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Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **REPORT ON THE TARGETED SUPPORT PROVIDED TO CANDIDATES WRITING THE 2018 NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION IN ECONOMICS**

24 December 2018

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# **REPORT ON THE TARGETED SUPPORT PROVIDED TO CANDIDATES WRITING THE 2018 ECONOMICS NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) EXAMINATION**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

On 4 November 2018, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) raised concerns regarding a radio revision series on Ukhozi FM that seemed to have provided learners with hints that related to questions in the Economics question paper. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) through its investigation subsequently established that the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education in conjunction with Ukhozi FM hosts a support programme for Grade 12 learners in a number of subjects and utilises experienced and top teachers in the province to host these programmes.

Subsequent to this, a parliamentary question was submitted to the DBE on 22 November 2018 requesting the DBE to respond to a query which involved a possible compromise of the Economics question papers for both P1 and P2 based on a radio programme hosted in KwaZulu Natal, where information relating to the Economics question papers were discussed.

In addition, a teacher from the WCED provided the DBE with an analysis they had carried out of the Spring School Revision Notes prepared for the Northern Cape learners and its relationship to the question paper.

Upon receiving the information above, the DBE instituted an investigation on the matter.

## **2. METHODOLOGY/APPROACH**

The DBE employed a six pronged approach in their investigation to ensure that there was full disclosure with regard to this matter. The following were the areas of focus:

### **2.1. Interview of Presenters:**

The two presenters that hosted the Radio Support Programme on UkhoziFM, together with the Acting Director for Curriculum in the KZN province, were interviewed in order to establish the details of the presentation and to what extent the programme related to the question paper.

**2.2. Evaluation of the Contents of the Radio Broadcast:**

The broadcast (podcast) was requested from the radio station and has been evaluated by the DBE Internal moderators to assess the extent to which the information that was shared with the audience displayed similarities to the question papers. This evaluation, was also intended to make a determination whether the information shared on the radio broadcast could have been put together based on the experience and expertise of the presenter and based on an in-depth analysis of all relevant support material on the subject.

**2.3. Evaluation of the Revision Notes of the Three Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) that were mentioned by the Presenters:**

The presenters mentioned that in their preparation for the broadcast, they used revision notes of the three PEDs namely, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape. The DBE evaluated these revision notes in order to determine whether the material had a direct bearing on the question papers and whether it could have assisted candidates in their preparation for the examination.

**2.4. Interview of the Examination Panel:**

The national panel members, were interviewed since it appeared that the revision notes emerged from PEDs where these examiners were located. The interview included the various roles which the examiners/internal moderators perform in the provinces relating to compiling revision notes or sometimes conducting radio broadcasts to prepare learners for Examinations. The DBE interviewed all national panel members to determine whether they in any way could have been compromised relating to the Economics question papers.

## **2.5. Investigative Marking**

A sample of scripts from the following PEDs was subjected to investigative marking by DBE subject specialists in the affected provinces

:

- (a) KwaZulu Natal
- (b) Mpumalanga
- (c) Northern Cape
- (d) Western Cape
- (e) Gauteng

## **2.6 Analysis of the Candidate Performance in the three PEDs**

Given that that five of the provinces, viz. Northern Cape, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal are linked to the revision notes, it was considered necessary to analyse the performance of candidates in Economics Paper 1 and Paper 2. The performance in Economics was compared to performance in other subjects taken by these candidates and to the performance of these candidates in the preparatory examination and their School Based Assessment (SBA)

## **3. FINDINGS**

### **3.1 INTERVIEW OF THE UKHOZI FM PRESENTERS**

On 8 November 2018, the DBE conducted a telephonic interview with the Acting Director for Curriculum in KwaZulu Natal (KZN), Ms Z Buthelezi, and the two radio presenters, Mr L Nene (teacher at Sithabile High School) and Ms N Majozi (teacher at Emachobeni Secondary School). The interview was chaired by Ms P Ogunbanjo (Director: Examinations and Assessment) and Ms NE Nobongoza (CES in the Item Development Unit) was also present.

