



**education**

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**NORTH WEST PROVINCE**

**PROTOCOL ON THE WRITING OF THE  
PREPARATORY EXAMINATION  
UNDER THE COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT**



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## 1. Introduction

The advent of Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated the need for an alternative approach to the general conduct, administration and management of national examinations. It is imperative for officials trusted with the responsibility of administering and managing the writing of examinations to ensure that the necessary precautions aimed at protecting both officials and candidates from contracting Covid-19 are instituted at all centres and venues where the examinations are written. The need to maintain social distancing as one of the strategies instituted by the World Health Organization (WHO) to combat the spread of Covid-19 has a direct impact on the processes followed during the writing of examination. This protocol aims at providing precautionary measures that are to be put in place as guidelines to be followed when managing the following processes during the writing of examinations:

- (a) Preparation of the examination venue (decontamination, adherence to social distancing, provisioning of hand sanitizers, availability of surgical masks)
- (b) Admitting candidates into the examination venue (procedures)
- (c) Invigilation of the writing of the examination (procedures)
- (d) Handling of Examination material
- (e) Management of Irregularities Associated with the writing
- (f) Monitoring of the writing (monitor behavior)
- (g) Management of Scribes and Readers

## 2. Preparation of the Examination Centre

- 2.1 Identify a dedicated SMT member or a senior teacher to lead the screening team as invigilators, candidates and monitors enter the centre premises (at the main gate).
- 2.2 The screening team must ensure that Invigilators, candidates and monitors complete a health profile form everyday they enter the centre premises.
- 2.3 Ensure that an adequate number examination rooms are identified that will enable the centre to comply with COVID-19 protocol on social distancing.
- 2.4 Ensure that adequate furniture is available during writing.
- 2.5 A sanitization station must be set up for use by both candidates and invigilators at each examination venue.
- 2.6 Cordon off the Grade 12 NSC examination rooms from the rest of the classrooms used for internal classes (may use a demarcation tape).
- 2.7 Ensure that the number of invigilators to be used complies with the number of examination rooms, including availability of relief invigilators.



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- 2.8 Prepare reserves in case an invigilator may have to be excluded due to displaying COVID-19 related symptoms (or simply test positive) before the end of the examinations.
- 2.9 Conduct deep cleaning of the identified examination rooms/halls and keep the examination rooms locked to avoid unauthorised entry before examinations/sessions.
- 2.10 Have a deep-cleaning service provider on call in case of emergency.
- 2.11 Prepare masks and sanitisers for invigilators and candidates that will be used during writing. There is a need to have some reserves in case of a candidate who may forget her/his mask at home.
- 2.12 Prepare an isolation room in the event it may be found that a candidate is displaying COVID-19 related symptoms. A system must be developed to ensure that the candidate is invigilated without putting the invigilator at risk by coming into the isolation room.
- 2.13 For designated NSC and SC writing centres, the PED must put systems in place to manage their examinations in compliance with COVID-19 Protocols.
- 2.14 In the event a COVID-19 case is found in a particular examination room, such a venue must be decontaminated before it can be utilized for writing again.
- 2.15 Invigilators and candidates must wear masks at all times in the examination room.
- 2.16 Invigilators must also make sure that the candidates' desks are sanitized before every session.
- 2.17 One invigilator per twenty (20) candidates (in a normal 30 candidate classroom) must be observed.
- 2.18 Ensure that candidates are seated 1.5 m apart from each other along the rows and are also separated by a distance of 1.5 metres between rows.

### **3. Preparation of the Examination Venue**

- 3.1 Disinfect and sanitize all surfaces in all examination venues on a daily basis before each session starts.
- 3.2 Physical distancing of the candidates' furniture should be kept at 1.5m.
- 3.3 Ensure adequate ventilation in the examination venue.
- 3.4 Set up a sanitization station at the entrance of each examination venue.
- 3.5 Ensure that spare masks are available in case of candidates arriving without them.
- 3.6 Adequate Covid-19 signage must be displayed in every examination venue.
- 3.7 Strictly adhere to a ratio of 1 invigilator to 20 candidates when a normal classroom is used as an examination venue.
- 3.8 In case of a hall being used as an examination venue, divide the space in accordance with 1.5 m social distancing requirement and accommodate candidates accordingly. Remember that that the number of candidates should never be more than 30 per invigilator.



