

File no.: 21/2/11/4/Physical Sciences Olympiads
IMS Number: 20240219-1756

Curriculum GET Minute: 0003/2024

To: Deputy Directors-General, Chief Directors, Directors, Heads: Curriculum Support, Heads: Management and Governance, Circuit Managers, Deputy Chief Education Specialists, GET and FET Coordinators, Senior and Intermediate Phase Natural Sciences Subject Advisers, FET Life and Physical Sciences Subject Advisers and Principals of all ordinary public and independent schools

Subject: Call to register Grades 4–9 learners for the 2024 Natural Sciences, Grades 10-11 for the Life and Physical Sciences Olympiads and Grade 7 learners for the AstroQuiz Competition

1. The Natural, Life and Physical Sciences Olympiads and the AstroQuiz Competition are projects sponsored by the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA), which is a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF).
2. The Natural, Life and Physical Sciences Olympiads and the AstroQuiz Competition are stimulating activities which require participants to demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, innovation and creativity. The AstroQuiz Competition is for Grade 7 learners only, and it is based on astronomy-related themes that are linked to the "Earth and Beyond" section of the Natural Sciences curriculum. These competitions support the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) strategy for Mathematics and Physical Science. There are impressive prizes to be won by the top performers.
3. The Natural, Life and Physical Sciences Olympiads and the AstroQuiz Competition are aimed at:
 - creating an interest in sciences among learners and encouraging them to study sciences in the Further Education and Training Phase;
 - supporting Natural, Life and Physical Sciences educators and improving their classroom practice;
 - creating awareness and insight into basic astronomy;
 - fostering an interest in career opportunities in astronomy and other sciences; and
 - identifying talent among Natural, Life and Physical Sciences learners.

4. 2024 Natural Sciences Olympiad information

Natural Sciences Grades 4-6	Natural Sciences Grades 7-9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment of learners: Schools enrol via the online platform. Click on the following link: https://olympiad.saasta.ac.za/ • Closing date: Monday, 08 April 2024 • Entry fee closing date: Friday, 31 May 2024 • Examination date: Tuesday, 23 July 2024 • NRF-SAASTA will courier Olympiad papers to schools. • Schools courier answer sheets back to NRF-SAASTA. • Rounds: One round only. • Where: The paper will be written at school. • Format: multiple choice questions (40 questions) • Language: English and Afrikaans • Duration: 1½ hours are allowed (11:30–13:00) • Eligibility: The Olympiad is open to all Grades 4-6 learners. • Composition of paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remembering – 20% ○ Understanding – 30% ○ Applying – 30% ○ Analysing – 20% • Preparation: Educators are welcome to download previous papers to use in the classroom. Click on the link below and scroll down to “Download Past Papers”: https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/natural-science-olympiad/ • Training session: Once enrolled, educators will be invited, during Term 2, to an online training session on how to assist their learners to complete the personal information on the answer sheet. • Cost: R35 per learner, per Olympiad. • Queries: nsops@saasta.ac.za 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment of learners: Schools enrol via the online platform. Click on the following link: https://olympiad.saasta.ac.za/ • Closing date: Monday, 08 April 2024 • Entry fee closing date: Friday, 31 May 2024 • Examination date: Wednesday, 24 July 2024 • NRF-SAASTA will courier Olympiad papers to schools. • Schools courier answer sheets back to NRF-SAASTA. • Rounds: One round only. • Where: The paper will be written at school. • Choose between an online examination or the usual pen and paper (<i>This option is only available for the Grades 7–9 Olympiad.</i>) • Format: multiple choice questions (60 questions) • Language: English and Afrikaans • Duration: two hours are allowed (12:00–14:00) • Eligibility: The Olympiad is open to all Grades 7-9 learners. • Composition of paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remembering – 20% ○ Understanding – 30% ○ Applying – 30% ○ Analysing – 20% • Preparation: Educators are welcome to download previous papers to use in the classroom. Click on the link below and scroll down to “Download Past Papers”: https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/natural-science-olympiad/ • Training session: Once enrolled, educators will be invited, during Term 2, to an online training session on how to assist their learners to complete the personal information on the answer sheet. • Cost: R35 per learner, per Olympiad. • Queries: nsops@saasta.ac.za