Both the presenters confirmed that they only saw the question paper for Economics examination after it was written and Ms Majozi indicated that she had even analysed the paper. Mr Nene had not studied the paper in detail at the time of the interview. In terms of their preparation for the radio broadcast, they indicated that they have been doing the radio broadcast for the past five years. They also indicated that they use various material/resources, including the Examination Guidelines, past question papers (NSC November 2017, NSC Supplementary 2018 and the SC June 2018 question papers), the provincial Preparatory Examination papers, as well as the revision notes from Mpumalanga and Gauteng province. An in-depth analysis of these resources assists them to provide candidates with a good indication of what to expect in the paper and they often provide learners with possible questions that may appear in the question paper. They confirmed that they had no access to the question paper prior to the examination, and all the content and the topics that they emphasized on the radio broadcast was as a result of their own analysis of the resource material mentioned above and the trends in the topics and questions that appeared in previous question papers.

On 28 November 2018, a follow up interview was conducted with Ms Majozi and Mr Nene to check whether in their preparation they made use of revision notes from all PEDs or just the two PEDs mentioned. The presenters confirmed that they also used revision notes from the Northern Cape Education Department., however their focus was on the Mpumalanga and Gauteng revision notes. They also indicated the following:

- (i) Some of these notes were available from the websites of the PEDs and others were given to them by other teachers and subject advisors who are part of their Cluster Group.
- (ii) These notes would have been shared at their own sessions that they would have convened with teachers.

The Presenters also emphasised the point that an experienced teacher based on the historical analysis of past question papers will be able predict some of the questions that will appear in the current question paper.

### **3.2. EVALUATION OF THE RADIO BROADCAST**

The recording of the radio broadcasts were made available and evaluated by the two DBE internal moderators to ascertain whether there were similarities between the radio broadcast and the question papers. A thorough evaluation was conducted and the team compared the contents of the broadcast to that of the question papers. From the report, it is clear that the presenters focused on the two essay topics which appeared in Paper 1 and Paper 2 and each of these questions comprised 40 marks in each paper.

### **3.3. EVALUATION OF REVISION NOTES FROM THE THREE PEDS (MPUMALANGA, GAUTENG AND NORTHERN CAPE)**

**A summary of the findings from the evaluation of the revision notes of the three provinces is provided below.**

#### **3.3.1 Mpumalanga Revision Manual (Spring Camp)**

The compiler of the notes in Mpumalanga is one of the national panel members for Economics, Ms P Makgeru. She developed a 42 page manual which was designed to assist learners attending the Spring School. The evaluation of the notes lead to the following findings:

- Not all topics from the CAPS were covered in the revision notes. Selected topics were covered in the revision notes and other topics were excluded.
- Certain content areas covered in the Revision notes did not correspond with the question papers.
- There were no questions in the notes that appeared verbatim in the question paper.

- The notes provided learners with a description of the scope of the content which covered topics that appeared in the paper in the main and those that did not appear in the paper.

The evaluation showed that candidates would have benefitted from the notes relating to both papers, like any other resource in Economics, but there was no direct similarities between the areas covered in the notes and the question paper.

### **3.3.2 Gauteng June P1 2018 Paper**

The Economics subject coordinator at the Head Office in Gauteng confirmed that she did not utilise the services of the national examiner in the compilation of the revision notes in 2018. He was involved in developing the notes for 2017. For 2018, the national examiner was only involved in setting the June 2018 question paper for Paper 1 for his district (Ekurhuleni South District). The June 2018 P1 for the district was evaluated and it covered a few topics that appeared in the final question paper. It needs to be noted that the June paper covers a little more than 50% of the Curriculum and therefore the questions contained in this question paper would not have benefitted candidates much since the June paper does not cover all the content.

However, it is of concern that the cartoon that appeared in the June Paper 1, also appeared in the final November paper, even though the questions were completely different. This June paper also included the essay on the “demand side approach” which also appeared in the Final November examination. It would therefore appear that a similar resource was utilised by the examiner in setting the June paper as well as the November 2018 paper.

