

22 April 2021

BASIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SETS RECORD STRAIGHT ON SA-SAMS RELEASE

The Department of Basic Education has noted incorrect and misleading media reports saying that the latest version of the South African Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) has not been released. The release has in fact taken place and schools are currently using the system to prepare reports for learners as the first term comes to an end tomorrow.

An article in News24 (dated 22 April 2021) titled “*Department of Education has failed to release vital software to schools*” is misleading and causing unnecessary panic and anxiety. The correct information is that the Department has made the software available to schools who are currently seized with the work of compiling learner records of performance among other things.

It is important to note that the Department needed to make some adjustments to the system and this is what happened:

The SA-SAMS version 21.1.1 has been released and it includes the 2021 Curriculum settings. This release differs from previous years as it was developed in complete collaboration with relevant Policy Owners which include Curriculum, and Examination Assessment.

The change of methodology in releasing SA-SAMS version 21.1.1 originated from the demand of correct and up-to-date data that could be sourced using the SA-SAMS. Emanating from the revision of the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) and Programmes of Assessment (POAs) across all grades, and the associated amendments to Section 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), major amendments to the SA-SAMS programme were required for 2021.

This version was therefore pending the submission of the 2021 subject assessment programme of GET and FET subjects, including the verification thereof by the relevant Subject Specialists and Assessment officials, which has concluded.

The South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS), is designed for the South African Education Sector and is maintained by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), ensuring that it is aligned to education policies. It is freely provided to all school and aims to assist schools with their own school administration and reporting. SA-SAMS provides the only electronic platform to ensure efficient and standardised policy implementation and reporting across all provinces. The system is able to save on exorbitant resources for the Sector by eliminating data duplication, since it is the source system to collect the National Senior Certificate (NSC) registration information.

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SA-SAMS is updated quarterly with requests received from users and various Policy Owners. Changes are only included after consultation and recommendation from relevant governance structures, with representation from all Provincial Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS).

The new version is only released after being tested by the Provincial Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS) sections as well as the relevant Policy Owners. The changes are audited by Internal Audit and the usage of SA-SAMS for reporting by schools as well as the data submitted is audited annually by the Auditor General of South Africa (AGSA) as part of the audits of national systems.

Release 21.1.0/1:

The disruption to schooling in 2020, emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated amendments to Section 4 of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), resulted in the revision of the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) and Programmes of Assessment (POAs) across all grades and all subjects for both 2020 and 2021. One of the most significant additions to the Programme of Assessment (PoA), in 2021, is the inclusion of fixed weightings for all assessment tasks that are administered and this will ensure consistency in the computation of SBA marks across the various schools.

This led to the need for major amendments to the South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) programme for 2021. These amendments have a direct impact on the capturing of marks and the calculation of the School Based Assessment (SBA) marks for all learners, as well as the quarterly reporting of the learner assessment results.

Given the pivotal role played by SA-SAMS in the computation of marks at the school level, it was essential that the accuracy of the SA-SAMS programme was ensured. Hence, the quality assurance and testing that was done by the DBE and the PED's to ensure that SA-SAMS is aligned to the relevant policies, could not be compromised. To ensure accurate implementation of these amendments, quality assurance and testing of the updated SA-SAMS was completed by the Examination and Assessment, Curriculum and EMIS sections as well as the PED's, some schools and even unions to ensure accurate alignment and implementation of the SA-SAMS Curriculum version. This also included approval from each Subject Specialists.

This release will lay a foundation for the Sector and assist schools to accurately report on learner performance and will ensure uniformity across the country. These changes that emanated from COVID-19, have now been captured on the SA-SAMS programme, and the Recovery Curriculum programme will remain stable for next three years.

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Version 20.1.0 or 21.1.1

A test version of 21.1.0 was found in the schools. Changes were done in response to verification and sign off by the Subject Specialists and therefore the final release is renamed 21.1.1 to ensure that the correct version is run by the schools. Schools must ensure that this version is installed on their computers as this is a user friendly release.

Changes for Version 20.1.1 & what schools must do:

Description	Screen	What is new / changed	Action by the school																		
Verify subject settings for 2021	12.3.11	All subject assessment programme is updated New subjects are Marine Sciences (Gr10 -12), Robotics and Coding (Gr 1-6), Vocational subjects Gr 8 & 9	Verify each subject before capturing the marks CHECK the SBA year% it should read:																		
			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th> <th>Weight%</th> <th>Exceptions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Gr R-3</td> <td>100</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gr 4-6</td> <td>80</td> <td>LO (100)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gr 7-9</td> <td>80</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gr 10&11</td> <td>60</td> <td>LO (100)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gr 12</td> <td>75</td> <td>(LO (100))</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Grade	Weight%	Exceptions	Gr R-3	100		Gr 4-6	80	LO (100)	Gr 7-9	80		Gr 10&11	60	LO (100)	Gr 12	75	(LO (100))
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ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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