

By Conan Businge

# How to weigh your scores entry into university

Three months after Senior Six candidates sat for the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE), the education ministry says the results are ready and will this morning be released by the state minister for higher education, Dr John Chrysostom Musingo.

However, the next question for the students will be whether they qualify to join the university or other tertiary institutions.

According to government policy, a student requires two principal passes to be admitted at a university. But due to the stiff competition, various institutions come up with cut-off points. But how do you calculate the entry points?

About four years ago, the education ministry issued a policy guidelines, requiring all students to reduce the principal subjects from four to three. This is on top of general paper and one subsidiary subject.

Unlike in the past where subjects taken at A'level were grouped in four categories, universities now group them in three categories.

In the past, the admissions board was considering essential, relevant, desirable and others categories; when weighting students, results for admission to public universities. But the 'Others' category has been dropped, in the new admissions guidelines.

For one to be admitted at the university, they must have



Janet Museveni

done a combination of three subjects and general paper, on top of sub-maths or computer studies as a subsidiary. sub-maths and computer studies replaced what used to be the fourth subject in the combination.

### Weighting criteria

The essential subject for the academic programme one applied for weighs three points, the relevant two points and desirable one point.

The essential A'level subjects for university programmes must be passed with a

principal pass.

For a given candidate, not more than three subjects taken at principal level shall be considered in weighing in respect of the cut-off points.

Not more than two subjects shall be designated as "essential".

A pass with a distinction or credit in a subject taken at subsidiary level such as general paper, sub-maths or computer studies shall carry one point. A subsidiary pass ranges from grades D1 to C6.

In case of programmes where "Essential" subjects may be three or more, an "Essential set" of subjects is defined. The best-performed two subjects of the essential set shall be designated as "Essential Subjects" and weighted three. The third best done subject from the 'Essential Set' shall be designated as the "Relevant Subject" and weighted two.

For O'level grades, distinctions 1 and 2 carry 0.3 points, credits 3 to 6 carries 0.2, passes 7 and 8 carry 0.1 and Fail (9) carry 0.0 respectively.

For A'level grades, the conversion scale is A=6, B=5,

C=4, D=3, E=2, O=1, F=0.

### Totalling points

The O'level weight of a candidate for any programmes in the university, is obtained by multiplying the numbers of distinctions/credits/passes, by the relevant weights and

adding up for the distinctions, credits and passes actually obtained by the candidate.

The A'level weight, for a given programme, of a candidate is obtained by multiplying each subject grade point by the relevant weighting factor

and adding up all the subjects taken and passed.

The combined weight of a candidate for a given programme is obtained by adding the O'level weight obtained, to the A'level weight got. The best candidate for each programme is the one with the highest combined weight.

## A student requires two principal passes to be admitted at a university

Candidates are selected on merit out of those who apply for a programme as their first choice plus those who apply for the programme as second, third and fourth choice. If they have not been admitted to programmes of their earlier choices. All choices are considered.

### Other tertiary institutions

As the First Lady and education minister Janet Museveni, said recently, "Success in life is not only about joining university education. You can still make it in life through other tertiary institutions. You may even have better opportunities through those tertiary institutions."

Assuming you wanted to study medicine at a public university, this is how you would calculate your weight.

The essential subjects for bachelor of medicine and bachelor of surgery are biology and chemistry, while its relevant subject is either mathematics or physics. Its desirable subjects are general paper or sub maths.

Assuming you got a distinction in general paper and a point in the subsidiary paper and also scored AAA.

This is how you would calculate your entry score.

### Essentials: Biology

6x3=18

Chemistry 6x3=18

Desirable: Maths 6x2=12

Desirable: General Paper

1x1=1

One more point for subsidiary pass would be added to the score. Your sub-total score would then be 50.

More so, the O'level results also count for university entry. If you got a distinction in each of the considered eight subjects, then that would be (8x0.3=2.4).

The O'level and A'level performance score for such a student would then be 52.4.

## SAMPLE CALCULATION