

BY MARIA JACINTA KANNYANGE

KAMPALA. A total of 180 out of 540 special needs learners (SNLs) who sat the 2025 Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) examinations passed, according to results released by the Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb).

The results show that 96 SNL candidates obtained three principal passes, 37 secured two principal passes, and 47 registered one principal pass. Another 31 candidates attained a subsidiary pass.

Eight learners failed the examinations, while two candidates did not sit the final papers.

Of the 540 candidates with special needs who registered for the examinations, 274 were male and 266 female.

180 special needs learners pass UACE

Special needs learners are students with disabilities or learning challenges. They include the blind, the deaf, the physically impaired, those with severe physical impairments, dyslexic learners, and other categories such as accident survivors.

During national examinations, these learners are provided with special support, including additional time and tailored supervision to enable them to complete their papers.

The Executive Director of Uganda National Examinations Board, Mr Dan Odongo, said the number of SNLs who sat the examinations last year increased compared to 2024.

In 2024, Uneb registered 437 special

needs candidates for the UACE examinations. Despite the increase, the over-

REGISTERED CANDIDATES

A total of 166,400 candidates registered for the 2025 UACE examinations compared to 141,996 candidates in 2024, representing an increase of 24,404 candidates, or 17.2 percent.

Of the registered candidates, 72,764 (43.7 percent) were female, while 93,636 (56.3 percent) were male.

all number of special needs learners sitting national examinations remains relatively small due to several challenges. Many children with disabilities of school-going age remain out of school because of a shortage of specialised teachers and facilities suited to their learning needs. The cost of training and supporting SNLs also remains beyond the reach of many parents.

Curriculum issue

The Executive Director of the National Union for Persons with Disabilities of Uganda, Ms Esther Kyozira, said the learners who sat their examinations last year might have performed better if the new curriculum had adequately

catered for learners with special needs. "The curriculum came in a rush and was forgotten as it was designed," Kyozira said.

"When it was implemented, many subjects were picked while others were dropped, yet the learners were not familiar with them," he added.

She added that teachers handling special needs learners were not given adequate training to effectively implement the new curriculum.

Ms Kyozira called on the National Curriculum Development Centre to pay greater attention to learners with special needs when designing curriculum order to improve their chances of success.

"The teachers were not trained; much of the training was conducted online with some teachers being left out," she said.