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BY BUSEIN SAMILU

The results of the 2025 Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) released by the Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb) yesterday show a marked improvement, with 98.9 percent of learners qualifying for a certificate. There was an overall improvement in performance in 2025 compared to 2024. This was most noticeable in terms of the number of principal passes.

"University admissions to degree courses have, up to date, been considering two principal level passes as the minimum requirement. If this consideration is maintained, 113,291 (68.9 percent) qualify to be admitted, compared to 92,273 (65.5 percent) in 2024," Mr Dan Odongo, the Uneb executive director, said.

He added: "This is consistent with the fact that there was a significant increase in entries for the examination in 2025. An extra 21,018 university places should be available to absorb these. In cases where one principal and two subsidiary pass levels are considered for admission to other tertiary institutions, for example, TVET institutions offering diploma level programmes, 145,129 (87.9 percent) candidates will qualify."

Further breakdown shows that 60,607 boys scored both two and three principal passes compared to 52,684 girls. The number of male candidates with three principal passes is 36,615, while 23,992 got two principal passes. For girls, 32,291 got three principal passes, and 20,393 got two.

The boys still scored a single principal pass compared to girls. Anyone who scores one principal pass is eligible to be enrolled to study for a certificate in a tertiary.

In terms of general performance, the girls outperformed the boys. Boys accounted for 68 percent of the 1,891 total candidates who failed the examination, according to the UACE results.

"Proportionally, female candidates have performed better than their male counterparts. The percentage passes at the upper levels (3P and 2P) are higher, while the percentage passes at the lower levels and the failure rate among female candidates are lower than for the males," Mr Odongo said.

Subject performance comparison

This newspaper's analysis of the major subjects, highlighting the number of As scored, indicates that the girls outperformed boys in arts subjects of History and Entrepreneurship, while more boys scored As in the science subjects of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics compared to girls.

Boys also performed well in Geography and Economics. For instance, in History, 1,198 girls scored As compared to 858 boys. There were also 563 girls with (A) scores in entrepreneurship than 508 boys.

In Geography, there were 402 boys with (As) compared to 363 girls, and as well 534 girls and 594 boys respectively scored an (A) in Economics.



Huzaifah Kaliba of Kibuli SS, who scored 19 points in PMArt / ICT, with his parents Hussein and Gladys Sebiddo.
PHOTO/ ABUBAKER LUBOWA

98% qualify to get UACE certificates

In science subjects, more (As) were registered in Mathematics, followed by Biology, and Chemistry, while the list was in Physics. For Mathematics, 6,363 out of the 45,130 boys who sat for the paper scored an (A) while 2,675 girls out of the 25,002 that sat for the same subject also scored A.

In Biology 2,109 candidates out of the total 35,630 who sat for the paper scored (A), where 1,551 of these were boys. A total of 1,449 boys bagged (A) scores in Chemistry compared to 536 girls. Some 37,134 candidates sat for this subject. Physics had the least (As), attributable to 681 boys and 70 girls out of the total 21,302 candidates who sat for the subject.

"Female entries for the Sciences and Mathematics are lower than for the males, consistent with the fact that overall female entry is lower than that of the males," Mr Odongo revealed.

Candidature increase

A total of 166,400 candidates registered for the 2025 UACE examination compared to 141,996 candidates in 2024, an increase of 24,404 candidates, translating to 17.2 percent. Of these, 72,764 (43.7 percent) were female, and 93,636 (56.3 percent) were male.

Mr Odongo said the UACE examination centres increased by 8.7 percent from 2,255 in 2024 to 2,452 in 2025.

The actual number of candidates who appeared for the examination was 165,172 compared to 140,884 in 2024, indicating an increase of 24,288 candidates. Of these, 72,374 (43.8 percent) were female, and 92,798 (56.2 percent) were male.

"At this level, the number of female candidates has consistently been significantly lower than that of the males," Mr Odongo said.

The number of candidates registered under the Universal Post O-Level Ed-

ucation and Training (UPOLET) programme, he said, was 42,327, which is 25.4 percent of the total candidature compared to 35,652 (25.1 percent) in 2024.

Humanities attract more learners

In his speech, Prof Celestino Obua, the Uneb board chairperson, said performance patterns across subjects have remained broadly consistent with previous years.

"The humanities continue to attract a larger proportion of candidates compared to the Sciences. While recognising the indispensable role of the humanities in nation-building, the board reiterates the strategic importance of Mathematics and the Sciences in driving innovation, industrialisation and technological advancement," he said.

"Sustained investment in science infrastructure, teacher capacity and laboratory resources remains critical to building a robust pipeline into tertiary STEM programmes. Although enrolment in STEM subjects shows a gradu-

al upward trend, deliberate multi-sectoral interventions will be required to achieve national targets in science and technology development," he added.

Ms Museveni impressed

While releasing the results, the Minister of Education and Sports, Ms Janet Museveni, lauded the girls' performance, describing it as a remarkable achievement.

"I am particularly impressed by the steady increase in the number of girls taking science subjects, and that they have done very well. This demonstrates that there is nothing mysterious about Mathematics and Sciences. What we now need is more encouragement and the presence of role models," she said.

She added: "...while I fully recognise the invaluable role of the humanities, in shaping societal morals, inculcating business and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, promoting cultural awareness and nationalism, I believe, as I am sure you all do, that STEM subjects are the bedrock for industrial development."

Ms Museveni's ministry, through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), she said, has embarked on reforming the UACE curriculum, where excess and unnecessary content has been removed, and duplication of information across subject areas has also been addressed.

"From the release statement, comments on the work of candidates indicate that they do not relate the knowledge acquired to real-life situations in their communities," she said.

"Education must not be about acquisition of knowledge per se, but about how knowledge helps us to be creative, productive and able to find solutions to the problems in our communities and country," she added.

MALPRACTICE

Fewer cases...

Prof Obua revealed that the 2025 UACE examination registered comparatively few cases of examination malpractice, which reflected strengthened supervision mechanisms, enhanced security protocols and greater awareness among candidates and schools regarding the consequences of examination malpractice and irregularities.