### **3.3.3 Northern Cape Spring notes**

In the case of the Northern Cape, questions for the Spring School was compiled by a teacher at one of the schools as requested by the Chief Examiner of the National Panel for Economics P1 and P2. He confirmed that after she had compiled the

questions he amended the questions in certain cases so that they resembled the question in the final question paper. For example, there was a, essay question that stated: Discuss the features underpinning forecasting”. He then added: “Discuss the features underpinning forecasting, excluding the economic indicators” and this is how the question appeared in the question paper. Three learner and three Teacher Guides were produced.

From the evaluation of the Learner Guides, it is clear that there were some similarities in certain questions with the final question papers which appeared in the final November examination. However, according to the Chief Examiner the Learner Guides and Teacher Guides were only distributed to the learners and teachers at the Spring School. There were 212 learners at the Spring School for Economics. The DBE has been provided with a list of the learners at the Spring School.

#### **3.4. INTERVIEW OF THE EXAMINATION PANEL**

Mr Olivier (Chief Examiner); Mr Gouws (Examiner) and Ms Makgeru (Examiner) were interviewed. These are the three members of the panel that were involved in the drafting of the revision notes/question papers. All three of them indicated that their intention was to support learners as part of their subject advisory role and they had no inkling that this will be construed as providing an unfair advantage to these candidates

#### **3.5 INVESTIGATIVE AUDIT**

Investigative marking was conducting in the five (5) provinces to ascertain if the candidates had an unfair advantage and the impact of the radio broadcast and notes provided to learners. The table below shows the sample of the scripts audited per province during the investigation.

In all provinces a random sample of centres were selected but where necessary certain centres were purposively sampled for special focus. E.g centres from certain districts where members of the examination panel are subject advisors.

**TABLE 1: SAMPLE OF CENTRES FOR INVESTIGATIVE MARKING**

PROVINCE	DISTRICTS	CENTRES SELECTED IN THE SAMPLE	SPECIAL FOCUS CENTRES
GDE	15	2 centres per district for 14(28)	Ekurhuleni South ( 7 centres)
MP	4	7 centres per district for 3 districts (21)	Nkangala (14 centres)
KZN	12	4 centres per district for 10 districts (40)	Ilembe (7 centres) Ulundi (8 centres)
NC	5	7 centres per district ( 35)	
WC	10	3 centres per district for 9 districts (27)	Metro south( 8 centres)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>37</b>

The following is a summary of the findings from the investigative marking per province.

### 3.5.1 GAUTENG

#### Paper 1

- Question 2: The average score for centres audited was 33%.
- Question 3: The average score was 48%
- Question 4: 69% of all audited centres performed well.
- Question 5: Although Question 5 appeared in the notes handed to learners during the Spring School, the indicators were included as part of the question but the 2018 examination paper excluded the indicators.
- Question 6: Candidates performed extremely poorly. A similar question appeared in Economics June P1 of the Ekurhuleni District in Gauteng. An evaluation of the Ekurhuleni centres did not show any benefit to candidates.

### Paper 2

- Question 5: Candidates performed very poorly compared to Question 6. Graphs were included in the discussion of the main part of Question 5. Candidates could not draw the graphs.
- Question 6: Candidates performed fairly well in Question 6. This was a popular question throughout the country.

## **3.5. 2 KWAZULU NATAL**

### Paper 1

- The majority of the candidates answered Q5 (essay) in P1
- In Question 5, 36 candidates from 48 centres scored below 50%
- In Question 6, candidates in 18 centres scored below 50%
- Candidates at 37 centres scored below 50% in Section B

### Paper 2

- The essay was answered by the majority of candidates is Question 6.
- In Question 5, candidates at 9 centres scored below 50% and candidates 12 centres scored 50% and above
- In Question 6, candidates at 3 centres scored below 50% where-as candidates at 32 centres scored 50% and above
- Candidates at 37 centres scored below 50% (average) for Section B
- There is no clear trend that candidates at all centres performed well across the both papers
- Essays were generally better performed, however these are usually drilled in the classroom.
- Candidates at some centres did well in a group of questions whilst others did not perform as well.
- Tourism in paper II seemed to be an easy topic for most candidates and responses seemed to be from Mind the gap which usually assists most of the low achievers in Economics.

