	6,523	93.9
Music	1,679	1,618	96.4	1,762	1,702	96.6	1,744	1,659	95.1	1,874	1,769	94.4
Physical Sciences	179,194	109,918	61.3	184,383	124,206	67.4	167,997	103,348	61.5	193,189	113,121	58.6
Religion Studies	4,212	4,023	95.5	5,241	4,810	91.8	5,802	5,325	91.8	7,037	6,330	90.0
Tourism	93,254	90,962	97.5	110,565	106,449	96.3	116,179	113,251	97.5	144,643	139,447	96.4
Visual Arts	6,409	6,280	98.0	6,871	6,755	98.3	6,892	6,814	98.9	6,611	6,459	97.7

Improvements are noted in Engineering Graphics and Design and Information Technology



Table 13.2.5 Candidates' performance in Mathematics and Physical Science by gender, 2012 – 2015

Years	Subject			Mathematics			Physical Science		
	Gender	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total		
2012	Total Wrote	122 620	103 254	225 874	94 279	84 915	179 194		
	Achieved at 30% & above	60 322	61 648	121 970	55 575	54 343	109 918		
	% Achieved	<b>49.2</b>	<b>59.7</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>58.9</b>	<b>64.0</b>	<b>61.3</b>		
2013	Total Wrote	132 784	108 725	241 509	97 995	86 388	184 383		
	Achieved at 30% & above	72 069	70 597	142 666	64 376	59 830	124 206		
	% Achieved	<b>54.3</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>65.7</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>67.4</b>		
2014	Total Wrote	123 045	102 413	225 458	88 729	79 268	167 997		
	Achieved at 30% & above	59 814	60 709	120 523	52 449	50 899	103 348		
	% Achieved	<b>48.6</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>61.5</b>		
2015	Total Wrote	144 405	119 498	263 903	102 983	90 206	193 189		
	Achieved at 30% & above	63 898	65 583	129 481	58 036	55 085	113 121		
	% Achieved	<b>44.2</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>56.4</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>58.6</b>		

Performance of male and female candidates in both Mathematics and Physical Science has declined in 2015 compared to previous years



Table 13.2.6 Candidates' performance in Mathematics by province and level of achievement, 2013 - 2015

Province	Mathematics														
	Total Wrote			Total achieved at 30% and above			% achieved at 30% and above			Total achieved at 40% and above			% achieved at 40% and above		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Eastern Cape	36,274	31,091	39,084	15,753	13,054	14,597	43.4	42.0	37.3	9,564	7,812	8,526	26.4	25.1	21.8
Free State	9,629	10,135	11,066	6,847	6,665	7,646	71.1	65.8	69.1	4,794	4,506	5,089	49.8	44.5	46.0
Gauteng	36,908	35,572	37,053	27,150	24,661	25,789	73.6	69.3	69.6	20,088	18,035	18,450	54.4	50.7	49.8
Kwazulu-Natal	73,019	71,634	85,057	39,151	29,188	28,265	53.6	40.7	33.2	25,841	17,405	17,025	35.4	24.3	20.0
Limpopo	35,558	32,122	40,673	21,088	18,265	21,188	59.3	56.9	52.1	14,224	11,485	13,185	40.0	35.8	32.4
Mpumalanga	19,400	17,767	20,596	11,301	10,050	11,441	58.3	56.6	55.5	7,719	6,330	7,423	39.8	35.6	36.0
North West	10,906	9,478	10,761	7,350	5,846	6,416	67.4	61.7	59.6	4,889	3,819	4,016	44.8	40.3	37.3
Northern Cape	3,139	2,411	3,054	1,810	1,529	1,742	57.7	63.4	57.0	1,198	1,022	1,101	38.2	42.4	36.1
Western Cape	16,676	15,248	16,559	12,216	11,265	12,397	73.3	73.9	74.9	9,473	8,636	9,482	56.8	56.6	57.3
National	241 509	225 458	263,903	142 666	120 523	129,481	59.1	53.5	49.1	97 790	79 050	84,297	40.5	35.1	31.9

The performance of Mathematics candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 59.1% in 2013 to 49.1% in 2015. Similarly, Mathematics candidates who passed at 40% and above decreased from 40.5% in 2013 to 31.9% in 2015.



Table 13.2.7: Candidate performance in Physical Sciences, by province and level of achievement, 2013 – 2015

Province	Physical Science														
	Total Wrote			Total achieved at 30% and above			% achieved at 30% and above			Total achieved at 40% and above			% achieved at 40% and above		
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015
Eastern Cape	25 218	21 855	27 749	14 061	11 263	12 731	55.8	51.5	45.9	7 534	5 793	6 872	29.9	26.5	24.8
Free State	8 288	8 641	9 628	6 280	5 959	6 709	75.8	69.0	69.7	4 047	3 699	4 172	48.8	42.8	43.3
Gauteng	29 836	29 093	30 548	22 557	19 881	20 690	75.6	68.3	67.7	15 750	13 353	14 076	52.8	45.9	46.1
Kwazulu-Natal	50 332	45 143	50 163	33 442	25 177	25 988	66.4	55.8	51.8	20 875	14 077	15 126	41.5	31.2	30.2
Limpopo	30 758	26 691	33 680	20 180	17 801	20 063	65.6	66.7	59.6	12 233	10 384	11 928	39.8	38.9	35.4
Mpumalanga	16 952	15 210	17 528	11 104	8 921	10 981	65.5	58.7	62.6	6 958	5 234	6 756	41.0	34.4	38.5
North West	8 978	8 191	9 090	6 686	5 243	5 639	74.5	64.0	62.0	4 182	3 012	3 265	46.6	36.8	35.9
Northern Cape	2 540	2 082	2 777	1 563	1 258	1 507	61.5	60.4	54.3	916	765	920	36.1	36.7	33.1
Western Cape	11 481	11 091	12 026	8 333	7 845	8 813	72.6	70.7	73.3	6 182	5 715	6 584	53.8	51.5	54.7
<b>National</b>	<b>184 383</b>	<b>167 997</b>	<b>193 189</b>	<b>124 206</b>	<b>103 348</b>	<b>113 121</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>61.5</b>	<b>58.6</b>	<b>78 677</b>	<b>62 032</b>	<b>69 699</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>36.1</b>

The performance of Physical Science candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 67.4% in 2013 to 58.6% in 2015. Similarly, Physical Science candidates who passed at 40% and above decreased from 42.7% in 2013 to 36.1% in 2015.



