

BY MONITOR TEAM

COUNTRYWIDE. Several schools yesterday expressed readiness to admit students who were thrown out by the two-day Senior Five selection and placement exercise, which left over 140,000 qualifying students stranded.

The selection and placement exercise, which kicked off on Tuesday, ended yesterday with 284,620 students enrolled in 2,205 private and government secondary schools.

With 428,628 candidates, part of those who sat for their Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) last year, passing the examinations and qualifying to go to Senior Five, according to the results released by the Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb) last week, admitting only 284,620 students implies that 140,008 were left out.

Although officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports advised these students to try other avenues like joining vocational schools, nursing institutions, and others, officials from various schools yesterday said they would admit these students, provided they meet the criteria.

Mr Wilson Ndeze, the deputy head teacher of Ntare School, said the ministry gave them 120 students, yet their target is to admit 300 students, where 200 shall be given science combinations, while the rest shall be given arts.

"The ministry has given us 120 students, so the rest shall be picked from those who will apply, provided they meet our requirements," he said, adding that the school is admitting students who scored (As) and (Bs) in various subjects.

Mr Emmanuel Kanyope, a teacher at

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school will admit 300 students in Senior Five this year, starting with the 180 the ministry has given them, so the rest will be picked from those who will apply.

"Bweranyange is a school of academic excellence, and without discriminating, our combination we take at least 2As and B at worst, because if you compete, you also need to take in quality," he said.

Bweranyange Girls School and Ntare School are among the top schools that are admitting students, provided they scored (As) and (Bs) in their subjects. In these schools, a student can do a science combination provided they scored at least 2As and a B in the subjects of their chosen combination, while an arts combination is given to a student who has scored at least 2-Bs and an A in the subjects of their combination choice.

According to officials, the Education ministry gave the lists of students who chose their schools as the first choice and scored in the range of their requirements, which is why some of the students who, despite qualifying, are not on the list, and in case such students apply they will be admitted.

Mr Fred Lubwama, the director of studies of Kisowera Secondary School in Mukono, said: "By virtue of the fact

that our school is located within the community and for the community, we shall be using a selection criterion that caters to every learner that comes except those that don't qualify for A-Level; as we advance, we shall adjust to cater for all learners in the community."

The Deputy Head teacher of Bombo SS, Mr Habib Ibrahim, said not all the students they select at the exercise, turn-up, which creates vacancies that are filed by new applicants.

"We're always a bit flexible to those who come at school partly because they have not been placed anywhere and because they actually think they love to be part of us, so we adjust but not so much to at least accommodate a few more students especially from the community around," he said.

Ms Stela Dramaru, from Atapara SSS in Oyam District, said: "When we go back home, we use the same procedure given by the ministry to select other students who also qualified."

Mr Juma Mwariwenka, the head teacher of Bukoyo Secondary School, said: "When you go back at the station, and you get parents with their children coming to find out whether their children can be admitted, we look at what the ministry has given us, or what has been allocated to us and we also look at the capacity, so we may be in a position to admit them at times."

Mr Bakawa Kyeswa, the director of studies at St Kizito Katikamu Kisuule, said: "For us, we admitted the learners based on A and Bs in Sciences, and a few categories can be accepted on a C in Arts, but that is the standard. But sometimes you find that a learner has come up with a recommendation from higher authorities, especially those who supervise us when they are left out, well sometimes we can consider them."

"If there is room, then we can admit more students, and even depending on how they have performed, we can adjust either downwards or upwards, depending on the situation, the capacity and how the learners have performed for that particular year," he added.

By the end of the selection of the exercise yesterday, 101,360 students were expected to be enrolled in 769 government-aided secondary schools under the Universal Post O'Level Education and Training (UPOLET) programme, 18,180 students enrolled in 97 government-aided schools (non-UPOLET), and the remaining 164,280 students enrolled in 1,369 private schools across the country.

Dr Kedrance Turyagyenda, the ministry's Permanent Secretary, said the unabsorbed students will go to vocational and other institutions of learning.

"The skills system is not anything less than that academic system which we have always known, so those big numbers are going to be trained in skills, generate jobs, and support others," she said.

Compiled by Busein Samilu, Vicent Lusambya, Sylvia Katushabe, Moses Ndaye, Jane Nafula, and Ibrahim Manzil

