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Curriculum GET and FET Minute: 0004/2025

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 2025 Natural Sciences, Grades 10–11 learners 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). These competitions are stimulating activities which require learners to demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, innovation and creativity. The aim is to nurture talent, as well as encouraging learners to consider careers in science, engineering and technology. In addition, the competitions support the Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) strategy for Mathematics, Life and Physical Sciences, Engineering, Agricultural Sciences, and Marine Science. There are impressive prizes to be won by the top performers.
2. This year, the Natural Sciences Olympiad is in its 14<sup>th</sup> year and the project offers learners in Grades 4–9 an opportunity to opt for Life and Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Accounting in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase.
3. The National Sciences Olympiad is in its 60<sup>th</sup> year and the project offers learners in Grades 10–11 an exciting opportunity to compete in science with fellow learners from all nine provinces as well as Southern African Development Community countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Namibia. The competition comprises an annual examination in sciences (Life and Physical Sciences).

4. The AstroQuiz Competition is for Grade 7 learners only, and it is based on astronomy-related themes that are linked to the “*Planet Earth and Beyond*” section of the Natural Sciences curriculum.
5. The AstroQuiz Competition aims to:
  - create an interest in sciences among learners and encourage them to study sciences in the FET Phase;
  - support Natural, Life and Physical Sciences educators and improve their classroom practice;
  - create awareness and insight into basic astronomy; and
  - foster an interest of learners in career opportunities in the field of astronomy and other sciences.

6. **2025 Natural Sciences Olympiad information**

Grades 4–6	Grades 7–9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enrolment of learners:</b> Schools should enrol their learners on the following online registration platform: <a href="https://olympiads.co.za/eduregister">https://olympiads.co.za/eduregister</a></li> <li>• <b>Closing date:</b> Monday, 07 April 2025</li> <li>• <b>Entry fee closing date:</b> Friday, 30 May 2025</li> <li>• <b>Examination date:</b> Tuesday, 29 July 2025</li> <li>• <b>Where:</b> The paper will be written at school.</li> <li>• <b>Papers and answer sheets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NRF-SAASTA will courier Olympiad papers to schools.</li> <li>○ Schools should courier answer sheets back to NRF-SAASTA. An envelope will be provided for this purpose.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Format:</b> Multiple choice questions (40 questions)</li> <li>• <b>Language:</b> English and Afrikaans</li> <li>• <b>Duration:</b> 1½ hours are allowed (11:30–13:00)</li> <li>• <b>Eligibility:</b> The Olympiad is open to all Grades 4–6 learners.</li> <li>• <b>Composition of the paper:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remembering – 20%</li> <li>○ Understanding – 30%</li> <li>○ Applying – 30%</li> <li>○ Analysing – 20%</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Preparation:</b> Educators are welcome to download the previous years' papers to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enrolment of learners:</b> Schools should enrol their learners on the following online registration platform: <a href="https://olympiads.co.za/eduregister">https://olympiads.co.za/eduregister</a></li> <li>• <b>Closing date:</b> Monday, 07 April 2025</li> <li>• <b>Entry fee closing date:</b> Friday, 30 May 2025</li> <li>• <b>Examination date:</b> Wednesday, 30 July 2025</li> <li>• <b>Where:</b> Choose between an online examination or the usual pen and paper format. (<i>This option is only available for the Grades 7–9 Olympiad.</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Papers and answer sheets:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ NRF-SAASTA will courier Olympiad papers to schools.</li> <li>○ Schools should courier answer sheets back to NRF-SAASTA. An envelope will be provided for this purpose.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Format:</b> Multiple choice questions (60 questions)</li> <li>• <b>Language:</b> English and Afrikaans</li> <li>• <b>Duration:</b> Two hours are allowed (12:00–14:00)</li> <li>• <b>Eligibility:</b> The Olympiad is open to all Grades 7–9 learners.</li> <li>• <b>Composition of the paper:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remembering – 20%</li> <li>○ Understanding – 30%</li> <li>○ Applying – 30%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>use in their classrooms. They should click on the link below and scroll down to "Download Past Papers":  <a href="https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/natural-science-olympiad/">https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/natural-science-olympiad/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Training session:</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Cost:</b> R35 per learner, per Olympiad.</li> <li>• <b>What if the learner cannot afford the entry fee?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Special arrangements can be made for schools/learners that cannot afford the entry fee. Principals should apply for exemption via email at nsops@saasta.nrf.ac.za by 16 May 2025.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>For any questions/queries:</b> Contact NRF/SAASTA at tel. no.: 012 392 9300 or send an email to nsops@saasta.nrf.ac.za</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Analysing – 20%</li> <li>• <b>Preparation:</b> Educators are welcome to download the previous years' papers to use in their classrooms. They should click on the link below and scroll down to "Download Past Papers":  <a href="https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/natural-science-olympiad/">https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/natural-science-olympiad/</a></li> <li>• <b>Training session:</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Cost:</b> R35 per learner, per Olympiad.</li> <li>• <b>What if the learner cannot afford the entry fee?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Special arrangements can be made for schools/learners that cannot afford the entry fee. Principals should apply for exemption via email at nsops@saasta.nrf.ac.za by 16 May 2025.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>For any questions/queries:</b> Contact NRF/SAASTA at tel. no.: 012 392 9300 or send an email to nsops@saasta.nrf.ac.za</li> </ul>
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## 7. 2025 Life and Physical Sciences Olympiad information

