

**National Testing of Pupils
in Europe:
Objectives, Organisation and
Use of Results**

Malta

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PART I: GENERAL OVERVIEW OF PUPIL ASSESSMENT

The overview that follows concerns Primary Education for ages 4 to 10+ (ISCED Level 1) and Secondary Education for ages 11 to 16 (ISCED Level 2).

ISCED LEVEL 1

At Kindergarten Level (ages 3 to 5) pupil assessment focuses on their physical development, social development, creative development, intellectual development (which includes language and mathematical development) and their understanding of the world around them. At this level there is no formal teaching; the Kindergarten practitioner is responsible for the creation of learning opportunities and assessment activities that are related to the areas of development indicated earlier. Assessment is carried out informally and is based thoroughly on pupil observation. Reporting to parents on the pupils' progress and development is carried out during informal meetings with parents and formally at least once a year.

At Primary Level (ages 5 to 10+) pupil assessment is carried out differently in Years 1 to 3 and in Years 4 to 6. In the first three years of Primary Education assessment is carried out informally and for a formative purpose. Evidence is collected in various ways (pupils' work, portfolios, interviews, presentations, etc) and is used to identify the pupils' achievements and weaknesses. It is used formatively to provide the necessary support to push learning forward. Reporting to parents on pupils' progress is carried out once a year during a formal meeting with parents. In the last three years of Primary Education assessment is both formative and summative. At the end of the scholastic year pupils in Year 4 and 5 in State Schools take compulsory national examinations in Maltese, English, Mathematics, Religion and Social Studies. The results of these examinations are used to stream pupils accordingly in Year 5 and Year 6 ⁽¹⁾. Pupils in Year 6, however, sit their national annual examinations in February and not in June. The majority of these pupils sit also for an optional yet selective entrance examination to gain access into academically oriented schools called Junior Lyceums. Those who pass this examination will secure a place in a Junior Lyceum whilst those who fail or do not take this examination will proceed to a general Secondary School.

Pupils taking up Primary Education in Church and Independent Schools are assessed on similar lines but do not take part in national testing except for a number of boys who opt to sit the selective Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination at the end of Year 6.

Last year the Ministry of Education commissioned a group of experts in assessment to review the transition mechanism from Primary to Secondary and to suggest alternative methods. The report was presented by the group earlier this year and the proposals are currently being discussed at Ministerial level. Any decisions that will be taken will eventually be presented to the public for further discussion before adopting a new transition system.

⁽¹⁾ Streaming on the basis of the results of these examinations has been discontinued as from scholastic year 2008 – 2009.

Amongst various reforms, the report proposes the setting up of a national benchmarking system at the end of Primary schooling for monitoring and auditing purposes.

ISCED 2

As already indicated above, students in State Schools either follow a Secondary Education course in a Junior Lyceum or in a general Secondary School. (Most pupils in Church and Independent Schools proceed with their secondary schooling in Church and Independent Secondary Schools.) Students are assessed both on a formative and continuous basis as well as on a summative basis. Half-yearly examinations are carried out on internally but Annual Examinations are taken on a national basis. Results and progress are communicated to parents twice a year. Schools use these results for student progression from one year to another and for setting purposes in the main subjects, such as English and Mathematics. The Annual Examination taken by the State School students in their final year is used also for certification purposes, using the examination results as a basis for the issue of a school leaving certificate which unfortunately has little currency in the job market.

The national examinations taken at the end of each scholastic year cover quite an extensive range of subjects and areas including, amongst others, Maltese, English, Mathematics, Foreign Languages (1 or 2), Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

Students completing their Secondary Education wishing to pursue further studies at post-secondary level or to secure a certificate that is recognised in the job market, sit for the so called Secondary Education Certificate Examinations administered by the University of Malta. These examinations are intended to be accessible for about 80 % of the student cohort.

PART II: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO NATIONAL TESTING AND ITS POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

In Malta there are three educational sectors, namely, the State, the Church and the Independent. The largest sector is the State sector in which all schools are non-continuous schools, that is, pupils need to transfer from a primary school to a different secondary school. All State primary schools are co-educational schools whereas all State secondary schools are single-sex schools. State primary schools are found in the different towns and villages in Malta and Gozo. Currently, there are two types of State secondary schools: Junior Lyceums and General Secondary schools. In the State system pupils are admitted into the Junior Lyceum in their catchment area if they pass the Junior Lyceum (JL) entrance examination. Pupils who do not pass the JL examination or who do not sit for this examination are admitted to the General Secondary school in their area.

