

NSC 2026 DRAFT TIMETABLE OPPORTUNITY TO SUBMIT COMMENT

SACAI has already consulted with the applicable education authorities and can now garner feedback from the institutions registered with SACAI regarding the draft NSC timetable for 2026 ([click here to view the provisional timetable](#)). Institutions are requested to thoroughly scrutinise the draft timetable and submit considered and motivated feedback [on this link](#) before or on **15 May 2026**.

GRADE 12 SBAs EARLIER SUBMISSION REQUIRED BY UMALUSI

Umalusi has informed SACAI that all the grade 12 SBA marks must be submitted much earlier than in the past. All indications point to the end of September 2026. Considering that the common SACAI Pre-liminary examination commences on Monday, 17 August 2026 and concludes on Thursday, 10 September 2026, institutions should be able to comply. We are aware that this may place some institutions under pressure, but we are convinced that the early warning will enable all institutions to get the required processes in place.

GRADE 9 STANDARDISED TESTING

1. Why are SACAI standardised tests necessary?

- a. In terms of SACAI's status as accredited assessment body with Umalusi, SACAI must be able to formally confirm that all learners in the FET phase have complied with the national policy regarding promotion from one grade to the next, i.e. do they objectively belong in grade 10.
- b. Numerous parents during the registration process for grade 10 cannot present credible report cards or assessment reports to prove that the learner has genuinely passed grade 9.
- c. It is common cause that provincial departments of education (PDE) find it impossible to comply with the following requirements in terms of the SA Schools Act, 1996 (as amended) –
 - i. Section 51(2)(iii) (bb) and (iv), i.e. formal confirmation by the PDE at the end of each phase that the home-schooled learner's educational attainment is on a standard that is not inferior to the national policy regarding promotion requirements.



- ii. Section 51(9), i.e. at the end of grade 9 that the home-schooled learner fully complies with regulation 7(4A) of the Regulations pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate examination.
- d. SACAI has grave reservations about whether all assessors –
 - i. Comply with the definition of a “competent assessor” as defined in the SA Schools Act, with specific reference to SACE registration;
 - ii. Are truly competent to objectively ascertain if a home-schooled learner at the end of grade 9 complies with the promotion requirements for all nine (9) subjects; and
 - iii. SACAI has serious reservations regarding the question if all assessors can be deemed to be a subject specialist in all nine subjects.

2. What subjects will be tested in the standardised SACAI tests?

- a. The intention is to test two subjects at genuine grade 9 level, i.e.:
 - i. English Home Language or Afrikaans Huistaal; and
 - ii. Mathematics.
- b. Based on the educational deductions that may be made from the PIRLS and TIMSS testing, the outcomes will serve the following purposes:
 - i. To help educators and institutions understand how well the learners can read and do mathematical calculations after nine years of formal schooling;
 - ii. To identify knowledge and competency weaknesses in a learners’ ability to master the academic challenges in grade 10;
 - iii. To improve internal teaching and assessment approaches;
 - iv. To provide a basis for the development of a learner’s individual support programme; and/or
 - v. To identify if it is in the best interest of a learner to register for grade 10.

3. When will the standardised tests be implemented?

SACAI will require compliance with effect from November 2026 as Umalusi requires that SACAI must be able to formally confirm that all learners in the FET phase comply with the required minimum learning standards, expectations and promotion requirements of the preceding grades.

4. What is the focus of the SACAI standardised test?

As stated here above the focus will be to ensure that all the assessments in the two subjects are marked and moderated in a uniform manner to allow for the comparison of performance across individuals, groups and institutions. The SACAI tests have been designed using predetermined standards and procedures to ensure fairness, reliability, and comparability with the aim to measure student knowledge, cognitive ability, or aptitude.

5. Will the standardised tests be used for certification purposes?

No, as stated under question 2 here above, the focus will be to enable institutions to make the educational conclusions as specified, with specific reference to determine if the required minimum learning standards and expectations are met. To a large extent, the outcomes will establish accountability for earlier institutions or tutors regarding the quality of learning and teaching during the phases prior to the FET phase.

6. Will all grade 9 or 10 learners be required to write the standardised tests?

The following will apply in this regard:

- a. A learner who submits a credible report card from a credible institution may be exempted.
- b. Learners under the following conditions will be required to write the tests:

- i. If a credible report card cannot be submitted;
- ii. If the credibility of a assessors' report is in doubt; or
- iii. If an assessor's report cannot be submitted.

7. Will institutions be allowed to request that all the learners in grades 9 or 10 may write the standardised tests?

It is actually recommended that all learners should write the tests as valuable educational conclusions may be made from the outcome of the assessments, i.e. to identify learning gaps, strengths, and areas needing improvement, and enabling targeted academic support. Such conclusions will enable the institution to adapt its teaching and assessment programme to attain certain outcomes, provided that there may not be a deviation from the minimum CAPS programme of assessment.

8. Will genuine exam writing conditions be required?

The same exam writing conditions as that which apply to the formal SACAI common examinations must apply to ensure the credibility of the outcomes with specific reference to the security and confidentiality of the question papers prior to the examination, test dates and times, seating plans and invigilation.

9. How will the tests be marked?

The following approach will apply:

- a. Institutions will be responsible for marking.
- b. SACAI will provide a standardised marking guideline (memorandum).
- c. An online marking guideline discussion will be held for all institutions.
- d. All marking must adhere to the SACAI marking policy, with specific reference to subject specialists.
- e. SACAI moderation policy must be adhered to.
- f. SACAI will exercise its right to request answer scripts for a second round of moderation.

**WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST:
WHAT IS THE POSITION OF CANDIDATES REGARDING THE FINAL NSC EXAMINATION?**

Numerous institutions with international students have enquired with SACAI about the position of such students considering the restrictions on regular flights and related complexities.

SACAI has enquired with Umalusi in this regard and the following response was received: In terms of the Regulations pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate Examinations, promulgated in terms of the National Education Policy Act, 1996:

- (a) Only candidates who are children of diplomats or (b) candidates officially representing the Republic of South Africa in sporting or cultural events will be allowed to write the examination outside the borders of SA; and
- No provisions for concessions or alternative examination arrangements for candidates who are unable to travel because of geopolitical instability, travel restrictions, or similar circumstances are admissible.