

The review examines subject content, teaching methods, and assessment approaches to ensure consistency across education levels.

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The government has set the ball rolling on a major reform of the education system, with the Primary School Curriculum under review to align with O-Level learning as the country deepens its shift to competency-based education.

Speaking during the release of the 2025 Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results on Friday, the Minister of Education and Sports, Ms Janet Kataaha Museveni, said the reforms aim to ensure learners acquire practical knowledge and skills that prepare them for lower secondary education and real-life problem solving.

"From the Executive Director's (Mr Dan Odongo, Uganda National Examinations Board) report, the examination emphasised the competency-based learning approach that the country has adopted, and the questions tested knowledge, understanding, and application of the knowledge to solve problems in the community," Ms Museveni said.

This is the direction we are heading, to ensure that the learners at this level are equipped to cope with the requirements of the competency-based curriculum at Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE)," she added.

Primary curriculum under review - govt

The minister stressed the need for teachers to move with the times, noting that the ministry is implementing several interventions to strengthen teacher capacity.

"It is essential for our teachers to adjust their teaching methods. Through the National Teacher Policy, 2019, we are implementing standards via in-service and pre-service training to ensure quality teaching across the country," she said.

As part of the reforms, the ministry has begun reviewing the Primary School Curriculum to ensure alignment with the revised Lower Secondary Curriculum, while also rethinking how learning outcomes at the primary level are monitored and assessed.

Review focus

The review examines subject content, teaching methods, and assessment approaches to ensure consistency across education levels.

Officials at the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) did not comment on the primary curriculum review when asked yesterday, but they had earlier said the Competency-Based Curriculum for A-Level is taking shape, and both teachers and learners must embrace it to make it a success.

Mr Taddeo Bwambale, the spokesperson of NCDC, said the government has poured resources into both O-Level and



Janet Museveni

A-Level competency curricula to ensure Uganda's education system nurtures all-round learners who can hold their own in today's competitive labour market.

Earlier attempts

Earlier attempts (2006) to introduce a Competence-Based Curriculum (the thematic curriculum) at the primary level fell flat, allegedly due to resistance from parents, teachers, and school owners who opposed the use of local languages as a medium of instruction at lower primary.

The Ueb Executive Director, Mr Dan Odongo, said examiners generally ap-

BACKGROUND

Relatedly, the revised Lower Secondary Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), whose implementation commenced in 2020, is designed to prepare learners with 21st-century skills that emphasise practical abilities, critical thinking, and learner-centered education. Last year, the NCDC officially launched the long-awaited two-year aligned Advanced Secondary Curriculum.

preciated the quality of the 2025 PLE papers, noting that they reflected the shift to competency-based learning.

"The papers clearly recognised the paradigm shift. They tested application of knowledge, not just recall," Mr Odongo said.

However, he noted that many candidates hit a brick wall with questions requiring practical application, particularly in Social Studies and Religious Education.

"Candidates found it difficult to apply knowledge to their communities and to Uganda as a whole," he said, attributing the challenge to teachers who are still finding their footing with competency-based methods.

Mr Odongo also raised concern over

the influence of materials produced by so-called examination bureaus and circulated shortly before examinations, saying they mislead both teachers and learners.

Across several subjects, learners struggled with practical competencies such as applying percentages in real-life situations, interpreting texts in English, using scientific concepts in everyday contexts, and applying knowledge of climate, production, and citizenship in Social Studies.

At the school level, teachers say they are trying to prepare learners for the new curriculum despite resource constraints.

Ms Juliet Nakayiza, the head teacher of KCCA Kansanga Seed Primary School in Makindye Division, said her school has embraced training initiatives to introduce learners to competency-based learning.

"We tell our learners that they are shifting from a subject-based to a competence-based curriculum. We try to engage them in practical skills, but we do not have the facilities to fully support this approach," she said.

In Karamoja, Mr Moses Ecweru, the head teacher of Naweet Primary School in Nabilatuk District, said the new curriculum is already helping learners acquire hands-on skills.

"In agriculture, learners are taught how to plant vegetables, and in Social Studies, they conserve the environment by planting trees," he said.