



Examinations and Competitive Exams in Tanzania

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Introductions

- Education and training in Tanzania is organised under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government and in Zanzibar is organised by the Ministry of Education and Vocation Training.
- Education system is run under the following educational levels: 2:7:4: 2:3+ - two years in pre-primary education, seven years in primary education, four years in ordinary level secondary education, two years in advanced level secondary education and at least three years of tertiary education.
- The body which is responsible for handling national examinations is called The National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA).

The National Examinations Council of Tanzania

- **After Tanzania Mainland had pulled out of the East African Examinations Council, in 1971, National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) was established by the Parliamentary ACT No. 21 of 1973.**
- **NECTA is the agency responsible for the administration of all National Examinations in Tanzania.**
- **It also awards official diplomas for primary, secondary and teacher education.**

The Functions of NECTA

- **To formulate examinations policy in accordance with the principles of education for self reliance and the education and training policy;**
- **To ensure responsibility for examinations within the United Republic of Tanzania and to make provision for places and centres for examination;**
- **To receive from other persons or bodies of persons reports or other materials affecting examinations policy and from time to time to consider and review examinations policy as circumstances may require;**
- **To co-operate with other stakeholders in the orderly development of the examination system in the United Republic of Tanzania;**
- **To conduct examinations for, and to grant, diplomas, certificates and other awards of the council;**
- **To act as the body which facilitates, administers and supervises foreign examinations in Tanzania.**

Types of Examinations in Tanzania

- **At each level of education, a variety of teacher-made tests are offered to suit various specific educational purposes.**
- **Most of these tests are administered for formative evaluation while others are summative evaluation.**

1. Primary school cycle

Within the primary school cycle, there are at present two official examinations which are conducted on a large scale:

i. Standard IV Examination

This is conducted regionally to identify pupils' mastery of the 3Rs and the results thereof are used to make decisions for promotion or repetition.

ii. Standard VII Examination

- This is a Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE).**
- It is prepared and administered by the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA).**
- Mark the completion of the primary education cycle.**
- The examination is used for selection of students into secondary education.**

2. Secondary school cycle

Within the secondary school cycle, there are three official examinations conducted on a large scale:

i. Form 2 Examination

The Form 2 examination is essentially used for diagnostic purposes and continuous assessment in the O-Level secondary education.

ii. Form 4 and Form 6 examinations:

- The Form 4 and Form 6 examinations mark the completion of the secondary education cycles.**
- The results of these two types of examinations are also used for selection of students for further formal education, training and direct employment.**

3. Teacher education

- a) Examinations for Teacher Education programme include:
- i. Grade A Teacher Certificate Examinations (GATCE) for student teachers prepared to teach in primary schools.
 - ii. Diploma in Secondary Education Examinations (DSEE) for student teachers prepared to teach in secondary schools.
- b) Student are assessed through:
- Continuous assessment - exercises, tests, portfolios, seminar presentations, report writing and teaching practice (Micro teaching, single lesson, and block teaching) – 30% of the final grade.
 - Final (National) Examination -70% of the final grade.

Challenges in Examinations

- Nature of assessment tools versus curriculum orientation;
- Teachers' competence in preparing quality assessment tools;
- Overemphasis in the use of written assessment tools;
- Much emphasis on assessing cognitive aspects (very little on affective and psychomotor);
- Great school, gender, regional and district variations in pass rates.
- Competition between schools, districts, and regions.
- Persistent poor performance in math, science and English Language;
- Mismatch between the quality of continuous assessment tools and the final examinations;

Challenges in Examinations (contd.)

- Drilling pupils/students with a lot of tests (weekly, monthly, mock);
- Lack of timely and regular assessment feedback from NECTA to schools;
- Face validity – test items not appearing relevant, logical, to the extremely diverse clients;
- Truancy among candidates;
- Cheating.