Table 13.2.8: Candidates' performance in Accounting by province and level of achievement, 2014 – 2015

Province	Accounting											
	2014						2015					
	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%		
Eastern Cape	15 482	9 508	5 831	61.4	37.7	18 021	9 497	5 271	52.7	29.2		
Free State	6 620	5 277	3 730	79.7	56.3	7 268	5 307	3 442	73.0	47.4		
Gauteng	23 777	17 236	12 210	72.5	51.4	24 203	17 133	12 013	70.8	49.6		
Kwazulu-Natal	37 968	23 901	14 866	63.0	39.2	39 671	20 430	11 627	51.5	29.3		
Limpopo	17 320	12 076	7 251	69.7	41.9	22 945	12 679	6 737	55.3	29.4		
Mpumalanga	9 205	6 193	3 854	67.3	41.9	10 116	6 461	3 886	63.9	38.4		
North West	4 337	3 272	2 208	75.4	50.9	6 019	3 701	2 000	61.5	33.2		
Northern Cape	1 726	1 134	703	65.7	40.7	1 799	999	613	55.5	34.1		
Western Cape	9 552	7 084	5 184	74.2	54.3	10 432	7 540	5 317	72.3	51.0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>125 987</b>	<b>85 681</b>	<b>55 837</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>140 474</b>	<b>83 747</b>	<b>50 906</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>36.2</b>		

The performance of Accounting candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 68.0% in 2014 to 59.6% in 2015. This is expected as the decline is consistent with the decline in the performance in general.



Table 13.2.9: Candidates' performance in Business Studies by province and level of achievement, 2014 – 2015

Province	Business Studies									
	2014					2015				
	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%
Eastern Cape	23 581	17 420	11 248	73.9	47.7	29 344	20 212	12 776	68.9	43.5
Free State	11 009	8 807	5 970	80.0	54.2	13 518	11 021	7 687	81.5	56.9
Gauteng	44 936	40 126	31 199	89.3	69.4	48 925	43 488	32 448	88.9	66.3
KwaZulu-Natal	60 157	43 155	29 017	71.7	48.2	69 615	48 097	33 032	69.1	47.4
Limpopo	20 717	13 892	7 889	67.1	38.1	28 300	17 765	9 465	62.8	33.4
Mpumalanga	16 265	12 671	8 021	77.9	49.3	19 868	15 024	9 103	75.6	45.8
North West	7 814	6 749	4 818	86.4	61.7	11 270	10 062	7 212	89.3	64.0
Northern Cape	3 251	2 528	1 519	77.8	46.7	4 185	2 974	1 794	71.1	42.9
Western Cape	19 929	16 375	12 062	82.2	60.5	22 797	18 842	13 936	82.7	61.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>207 659</b>	<b>161 723</b>	<b>111 743</b>	<b>77.9</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>247 822</b>	<b>187 485</b>	<b>127 453</b>	<b>75.7</b>	<b>51.4</b>

The performance of Business Studies candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 77.9% in 2014 to 75.7% in 2015.



Table 13.2.10: Candidates' performance in Economics by province and level of achievement, 2014 – 2015

Province	Economics									
	2014			2015						
	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	18 353	10 945	5 239	59.6	28.5	23 020	12 419	6 117	53.9	26.6
<b>Free State</b>	6 822	4 383	2 103	64.2	30.8	8 384	5 511	2 728	65.7	32.5
<b>Gauteng</b>	27 336	21 232	12 871	77.7	47.1	29 015	23 748	15 223	81.8	52.5
<b>Kwazulu-Natal</b>	36 230	25 241	14 781	69.7	40.8	41 626	25 291	13 746	60.8	33.0
<b>Limpopo</b>	22 002	14 334	7 614	65.1	34.6	30 742	21 036	12 128	68.4	39.5
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	11 579	6 524	2 849	56.3	24.6	13 630	9 696	5 216	71.1	38.3
<b>North West</b>	4 627	3 919	2 560	84.7	55.3	7 348	5 999	3 539	81.6	48.2
<b>Northern Cape</b>	1 513	1 137	645	75.1	42.6	1 894	1 351	798	71.3	42.1
<b>Western Cape</b>	9 016	7 064	4 632	78.3	51.4	9 983	7 871	5 285	78.8	52.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>137 478</b>	<b>94 779</b>	<b>53 294</b>	<b>68.9</b>	<b>38.8</b>	<b>165 642</b>	<b>112 922</b>	<b>64 780</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>39.1</b>

The performance of Economics candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased marginally from 68.9% in 2014 to 68.2% in 2015. However there is an increase in the number of candidates that passed at 40%.



Table 13.2.11: Candidates' performance in Geography by province and level of achievement, 2014 – 2015

Province	Geography									
	2014			2015						
	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%
Eastern Cape	26 379	19 702	11 747	74.7	44.5	35 312	23 610	14 000	66.9	39.6
Free State	9 409	8 183	5 549	87.0	59.0	12 847	10 727	7 453	83.5	58.0
Gauteng	41 090	36 341	26 459	88.4	64.4	49 348	42 289	29 139	85.7	59.0
KwaZulu-Natal	64 057	49 303	33 238	77.0	51.9	78 898	54 674	34 430	69.3	43.6
Limpopo	37 603	30 720	19 124	81.7	50.9	55 617	42 776	28 348	76.9	51.0
Mpumalanga	20 259	16 923	11 355	83.5	56.0	25 643	21 367	14 588	83.3	56.9
North West	14 270	12 328	7 905	86.4	55.4	18 413	15 162	9 026	82.3	49.0
Northern Cape	4 366	3 115	1 462	71.3	33.5	6 252	4 794	2 723	76.7	43.6
Western Cape	18 618	15 351	10 519	82.5	56.5	21 655	18 810	13 505	86.9	62.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>236 051</b>	<b>191 966</b>	<b>127 358</b>	<b>81.3</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>303 985</b>	<b>234 209</b>	<b>153 212</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>50.4</b>

The performance of Geography candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 81.3% in 2014 to 77.0% in 2015.



Table 13.2.12: Candidates' performance in History by province and level of achievement, 2014– 2015

Province	History									
	2014			2015						
	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%
Eastern Cape	15 877	12 359	8 271	77.8	52.1	22 827	16 546	10 828	72.5	47.4
Free State	4 062	3 629	2 917	89.3	71.8	6 073	5 084	3 904	83.7	64.3
Gauteng	25 319	22 684	17 852	89.6	70.5	30 508	28 281	23 214	92.7	76.1
KwaZulu-Natal	31 224	28 006	23 121	89.7	74.0	39 930	31 766	23 048	79.6	57.7
Limpopo	11 202	8 395	5 261	74.9	47.0	18 478	14 301	9 444	77.4	51.1
Mpumalanga	5 386	4 958	4 279	92.1	79.4	7 190	6 360	5 059	88.5	70.4
North West	5 272	4 988	4 190	94.6	79.5	7 118	6 465	4 862	90.8	68.3
Northern Cape	2 525	2 175	1 479	86.1	58.6	3 945	3 426	2 227	86.8	56.5
Western Cape	14 819	12 629	9 534	85.2	64.3	18 329	17 414	15 060	95.0	82.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>115 686</b>	<b>99 823</b>	<b>76 904</b>	<b>86.3</b>	<b>66.5</b>	<b>154 398</b>	<b>129 643</b>	<b>97 646</b>	<b>84.0</b>	<b>63.2</b>

The performance of History candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 86.3% in 2014 to 84% in 2015.