### **3.5.3 MPUMALANGA**

#### Paper 1

- For all questions in section B (Question 2, 3 and 4), performance was varied amongst candidates from low to high revealing no specific trends.
- Most candidates did not do well on the multiplier and could not calculate or apply it in practice, e.g. in Question 2.5 (higher order calculation and application)
- In question 4, Question 4.2 (data base), candidates could identify the curve and performed better than in other questions in Question 4.
- In Question 5 (essay) most candidates included the indicators, although it was specifically excluded from the question paper.

#### Paper 2

- No evidence of anomalous patterns were detected in the scores or performance in the sample audited/ moderated
- The average performance in both Paper 1 and Paper 2 was better in section A, followed by section C (essays) and lowest in section B. This is an expected trend as section A is generally short answers and objective type questions.
- Overall the general performance did not show any anomalous improvements.

### **3.5.4 NORTHERN CAPE**

In the Northern Cape thirty centres (30) were audited.

#### Paper 1

- Fourteen (14) centres performed poorly in the Essays (below 40%)
- This corresponded with the performance in Section A and B.
- No anomalous trends were identified.

- Poor performance was noted in the additional part of the essay (10 marks)
- In Section B learners struggled with the higher order questions
- The performances overall in all centres, in both papers did not reveal any conclusive trends in linking the performance to the support material provided.
- The performance in the key questions i.e. the 8 mark –higher and middle order questions and additional parts to the essay showed no trends linking them to the support material.

### **3.5.5 WESTERN CAPE**

A total of 24 centres, in 8 districts with 2 083 candidates were audited.

#### Paper 1

- There were 22 centres which were audited.
- In 13 of the 22 centres there was an average of less than 40%. These districts did not show any anomalous trends.
- Performance in questions 2 and 3 was generally consistent with Q1 and revealed no anomalous trends. Higher order questions (2.5, 3.5, 4.5), were answered poorly. 2.3 was also answered poorly. Essay questions were also answered poorly.

#### Paper 2

- There were 23 centres audited and the overall performance was better than in P1.
- The most popular essay was Question 6. In most cases nearly all the candidates chose Question 6 (Tourism).
- Nine (9) centres had an average of 45% and less.
- The higher order questions (2.5, 3.5, 4.5) were answered poorly to moderate.
- Question 3.4 and 4.4 were also answered poorly to moderately.

- Performance in Question 2.3 and 4 was consistent with Question 1 and generally poorly answered.

### 3.6 ANALYSIS OF LEARNER PERFORMANCE

#### (i) Economics Papers 1 and Paper 2 comparison (separately) 2017 and 2018

Prov	2017		2018	
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 1	Paper 2
GP	62.6	60.7	62.7	61.8
KZ	56.8	52.8	54.8	57.5
MP	55.4	50.5	51.5	55.3
NC	60.9	55.8	52.4	50.1
WC	60.8	66.4	51.8	66.7
Ekurhuleni South	59.3	57.1	59.9	59.9