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#### 4. Admitting candidates into the examination venue

- 4.1 Candidates must arrive at least one hour before the start of the examination.
- 4.2 All candidates entering the examination centre must wear a face mask at all times.
- 4.3 Should a candidate not have a cloth face mask the candidate will not be allowed inside the examination room.
- 4.4 Screen all candidates before they enter the examination venue. Should a candidate refuse to be screened, he/she will not be allowed into the examination room.
- 4.5 Candidates whose temperatures are higher than the acceptable level (above 38 degrees C) will be isolated for 10 minutes and rescreened. Such candidates will only be allowed into the examination room if the temperature decreases to the acceptable level. Should a candidate's temperature test normal **and** has answered "no" to the five questions, **within the first hour** of the examination session, the candidate must be allowed entry into the examination venue. In the event that a candidate's temperature remains high (above 38 degrees C) he/she will be taken to the sick bay of the centre. (determine protocols for such candidates). Parent/guardian/relative must be contacted to collect the candidate from the examination centre as soon as possible. The candidate will be marked absent **with a valid reason**".
- 4.6 Ensure all candidates adhere to the social distancing protocol of 1.5 meters at all times.
- 4.7 "15 (5) A school that has a large enough facility, such as a school hall, may accommodate more than 50 persons in that facility at a time strictly for educational purposes: Provided that all health, safety and social distancing requirements are complied with."
- 4.8 Candidates must sanitise their hands before admission into the examination venue.
- 4.9 All candidates to wear masks at all times during writing.
- 4.10 Candidates to present their IDs and admission letters before entering the examination room – social distancing of 1.5 metres must be maintained as far as possible.
- 4.11 Candidates should be allowed to bring their own sanitisers into the examination venue. The sanitizer bottles should not be hidden or written on and must be visible to the invigilators, either kept on the desk or on the floor.

#### 5. Invigilation of the writing

- 5.1 Invigilator sanitises her/himself prior to handling of question paper packs.
- 5.2 Invigilator ensures that he/she personally distributes question papers to candidates, and not ask the candidates to pass question papers from one to another.
- 5.3 Candidates must report to invigilator if he/she is not feeling well.
- 5.4 Invigilators must report to the Chief Invigilator if they are not feeling well.
- 5.5 No borrowing of writing materials between candidates are allowed.



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- 5.6 Should a candidate require a bathroom break, she/he have to be accompanied by a same gender invigilator.
- 5.7 On return from the bathroom, the candidate and invigilator must sanitize their hands again.
- 5.8 Invigilators must be on guard to check if candidates are not carrying crib notes on their masks.
- 5.9 Ensure that there are disposable cups in case of the need for a candidate to drink water during writing.
- 5.10 A candidate who brings his/her own water bottle may be allowed provided it is visible to the invigilators and monitors. In such a case, the water bottles must be placed on the floor.

## 6. Handling of Irregularities Associated with the Writing

- 6.1 *A candidate found with crib notes:* Invigilator must confiscate the crib notes. The crib notes must be sanitised before it is safely kept away as evidence.
- 6.2 *A candidate found with a cellphone during writing:* The invigilator must confiscate the cellphone: The cellphone must be sanitized before it is taken away for safe keeping as evidence.

## 7. Handling of Examination Material

- 7.1 Chief Invigilators must ensure that invigilators wear masks at all times during writing and have access to a working sanitization station at each examination venue.
- 7.2 The package of question papers must be sanitized before opening for distribution.
- 7.3 Invigilators must personally distribute question papers to candidates after sanitising their hands. Candidates should not be used to pass question papers and any other examination materials from themselves to others.
- 7.4 Invigilators must sanitise their hands before collecting examination scripts.
- 7.5 Plastic satchels used for batching of scripts should be sanitized before handling.