Table 13.2.13: Candidates' performance in Life Sciences by province and level of achievement, 2014 – 2015

Province	Life Science									
	2014					2015				
	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%
Eastern Cape	37 564	24 937	15 698	66.4	41.8	50 440	30 183	18 210	59.8	36.1
Free State	12 644	10 347	7 554	81.8	59.7	15 214	12 648	9 283	83.1	61.0
Gauteng	45 980	37 043	26 762	80.6	58.2	50 265	40 909	29 702	81.4	59.1
KwaZulu-Natal	74 496	54 184	35 850	72.7	48.1	86 927	56 718	36 570	65.2	42.1
Limpopo	44 889	32 187	19 650	71.7	43.8	62 531	42 817	25 933	68.5	41.5
Mpumalanga	23 953	18 459	11 875	77.1	49.6	29 513	23 006	14 996	78.0	50.8
North West	14 956	11 432	7 353	76.4	49.2	18 081	13 399	8 113	74.1	44.9
Northern Cape	5 331	3 384	1 946	63.5	36.5	7 180	4 105	2 211	57.2	30.8
Western Cape	24 485	17 810	12 421	72.7	50.7	27 925	21 379	15 186	76.6	54.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>284 298</b>	<b>209 783</b>	<b>139 109</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>48.9</b>	<b>348 076</b>	<b>245 164</b>	<b>160 204</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>46.0</b>

The performance of Life Science candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 73.8% in 2014 to 70.4% in 2015. There is also a decrease in the performance of candidates that passed at 40% from 48.9% in 2014 to 46.0% in 2015.



Table 13.2.14: Candidates' performance in Mathematical Literacy by province and level of achievement, 2014 – 2015

Province	Mathematical Literacy									
	2014					2015				
	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%	Wrote	No. Pass @ 30%	No. Pass @ 40%	% Pass @ 30%	% Pass @ 40%
Eastern Cape	36 467	28 120	17 666	77.1	48.4	48 877	27 193	14 278	55.6	29.2
Free State	16 462	14 904	11 327	90.5	68.8	21 933	17 068	11 368	77.8	51.8
Gauteng	64 586	60 502	49 198	93.7	76.2	72 765	62 474	45 629	85.9	62.7
KwaZulu-Natal	70 070	53 154	34 110	75.9	48.7	79 549	45 871	24 818	57.7	31.2
Limpopo	41 044	34 132	21 240	83.2	51.7	61 282	41 807	21 981	68.2	35.9
Mpumalanga	27 438	22 060	14 726	80.4	53.7	34 608	25 877	15 218	74.8	44.0
North West	16 703	15 040	10 923	90.0	65.4	22 744	18 830	11 747	82.8	51.6
Northern Cape	6 454	5 802	4 263	89.9	66.1	8 842	6 372	3 659	72.1	41.4
Western Cape	32 830	28 781	22 075	87.7	67.2	38 245	32 102	23 517	83.9	61.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>312 054</b>	<b>262 495</b>	<b>185 528</b>	<b>84.1</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>388 845</b>	<b>277 594</b>	<b>172 215</b>	<b>71.4</b>	<b>44.3</b>

The performance of Mathematical Literacy candidates who passed at 30% and above has decreased from 84.1% in 2014 to 71.4% in 2015.

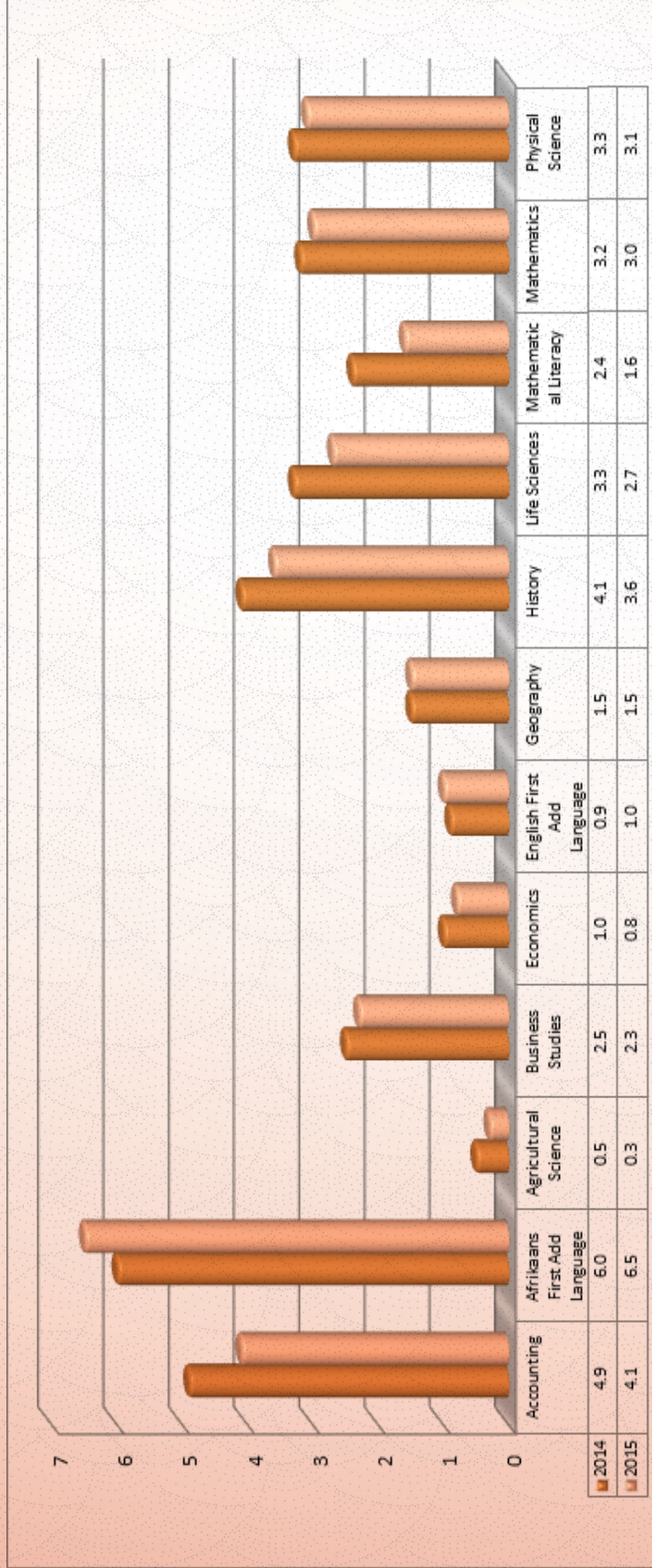


**Table 13.2.15: Number and percentage of distinctions (80% -100%) in Key Subjects, 2014 and 2015**

Subject	2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved with Distinction	% with Distinction	Wrote	Achieved with Distinction	% with Distinction
Accounting	125 987	6 235	4.9	140 474	5 820	4.1
Afrikaans First Additional Language	82 649	4 992	6.0	86 987	5 629	6.5
Agricultural Sciences	78 063	401	0.5	104 251	305	0.3
Business Studies	207 659	5 276	2.5	247 822	5 783	2.3
Economics	137 478	1 318	1.0	165 642	1 309	0.8
English First Additional Language	432 933	3 899	0.9	543 941	5 178	1.0
Geography	236 051	3 454	1.5	303 985	4 635	1.5
History	115 686	4 774	4.1	154 398	5 540	3.6
Life Sciences	284 298	9 516	3.3	348 075	9 325	2.7
Mathematical Literacy	312 054	7 387	2.4	388 845	6 130	1.6
Mathematics	225 458	7 216	3.2	263 903	7 791	3.0
Physical Sciences	167 997	5 513	3.3	193 189	5 903	3.1



