



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Ministry of Education and Sports

Lower

Secondary

Curriculum



# CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK



**NCDC**

NATIONAL CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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## INTRODUCTION

The UNESCO Education Strategy (2014 – 2021) advocates for a humanistic and holistic vision of education as a fundamental human right that is essential to personal and socio-economic development. UNESCO further recommends, societies that are just, inclusive, peaceful and sustainable by 2030. The Uganda Vision 2040 aims to transform Uganda into a modern and prosperous country, while the NDP recognises the existing weaknesses in education, including the low efficiency and variable quality at the secondary level. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 advocates for inclusive and quality education, while the National Development Plan II focuses on enhancement of human capital, development, strengthening mechanisms for quality, effective efficient service delivery and improvement of quality and relevance of skills development. The NRM Manifesto (2016-2021), emphasises continuous assessment examination systems, strengthening soft skills, which promote self-esteem, conscientiousness and a generally positive attitude to work, promoting e-learning and computer literacy in order to enhance learning outcomes. All these are lacking and where they exist it is at a minimum level.

In alignment with the above, the Education and Sports Sector Strategic plan (2017/20) advocates for delivery of equitable, relevant and quality education for all. The current secondary school curriculum of Uganda, although highly regarded by some, is focused on the needs of a tiny academically oriented elite yet the needs of the majority of learners need to be the focus. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) through the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) therefore, undertook a review of the Lower Secondary Curriculum, aimed at providing a learning environment, opportunities, interactions, tasks and instructions that foster deep learning by putting the learner at the centre of the learning experience. This is in line with aims of secondary education in Uganda as outlined below:



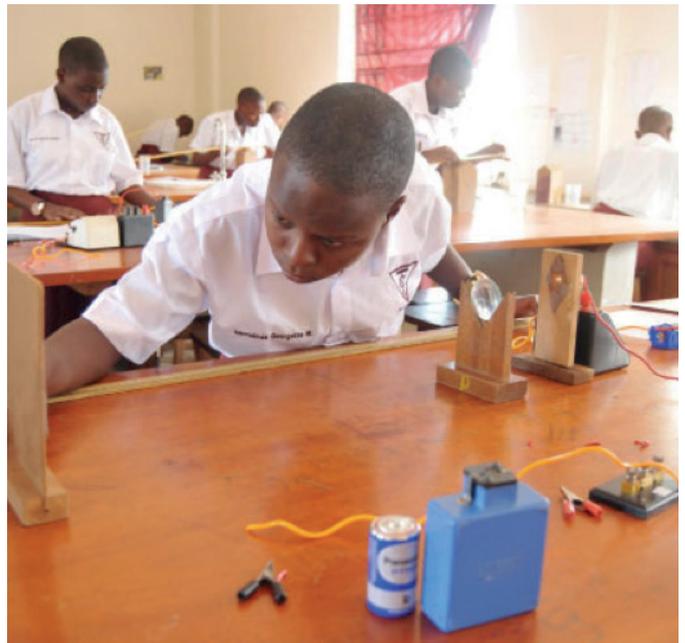
Handwritten notes on a lined notebook page, including a diagram of a rectangular structure with internal lines and some text.

Diagram of a rectangular structure with internal lines and text. The text includes "The diagram shows the layout of the school building" and "The diagram shows the layout of the school building".

## The aims of secondary education in Uganda are to:

- Instil and promote national unity, an understanding of the social and civic responsibilities, strong love and care for others and respect for public property, as well as an appreciation of international relations and beneficial international co-operation;
- Promote an appreciation and understanding of the cultural heritage of Uganda including its languages;
- Impart and promote a sense of self discipline, ethical and spiritual values, personal and collective responsibility and initiative;
- Enable individuals to acquire and develop knowledge and an understanding of emerging needs of society and the economy;
- Provide up-date and comprehensive knowledge in theoretical and practical aspects of innovative production, modern management methods in the field of commerce and industry and their application in the context of socio-economic development of Uganda;
- Enable individuals to develop basic scientific, technological, technical, agricultural and commercial skills required for self-employment;
- Enable individuals to develop personal skills of problem solving, information gathering and interpretation, independent reading and writing, self-improvement through learning and development of social, physical and leadership skills such as are obtained through games, sports, societies and clubs;
- Lay the foundation for further education;
- Enable the individual to apply acquired skills in solving problems of community, and to develop a strong sense of constructive and beneficial belonging to that community;
- Instil positive attitudes towards productive work and strong respect for the dignity of labour and those who engage in productive labour activities;
- Develop a positive attitude towards learning as a lifelong process.

