

Govt to drop 23 O-Level subjects

Objective. The new curriculum will retain subjects that are meant to develop competencies on technology, communication, analysis, synthesis, creative thinking and team work.

BY PATIENCE AHIMBISIBWE
pahimbisibwe@ug.nationmedia.com

KAMPALA. Government has moved to drop half of the subjects studied at Ordinary Level, saying they have become irrelevant.

The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) has proposed to drop 23 subjects and retain only 20 out of the 43.

According to Ms Grace Baguma, the NCDC executive director, the proposed new curriculum will retain subjects that are meant to develop competencies in technology, communication, analysis, synthesis, creative thinking, problem solving and team work.

She said the content of the dropped subjects has either been merged or new information has been added into the retained subjects in the revised syllabus.

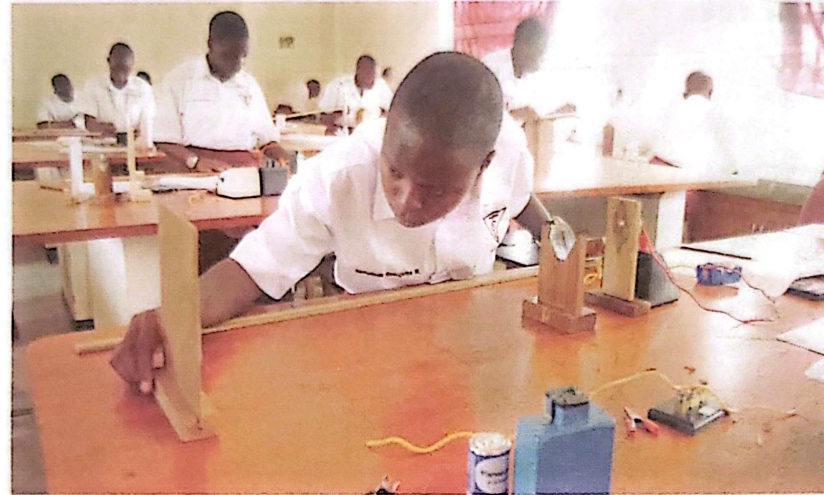
"When stakeholders didn't agree with the learning areas we had suggested, we went back and have worked on their guidance. We have maintained the subject approach. This time round, it will be competence-based and not objective driven," Ms Baguma said.

20 subjects remain

"The current curriculum has been overloaded. The content has now been reduced. Out of the original 43, we have proposed 20 subjects [to be retained]. The ministry's top management has been in discussion on how best to handle," she added.

In some instances, Mr John Okumu Emorut, NCDC specialist in business education, said repetitive or obsolete content has been dropped entirely.

In the new syllabus, for example, Commerce and Principles of Accounts will be merged to form Entrepreneurship.



Learning. Students conduct a physics practical exam. In the new syllabus, some subjects have been merged. PHOTO BY JOSEPH KIGGUNDU

Health Science, Electricity, Energy and Power subjects will have their components taught in Biology, Physics and Chemistry respectively.

Mr Emorut said Music has been dropped because it failed to attract many students over the years and there is no justification to keep paying teachers for it.

He said Political Education content will be integrated into the History subject. Swahili will be a compulsory subject in order to be compliant with the East African Community needs.

"There are few schools and students doing some of these subjects like Wood Work, Metal Work, Music and Political Education. They are very expensive to train them. They are not possible to administer without laboratories. Some subjects will be sent to vocational schools," Mr Emorut explained in an interview with *Daily Monitor*.

Under the new curriculum, each local community in Uganda will

adopt their own language which will be a compulsory subject for all learners in schools in the respective locality.

Mr Nicholas Ssempijja, a lecturer at Makerere University's Department of Music, Dance and Drama, however, wondered which

PROPOSED CHANGES

Some dropped subjects

- Music
- Political Education
- Health Science
- Office practice
- Typing
- Shorthand
- Electricity
- Power
- Energy
- Woodwork
- Building and construction
- Metal Work
- Additional

Mathematics

- Fasihi ya Kiswahili
- Principles of Accounts
- Electronics
- Commerce

Retained subjects

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Mathematics
- English language
- Literature in English
- General Science for people with special needs

• Swahili

- Foreign language
- Local language
- Christian Religious Education
- Geography
- History
- Physical Education
- Technical Drawing
- Home Economics
- Entrepreneurship
- Agriculture
- Fine Art
- ICT

people the curriculum developers had consulted about the new changes in the syllabus.

He said the music industry employs a big number of people and scrapping it from the curriculum will affect many Ugandans.

He said the department does not only train Ugandans but international students, too.

"Music has become part of us; whether you are in office, on the road or in the toilet. Music helps us promote our culture. My worry is whether they have considered this. They have not approached us, the music scholars. Overtime, it has been understood that music is a money generating project," Dr Ssempijja said.

Cry foul

"Are these people serving individual needs? Who did they consult? Makerere tried to scrap it at our department but later realised how much it has nurtured the country's great talent. Music reflects the needs of the nation and scrapping it off the syllabus will stifle the progress we have had," he added.

During consultations with university vice chancellors across the country last December, President Museveni halted the implementation of the revised curriculum.

The university leaders insisted that the subjects be maintained but proposed that content be reviewed. The curriculum developers were then tasked to go back and modify what they had done.

Speaking at the Education Sector Review conference recently, the Ministry of Education Permanent Secretary, Mr Alex Kakooza, said the students will choose eight to nine subjects upon which they will be examined at the end of the four-year education cycle.

Yesterday, Mr Kakooza said once they agree on the proposals of the new syllabus, it will be one of the government's priority areas for implementation next year.

"We have not yet agreed. We are still in discussions. We are prioritising it next year. We want to deliver. Before next year ends, we shall have made good progress," Mr Kakooza said.