Figure 13.2.2: Distinctions percentages in the 12 Key Subjects 2014 and 2015



The distinction passes have increased for only two subjects, English FAL and Afrikaans FAL, and decreased in all the other key subjects including Accounting, Agricultural Science, Business Studies, Economics, History, Life Sciences, Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Physical Science. The distinction passes in Geography have remained constant at 1.5%.



### 13.3 Performance of Candidates in special needs education

Table 13.3.1: Special Needs Education (SNE) candidates (incl. concession candidates) – Full-Time, 2014 - 2015

Province Name	Years	Total Wrote	Achieved Bachelor	Achieved Diploma	Achieved H-Cert	Achieved NSC	Achieved Endorsed NSC	Did Not Achieved
Eastern Cape	2014	146	22	57	14	0	1	53
	2015	185	19	61	31	0		74
Free State	2014	58	6	28	11	5	46	7
	2015	54	11	25	13	1		2
Gauteng	2014	730	203	375	52	37	69	63
	2015	564	207	285	38	0		34
KwaZulu-Natal	2014	103	20	64	6	0	4	13
	2015	646	153	229	115	0		149
Limpopo	2014	51	3	8	10	6	6	2
	2015	21	3	2	1	0		9
Mpumalanga	2014	7	4	3	0	0	0	0
	2015	6	3	3	0	0		0
North West	2014	23	4	14	3	0	0	2
	2015	30	7	15	2	0		6
Northern Cape	2014	19	6	9	0	2	1	2
	2015	19	4	11	1	1		0
Western Cape	2014	183	40	79	8	24	27	13
	2015	166	36	102	12	0		16
<b>National</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>1320</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>155</b>
	<b>2015</b>	<b>1691</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>290</b>



### 13.4 2015 NSC Examinations Results for Repeat candidates

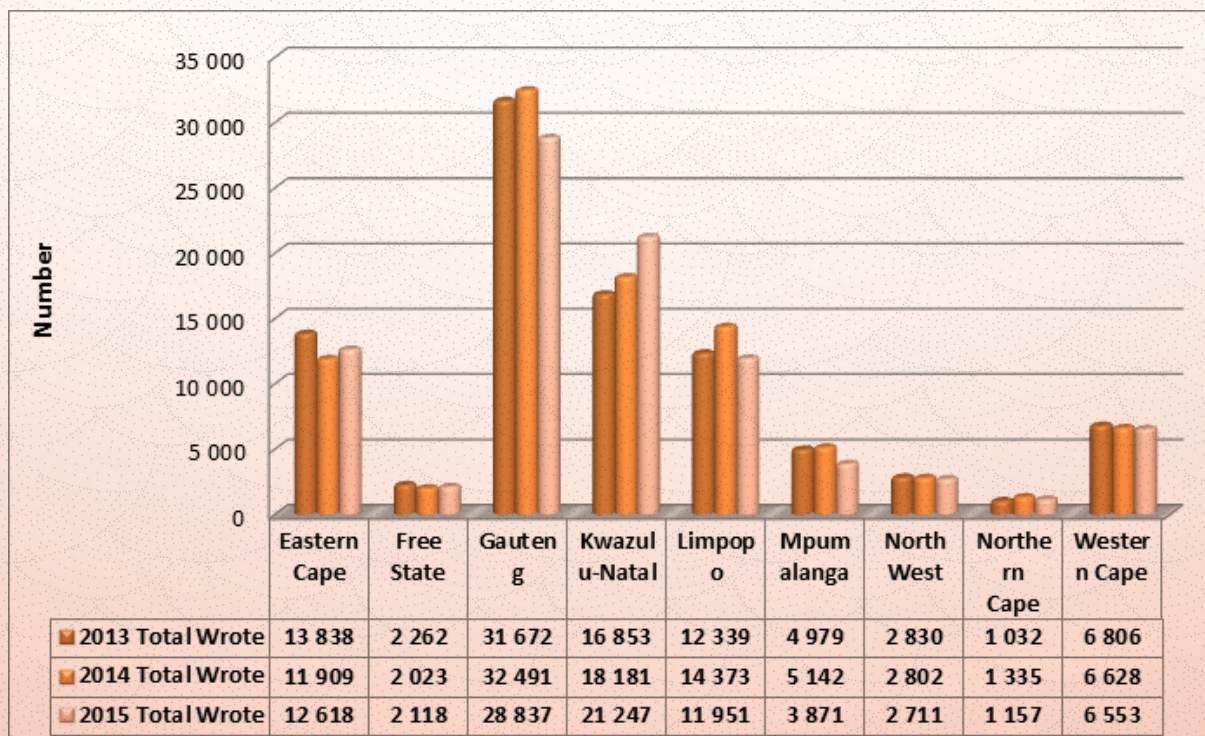
Table 13.4.1: Overall performance of Repeat candidates (Full Time) in the 2015 NSC examination

Province	2015			
	Total Enrolled	Total Wrote	Total Achieved	% Achieved
Eastern Cape	6 302	6 049	4 038	66,8
Free State	1	1	1	100,0
Gauteng	6	3	3	100,0
KwaZulu-Natal	428	372	216	58,1
Limpopo	8 623	8 434	6 307	74,8
Mpumalanga	2 629	2 513	2 109	83,9
North West	44	41	29	70,7
Northern Cape	0	0	-	-
Western Cape	3	2	1	50,0
<b>National</b>	<b>18 036</b>	<b>17 415</b>	<b>12 704</b>	<b>72,9</b>

The overall achievement rate for Full-time Repeat candidates in 2015 is **72.9%**. There were no Repeat candidates enrolled in Northern Cape.

