



basic education

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TO: HEADS OF EXAMINATION
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM SECTIONS
ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE PROVIDERS
SOCIETY OF REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRES
HIGHER EDUCATION OF SOUTH AFRICA
MATRICULATION BOARD
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PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA
AFRICAN PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL TEACHER ORGANISATIONS

CIRCULAR E16 OF 2010

INFORMATION REGARDING THE NEW FORMAT OF THE LIFE SCIENCES NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) EXAMINATION: GRADE 12 2011

1. As indicated in Circular S6 of 2007, the new content framework for Life Sciences is currently being implemented in Grades 10 and 11. In 2011, the new content framework for Life Sciences will be implemented in Grade 12. Hence the need to amend the format of the examination papers for Life Sciences for 2011.
2. The Department of Basic Education wishes to draw your attention to the following aspects relating to the Grade 12 Life Sciences examination question papers for 2011:
 - (a) Weighting of the Learning Outcomes;
 - (b) Sequence of strands/knowledge areas;
 - (c) Weighting of strands/knowledge areas;
 - (d) Format of the examination question paper; and
 - (e) Weighting of the cognitive levels.

WEIGHTING OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES

3. For assessment and examination purposes the Learning Outcomes for Life Sciences in Grade 12, listed in the *Subject Assessment Guidelines for Life Sciences 2007*, are currently weighted as follows:

Current Weighting

| Learning Outcome 1 | Learning Outcome 2 | Learning Outcome 3 |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 40% | 40% | 20% |

4. From **2011** the weighting of the Learning Outcomes for Life Sciences in Grade 12 for assessment and examination purposes will change as follows:

New Weighting from 2011

| Learning Outcome 1 | Learning Outcome 2 | Learning Outcome 3 |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 30% | 60% | 10% |

SEQUENCE AND WEIGHTING OF STRANDS/KNOWLEDGE AREAS

5. With regard to the sequence of strands/knowledge areas, the sequence as outlined in *A New Content Framework for the Subject Life Sciences as listed in the National Curriculum Statement Grade 10 – 12 (General)*, will be followed (Circular S6/2007 of 18 June 2007):

WEIGHTING OF STRANDS/KNOWLEDGE AREAS FROM 2011

6. The following weightings will apply to Grade 12 in **2011**:

| | Grade 12 | Percentage (%) |
|---------|--|----------------|
| Paper 1 | Life at the molecular, cellular and tissue level | 60% |
| | Diversity, change and continuity | 40% |
| Paper 2 | Life processes in plants and animals | 60% |
| | Environmental studies | 40% |

FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION QUESTION PAPER

7. Format of the examination question paper for Grade 12 from 2011

| Sections | Type of questions | Marks |
|----------|---|--------|
| A | Short answer, objective questions for example MCQ, Terminology, columns/ statement and items. | 50 |
| B | A variety of questions types: 2 questions of 30 marks each divided into 3 – 4 subsections | 2 x 30 |
| C | Consists of two parts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data response questions • a mini-essay (may address one or more Learning Outcomes) | 20 |
| | | 20 |

8. The mini-essay would not necessarily address Learning Outcome 3. This outcome could be more appropriately covered elsewhere in the examination question paper under the relevant sections.

WEIGHTING OF COGNITIVE LEVELS

9. The cognitive levels for Grade 12 in **2010** are as follows:
 Lower Order questions (knowledge and comprehension): 50%
 Higher Order questions (analysis, synthesis and evaluation): 50%

10. The allocation of questions to the specific cognitive levels from 2011 will be as follows:

Weighting of cognitive levels for Grade12 examination question papers from 2011

| Category Reference | Level | Cognitive Levels | Percentage |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| A | Lower Order (60%) | Knowledge | 30 |
| B | | Comprehension | 30 |
| C | Higher Order (40 %) | Application | 20 |
| D | | Analysis, Synthesis and evaluation | 20 |

11. You are kindly requested to bring this notice to the attention of all Subject Advisors and Teachers responsible for Life Sciences.
12. The attached Examination Guideline for Life Sciences 2011 document provides guidance on the scope and depth of the content for the four strands/knowledge areas. Please ensure that this examination guideline is distributed to all schools offering Life sciences.

Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.


DR SNP SISHI
CHIEF DIRECTOR: EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT, ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

DATE: 2010 _____ 11 _____ 09

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