Grades 10–11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Enrolment of learners:</b> Schools should enrol their learners on the following online registration platform: <a href="https://olympiads.co.za/eduregister">https://olympiads.co.za/eduregister</a></li> <li>• Learners can enrol for both Physical and Life Sciences.</li> <li>• <b>Closing date: Monday, 07 April 2025</b></li> <li>• <b>Entry fee closing date: Friday, 30 May 2025</b></li> <li>• <b>Examination date:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Life Sciences – <b>Tuesday, 29 July 2025</b></li> <li>◦ Physical Sciences – <b>Thursday, 31 July 2025</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Where:</b> The paper will be written at school.</li> <li>• <b>Format:</b> Multiple choice questions (100 questions)</li> <li>• <b>Language:</b> English and Afrikaans</li> <li>• <b>Duration:</b> Three hours are allowed (12:00–15:00)</li> <li>• <b>Eligibility:</b> The Olympiads are open to <b>Grades 10–11 learners only</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Composition of paper:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Remembering – 20%</li> <li>◦ Understanding – 30%</li> <li>◦ Applying – 30%</li> <li>◦ Analysing – 20%</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- **Preparation:** Educators are welcome to download previous papers to use in the classroom from the SAASTA website: [www.saasta.ac.za](http://www.saasta.ac.za).
- Click on competitions and choose the competition you are interested in. Scroll down to "Download Past Papers".
- **Cost:** R35 per learner, per Olympiad.
- **What if the learner cannot afford the entry fee?**
  - Special arrangements can be made for schools/learners that cannot afford the entry fee. Principals should apply for exemption via email at [nsops@saasta.nrf.ac.za](mailto:nsops@saasta.nrf.ac.za) by 16 May 2025.
- **Papers and answer sheets:** NRF-SAASTA will courier Olympiad papers to schools.
- **Note:** Schools should courier answer sheets back to SAASTA. An envelope will be provided for this purpose.
- **Queries** (new email address): [scienceolympiad@saasta.nrf.ac.za](mailto:scienceolympiad@saasta.nrf.ac.za) or tel. no.: 012 392 9300

8. The WCED will pay for the entries of 30 learners, per school, per phase, for the Grades 4–9 Natural Sciences and Grades 10–11 Physical and Life Sciences Olympiads. This only applies to learners from Mathematics, Science and Technology (MST) focus schools and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) club schools. All these schools should send evidence or a copy of their learner entries via email by no later than 15:00 on **Monday, 26 May 2025**, directly to:

Suanne Rampou: [Suanne.Rampou@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Suanne.Rampou@westerncape.gov.za) Natural Sciences

Jean Goliath: [Jean.Goliath@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Jean.Goliath@westerncape.gov.za), Life Sciences

Marius Diergaardt [Marius.Diergaardt@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Marius.Diergaardt@westerncape.gov.za), Physical Sciences

Lorenzo Meyer: [Lorenzo.Meyer@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Lorenzo.Meyer@westerncape.gov.za), MST Interventions and Projects

## 9. 2025 AstroQuiz Competition rules

### Entry requirements

Educators must enter their learners online. Teams of four learners each, **except** in round 1 where educators have a choice between entering teams **OR** enrol all Grade 7 learners who are interested. This offers the educator to choose the best learners to enter for round 2.

### Competition dates

Round	Level	Format	Date
1	School	Written (pen and paper)	Thursday, 10 April
2	District	Online	Thursday, 15 May
3	Provincial	Online	Thursday, 14 August
4	National	Online	Thursday, 04 September

### General

- Each team must consist of four learners (no fewer, no more).
- Entry is free.
- 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.
- 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 to win prizes.

### Round 1: Thursday, 10 April 2025

- The educator has the choice to either **not** restrict the number of Grade 7 learners taking the quiz, i.e. enrol as many Grade 7 learners as they wish **or** may 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 at the school are allowed to participate.
- Once the quiz has been written, the educator must provide NRF-SAASTA with the results on the template, which the educator will receive together with the paper.
- Learners have 30 minutes to complete the round.
- The educator decides/selects which team/s (maximum TWO teams) he/she would like to enrol for round 2.

### Round 2: Thursday, 15 May 2025

- Rounds 2–4 will take place online and 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, the tied teams will be allowed to proceed to round 3.
- Should the two teams from the same school be tied, they will be given a tiebreaker test to determine which team will proceed to round 3. If, after the tiebreaker, the teams are still tied, 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, 14 August 2025

- Teams compete with 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 tiebreaker test. If, after the tiebreaker, the teams are still tied, 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, 04 September 2025**

- 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 tiebreakers.

#### **Number of questions and duration per round**

- All rounds consist of multiple-choice questions.
- All rounds consist of 30 questions and learners are allowed 30 minutes (one minute per question) to complete the round.
- Where learners are tied (from round 2 upwards), a tiebreaker of 10 questions will be used to determine the winning teams who will go through to the next round.

#### **What is needed for round 2–4 to take the online quiz?**

- Any smartphone or tablet. You only need one device. If you have TWO teams, they may take the quiz one after the other.
- On average the data that will be needed will not be more than the cost of sending 4–5 WhatsApp messages to complete each quiz.

#### **Prizes**

The top THREE teams in the provincial round as well as the top THREE teams in the national round stand to win prizes. All learners will receive electronic participation certificates.

**New email address:** [astro@saasta.nrf.ac.za](mailto:astro@saasta.nrf.ac.za)

10. The WCED would like to encourage as many schools as possible to participate in the 2025 Natural, Life and Physical Sciences Olympiads and AstroQuiz Competition.
11. 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:** BJ LORISTON

**DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT**

**DATE:** 2025-03-13