### 13.5 2015 NSC Examinations Results for Part-Time candidates

Figure 13.5.1 The Numbers wrote NSC Part-Time, 2013 and 2015



The number of part time candidates that wrote the 2015 NSC examination has decreased in all PEDs except for KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape where they had an increase of 3 066 and 709 candidates respectively writing the examination



Table 13.5.1: Numbers wrote NSC Part-Time, 2013 and 2015

Province Name	2013		2014		2015	
	Total Entered	Total Wrote	Total Entered	Total Wrote	Total Entered	Total Wrote
Eastern Cape	20 634	13 838	21 503	11 909	19 312	12 618
Free State	3 285	2 262	3 101	2 023	3 470	2 118
Gauteng	41 423	31 672	42 538	32 491	39 181	28 837
KwaZulu-Natal	25 147	16 853	26 666	18 181	31 176	21 247
Limpopo	16 993	12 339	19 673	14 373	16 137	11 951
Mpumalanga	7 442	4 979	8 008	5 142	5 569	3 871
North West	3 609	2 830	3 794	2 802	3 386	2 711
Northern Cape	1 783	1 032	2 583	1 335	1 838	1 157
Western Cape	10 928	6 806	11 842	6 628	11 312	6 553
<b>National</b>	<b>131 244</b>	<b>92 611</b>	<b>139 708</b>	<b>94 884</b>	<b>131 381</b>	<b>91 063</b>

About **40 318** Part- time candidates that enrolled did not end up writing the 2015 NSC examination



**Table 13.5.2: Part-Time candidates' performance at 30% and above in selected subjects, 2011 to 2015**

Subjects (Part-Time)	2011			2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved 30% & Above	% Achieved
Accounting	13 405	4 213	31.4	1 248	341	27.3	14 030	3 336	23.8	15 274	4 410	28.9	13 362	4 480	33.5
Agricultural Science	5 696	1 756	30.8	327	125	38.2	6 582	2 140	32.5	6 340	2 893	45.6	4 820	2 635	54.7
Business Studies	13 853	6 341	45.8	1 668	577	34.6	16 024	6 902	43.1	16 905	6 687	39.6	16 231	8 052	49.6
Economics	9 936	3 040	30.6	1 044	333	31.9	13 530	3 818	28.2	14 894	4 217	28.3	15 309	6 065	39.6
Geography	12 514	4 068	32.5	1 612	517	32.1	17 474	6 617	37.9	18 272	8 005	43.8	17 541	9 026	51.5
History	3 293	1 094	33.2	572	286	50	3 984	1 729	43.4	4 312	1 609	37.3	4 643	2 768	59.6
Life Orientation	535	501	93.6	790	757	95.8	2 000	1 877	93.9	1 416	1 343	94.8	2 480	2 430	98.0
Life Sciences	24 083	12 352	51.3	2 749	1 055	38.4	32 820	12 409	37.8	34 688	15 651	45.1	32 114	17 774	55.3
Mathematical Literacy	12 137	6 285	51.8	1 681	1 021	60.7	18 204	9 919	54.5	19 265	10 382	53.9	19 868	10 484	52.8
Mathematics	46 067	11 234	24.4	4 722	1 273	27	47 067	15 766	33.5	45 114	12 421	27.5	44 376	15 695	35.4
Physical Sciences	38 226	11 827	30.9	3 715	994	26.8	38 537	13 356	34.7	36 862	11 703	31.7	35 219	13 726	39.0

The performance of Part-Time candidates between 2013 and 2015 has improved for the following subjects: Accounting, Agricultural Sciences, Economics, Geography and Life Sciences. Even though the following subjects took a dip in 2014, the 2015 performance shows a significant improvement from 2013 and the subjects are Business Studies, History, Mathematics and Physical Sciences.

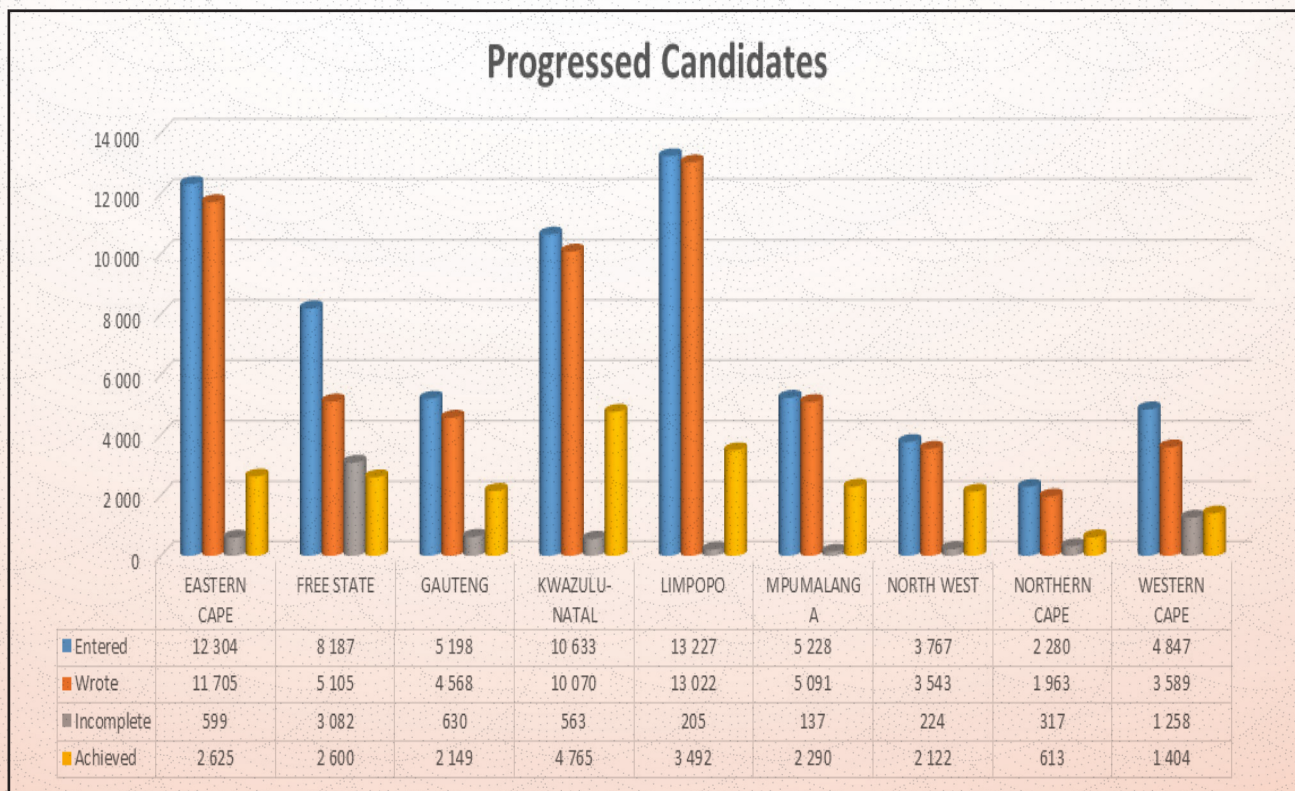


### 13.6 2015 NSC Examinations Results for Progressed candidates

Table 13.6.1: Numbers wrote and Achieved NSC as Progressed Candidates per Province, 2015