1992 Government White Paper.



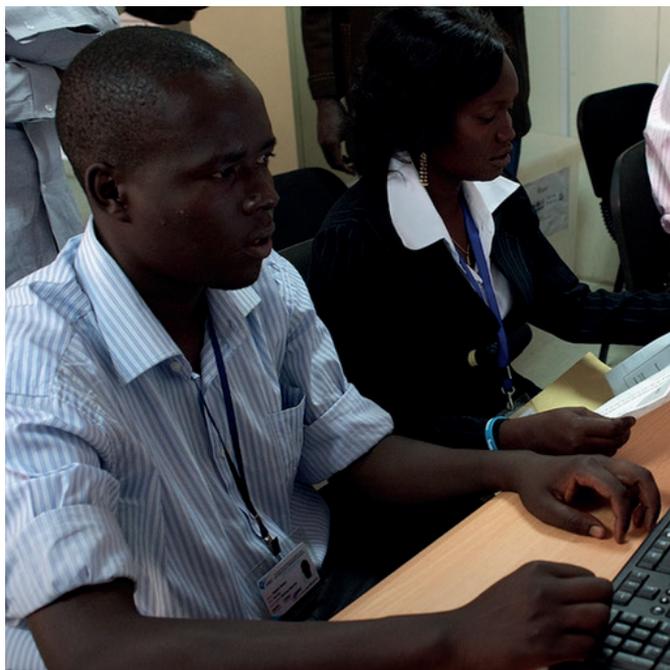
## BACKGROUND

The review was based on the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP), 2009 – 2018) which set out strategies to improve the quality and relevance of secondary education. The ESSP's sub-objective 2.2 was to ensure that "Post-primary students [are] prepared to enter the workforce and higher education". This is also in line with the current strategic plan of 2017-2020. To achieve this objective, one of the Ministry's strategies was to revise the curriculum and improve instruction and assessment by eliminating the short comings in the current curriculum.

The review focused on: producing a secondary school graduate who has the competences that are required in the 21st century; promoting values and attitudes; effective learning and acquisition of skills in order to reduce unemployment among school graduates. The review also aimed at reducing the content overload and contact hours in the classroom so as to create time for research, project work; talent development and creativity; allowing for emerging fields of knowledge across all subjects and doing away with obsolete information. There was need to address the social and economic needs of the country like the mining sector, tourism, services provision, science and technology development and to ensure rigorous career guidance programme to expose learners to the related subjects. This will enable learners to make informed choices as they transit and to equip them with knowledge and skills that will enhance their competitiveness in the global value chain.

### To meet the above requirements, the review was based on:

- The development of a holistic education for personal and national development based on clear shared values
- A commitment to higher standards, deeper understanding and greater opportunities for learners to succeed
- A focus on the key skills that are essential to work, to learning, and to life, and which will promote life-long learning
- Core subjects with a clear focus on essential learning to a deeper level, and to remove unnecessary and out of date content
- Elective subjects to allow choice and specialisation, especially at Senior 3 and 4.
- An integrated and inclusive approach that will develop the ability to apply learning in practical situations.



### The ESSP further outlined what the reforms imply:

"This reform will necessitate a sweeping revision of the general secondary curriculum, away from strictly academic learning objectives that are thought to prepare students for erudite higher education and towards a set of competencies that serve both those who continue their education after S4 and those who choose to enter the workforce. The new curriculum will enable learners to acquire specific vocational skills that they can use once they enter the world of work. The new curriculum will help learners make informed decisions as citizens and family members, and it will give those who continue with their education, either immediately in S5 or later in life, the learning skills they need to think critically and study efficiently."