The Church sector is the second largest educational sector in Malta and Gozo. It provides free education, although parents are encouraged to support the schools by giving an annual donation. There are both continuous and non-continuous schools in this sector. Church schools are mainly single-sex schools both at primary and secondary level although there are several co-educational non-continuous primary schools. In the Church sector, the issue of non-continuity affects the majority of boys' secondary schools since most of the girls' schools are continuous schools. Admission into most boys' Church secondary schools is dependent on the pupils' relative performance on the Common Entrance (CE) examination and the number of vacancies available.

The Independent sector has both continuous and non-continuous schools which are all fee-paying. The non-continuous schools are all primary schools. There are no schools in the Independent sector which only cater for secondary school students. There are single-sex and

co-educational schools at both primary and secondary levels in this sector. Admission into an Independent school is non-competitive.

The issue of transition from primary to secondary school is one that preoccupies parents, children, educators and political parties in Malta and Gozo. Currently gaining access into a State Junior Lyceum or a boys' Church Secondary school is dependent on high stakes examinations. There are two clusters of examinations based on the same set of syllabi issued by the Department for Curriculum Management and eLearning within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education: the Junior Lyceum (JL) entrance examination is organised by the State, specifically by the Educational Assessment Unit and the Common Entrance (CE) examination is organised by the Private Schools' Association. It is necessary to point out that the CE examination is not used for entry into all boys' Church secondary schools. A small number of schools still opt to set their own entrance examination. Others have an entry point at the primary level and pupils move on to the secondary sector of the school automatically as is the case in most girls' Church schools. A small number of girls' Church schools also set their own examination for entry at Secondary level with the exception of the only girls' Church school in Gozo which makes use of the CE examination commonly taken by boys.

The reality is such that at the end of primary school, the majority of girls in State schools sit for one set of examinations: the JL examination, though a small number sit for two sets: the JL examination as well as the examination set by particular Church schools (in Malta) or the CE examination (in Gozo). The majority of boys in Malta and Gozo also sit for the JL examination. At the same time, around half of the boys' cohort in Malta and Gozo also sit for the CE examination. The majority of primary school children in Malta and Gozo experience high-stakes examinations at the end of their primary cycle of schooling. The only exceptions are the children who attend Church and Independent schools that have both the primary and the secondary cycles of schooling.

On average, three-fourths of all primary school children in Malta and Gozo attend non-continuous schools. Therefore, the transition affects the majority of Maltese and Gozitan families and is of major significance in the local educational scene.

There were various reforms that took place in the late 1960s and early 1970s that affected the transition from primary to secondary education. Between 1965 and 1969, candidates who passed the Secondary Entrance examination were admitted either to the Government grammar schools of which there were six; two for boys and four for girls, or to the Government Secondary Technical schools, of which there were four; three for boys and one for girls. Other students, including unsuccessful candidates could join one of the fee-paying private schools, most of which were owned and administered by religious institutions. A few unsuccessful candidates could also join one of a small number of Government craft and industrial training centres.

In all schools, the curriculum was geared to prepare pupils for the GCE O-level examinations, irrespective of whether the schools were designated as grammar, technical or private, and the more passes obtained the better; private tuition was used to offer additional subjects. The results showed that a number of pupils managed to obtain a minimal level of success in a large number of subjects.

In 1970 secondary education was extended to all pupils. The secondary school entrance examination took place as usual and the successful pupils were admitted to the Government grammar and secondary technical schools as in previous years. The other pupils who completed Standard IV and Standard V (at ages 12 and 13 respectively) of the primary school were admitted into a number of new secondary schools for boys and girls. With this

innovation, secondary education for all came into operation though there was a clear distinction between the selective schools and the new schools.

The reform continued in subsequent years with a number of reforms, starting with the abolition of all entry tests and examinations in 1972 so that the transition from primary to secondary in State schools became completely non-selective. The Government secondary school system was reorganized on an area basis.