Province	Progressed Candidates				
	Entered	Wrote	Incomplete	Achieved	Achieved %
Eastern Cape	12 304	11 705	599	2 625	22.4
Free State	8 187	5 105	3 082	2 600	50.9
Gauteng	5 198	4 568	630	2 149	47.0
KwaZulu-Natal	10 633	10 070	563	4 765	47.3
Limpopo	13 227	13 022	205	3 492	26.8
Mpumalanga	5 228	5 091	137	2 290	45.0
North West	3 767	3 543	224	2 122	59.9
Northern Cape	2 280	1 963	317	613	31.2
Western Cape	4 847	3 589	1 258	1 404	39.1
<b>National</b>	<b>65 671</b>	<b>58 656</b>	<b>7 015</b>	<b>22 060</b>	<b>37.6</b>

Figure 13.6.1: Performance of Progressed and Non-Progressed Candidates per province, 2015





13.6.2 Performance of Progressed and Non-Progressed Candidates per province, 2015

Table13.6.2: Performance of Progressed and Non-Progressed Candidates per province, 2015

Province	Progressed		Non-Progressed	
	Achieved	% Achieved	Achieved	% Achieved
Eastern Cape	2 625	22.4	46 829	62.2
Free State	2 600	50.9	22 876	87.7
Gauteng	2 149	47.0	89 237	85.9
Kwazulu-Natal	4 765	47.3	93 997	61.6
Limpopo	3 492	26.8	63 454	71.7
Mpumalanga	2 290	45.0	40 939	82.1
North West	2 122	59.9	24 996	84.0
Northern Cape	613	31.2	7 454	77.2
Western Cape	1 404	39.1	44 080	88.0
National	22 060	37.6	433 862	74.1



Table 13.7.1 District performance

(a) EASTERN CAPE

	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	<b>63 989</b>	<b>39 443</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>72 138</b>	<b>46 840</b>	<b>64.9</b>	<b>66 935</b>	<b>43 777</b>	<b>65.4</b>	<b>87 090</b>	<b>49 475</b>	<b>56.8</b>
Butterworth	3 925	2 115	53.9	4 407	2 596	58.9	3 619	2 068	57.1	4 253	2 333	54.9
Cofimvaba	1 560	1 131	72.5	1 839	1 300	70.7	1 648	1 100	66.7	1 871	1 158	61.9
Craddock	896	648	72.3	853	627	73.5	690	568	82.3	1 004	719	71.6
Dutywa	3 188	1 625	51.0	3 540	2 152	60.8	3 418	1 978	57.9	4 933	2 573	52.2
East London	5 811	3 995	68.7	6 138	4 488	73.1	5 922	4 434	74.9	7 470	4 619	61.8
Fort Beaufort	1 857	830	44.7	1 911	1 082	56.6	1 674	952	56.9	2 046	1 016	49.7
Graaff-Reinet	724	517	71.4	824	557	67.6	861	545	63.3	961	578	60.1
Grahamstown	861	583	67.7	1 060	662	62.5	935	672	71.9	1 099	666	60.6
King Williams Town	4 977	2 830	56.9	5 232	3 414	65.3	5 013	3 204	63.9	5 759	3 396	59.0
Lady Frere	1 323	833	63.0	1 417	942	66.5	1 353	864	63.9	1 907	882	46.3
Libode	3 653	2 169	59.4	5 580	3 356	60.1	4 717	2 944	62.4	6 925	3 363	48.6
Lusikisiki	3 592	2 133	59.4	3 792	2 240	59.1	2 522	1 541	61.1	3 870	1 827	47.2
Maluti	1 707	1 227	71.9	1 799	1 267	70.4	1 914	1 181	61.7	2 522	1 409	55.9
Mbizana	2 931	1 689	57.6	3 210	1 885	58.7	3 068	1 845	60.1	4 078	2 178	53.4
MT Fletcher	1 351	911	67.4	1 654	1 081	65.4	1 638	1 063	64.9	2 282	1 270	55.7
MT Frere	2 350	1 166	49.6	2 329	1 370	58.8	3 483	1 920	55.1	4 837	2 666	55.1
Mthatha	5 690	3 739	65.7	6 718	4 518	67.3	5 497	3 716	67.6	6 889	4 385	63.7
Ngcobo	1 503	910	60.5	1 729	1 174	67.9	1 809	1 192	65.9	2 634	1 266	48.1
Port Elizabeth	6 877	4 890	71.1	7 575	5 609	74.0	7 613	5 655	74.3	9 349	6 168	66.0
Queenstown	2 559	1 587	62.0	2 732	1 800	65.9	3 028	1 757	58.0	3 161	1 791	56.7
Qumbu	2 107	1 035	49.1	2 547	1 339	52.6	1 329	997	75.0	2 842	1 360	47.9
Sterkspruit	1 996	1 120	56.1	2 133	1 219	57.1	2 225	1 346	60.5	2 939	1 465	49.8
Uitenhage	2 551	1 760	69.0	3 119	2 162	69.3	2 959	2 235	75.5	3 459	2 387	69.0



(b) FREE STATE

	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
Free State	24 265	19 676	81.1	27 105	23 689	87.4	26 440	21 899	82.8	31 161	25 416	81.6
Fezile Dabi	3 864	3 112	80.5	4 679	4 025	86.0	4 316	3 611	83.7	4 957	4 271	86.2
Lejweleputswa	4 936	4 079	82.6	5 594	4 842	86.6	5 554	4 489	80.8	6 307	5 210	82.6
Motheo	7 871	6 309	80.2	8 519	7 488	87.9	8 913	7 196	80.7	10 862	8 147	75.0
Thabo Mofutsanyana	6 779	5 509	81.3	7 282	6 438	88.4	6 563	5 747	87.6	7 907	6 904	87.3
Xhariep	815	667	81.8	1 031	896	86.9	1 094	856	78.2	1 128	884	78.4



## (c) GAUTENG

	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>Gauteng</b>	<b>89 627</b>	<b>75 214</b>	<b>83.9</b>	<b>97 897</b>	<b>85 122</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>99 478</b>	<b>84 247</b>	<b>84.7</b>	<b>108 442</b>	<b>91 327</b>	<b>84.2</b>
Ekurhuleni North District	8 163	7 165	87.8	9 116	8 039	88.2	8 767	7 780	88.7	9 731	8 447	86.8
Ekurhuleni South District	9 247	7 563	81.8	10 308	8 711	84.5	11 134	8 878	79.7	11 237	9 337	83.1
Gauteng East District	6 167	4 979	80.7	6 507	5 696	87.5	6 898	5 599	81.2	7 958	6 518	81.9
Gauteng North District	1 564	1 398	89.4	1 728	1 529	88.5	1 836	1 591	86.7	2 129	1 800	84.5
Gauteng West District	6 207	5 242	84.5	6 333	5 703	90.1	5 904	5 471	92.7	7 169	6 463	90.2
Johannesburg Central	6 776	5 417	79.9	7 702	6 537	84.9	8 344	6 775	81.2	9 195	7 087	77.1
Johannesburg East District	6 418	5 426	84.5	6 969	6 137	88.1	7 689	6 452	83.9	7 913	6 638	83.9
Johannesburg North District	5 881	4 989	84.8	6 355	5 518	86.8	6 644	5 686	85.6	7 414	6 213	83.8
Johannesburg South District	5 870	4 575	77.9	6 272	5 296	84.4	6 099	5 376	88.1	6 424	5 629	87.6
Johannesburg West District	4 200	3 578	85.2	4 556	4 082	89.6	4 804	4 145	86.3	5 154	4 466	86.7
Sedibeng East District	2 468	2 118	85.8	2 576	2 337	90.7	2 427	2 213	91.2	2 848	2 575	90.4
Sedibeng West District	4 875	3 861	79.2	5 354	4 440	82.9	5 897	4 619	78.3	5 748	4 721	82.1
Tshwane North District	5 413	4 765	88.0	6 466	5 684	87.9	6 210	5 214	84.0	6 959	5 657	81.3
Tshwane South District	9 992	8 695	87.0	10 353	9 163	88.5	10 296	8 959	87.0	10 862	9 433	86.8
Tshwane West District	6 386	5 443	85.2	7 302	6 250	85.6	6 529	5 489	84.1	7 701	6 343	82.4