NB. Marks out of 150

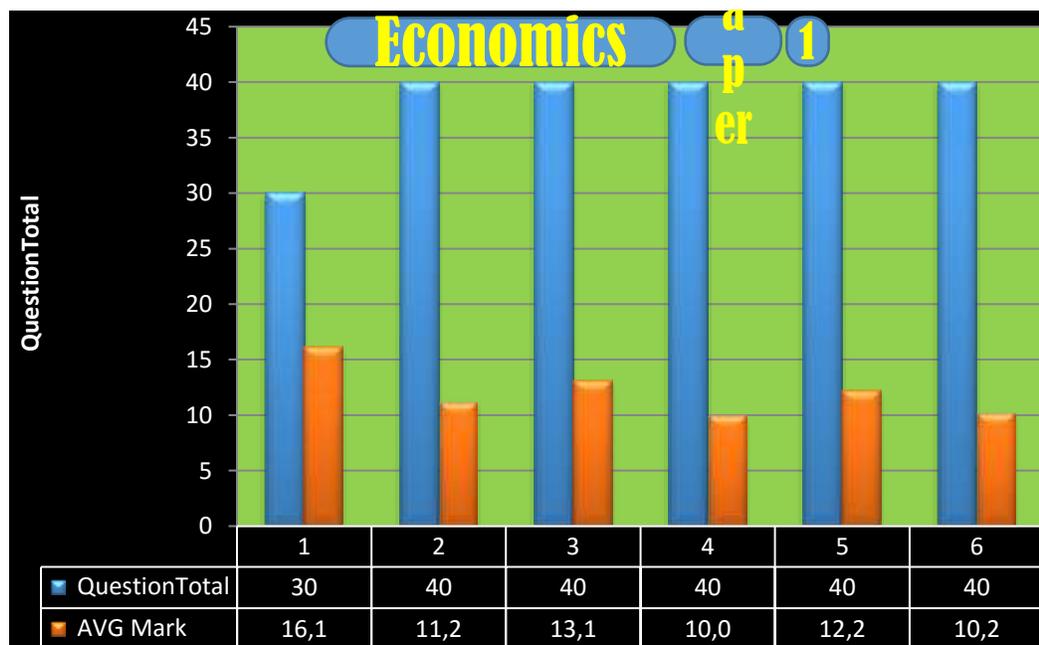
#### (ii) Economics written papers in comparison with SBA 2017 and 2018

Prov	2017		2018	
	Paper 1 + 2	SBA	Paper 1 + 2	SBA
GP	37.8	43.9	37.2	44.2
KZ	31.5	39.0	20.5	38.3
MP	31.0	36.8	29.4	36.4
NC	36.2	41.4	30.9	41.6
WC	40.6	45.5	38.0	45.3
EKURHULENI SOUTH	35.1	39.2	35.7	40.6

(iii) Economics comparison with other subjects on percentages of raw written marks

Prov	Economics		Accounting		Business Studies		Geography		History	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
GP	41.1	41.5	40.5	50.8	40.1	38.7	35.6	37.8	54.8	55.3
KZ	36.5	37.1	32.3	41.7	34.1	32.8	32.3	32.4	46.6	49.0
MP	35.3	35.6	34.7	42.2	31.9	33.6	31.5	33.1	44.3	49.0
NC	38.9	34.2	34.0	43.1	34.3	30.1	35.2	31.9	39.9	46.9
WC	42.4	39.5	41.4	48.6	39.0	36.8	36.8	38.5	54.4	54.9
Ekurhuleni South	38.8	41.5	39.9	50.2	36.4	36.5	33.1	32.8	54.8	51.3