In 1973-74 the Education report noted that all schools had remedial classes in the lower forms, the system of continuous assessment was maintained and the end-of-year examinations were re-introduced. New trade schools were opened. The demand for places in these schools required the introduction of a new selection system for entry into trade schools and technical institutes. In the same year, following the promulgation of the 1974 Education Act, the school leaving age was raised to 15 years and later to 16 years as from 1 September 1974. This regulation brought the school leaving age in Malta in line with that in various European countries. However, the 14-year-old students rebelled against it when they found that they had to stay on at school for another two years. The Education Report for 1974-75 noted that the larger incidence of troublesome students, evidently resentful of the raising of the school-leaving age, coupled with the extra responsibilities and clerical work placed upon school administrations, strained some schools during the year. The response to these challenges was the introduction of formal annual examinations as from June/July 1975 in an attempt to motivate students in their studies and control their behaviour. Further changes in the curriculum and the grouping of pupils took place over the next few years.

The reforms had other repercussions. The number of pupils admitted to fee-paying private schools increased and the distribution of motivated and unmotivated pupils between Government and private schools became unbalanced. The establishment of the Junior Lyceums in 1981 as schools for high fliers can be seen as a measure to redress this balance. With the Junior Lyceums came the JL entrance examination, which in practice meant a return to the selective transition from primary to secondary of the late 1960s based on academic ability. Similarly, the Church secondary boys' schools needed to find a non-discriminatory way of admitting pupils to the limited number of places available as the number of pupils seeking admission kept increasing. The result was the Common Entrance examination, which was held for the first time in 1978. In effect, with the JL and CE examinations, the transition from primary to secondary became even more selective and competitive for a large proportion of boys.

Besides the changes in the mode of transition from primary to secondary, the closing of the Trade Schools in the late 1990s practically meant the loss of the vocational and technical track in secondary education and the return to the academic track as the only type of education at secondary level.

The main aim of the reforms of the late 1960s and the 1970s was the opening of secondary education for all pupils. The main trust was on the academic track and less so on vocational education. This was evident from the increasing number of registrations by students for GCE Ordinary level examinations set by UK examination boards in the popular subjects – English Language, Mathematics and Physics – which had been offered for more than 50 years.

From 1995 onwards, registrations for the GCE O-level examinations declined as pupils started to sit for the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examinations offered by the MATSEC Board of the University of Malta. The SEC examinations in English Language, Mathematics and Physics were first offered in 1992 in a similar format to the GCE O-Level examinations. From 1994 onwards, their format changed to the present one with differentiated

papers. At present about one third of the 16-year-old cohort either do not register for the examination or fail to obtain a certificate in any subject.

The Matriculation and Secondary Education Certificate (MATSEC) Examinations Board was established in 1991 by the Senate and the Council of the University of Malta. The Board was entrusted with the development of an examination system to replace the GCE Ordinary and Advanced level examinations set by UK examination boards. The new board also took over the function of the Matriculation Board which also used to set examinations at Ordinary and Advanced level in a number of subjects. Indeed, the MATSEC Board holds records of Matriculation examinations that go back to the late 19th century.

The composition of the MATSEC Board ensured equal representation of schools and University. A Support Unit was also established in 1991 to implement the policies of the Board after these had been approved by the Senate of the University. The development of the MATSEC system of examinations occurred in two phases. The Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) examination system was introduced in 1994 as an alternative to the previous Ordinary level examinations. Later, in 1997, the Matriculation Certificate system was introduced as an alternative to the Advanced level examinations. With the introduction of an affordable local examination system aimed at students with a wide range of abilities, Maltese educators were being given the opportunity to be more autonomous in establishing an organic and holistic vision of educational practice on the island. It was anticipated that a local examination system would also encourage the development of curricula and textbooks that take local culture and reality into account and hence eliminate cultural bias in examination papers.

The SEC syllabi and methods of assessment set in place in 1994 have two objectives: (a) to be appropriate for a wide ability range, and (b) to preserve existing standards for the more academically able candidates. All examinations consist of two papers: a common Paper 1 taken by all candidates and a choice of Paper 2A or Paper 2B, with Paper 2A intended for candidates of higher ability and Paper 2B for candidates with a lower ability in the subject. Oral examinations are included in the assessment of all modern language examinations. School-based assessment is included in subjects such as the sciences, geography, computer studies, art, business studies, home economics, physical education, textiles and design. While in 1994 only 50.5 % of the cohort of 16-year-olds sat for the SEC examinations, in 2005, this percentage rose to 81.3 %.

