



University students attending lectures. Every A'level student wishes to score enough points to get them admitted for their dream course at university

Why university entry may be tight

By Conan Businge

Entry in all public universities is set to be still in the forthcoming academic year, due to the high number of intending entrants, who equally excelled in last year's national examinations.

All public universities in the country set cut off points for the students, and will be the basis for admitting students, on both private and public entry.

Meanwhile, the performance for students, who sat for Senior Six examinations last year, is better than of their predecessors in 2017.

This improvement in performance is set to hike the entry points of various courses to public universities this year. The higher the performance, so does the demand or the best students to join the available courses in public universities on government sponsorship and private admissions.

Apart from the improved performance, the number of excelling students also went up.

Candidates are selected on merit from those who apply for a programme as their first choice plus those who apply for the programme as second, third and fourth choice, if they have not

been admitted to programmes of their earlier choices. All choices are considered.

HOW IS RANKING DONE?

All subjects taken at the A' level are grouped into three categories and weighted as follows for purposes of admission to any programme of undergraduate study in the university. The essential subject weighs three points, relevant two points and desirable one point.

● The Essential A' Level subjects for university programmes must be passed with a principal pass.

More so, for a given candidate, not more than three subjects taken at the principal level shall be considered in weighing to get cut off points.

● Important to note is that not more than two subjects shall be designated as "Essential".

● A pass with a distinction or credit in a subject taken at subsidiary level such as general paper, sub-maths or computer studies shall carry one point.

A subsidiary pass ranges from grades D1 to C6.

● In case of programmes where "essential" subjects may be three or more, an "essential

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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set" of subjects is defined. The best-performed two subjects of the essential set shall be designated as "essential subjects" and weighted three.

The third best done subject from the essential set shall be designated as the "relevant subject" and weighted two.

● For 'O' level grades, distinctions 1 and 2 carry 0.3 points, credits 3 to 6 carry 0.2, passes 7 and 8 carry 0.1 and fail 9 carry 0.0 weights respectively.

● For A'level grades, the conversion scale is A=6, B=5, C=4, D=3, E=2, O=1, F=0 points.

TOTALLING POINTS

● The O'level weight of a candidate for a programme in the university, is obtained by multiplying the numbers of distinctions, credits and passes, by the relevant weights and adding up for the distinctions, credits and passes actually obtained by the candidate.

● The A'level weight, for a given programme of a candidate is obtained by multiplying each subject grade point by the relevant weighting factor and adding up for all the subjects taken and passed.

● The combined weight of a candidate for a given programme is obtained by adding the O'level weight obtained, to the A'level weight obtained. The best candidate for each programme is the one with the highest combined weight.

● Candidates are selected on merit from those who apply for a programme as their first choice plus those who apply for the programme as second, third, fourth choice, if they have not been admitted to programmes of their earlier choices. All choices are considered.

Sample score calculations

Assuming you wanted to study medicine in a public university, this is how you would calculate your weight.

The essential subjects for bachelor of medicine and surgery are biology and chemistry, while its relevant subject is either mathematics or physics. Its desirable subjects are general paper or sub math.

Assuming you got a distinction in general paper and a point in the subsidiary paper and also scored AAA. This is how you would calculate your entry scores.

Essentials: biology $6 \times 3 = 18$
chemistry $6 \times 3 = 18$
Relevant: maths $6 \times 2 = 12$

Desirable: general paper $1 \times 1 = 1$

One more point for subsidiary pass would be added to the score. Your sub-total score would then be 50.

More so, the O'level results also account for university entry. If you got a distinction in each of the considered eight subjects, then that would be $(8 \times 0.3 = 2.4)$.

The O'level and A'level performance score for such a student would then be 52.4.

Had it been last year, such a student would qualify for medicine and surgery in a public university, on private and government sponsorship. The private students' cut-off was 41.4 and the one on government was 45.0.



Graduants celebrate during their graduation recently at YMCA in Kampala