## THE NEW CURRICULUM

The new curriculum focuses on four “Key Learning Outcomes” of:

- **self-assured individuals**
- **responsible and patriotic citizens**
- **lifelong learners**
- **positive contributors to society.**

The curriculum emphasises knowledge, application and behavioural change. It is based on **a clear set of values** which **must be imparted** to learners during the learning process. At the heart of every subject there are generic skills that allow development into life-long learners. Besides, there are also cross cutting issues that are embedded across subjects to enable learners understand the connections between the subjects and complexities of life.

## Key Learning Outcomes

The new curriculum sets out ‘Key Learning Outcomes’ that sum up the expectations of the curriculum as a whole, and set out clearly the qualities that young people will develop.

By the end of the educational process, young people will become:

### Self-assured individuals who:

- Demonstrate self- motivation, self-management and self-esteem
- Know their own preferences, strengths and limitations
- Adjust their behaviour and language appropriately to different social situations
- Relate well to a range of personality types

### Responsible and patriotic citizens who:

- Cherish the values promoted in the curriculum
- Promote the development of indigenous cultures and languages and appreciate diversity, equity and inclusiveness
- Apply environmental and health awareness when making decisions for themselves and their community
- Are positive in their own identity as individuals and global citizens
- Are motivated to contribute to the well-being

### Lifelong learners who:

- Can plan, reflect and direct their own learning
- Actively seek lifelong learning opportunities for personal and professional development

### Positive contributors to society who:

- Have acquired and can apply the Generic Skills
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the emerging needs of society and the economy
- Understand how to design, make and critically evaluate products and processes to address needs
- Appreciate the physical, biological and technological world and make informed decisions about sustainable development and its impact on people and the environment.

## Values

The new curriculum is based on a clear set of values. These values underpin the whole curriculum and the work of schools. They are also the values on which learners need to base their lives as citizens of Uganda.

- Peace and harmony
- Integrity and honesty
- Patriotism
- Positive attitude towards work
- Respect for human rights
- Self-control

These values are integrated in the content across subjects. They will be developed during the teaching and learning process. The strategies and practices in a whole school approach will harness their acquisition.

## Generic Skills

The generic skills lie at the heart of every Subject. They are the skills that enable the learner to access and deepen learning across the whole curriculum. They are the same skills that are sought by employers and which will unlock the world of work.

These skills will allow young people to develop into life-long learners, who can adapt to change and cope with the challenges of life in the 21st Century. These include; critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, communication, cooperation and learning, calculation and ICT.

Young people need to be able to think critically and solve problems, both at school and at work. They need to be creative and innovative in their approach to learning and life. They need to be able to communicate well in all forms, co-operate with others and also work independently. They need to be able to use functional mathematics and ICT effectively.



## Critical thinking and problem-solving

- Plan and carry out investigations
- Sort and analyse information
- Identify problems and ways forward
- Predict outcomes and make reasoned decisions
- Evaluate different solutions

## Co-operation and Learning

- Work effectively in diverse teams
- Interact effectively with others
- Take responsibility for own learning
- Work independently with persistence
- Manage goals and time

## Creativity and innovation

- Use imaginations to explore possibilities
- Work with others to generate ideas
- Suggest and develop new solutions
- Try out innovative alternatives
- Look for patterns and make generalisations

## Calculation and ICT

- Use numbers and measurements accurately
- Interpret and interrogate mathematical data
- Use mathematics to justify and support decisions
- Use technology to create, manipulate and process information
- Use technology to collaborate, communicate and refine their work

## Communication

- Listen attentively and with comprehension
- Talk confidently and explain things clearly
- Read accurately and fluently
- Write and present coherently
- Use a range of media to communicate idea

