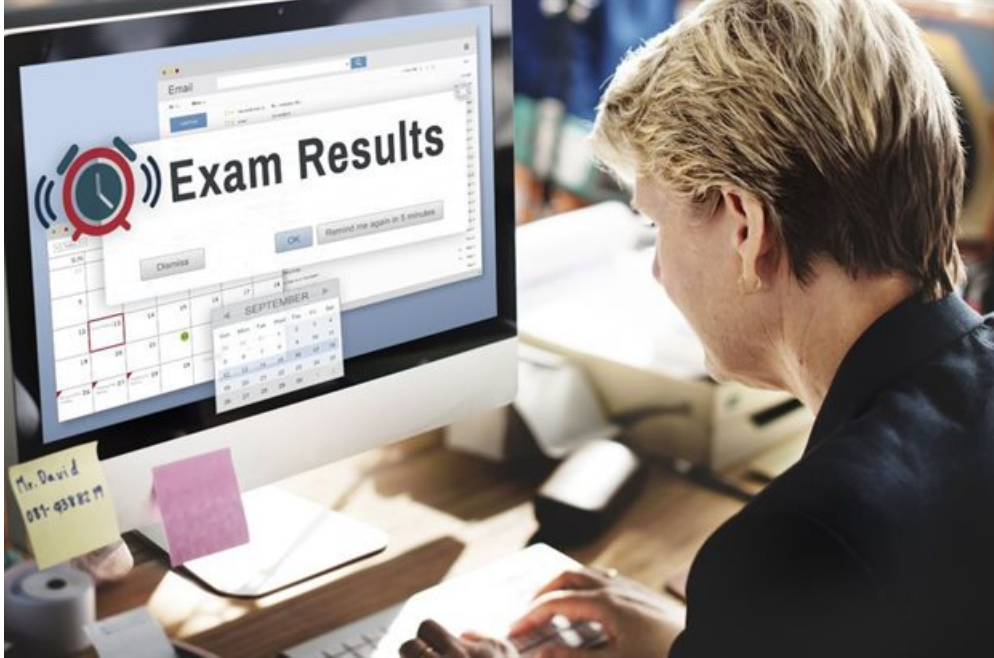


Matric results to be released on time

The Department of Basic Education says several provinces have completed the marking of Grade 12 exam papers ahead of schedule, and that results will be released on time.



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According to the department's Assessment and Examination Director, Priscilla Ogunbanjo, over 90% of centres, which were scheduled to finalise the marking of scripts on Friday, have already wrapped up.

Ogunbanjo revealed that Gauteng, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Northern Cape have already concluded the work, while the remaining provinces are rounding up between today and Thursday.

"Certainly by Friday, you won't find anyone at the marking centres," Ogunbanjo said during a media briefing.

Ogunbanjo used the opportunity to congratulate the markers, who worked tirelessly to grade the 2020 combined exam scripts, against the backdrop of Covid-19 alert lockdown level 3.

"It's really something to be grateful for and we're pleased that we'll finalise and release the results to our candidates," she said.

Covid-19

Ogunbanjo said 45,272 markers were appointed, of which 2,463 withdrew mostly due to Covid-19.

“These withdrawals were mostly those who declined, others maybe got sick, a family member got sick or for whatever reason, didn’t accept the appointment, and so didn’t show up,” she said, adding that the department replaced 70% of those who withdrew.

Meanwhile, 315 markers contracted the virus, which represents 0.7% of the markers.

According to Ogunbanjo, 168 tested positive before they could be allowed inside the marking centres in the Eastern Cape.

Three fatalities were recorded in KwaZulu-Natal, one each in Limpopo, Gauteng, Western Cape and at the DBE centralised marking centre as well.

Ogunbanjo told the media that the deceased arrived already ill.

“Some arrived and the very next day they were sick, which means they were incubating or had symptoms when they arrived... None [of the deceased] were from the Eastern Cape because it was going to be picked up. After all, it was mandatory to be tested [there].

“We feel very bad about any fatality but unfortunately, this has happened.”

She said she was pleased by how everyone observed Covid-19 protocols.

“This assisted in curbing the spread.”



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Capturing of results

Ogunbanjo said now the department will get on with capturing the marks, which overlaps with marking.

She said the 611 capturers in 34 centres across the provinces were put through the same safety measures before they started work.

“Two tested positive at the gate in the Eastern Cape and had to withdraw.”

Capturing is expecting to be completed on Monday, 25 January.

She said they were unaffected by Eskom’s load shedding during the marking but this could pose a challenge during the capturing of results.

However, six provinces do have back-up generators, while the other provinces are working around the load shedding schedule.

The Minister is expected to release the results on 22 February after Umalusi has made its pronouncements and approved them.

Remarking

Thereafter, the department will open the system for remarking and rechecking.

“Learners who are not happy with the marks that they’ve received and feel could have done better than what was rewarded are free to appeal,” Ogunbanjo explained.

She said once the results are out, candidates can start applying to tertiary institutions until 10 March.

The Director said the capacity of the system has been stretched, but she believes it will deliver.

The department’s Director-General, Mathanzima Mveli, said there have been a few concerns during the marking process that were immediately addressed.

Irregularities

The final report is still yet to be released after an extensive investigation following the leaked Maths and Physical Sciences Papers 2.

Mveli said the probe includes marking auditors, who will compare the performance of learners in the leaked papers.

The department said every learner’s script is marked, despite any irregularities. However, results are held until the outcome of the investigation.

“There are a whole lot of processes when dealing with irregularities, but the important thing is that we try to deal with it before the release of results,” said Ogunbanjo.

She said the report will be presented to Umalusi on 12 February and the council will make its statement thereafter.

“They will indicate whether they have any issues,” she said.

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