(d) KWAZULU-NATAL

	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>KwaZulu-Natal</b>	<b>127 253</b>	<b>93 003</b>	<b>73.1</b>	<b>145 278</b>	<b>112 403</b>	<b>77.4</b>	<b>139 367</b>	<b>97 144</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>162 658</b>	<b>98 761</b>	<b>60.7</b>
Amajuba	6 364	4 942	77.7	6 908	5 482	79.4	7 463	4 891	65.5	9 217	5 415	58.8
Ilembe	7 165	5 038	70.3	8 358	6 054	72.4	7 963	4 714	59.2	9 141	4 747	51.9
Pinetown	15 556	12 046	77.4	19 248	15 694	81.5	18 592	14 099	75.8	20 098	12 993	64.6
Sisonke	5 500	3 789	68.9	5 889	4 162	70.7	6 382	4 126	64.7	6 985	4 380	62.7
Ugu	9 370	6 745	72.0	10 171	7 648	75.2	9 542	6 921	72.5	11 910	7 177	60.3
Umgungundlovu	11 643	8 693	74.7	12 866	10 245	79.6	12 249	9 271	75.7	13 218	8 986	68.0
Umkhanyakude	10 407	6 781	65.2	10 461	7 757	74.2	10 308	7 413	71.9	14 054	8 810	62.7
Umlazi	18 554	14 832	79.9	23 099	19 340	83.7	21 056	16 272	77.3	21 648	15 726	72.6
Umzinyathi	7 460	5 281	70.8	8 471	6 083	71.8	7 545	4 163	55.2	10 047	4 679	46.6
Uthukela	8 440	6 175	73.2	9 284	7 315	78.8	8 853	6 493	73.3	11 095	6 778	61.1
Uthungulu	14 022	9 416	67.2	16 137	11 733	72.7	15 034	9 626	64.0	18 360	10 023	54.6
Zululand	12 772	9 265	72.5	14 386	10 890	75.7	14 380	9 155	63.7	16 885	9 047	53.6



## (e) LIMPOPO

	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>Limpopo</b>	<b>77 360</b>	<b>51 745</b>	<b>66.9</b>	<b>82 483</b>	<b>59 184</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>72 990</b>	<b>53 179</b>	<b>72.9</b>	<b>101 575</b>	<b>66 946</b>	<b>65.9</b>
<b>Capricorn</b>	21 378	14 104	66.0	22 232	15 592	70.1	19 449	13 916	71.6	24 839	16 572	66.7
<b>Greater Sekhukhune</b>	13 835	8 714	63.0	15 469	10 173	65.8	14 690	9 389	63.9	21 531	11 843	55.0
<b>Mopani</b>	16 762	10 587	63.2	17 256	11 949	69.2	13 963	10 369	74.3	19 152	13 193	68.9
<b>Vhembe</b>	18 453	14 176	76.8	20 396	16 436	80.6	18 403	14 932	81.1	26 535	19 809	74.7
<b>Waterberg</b>	6 932	4 164	60.1	7 130	5 034	70.6	6 485	4 573	70.5	9 518	5 529	58.1

## (f) MPUMALANGA

	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	<b>47 889</b>	<b>33 504</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>50 053</b>	<b>38 836</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>45 081</b>	<b>35 615</b>	<b>79.0</b>	<b>54 980</b>	<b>43 229</b>	<b>78.6</b>
<b>Bohlabela District</b>	11 230	7 022	62.5	11 057	7 966	72.0	9 753	7 491	76.8	11 341	8 700	76.7
<b>Ehlanzeni District</b>	14 580	10 782	74.0	14 586	12 079	82.8	13 792	11 324	82.1	16 203	13 349	82.4
<b>Gert Sibande District</b>	10 451	7 208	69.0	10 992	8 396	76.4	10 376	8 005	77.1	13 555	9 844	72.6
<b>Nkangala District</b>	11 628	8 492	73.0	13 418	10 395	77.5	11 160	8 795	78.8	13 881	11 336	81.7



**(g) NORTH WEST**

North West	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
		27 174	21 609		79.5	29 140		25 414	87.2		26 066	22 061
Bojanala Platinum District	10 941	8 723	79.7	11 873	10 366	87.3	9 979	8 598	86.2	12 364	10 541	85.3
Dr. K. Kaunda District	5 383	4 448	82.6	5 626	4 883	86.8	5 309	4 450	83.8	6 523	5 388	82.6
Dr. R.S Mompoti District	4 539	3 256	71.7	4 891	4 058	83.0	4 622	3 658	79.1	5 800	4 490	77.4
Ngaka M. Molema District	6 311	5 182	82.1	6 750	6 107	90.5	6 156	5 355	87.0	8 599	6 699	77.9

**(h) NORTHERN CAPE**

Northern Cape	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
		8 925	6 661		74.6	10 403		7 749	74.5		8 794	6 715
Frances Baard	3 363	2 557	76.0	4 114	3 007	73.1	3 461	2 632	76.0	4 452	3 043	68.4
John Taolo Gaetsewe	1 774	1 126	63.5	2 172	1 545	71.1	1 421	1 034	72.8	2 376	1 473	62.0
Namaqua	832	719	86.4	919	822	89.4	921	755	82.0	1 008	771	76.5
Pixley Ka Seme	1 234	879	71.2	1 342	962	71.7	1 178	881	74.8	1 550	1 171	75.5
ZF Mgcawu	1 722	1 380	80.1	1 856	1 413	76.1	1 813	1 413	77.9	2 237	1 606	71.8