The Matriculation Certificate is the admission requirement of the University of Malta. It is based on the premise that students seeking admission to University are more likely to develop into mature persons if their education spans both the Humanities and the Science areas. Students are required to sit for six subjects from various areas in one session of the examination. The choice of subjects includes a language, a humanities or a business subject, mathematics or a science subject, and any other two subjects. The sixth subject is Systems of Knowledge, which is compulsory. Two of the subjects must be at Advanced level, three at Intermediate level and Systems of Knowledge, which is also rated as an Intermediate level subject. Similarly to the case of the SEC examination, a significant and consistent increase in registrations has been noted in the case of the Matriculation Certificate from 1309 candidates, when it was offered for the first time in 1997, to 2455 candidates in 2005.

In 2004, ten years after the first SEC examinations set by the MATSEC Board, the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment commissioned a team to review the objectives, the operations, the impact and the quality of the MATSEC examinations system. The review produced a report, which was published in October 2005 with recommendations on how the system can be strengthened.

In 2006 the Ministry of Education commissioned a group of local experts on assessment to review the transition from Primary to Secondary in the light of a new policy aimed at grouping secondary schools in Colleges intended to remove the rather staccato manner by which students in State schools move from Primary to Secondary education. Consequently the objective behind national testing at the end of Primary schooling now needs to shift from one intended to select students on academic achievement to one focusing on benchmarking and using assessment evidence to enable all children to succeed on the basis of their overall achievement.

PART III: AIMS AND ORGANIZATION OF NATIONAL TESTING

Number of types of national testing identified: 4	
Type of national testing n° 1	<i>ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS</i>
ISCED level 1 and/or 2:	Level 1
1. Aims	<p>To make summative use of results</p> <p>To use results for progression purposes</p> <p>To inform parents of the child's summative achievement for that particular scholastic year</p> <p>To stream children in Years 5 and 6 according to the examination results ⁽²⁾</p> <p>To inform the directorate about the performance of the individual schools in these examinations (for monitoring and audit purposes)</p>
2. Responsible bodies and players	<p>The Educational Assessment Unit (EAU) within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) provides the examination papers which are developed by the subject specialists in the Department for Curriculum Management and eLearning. Examinations are marked at school level by teachers using mark schemes developed by the EAU.</p> <p>The government is responsible for the costs of running the examinations. Candidates pay no examination fees.</p>
3. Timing	June; children aged 8+, 9+, 10+.
4. Target groups	Children in Years 4, 5 and 6 (For Year 6 only the examination is held in February) in State Primary Schools only. These examinations are compulsory, starting at age 8+.
5. Subjects tested	Maltese, English, Mathematics, Religion, Social Studies
6. Links with the curriculum and types of test questions	Examinations are based on the yearly Primary Curriculum. Language examinations test listening and reading with understanding, and writing. The Mathematics examinations test children on Number, Shape, Space and Measures, Data Handling and Problem Solving. Those in Religion and Social Studies test knowledge and application. For more detail concerning the types of test questions, kindly refer to past examination papers posted at http://www.curriculum.gov.mt

⁽²⁾ Refer to footnote 2

7. Use of ICT	Nil during examinations
8. Main users	The State Primary Schools for progression and streaming purposes in Years 5 and 6 Parents, to be informed of their children's progress DQSE, for monitoring purposes
9. Reporting test results	Examination results in the form of marks out of 100 and teacher comments are sent to parents at the end of the scholastic year. Marks are aggregated and are used for streaming purposes.
10. Reforms	Testing of groups of children in Science is being considered for inclusion There is a proposal to stop using the examination results for streaming in Years 5 and 6. Instead, results are to be used formatively in a mixed ability classes. Another proposed reform for the coming years is to shift the Year 6 Annual Examination from February to June and use this examination as a national benchmarking tool for State and non State Schools. As a result the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination will be terminated and replaced by the End of Year 6 Examination.