## 8. Monitoring of the writing

- 8.1 Monitors should arrive at least one hour before the start of the examination.
- 8.2 All monitors are to be screened before entering the examination venue. No monitor will be allowed inside the examination room without being screened. Should a monitor refuse to be screened he/she will not be allowed access into the examination venue.
- 8.3 The screening of the monitors to include providing answers to the five COVID 19 protocol questions. Should a monitor answer “yes” to any one or more of the five questions, the monitor will not be allowed to fulfill his/her duty at the examination centre.



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- 8.4 Monitors whose temperatures are high (above 38 degrees C) will be isolated for 10 minutes and will be rescreened before they are allowed access into the examination venue. Should the temperature test normal on rescreening **and** the monitors responses to the Covid-19 protocol questions were “no”, the monitor will then be allowed access into the examination venue.
- 8.5 All monitors have to sanitize their hands before entering the examination venue and frequently whilst busy executing their duties inside the examination venue such as when checking the IDs and admission letters of candidates.
- 8.6 All monitors must wear face masks at all times inside the examination venue.
- 8.7 Monitors without face masks will not be allowed into the examination venue.
- 8.8 All monitors must adhere to the social distancing protocol of 1.5 metres during monitoring.
- 8.9 Monitoring instruments to be completed electronically and emailed to the PED responsible official.
- 8.10 Monitors are allowed to bring in their own sanitisers into the examination room.

## 9. Closure of Centres

- 9.1 The District Office may request the Provincial Head Office to close a centre when more than 10% of candidates, staff or both have tested positive for Covid-19.
- 9.2 The Provincial Head Office should ensure that an alternative writing venue for the candidates from the specified centre is secured before the next examination sitting.
- 9.3 The Head of Examinations from the affected province must inform the Chief Director: National Assessment and Public Examinations at the DBE immediately when the decision to close the centre has been taken and provide details of how the candidates from the affected centre are being accommodated to continue writing the examination.
- 9.4 The candidates who missed writing of certain papers due to testing positive for Covid-19 should be registered for the subjects they have missed to write during the June 2021 examinations.
- 9.5 Candidates who feel confident to continue with the writing of the remaining examinations on the Timetable after recovery should be allowed to do so. Those who do not feel confident to continue should also be accommodated to write the remaining question papers during the June 2021 examinations.



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## 10. Management of Scribes and Readers

- 10.1 Scribes and Readers should be appointed centrally and deployed to specific centres on request.
- 10.2 The examination room where a candidate who needs the services of a scribe or reader must be fumigated and surfaces should be sanitized before every sitting in the same way as the other examination rooms.
- 10.3 All scribes and readers should wear face masks at all times during writing.
- 10.4 No scribe or reader should be allowed into the examination centre without a face mask.
- 10.5 The Chief Invigilator must ensure that the scribe and the readers are screened upon arrival and that only those who answer favourably to all the Covid-19 protocol questions are allowed access into the examination venue.
- 10.6 A scribe or reader who does not answer favourably to one or more of the Covid-19 protocol questions or display an unacceptably high temperature should not be allowed access into the examination venue.
- 10.7 The Chief Invigilator should ensure that there is an invigilator, who complies with all the protocols as outlined under invigilation above (No. 5), allocated to each of the examination venues where either the scribe or reader has been assigned to provide their services to the candidates.

## 11. Conclusion

This protocol on the writing of the examination amid the Covid-19 pandemic is not a replacement of the policy document and regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination. The protocol deals specifically with the challenges raised by Covid-19 environment. Thus the normal requirements as per the regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of the National Senior Certificate apply except for the clauses that are affected by the need to comply with the international Covid-19 protocols. In an attempt to minimize the rate of Covid-19 infection amongst both candidates and officials, examination officials and other members of staff involved in the administration of examinations should ensure that this protocol is followed during the writing of examinations.



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