


THE STAR / NEWS

*In this file picture marker Elmarie Delpont is surrounded by Maths examination scripts. Picture Ian Landsberg*

## Basic Education relaxes selection criteria for matric markers due to Covid-19

By Bongani Nkosi  Sep 9, 2020



Johannesburg - Fearing a crippling shortage of experienced matric exam markers due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Basic Education Department has resolved to relax the selection criteria for new recruits.

Director-General Mathanzima Mveli has informed provincial education departments that they can deviate from the standard selection criteria because markers older than 60 and those with comorbidities may not be available.

Marking was scheduled to take place between January 4 and 22 next year.

Mweli pointed out in the circular sent to provinces, and which The Star has seen, that the country's alert level by that stage cannot be accurately predicted.

"The Covid-19 pandemic and the risk-adjusted strategy, would impact on the availability of markers across all provinces, given the risks associated with large gatherings and the large number of educators that are over the age of 60 and those with comorbidities," Mweli said.

Traditionally, those eligible for appointment were Grade 12 teachers with two years' experience on the subject or language they applied to mark.

Mweli not only gave provinces the green light to go on a new recruitment drive "in cases where marker shortages have been identified", he also allowed them to relax the requirements.

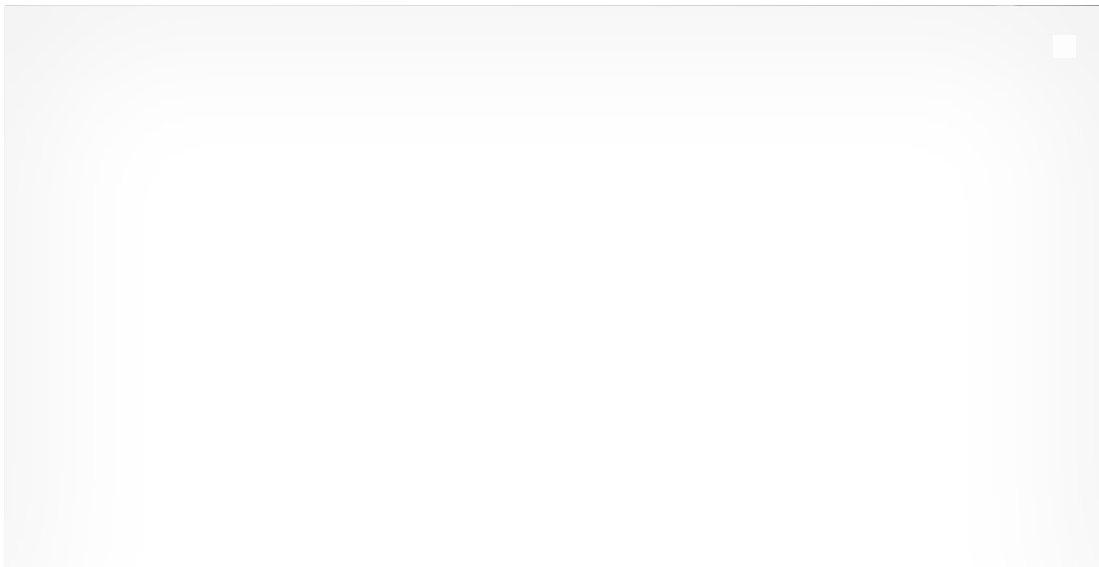
Grade 11 teachers can be appointed for subject marking provided they met some requirements, said Mweli.

"Teachers currently teaching Grade 11, provided that they have taught the subject in Grade 12 for a minimum of two years in the last five years, can be considered for marking," he said.

"However, in the case of languages, Paper 2 (literature), the applicants must have taught the Grade 12 genres being examined in 2020."

Provinces could "exceed the allowed 10% quota of novice markers that can be appointed per subject, per paper", Mweli said.

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“A maximum of 15% of novice markers in a subject, per paper could be appointed.”

Provincial heads could tweak the requirements even further if the shortage ran too deep.

“In exceptional circumstances, where the required number of markers for a subject cannot be achieved, the criteria for the appointment of markers ... may be relaxed by the head of department, provided it does not compromise the quality of marking,” Mveli said.

The National Teachers Union (Natu) cautioned against appointment of Grade 11 teachers over their matric counterparts.

Natu president Allen Thompson told The Star that there were scores of matric teachers who had never been appointed as markers despite applying.

“We’ll support the department provided that all the Grade 12 teachers who applied have been appointed.

“We’re saying before you can talk about Grade 11 teachers, we have so many Grade 12 teachers who applied and have not been appointed,” said Thompson.

The importance of marking the final scripts by teachers could never be overstated, he said.

“You come back a different teacher after marking the matric papers.”

The Grade 11 cohort appointed in addition to the matric teachers would not mean a lowered bar as such, Thompson said.

“We’re not opposed to that as long as people are subject specialists and have experience in the subject.

“They’ll never appoint someone who’s never taught a subject he’s marking, we’ll make sure of that,” he said.

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