Type of national testing n° 2:	<i>JUNIOR LYCEUM ENTRANCE EXAMINATION INTO FORM 1</i>
ISCED level 1 and/or 2:	Level 1
1. Aims	To make summative use of results To select pupils at the end of primary schooling at age 10+ to proceed either to a Junior Lyceum or to a General Secondary School
2. Responsible bodies and players	The Educational Assessment Unit within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education develops the examination papers by experienced subject specialists. Papers are externally marked by markers trained by the EAU. The government is responsible for the costs of running the examinations. Candidates pay no fees.
3. Timing	Once a year, in the month of May Children aged 10+
4. Target groups	Children completing Year 6 in State Schools Children completing Year 6 in non-continuous Church/Independent Schools Examinations are not compulsory; they are taken however by about 90 % of children in State Schools and about 35 % of children in Non State Schools.
5. Subjects tested	Maltese, English, Mathematics, Religion, Social Studies
6. Links with the curriculum and types of test questions	Examinations are based on the Primary Curriculum. Language examinations test reading with understanding and writing. The Mathematics examinations test children on Number, Shape,

	Space and Measures, Data Handling and Problem Solving. Those in Religion and Social Studies test knowledge and application. For more detail concerning the types of test questions, kindly refer to past examination papers posted at http://www.curriculum.gov.mt .
7. Use of ICT	Nil
8. Main users	DQSE and the Directorate for Educational Services (DES) for monitoring and placement purposes respectively Receiving Junior Lyceums and General Secondary Schools
9. Reporting test results	Results indicate PASS or FAIL. Results are given in grades ranging from A to E. A PASS is secured by the candidate when grades A, B, or C in the five subjects are obtained. Grades D or E indicates a FAIL in that subject and an overall PASS is not awarded. (Some candidates who do not profess the Catholic faith are exempted from the Religion examination. Likewise expatriates and certain returned migrants are exempted from the Maltese examination.)
10. Reforms	This 10+ selective examination is currently under review. The examination's objective is expected to shift from a selective one to a benchmarking one.

Type of national testing n° 3	<i>ANNUAL EXAMINATIONS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS</i>
ISCED level 1 and/or 2:	Level 1/2 (ages 11 to 16)
1. Aims	To make summative use of results To use results for progression purposes To inform parents of the child's summative achievement for that particular scholastic year To set children in the core subjects according to the examination results To inform the directorate about the performance of the individual schools in these examinations (for monitoring and audit purposes)
2. Responsible bodies and players	The Educational Assessment Unit (EAU) within the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) provides the examination papers which are developed by the subject specialists in the Department for Curriculum Management and eLearning. Examinations are marked at school level by teachers using mark schemes developed by the EAU. The government is responsible for the costs of running the examinations. Candidates pay no fees.
3. Timing	June; students aged 11 to 15+
4. Target groups	Students in State Secondary Schools in Forms 1 to 5 (For Form 5 only the examination is held in February). These examinations are compulsory.
5. Subjects tested	Maltese, English, Mathematics, Religion, Social Studies,

	Science and a range of compulsory and optional subjects in the Arts, Sciences, Languages and Humanities.
6. Links with the curriculum and types of test questions	Examinations are based on the yearly Secondary Curriculum. Questions vary in style but test knowledge, skills, understanding and application. For more detail concerning the types of test questions, kindly refer to past examination papers posted at http://www.curriculum.gov.mt
7. Use of ICT	Nil during examinations except in the case of the ICT examination which is computer based.
8. Main users	All State Secondary Schools for students in Forms 1 to 5 for progression and setting purposes Parents – to be informed about the student's progress Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education to monitor and audit schools' performance The Form 5 Annual Examination is the basis for the issue of the School Leaving Certificate
9. Reporting test results	Examination results in the form of marks out of 100 and teacher assessments marks and comments are sent to parents at the end of the scholastic year. Results are not aggregated.
10. Reforms	None envisaged in the short term in spite of a recommendation in the National Minimum Curriculum to introduce a national benchmarking examination in Form 2 for all State and non State schools

Type of national testing n° 4	<i>SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION (SECE)</i>
ISCED level 1 and/or 2:	Level 2
1. Aims	To make summative use of results To provide certification at the end of Secondary Education
2. Responsible bodies and players	The MATSEC BOARD, run by the University of Malta. This board is composed of representatives from the University Faculty of Education, the Ministry of Education, the Directorate for Quality and Standards (DQSE) and the Non State Schools. The board appoints a number of examining boards for the different subjects; the members on these boards include subject specialists and education officials from the DQSE and non State schools. Papers are marked externally by trained markers guided by centrally developed mark schemes. Candidates pay fees for these examinations which are also partly subsidised by government.
3. Timing	April, May for the first session and a resit session in a limited number of core subjects in September Students completing Secondary education, usually aged 15+ to 16+.

