

BASIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SATISFIED WITH THE FIRST WEEK OF MARKING OF MATRIC PAPERS

08 JANUARY 2021

The Department of Basic Education is satisfied with the progress made in the first week of marking of the combined matric examination scripts for the class of 2020.

In addition to the staggered marking which already started in December 2020 in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Gauteng respectively, marking commenced in earnest in five provinces on Monday, 4 January, and the remaining four provinces on 5th and 6th January 2021. By Thursday January 7th, more than 96% of the 46 192 markers expected had reported at the 177 marking centres.

The Director-General of the Department of Basic Education, Mr Mathanzima Mveli has been monitoring marking since Monday starting with Western Cape where he visited 11 centres, on Tuesday and Wednesday he monitored 19 centres in the Eastern Cape. On Thursday and Friday he visited 23 centres in the Free State. Monitoring will proceed to the Northern Cape, North West, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and complete with KwaZulu Natal provinces on 18 January 2021.

For the first time in the 125 history of the administration of the examinations, the Basic Education Sector has placed health and safety as priority number 1. COVID-19 has added an extra dimension to marking as we have known it, now the emphasis is really on safety before we focus on the quality of marking. We cannot afford to have marking centres as super spreaders of the coronavirus and that is the message we are taking to colleagues in all the marking centres,” he said.

Mr Mveli said that the wearing of masks, social distancing and sanitizing must never be compromised under any circumstances during marking in particular but also in general. He said that he was satisfied that the logistics were in place in all centres and that marking in earnest is underway.

“The marking of each question paper is based on an organizational structure which is strictly hierarchical to ensure control and quality assurance of marking. To ensure that the marking hierarchy is firmly

Media Enquiries:

Elijah Mhlanga - Head of Communication: 083 580 8275 | **Hope Mokgathe** - Spokesperson to Minister: 079 817 0427

Terence Khala - Media Liason Officer: 081 758 1546



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grounded, the marking session is a phased in process, which commences with the marking centre manager and management team that prepare the marking centre before the chief markers, internal moderators, deputy chief markers and senior markers arrive. This cadre of supervisory markers must first meet for at least a full day to fully deliberate the national marking guideline and establish a common standard amongst this group of senior marking personnel who are responsible for marking quality and standards. On the second day the markers arrive," he said.

Markers constitute the majority of the marking team and they must be fully orientated to the marking guideline and trained in the application of the marking guideline so that there is only a minor threshold of deviation between markers. Each group of 5- 7 markers are directly supervised by a senior marker, and a group of seven senior markers are supervised by a deputy chief marker, who reports to the chief marker, who is responsible for the management of marking of a specific question paper. Overseeing this entire process is the internal moderator and the DBE and Umalusi external moderators who are the final custodians of standard in the marking process.

In the orientation session that was conducted on 4, 5 and 6 January 2021, for the different levels of marking personnel, the Marking Protocol relating to COVID-19 compliance featured prominently so that every marker is fully *au fait* of what is expected of him/her during the marking process. It was once again emphasized that the wearing of a mask is compulsory, social distancing cannot be compromised and regular sanitising is a must.

It is encouraging to note that the Department of Health is supporting the marking centres in the Eastern Cape, where the infection rates are high, with testing of marking personnel prior to accepting markers into the marking centre. This is an extensively demanding process which was not accommodated in the initial plans of the Eastern Cape but the province is working closely with the Department of Health to see how best this can be managed without compromising the marking process.

The DBE is encouraged by the commitment of markers to ensure that the marking gets underway despite the risks. Approximately 1700 markers across the 9 PEDS (which totals to about 3.6% of the markers appointed) declined their appointments but the PEDs have a set of reserve markers which have already been used to replace markers, since PEDs appointed between 10 to 15% reserve markers for each paper. Where PEDS choose not to replace the markers, they could extend the marking for up to 18 days.

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This had already been planned as contingency as it was expected that they could be marker shortages in some papers due to declines.

MARKING CENTRES STATUS AS OF 7 JANUARY 2021(data subject to change)

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF MARKERS EXPECTED AS OF 7 JAN.2021	WTHDRAWALS	TESTED POSITIVE AFTER REPORTING	MARKING CENTRES CURRENTLY IN OPERATION
FREE STATE	2138	10	01	23
EASTERN CAPE	5636	100	120(at the gate)	24
GAUTENG	12 148	827	06	24
KWA ZULU NATAL	8730	101	04	30
LIMPOPO	6104	02	03	24
MPUMALANGA	4 159	106	09	19
NORTHERN CAPE	1 044	63	03	4
NORTH WEST	2 625	157	03	17
WESTERN CAPE	3450	298	00	11
DBE CENTRALISED MARKING	158	18	01	1
TOTAL	46192	1682	171	177

The DBE and the PEDs will continue to monitor the marking centres very closely to ensure that all risks are appropriately addressed and daily reports are received from each of the 177 marking centres on progress and challenges to be addressed.

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There is already a relative sense of stability which should improve in the next few days as markers settle and get down to business

The DBE is also currently managing the centralized marking of South African Sign Language Home Language, 6 Low enrolment First Additional Languages, and 5 Low enrolment Second Additional Languages as well as 4 Low enrolment content subjects namely Music, Dance Studies, Agricultural Technology and Agricultural Management Practices, currently underway in Pretoria.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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