## Generic Skills within the Subjects

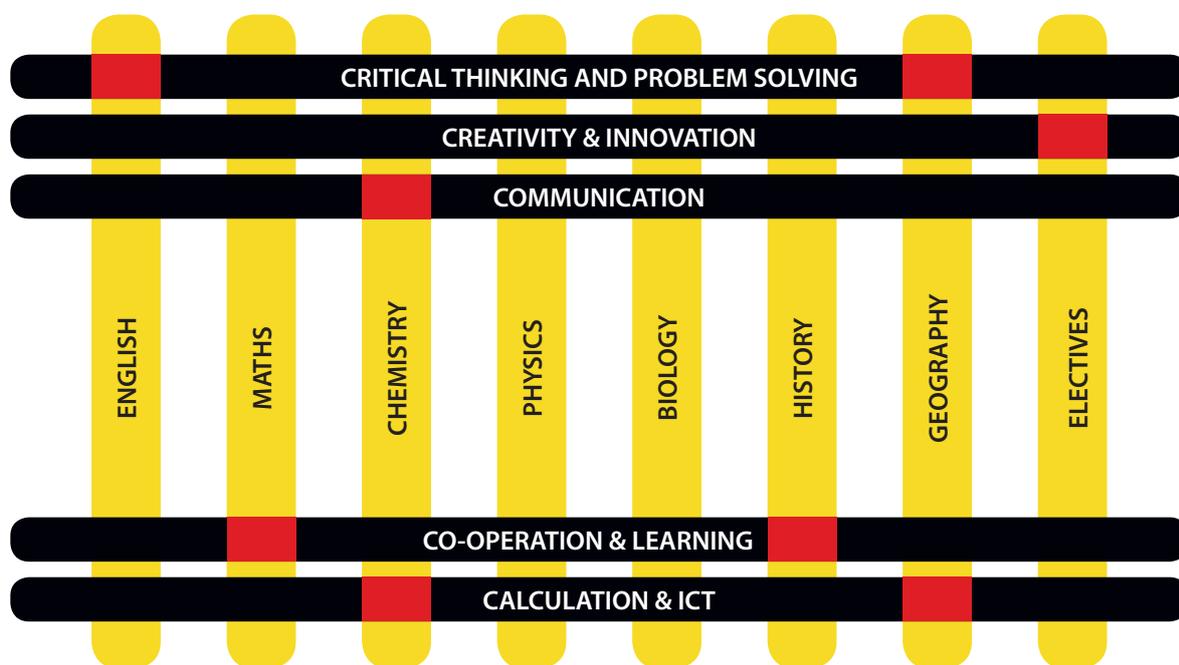
These skills are not separate subjects in themselves; they are developed within the subjects of the curriculum. They also help learning within those subjects. It is when these generic skills are deployed that learning is most effective. The model below shows how the generic skills intersect with each of the subjects. Within the intersections, learners develop the skills in the context of the subject. For example, Mathematics can provide a context for developing critical thinking skills; History can provide a context for developing communication skills.

There is not a one to one relationship in this case. Every subject area can provide a context for the development of every generic skill.

The diagram below shows how this operates. The diagram presents only some of the subjects because it is impossible to fit all of them into a diagram, but the model applies equally to all subjects.

The generic skills are a key part of the new curriculum. They have been built into the syllabuses for each of the Subjects, and these Subjects provide the context for the skill development.

The Subjects also provide the contexts for progression within the skills. The same skill definitions apply to all year groups, and skills progression is provided by the increasing complexity of the subject matter within each Subject. For example, within 'critical thinking', learners begin thinking critically about the relatively simple subject matter in Senior 1 and then progress to thinking about the much more complex matters in Senior 4. Thus the progression is in the increasing complexity of the matters being thought about.



