

Teens Buzz

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Dear S.6 vacists, results are out — What next for you?

Finishing Senior Six marks more than the end of high school. It is the beginning of a transition into adulthood, where the choices you begin making will shape the direction of your future. How you go from here means a lot for you.

BY PATRICK SSENTONGO

With the release of the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) results on Friday by the Uganda National Examinations Board, thousands of Senior Six finalists across Uganda are stepping into a new chapter. If you are among those that received their results, chances are you are feeling a mix of emotions, relief, excitement, pride, and perhaps a little uncertainty. After years of school routines, uniforms and examinations, the elephant in the room now is what comes next for you?

Finishing Senior Six marks more than the end of high school. It is the beginning of a transition into adulthood, where the choices you begin making will shape the direction of your future. For many students, the immediate thought is university and rightly so. Admission through the Public Universities Joint Admissions Board remains a major aspiration for those who meet the required points.

Public universities such as Makerere University, Kyambogo University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology continue to attract thousands of applicants every year.

If your results place you in line for that opportunity, you may soon find yourself preparing for the next academic journey, one that is very different from the structured environment you have just left behind.

The campus dream, and the reality

If university is your next step, you have probably already imagined what campus life might look like. Most of you picture independence, new friendships, vibrant social scenes and the freedom to make your own decisions. In many ways, that picture is true. University life introduces you to a wider world where you meet people from different regions, backgrounds and cultures.

But campus is also a space that demands maturity. Unlike secondary school, where teachers closely monitor your schedule, university places much of the responsibility on you. Lecturers (that's how we call them here lol) will not chase you for missed lectures (not classes), and deadlines will not shift simply because you forgot about

assignment. For the first time, you will be managing your own academic discipline.

This freedom can feel exciting, but it also tests your ability to stay focused. Some students adapt quickly and thrive in independence, while others struggle to balance the social side of campus with the academic expectations. The key lesson you will learn early is that success at university often depends on how well you manage your time.

Exploring other paths beyond University

Even so, university is not the only path available after Senior Six. If your results did not align with your original expectations, or if you are considering a different direction, it is important to remember that there are several meaningful options open to you.

Across the country, technical institutes and vocational training centres are increasingly offering practical courses that equip students with specialised skills. Fields such as electrical engineering, automotive mechanics, hospitality, fashion design and digital technology are becoming popular choices for young people seeking hands-on training that can lead directly to employment or entrepreneurship.

For some students, these skills-based programmes provide a faster route into the world of work. In a labour market that increasingly values practical competence, the ability to design, repair, build or create can open doors just as

effectively as a university degree.

You might also discover opportunities in short professional courses, particularly in emerging fields such as digital marketing, photography, graphic design or content creation. These skills are shaping new career paths, especially for young people interested in new technology and the creative industries.

Learning the real lessons of independence

Wherever your journey takes you, the period after Senior Six will introduce you to new responsibilities. One of the first lessons many young people encounter is financial discipline. If you eventually join university or begin living away from home, you will quickly realise that managing money becomes an important life skill.

Daily expenses such as transport, food, study materials and accommodation require careful planning.

Many learn the importance of budgeting during this phase, sometimes through trial and error. For some, this is also the time when small side ventures

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begin to take shape, whether through freelance work, small businesses or part-time opportunities.

Beyond finances, the social environment you enter will also shape your experience. Whether at university, a vocational institute or in a workplace setting, you will meet people with different lifestyles, ambitions and perspectives. Some friendships will inspire you and push you to grow, while others may test your judgement.

This is why mentors and educators often remind you that the company you keep matters. Surrounding yourself with people who respect your goals and encourage your growth can make a significant difference during these formative years.

For some of you, the best decision after Senior Six may even be to pause briefly before committing to a long-term path. A well-planned gap year, internships, volunteering or short-term training programmes can provide valuable exposure and help you better understand your interests before making major decisions about your career.

Ultimately, your UACE results are an important milestone, but they do not define the limits of your potential. What matters most is how you use the opportunities ahead of you. As you hold your results and begin thinking about the future, remember that this moment is not an ending, it is the start of a new journey.

Whether your path leads to university lecture halls, technical workshops, creative industries or entrepreneurial ventures, the choices you make now will shape the person you are becoming.

And as many who have walked this road before will tell you, the real story after Senior Six is not just about the results you received, it is about what you choose to do next. For now, keep grinding.

Hold onto that vac job or start that's earning you a little money. Save part of it—you will thank yourself later when you step into the next phase after the vacation.



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A student celebrates success in an assessment.