4. Target groups	Students completing Secondary Education in State and non State schools. About 80 % of the student cohort take these examinations.
5. Subjects tested	A wide range of subjects (refer to http://home.um.edu.mt/matsec)
6. Links with the curriculum and types of test questions	The Secondary School syllabi are based on the syllabi published by the Matsec Board. As the examining board provides two differentiated papers, test questions vary in difficulty level and content level. (Refer to http://home.um.edu.mt/matsec/ for sample questions)
7. Use of ICT	Nil
8. Main users	Post Secondary Institutions for admission purposes (Junior College, Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology, Institute of Tourism Studies, Higher Secondary School, etc) Employers requesting qualifications
9. Reporting test results	An official certificate is issued bearing the grades achieved in the different subjects
10. Reforms	The 2004 Matsec Review Report recommended various reforms amongst which is the need to introduce a third differentiated paper to cater for lower ability pupils remaining without any kind of certification. The introduction of the use of ICT to assess ICT skills and the use of e-assessment was another proposal. None of the proposals in the Review Report have been implemented so far as these are still under consideration by the Ministry of Education. For more details please refer to http://www.education.gov.mt/ministry/doc/pdf/matsec/matsec_APPENDIX_C.pdf and http://www.doi.gov.mt/en/press_releases/2005/12/pr1860A.asp .

USES OF NATIONAL TEST RESULTS

As already described earlier, the test results are used:

- for progression and transition purposes
- for monitoring and auditing purposes
- for certification purposes and employability

Note:

No formative use is made of the national test results except in the case of the Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination. Students who fail are offered the possibility to demand a revision of paper and view their mistakes together with the examiner.

Test results are not combined with teacher assessment or coursework generally. However in a limited number of practical subjects (such as the Sciences) the coursework assessment is integrated with the examination result both in the Annual Secondary Examinations and in the SECE.

PART IV: IMPACT OF NATIONAL TESTING

The national examinations at ISCED 1 and 2 have a direct impact on the children's physical, psychological and emotional well-being because of the high stakes associated with them.

ISCED 1

The Primary Annual Examinations at the end of Year 4 and 5 are creating undue stress on both children and parents since the outcome of these examinations determines the stream the child will be joining in Year 5 and Year 6. It is a common practice for parents to send their children for private tuition to ensure that they do very well in these examinations to secure a place with the pupils in the best stream. As a consequence a good number of children are being deprived of some of (if not all, in certain circumstances!) their playing time as they have to go for the private tuition after school hours and keep up with the additional extra work at home. The pressure by parents on children also puts an additional burden on the teachers as parents's expectations are high. The final outcome is that learning is driven by the examinations with a emphasis on rote learning and very often at the expense of ignoring areas such as Drama, Art, Music and PE. As a matter of fact all that is taught is taught for tests and examinations – hardly little is taught for life.

The Junior Lyceum Entrance Examination into Form 1 is having similar effects on parents, teachers and children. In spite of the fact that this examination motivates some children to take up learning seriously, it affects negatively those children who fail to make the grade. Those who fail this examination tend to feel as being officially labelled as failures; consequently their self-esteem goes down. Eventually this adversely affects the motivation of the 'failed' students who tend to pursue their studies at Secondary level with minimal engagement and commitment. This is evidenced by their very low academic performance in the SECE examinations.

ISCED 2

The Secondary Annual Examinations in Forms 1 to 5 do have a motivating power on the students; however, the stress on the students and the parents is less than that generated by the high stake national examinations at the end of Primary education. When in the past these national annual examinations were abolished, students made less progress with their studies and consequently the annual examinations had to be reintroduced.

The Secondary Education Certificate Examinations (SECE), however, do give rise to parent pressure and student stress due to the high stake outcomes associated with this type of certification. A pass in the SECE enhances the life chances of the students. To improve their chances at securing a pass, students resort to private tuition, very often in two, three or even more subjects. Private tuition impacts directly not only on the students' lifestyles but also on the parents' financial means.

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Unrevised English

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