The Generic Skills across the Subjects

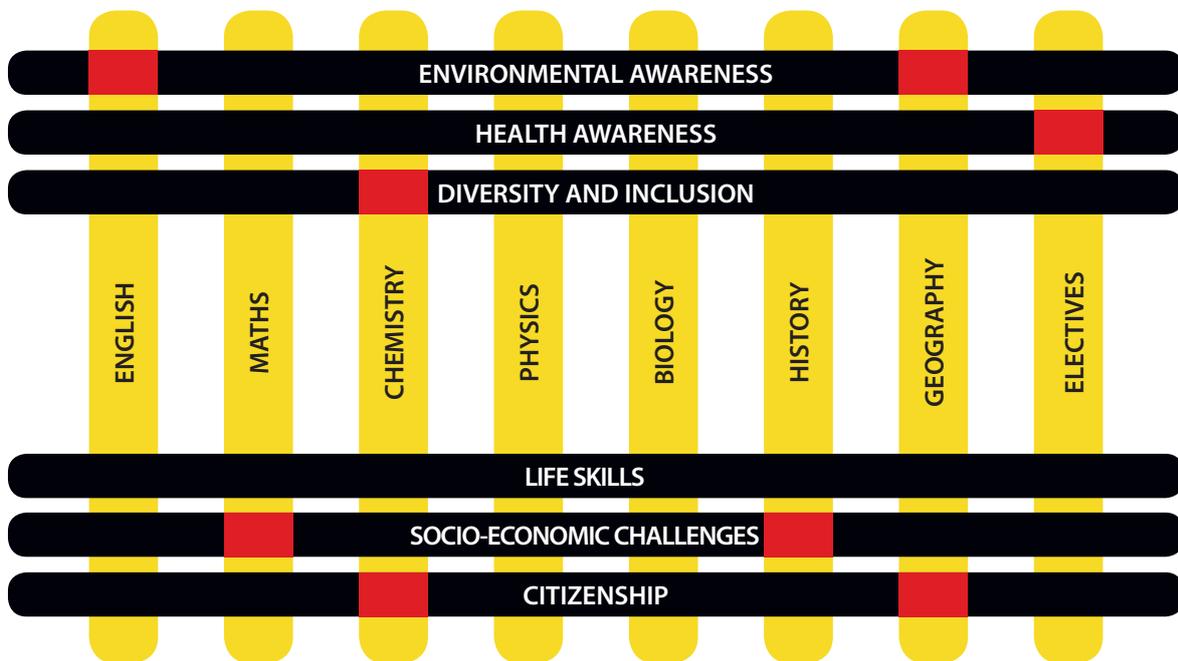
## Cross-cutting Challenges

There are some issues that young people need to learn about, but which are not confined to one Subject. These are the 'Cross-cutting Challenges' and they need to be studied across the Subjects. These issues develop learners' understanding of the connections between the Subjects, and so of the complexities of life.

The Cross-cutting Challenges identified in the curriculum are:

- Environmental awareness
- Health awareness
- Diversity and inclusion
- Socio-economic challenges
- Citizenship
- Life skills

These have been built into the syllabuses of each Subject. The way in which they are handled within the Subject is very similar to the way generic skills are handled as the model below shows.



Cross-cutting Challenges across the Subjects

## The Curriculum Menu

The Lower Secondary Curriculum Menu consists of 21 subjects. A school is expected to select 15 subjects to be offered out of the 21 subjects on the menu. At S1&2, learners are expected to offer 13 compulsory subjects plus two electives. At S3&4 learners are expected to offer a minimum of 8 and maximum of 10 subjects, out of which 7 are compulsory.

## The Subjects

Learners will study a core of compulsory subjects and will be able to choose from a range of elective subjects that will allow them to follow their own interests and to specialise in particular areas (The detailed justification for each of the subjects can be referred to on page 13).

The compulsory subjects at S1 & 2 are; English, Entrepreneurship, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics (or General Science for learners with special educational needs), Geography, History, Kiswahili, Physical education, ICT, Religious Education and Agriculture. (The details of the elective subjects are indicated in the table below).

At S3&4 there is a greater focus on a narrower range, with 7 compulsory subjects which are: Mathematics, English, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, (General Science), Geography and History & Political Education and a maximum of three elective subjects. At S3 and S4, emphasis should be placed on integrating ICT in all subjects so that learners fit the learner graduate profile at the end of the cycle.

