Varsity entry cut-off points expected to be stiff

BY NELSON KIVA

Following the improved performance in the 2025 Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) exams, experts have predicted stiff competition for major university courses.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) indicated that if the rule of university admissions to degree courses is maintained at two principal-level passes as the minimum requirement, 113,291 (68.6%) out of 165,172 candidates who sat for examinations qualified to join universities.

This represented a 3.1% improvement compared to the 92,273 (65.5%) of students who qualified to join universities in 2024.

"This is a welcome development. The performance indicates that many candidates are eligible for university admission, which in most cases requires only two principal passes. It is, therefore, a great opportunity for universities to enrol students at their maximum capacity, especially those offering relevant courses for the present century," Dr Swaib Kaggwa Nsereko, a mass communication lecturer at the Islamic University in Uganda, said.

Whilst delivering the examination results to the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni, for release at State House Nakasero in Kampala, UNEB executive director Dan Odongo noted an overall improvement in subjects such as mathematics, chemistry, agriculture, geography, economics, biology, and literature in English. He indicated that 41.7% of the candidates achieved three principal passes, 26.9% scored two principal passes, whilst those who had only one principal pass were 19.3%.

"Those who only managed a subsidiary score were 11%, whilst 1.1% of the candidates failed to qualify for a UACE certificate," Odongo said.

Dr Allen Kabagenyi, a senior lecturer in the department of population studies, school of statistics and planning at Makerere University, indicated that many of the best performers will aspire to join Makerere, being the foremost university in the country for key courses such as medicine.

"However, the good news is that we have many universities, including public and private ones. Previously, everyone had to come to Makerere for courses like medicine and pharmacy, but there are now alternatives," Kabagenyi said.

A total of 166,400 candidates registered for the 2025 UACE examinations, representing an increase of 17.2% from the 141,996 candidates who registered in 2024. Of these, 72,764 (43.7%) were female, whilst 93,636 (56.3%) were male.

See lists of cut-off points on pages 34, 35 and 36