5. 2024 Life Sciences and Physical Sciences Olympiad information

Life Sciences and Physical Sciences: Grades 10–11

- **Enrolment of learners:** Schools enrol via the online platform – click on the following link: <https://olympiad.saasta.ac.za/>
- **Closing date: Monday, 08 April 2024**
- **Entry fee closing date: Friday, 31 May 2024**
- **Examination date:**
 - Life Science – **Tuesday, 23 July 2024**
 - Physical Science – **Thursday, 25 July 2024**
- NRF-SAASTA will courier Olympiad papers to schools.
- Schools courier answer sheets back to SAASTA.
- **Rounds:** One round only
- **Where:** The paper will be written at school.
- **Format:** multiple choice questions (100 questions)
- **Language:** English and Afrikaans
- **Duration:** **three hours** are allowed (**12:00 – 15:00**)
- **Eligibility:** the Olympiads are open to **all Grades 10–11 learners only**.
- **Composition of paper:**
 - Remembering – 20%
 - Understanding – 30%
 - Applying – 30%
 - Analysing – 20%
- **Preparation:** Educators are welcome to download previous papers to use in the classroom: <https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/national-science-olympiad/>. Click on the link and scroll down to “Download Past Papers”.
- **Training session:** Once enrolled, educators will be invited, during Term 2, to an online training session on how to assist their learners to complete the personal information on the answer sheet.
- **Cost:** R35 per learner, per Olympiad.
- **Queries:** scienceolympiad@saasta.ac.za

6. The WCED will pay the entries of 30 learners, per school, per phase, for the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) club schools and for the Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) focus schools. All these schools should send evidence or a copy of their learner entries via email by no later than 15:00 on **Monday, 08 April 2024**, directly to: Suanne Rampou, Suanne.Rampou@westerncape.gov.za, Natural Sciences; Jean Goliath, Jean.Goliath@westerncape.gov.za, Life Sciences; and Marius Diergaardt, Marius.Diergaardt@westerncape.gov.za, Physical Sciences.

7. 2024 AstroQuiz Competition rules

This competition is open to Grade 7 learners only. There are four rounds that will run as follows:

General

- Each team consists of four learners (no fewer, no more).
- Participation is free of charge.
- Schools enrol via registration platform:
<https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/astroquiz/astroquiz-2024-registration-form/>
for round 1.
- No school is allowed to skip a round.
- All schools must submit their results before being allowed to enrol for round 2.
- Round 1 will be paper-based and written at school.
- Rounds 2-4 will be online.
- Training session on how to register for round 2: Educators will receive an invitation.
- Each round consists of 30 multiple choice questions.
- The top three teams in the provincial round as well as the top three in the national round stand a chance to win prizes.
- The closing date for entries is: **15 March 2024**.

Round 1: Thursday, 11 April 2024 – Will be written at school

- The educator has the choice to either **not** restrict the number of Grade 7 learners participating in the quiz **or** select one to two teams of four members each at this stage.
- The paper will be emailed to all educators who registered by the closing date.
- All Grade 7 learners can participate at the school.
- Once the quiz has been written, the educator provides NRF-SAASTA with the results on the template which they will receive together with the paper.
- Learners have 30 minutes to complete the round.
- The educator decides/selects which team/s (maximum two teams) they would like to enrol for round 2.

Round 2: Thursday, 25 April 2024 - District (online)

- Each educator who sends their results of round 1 to NRF-SAASTA will receive the link to register their team(s). A maximum of two teams per school will be allowed in round 2.
- Teams compete within a district.
- The top three teams per district proceed to the provincial round.
- Time: teams have 30 minutes to complete the quiz.
- Should there be ties among the top three schools in a district in round 2, then all the tied teams will be allowed to proceed to round 3.
- Should there be a tie between the two teams from the same school, they will be given a tie-breaker test to determine which team will proceed to round 3.

- If, after the tie-breaker, the teams are still tied, the NRF-SAASTA will look at the time it took the teams to complete the original online quiz for round 2 to distinguish the winner. The team who completed the original online quiz in the fastest time, will be the winner of the tie and proceed to the next round.

Round 3: Thursday, 11 July 2024 - Provincial (online)

- Teams compete against the winning teams of all districts in their respective provinces.
- Teams compete for the top three positions in the province.
- Time: teams have 30 minutes to complete the quiz.
- The winning team proceeds to represent the province in the national round, i.e. round 4.
- Teams who are tied with one another for the top three positions in their province will be expected to write a tie-breaker test. If, after the tie-breaker, the teams are still tied, the NRF-SAASTA will look at the time it took the teams to complete the original online quiz for round 3 to distinguish the winner.

Round 4: Thursday, 08 August 2024 - National (online)

- Teams compete for the top three national positions.
- Time: teams have 30 minutes to complete the quiz.
- If there are teams who are tied with one another for the top three positions, the team who finished in the fastest time will be the winner. There will be no tie-breakers.

8. The top three teams in the provincial round as well as the top three teams in the national round will receive prizes. All learners will receive electronic participation certificates. Please send any query in this regard to astro@saasta.ac.za
9. The WCED would like to encourage as many schools as possible to participate in the 2024 Natural, Life and Physical Sciences Olympiads and AstroQuiz Competition.
10. Principals are requested to bring the content of this minute to the attention of all Grades 4-11 Natural, Life and Physical Sciences educators.

SIGNED: H MAHOMED

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT

DATE: 2024-03-04