In all subjects there is an emphasis on deeper understanding and the development of the ability to apply the subject learning in a range of situations. The range of subjects will enable learners to:

- Participate effectively in political, social, economic, scientific and technological development of their families, communities and the country at large
- Contribute effectively to the world of making a living, work in paid employment, and/or progress to BTVET institutions, tertiary and higher education and training.
- Solve problems in their communities, families and work through a scientific problem solving approach which integrates critical, creative and innovative thinking, effective communication, a high degree of numeracy, use of appropriate technology, social and interpersonal skills, self-motivation and management and the observation of the agreed values



The range of subjects to be studied is set out below.

| Subjects of the Lower Secondary Curriculum |                                    |                                      |                               |                       |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| S1-2                                       |                                    | S3-4                                 |                               |                       |
| 13 Compulsory plus 2 Electives             |                                    | 7 Compulsory plus 3 Electives        |                               |                       |
| Compulsory                                 | English                            | Compulsory                           | English                       |                       |
|  | Maths                              |                                      | Maths                         |                       |
|  | History & Political Education      |                                      | History & Political Education |                       |
|  | Geography                          |                                      | Geography                     |                       |
|  | Physics                            |                                      | Physics                       |                       |
|  | Biology                            |                                      | Biology                       |                       |
|  | Chemistry                          |                                      | Chemistry                     |                       |
|  | PE                                 | Practical (pre-vocational) Electives | Agriculture                   |                       |
|  | RE                                 |                                      | Entrepreneurship              |                       |
|  | Agriculture                        |                                      | Fine Arts                     |                       |
|  | Kiswahili                          |                                      | ICT                           |                       |
|  | ICT                                |                                      | Nutrition and Food Technology |                       |
|  | Entrepreneurship                   |                                      | Performing Arts               |                       |
| 2 Electives from                           | French/German/Latin/Arabic/Chinese |                                      | Language Electives            | Physical Education    |
|  | Local Language                     |                                      |                               | Technology and Design |
|  | Literature in English              | Foreign Languages                    |                               |                       |
|  | Fine Art                           | Kiswahili                            |                               |                       |
|  | Performing Arts                    | Literature                           |                               |                       |
|  | Technology and design              | Local Languages                      |                               |                       |
|  | Nutrition & Food Technology        | Religious Education Electives        | Christian Religious Education |                       |
|  |                                    | Islamic Religious Education          |                               |                       |

The 8 practical (pre-vocational) elective subjects in S3&4 will specifically prepare to join the world of work and gainful employment in Uganda, and will enable learners to gain a vocational qualification.

Learners of these subjects will be trained and assessed to the standard set by Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT). This kind of training and assessment focuses on ensuring that learners comply with the requirements of the world of work or employment in a stated occupation.

The assessment leads to an award of a work pass at Level 1 in the Uganda Vocational Qualification Framework (UVQF) as being successful in performance and written theory assessment. More details of this are found in the Assessment and Training Packages (ATPs) developed by DIT for the different occupations.

## Time allocations

The School day starts at 8am and instruction time will end at 2.40 pm. Between 2.40 pm and 4.30pm, learners will have free time for their creativity and innovation. Learning time needs to be allocated at school level so that time spans are available for meaningful study in each of the Subjects. For example, some practical subjects will need longer periods than more theoretical ones.

An Entrepreneurship project could well take a whole morning or afternoon. It is up to schools to decide how best to structure the learning periods for the Subjects in order to maximize the opportunities for learning. The table below is provided for general guidance.

The recommended allocation of time to each Subject below is based on 8 periods a day of 40 minutes each. This totals 1,600 learning minutes per week.

| SUBJECT                       | NO. OF PERIODS PER WEEK |                      |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
|                               | S1-2                    | S3-4                 |
| English                       | 4                       | 5                    |
| Maths                         | 4                       | 5                    |
| History & Political Education | 3                       | 3                    |
| Geography                     | 3                       | 3                    |
| Physics                       | 3                       | 4                    |
| Biology                       | 3                       | 4                    |
| Chemistry                     | 3                       | 4                    |
| General Science               | 6                       | 6                    |
| PE                            | 2                       |                      |
| RE                            | 2                       |                      |
| Agriculture                   | 2                       |                      |
| Kiswahili                     | 2                       |                      |
| ICT                           | 2                       |                      |
| Entrepreneurship              | 2                       |                      |
| Elective 1                    | 2                       | 3, or 4 if practical |
| Elective 2                    | 2                       | 3, or 4 if practical |
| Elective 3                    |                         | 3                    |
| School programme              | 1                       | 1                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                  | <b>40</b>               | <b>40</b>            |