## (i) WESTERN CAPE

	2012			2013			2014			2015		
	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved	Wrote	Achieved	% Achieved
Western Cape	44 663	36 967	82.8	47 615	40 542	85.1	47 709	39 237	82.2	53 721	45 489	84.7
Cape Winelands	6 392	5 381	84.2	6 823	5 918	86.7	6 932	5 773	83.3	8 070	6 743	83.6
Eden and Central Karoo	4 758	4 139	87.0	5 231	4 580	87.6	5 452	4 373	80.2	5 871	5 001	85.2
Metropole Central	7 554	6 323	83.7	7 963	6 829	85.8	8 049	6 619	82.2	8 639	7 566	87.6
Metropole East	7 041	5 429	77.1	7 670	6 180	80.6	7 129	5 809	81.5	8 299	6 684	80.5
Metropole North	8 142	6 963	85.5	8 741	7 500	85.8	9 227	7 498	81.3	10 063	8 501	84.5
Metropole South	7 271	5 698	78.4	7 539	6 285	83.4	7 319	5 986	81.8	8 605	7 267	84.5
Overberg	1 453	1 247	85.8	1 549	1 394	90.0	1 505	1 326	88.1	1 862	1 671	89.7
Westcoast	2 052	1 787	87.1	2 099	1 856	88.4	2 096	1 853	88.4	2 312	2 056	88.9

Table 13.7.2 Summary of District Performance 2014 and 2015

Province	Total number of Districts	2014					2015				
		Below 50%	50% to 59.9%	60% to 70%	70% to 80%	80% and above	Below 50%	50% to 59.9%	60% to 70%	70% to 80%	80% and above
Eastern Cape	23	0	5	12	5	1	7	8	7	1	0
Free State	5	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	2	3
Gauteng	15	0	0	0	2	13	0	0	0	1	14
Kwazulu-Natal	12	0	2	4	6	0	1	4	6	1	0
Limpopo	5	0	0	1	3	1	0	2	2	1	0
Mpumalanga	4	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	2	2
North West	4	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	2	2
Northern Cape	5	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	2	3	0
Western Cape	8	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>29</b>

In 2015, seven districts from the Eastern Cape and one from Kwazulu-Natal performed below 50%.



**Table 13.7.3 Names of Districts performing below 50% in 2015**

	<b>Total Wrote</b>	<b>Number Achieved</b>	<b>% Achieved</b>
<b>EASTERN CAPE</b>			
Fort Beaufort	2 046	1 016	49.7
Lady Frere	1 907	882	46.3
Libode	6 925	3 363	48.6
Lusikisiki	3 870	1 827	47.2
Ngcobo	2 634	1 266	48.1
Qumbu	2 842	1 360	47.9
Sterkspruit	2 939	1 465	49.8
<b>KWAZULU-NATAL</b>			
Umzinyathi	10 047	4 679	46.6

EC and KZN are the only provinces with districts performing below 50%. There is no district that performed below 40% in 2015.



## 14. CONCLUSION

The National Senior Certificate (NSC) Report provides a comprehensive account with conclusive data for education planners, institutional role players and decision makers in the sector to improve the quality of basic education. In a developing education system with a re-packaged curriculum relatively new to teachers and learners, it is expected to have cycles of marginal contractions in achieving quality learning outcomes. The contracted achievement rate observed in 2015 must not overshadow a sustained achievement rate of 70% and above for the last five years.

The Class of 2015 was the second cohort to write the NSC examination that is aligned with our internationally benchmarked national Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum and teachers and learners are still becoming familiar with the entire scope of the policy change. However, decline in subject performance will be investigated and more formative remediation measures introduced in 2016.

In summarising the gains emanating from the 2015 NSC results, it can be affirmed that the basic education systems is making steady progress but the journey is incomplete and still being shaped. The more tangible gains can be summarised as follows:

- (a) The Class of 2015 recorded the highest enrolment of Grade 12 learners in the history of education in South Africa. The total number of candidates who registered for the November 2015 Examinations was 799 306 written by 667 925 full-time candidates and 131 381 part-time candidates. The significant increase of 117 798 candidates in the 2015 enrolment confirms a higher throughput rate of learners in the system, a long desired goal of the Department.
- (b) Of the full-time candidates who wrote the examination, 455 825 candidates attained the National Senior Certificate, which constitutes a 70.7 pass rate, signifying a sustained achievement rate above 70% from 2011 to 2015.
- (c) The number of learners achieving the NSC, increased from 403 874 in 2014 to 455 825 in 2015. The number of learners passing Mathematics has increased from 120 523 in 2014 to 129 481 in 2015; while the number of learners passing Physical Science has increased from 103 348 in 2014 to 113 121 in 2015.
- (d) There were an increased number of candidates qualifying for Bachelor Studies and Diploma studies at Higher Education Institutions, with 15 511 more learners qualified for Bachelor Studies, and 17 031 more learners qualified for Diploma studies, than was the case in 2014.
- (e) 90 027 girl learners (25.7%) qualified for Bachelor Studies at Higher Education Institutions while 76 236 boy learners (25.9%) qualified for Bachelor Studies at Higher Education.
- (f) 2631 schools attained a pass percentage of 80% and above (38.8%). 470 schools attained a pass percentage of 100% (6.9%); 463 schools from quintile 1 attained a pass percentage of 80% and above (7.5%); 80 038 learners from quintiles 1, 2 and 3 schools qualified for Bachelor studies at Higher Education Institutions.
- (g) 59 of the 81 districts attained a pass rate of 60% and above; and 29 of them achieved a pass rate of 80% and above. The district that achieved the highest pass rate was Sedibeng East from Gauteng (90.4%).

The Department of Basic Education has noted that although the achievement rate has decreased in 2015, there has been a significant increase in the number of learners achieving the NSC. The decrease in the overall achievement rate

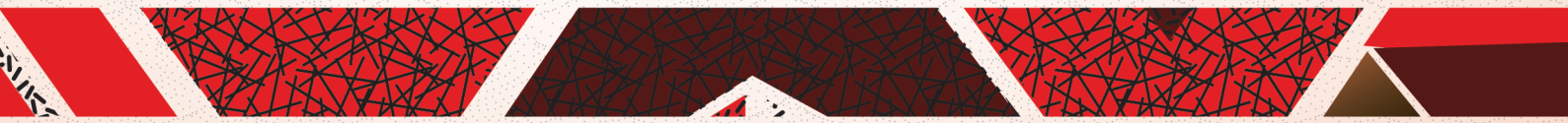


may be attributed to a higher standard of question papers in the 2015 NSC examination. A much greater effort by all in the sector will be needed to improve on the results of the 2015 cohort. The Department will make every effort to support the 2016 cohort in attaining an excellent performance.

The Second Chance Matric programme is intended to provide support to learners who have not been able to meet the requirements of the National Senior Certificate and thereby meeting the goals of the National Development Plan by increasing learner retention. The categories of learners who will be covered are those learners who qualify to write Supplementary Examinations for a maximum of two subjects, progressed learners who pursue multiple opportunities to complete the NSC, and learners who failed to meet the requirements of the NSC in 2015. The Minister will launch this programme early in 2016.

We are a country at work. South Africa is a far better place today than it was pre-1994. The National Development Plan (NDP) appropriately states that: "We, the people of South Africa have journeyed far since the long lines of our first democratic election on 27th April 1994, when we elected a government for us all. We began to tell a new story then. We have lived and renewed that story along the way. It is important that the significant lessons from the 2015 and together we must ensure that the national mandate for improved quality education in South Africa is a reality in 2016 and beyond.





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