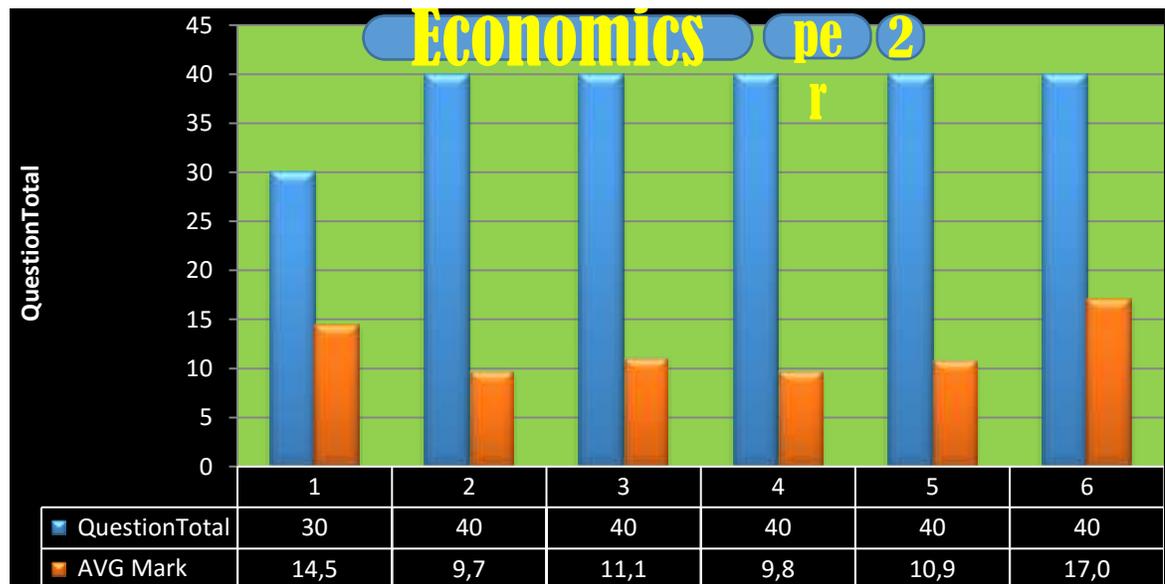
(iv) Northern Cape: Provincial Average



(v) Northern Cape District Average Paper PI

Question Nr	1	2	3	4	5	6
Frances Baard	16,3	11,2	13,7	10,0	10,8	8,0
John Taolo Gaetsewe	16,3	11,0	12,6	8,4	10,1	8,4
Namaqua	16,4	10,9	13,0	12,0	16,4	14,1
Pixley Ka Seme	15,7	11,0	12,5	10,1	11,6	9,2
Z F MGCAWU	15,7	11,9	12,3	10,6	17,9	19,2
PROVINCE AVG	16,1	11,2	13,1	10,0	12,2	10,2

(vi) Northern Cape Provincial Average PII



**(vii) Northern Cape District Average PII**

Question Nr	1	2	3	4	5	6
Frances Baard	14,8	10,5	11,8	9,9	11,1	17,2
John Taolo Gaetsewe	14,2	8,9	9,7	7,7	9,7	19,2
Namaqua	13,8	7,3	10,5	11,5	0,0	17,4
Pixley Ka Seme	14,7	9,4	11,8	10,3	8,4	16,0
Z F MGCWU	13,8	9,0	9,5	10,2	15,1	15,4
PROVINCE AVG	14,5	9,7	11,1	9,8	10,9	17,0

**4. KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

- (i) It is clear that there has been no unfair advantage to any group of candidates
- (ii) The listeners of the broadcast were not limited to KZN: a number of Provincial candidates from Mpumalanga, North West etc. indicated that they had also listened to the broadcast. Ukhozi FM has over 1 million listeners. It therefore cannot be determined who listened to the broadcast across the country.
- (iii) The broadcasts took place from 9 to 10 pm which was very late and it therefore cannot be determined if this was adequate time to impact learner improvement.
- (iv) A number of provincial candidates also indicated they are able to spot some essays following the 3 year cycle plan of Economics
- (v) The notes provided across all provinces included both generic and specific topics and learners utilised these resources as they would other resources in Economics including the Mind the Gap series. The Northern Cape Spring Guides collectively provides an estimated 100 – 120 questions and a few of these appeared in the final question paper. The Mpumalanga revision manual together with the Gauteng paper 1 for June 2018 does not provide substantive resemblance to the papers.

- (vi) Provincial Chief examiners and internal moderators who presided over marking did not identify or report any irregularities or anomalous trends during marking

## 5. CONCLUSION

- (i) The credibility of the Economics Paper 1 and Paper 2, was not compromised given that learners were not given direct questions that appeared in the examination and were not asked to focus on particular questions.
- (ii) Given the nature of the teaching and testing of Economics, which in the main focuses on a pool of questions, it is possible for experienced teachers to predict some of the questions that may appear in the question paper, particularly the essays.
- (iii) An analysis of learner performances does not show any anomalous trends. There is no significant improvement compared to 2017 and in some cases performance is actually lower.
- (iv) It would appear that Economics has taken on an approach of providing learners with a pool of possible questions and this starts with the Examination Guideline that is based on a series of questions. In the same vein, all support programmes are dominated by questions. It would also appear that based on a historical analysis of the previous question papers, teachers and subject advisors are able to predict with some certainty as to which questions will appear in the paper. This refers to examination predictability which warrants further investigation for the next examination.