| TIME ALLOCATIONS FOR S3-4 ELECTIVE SUBJECTS |                       |                                 |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Practical (4 periods)                       | Languages (3 periods) | Religious Education (3 periods) |
| Technology and Design                       | Foreign Languages     | Christian Religious Education   |
| Nutrition and Food Technology               | Local Languages       | Islamic Religious Education     |
| Fine Arts                                   | Literature in English |                                 |
| Performing Arts                             | Kiswahili             |                                 |
| Physical Education                          |                       |                                 |
| Agriculture                                 |                       |                                 |
| Entrepreneurship                            |                       |                                 |
| ICT   |                       |                                 |

Students may choose no more than two subjects from the practical column



| S/N | SUBJECT   | REASON FOR HAVING IT ON THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK   |
|-----|---|--|
| 1   | English Language/<br>Sign Language  | It is the official language and medium of instruction at the secondary level of education.<br>It is the language which learners use to learn all the other subjects on the curriculum. It is the subject which provides learners with communication skills in English.<br>This subject is in line with the SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.  |
| 2   | Literature in English   | It develops the learner's literary skills of comprehension, interpretation, analysis, evaluation, application and organization which can be used in other disciplines. It also prepares the learner to have inquiry and critical thinking skills   |
| 3   | Mathematics   | Mathematics is fundamental to national prosperity in providing tools for understanding science, engineering, technology and economics. It is essential in public decision-making and for participation in the knowledge economy, and promotes critical thinking.   |
| 4   | Biology   | The interconnectedness of concepts in Biology provides support for learners to better comprehend other science subjects of Agriculture, Mathematics and Geography. It helps learners make more informed decisions about their own health and about significant biological issues such as genetically modified crops, the use of antibiotics, and the eradication of invasive species. It prepares learners to pursue science related disciplines in higher education.  |
| 5   | Chemistry   | Chemistry enables learners to understand the properties of different materials and to transform materials into new and useful substances. Through chemistry, we can understand changes that we observe in the natural and physical world. Chemistry gives us understandings on which to base educated choices about consumer products and management of resources. It prepares learners to pursue science related disciplines in higher education in line with the Vision 2040 conceptualisation of Strengthening Fundamentals (Infrastructure, Human Capital, Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovations, Security and Defence) |
| 6   | Physics   | Physics lies at the heart of the natural sciences. Almost any scientific problem can be approached using the ideas and methods of physics. Physics explains how the world works and helps us understand why things in the natural world happen the way they do. It prepares learners to pursue science related disciplines in higher education in line with the Vision 2040 conceptualisation of Strengthening Fundamentals (Infrastructure, Human Capital, Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovations, Security and Defence).   |
|     | General Science (This will be an alternative to Biology, Physics and Chemistry) | This option will provide an opportunity for learners with special needs to acquire scientific skills. It will specifically cater for learners with visual impairment and some of those who are unable to carryout practicals because of physical disabilities. This is in line with SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all, and with sub-goal target 3; to achieve equitable access to relevant and quality education and training.   |
| 7   | History and Political Education   | Caters for critical thinking skills so as to help learners look beyond the headlines. It also trains the mind and teaches individuals how to think and process information. It provides a basis for research and inquiry into the past so as to learn from it, while political education highlights the importance of politics in development.   |
| 8   | Geography   | It enables learners recognise the responsibilities the learners have in relation to other people, the environment and long term sustainability of the planet. It develops critical thinking skills and life skills like map reading.   |
| 9   | Foreign Languages (French, German, Arabic, Latin, Chinese)                      | It provides a wider communication base for the learners and increases their job opportunities beyond the borders.  |
| 10  | Local Languages   | Local language is a key to maintaining the cultural heritage and helps build self-esteem and creates a sense of belonging.   |
| 11  | Kiswahili   | It will help individuals to benefit from the East African integration using this medium of communication for further studies and employment in the region and beyond.  |

| S/N | SUBJECT   | REASON FOR HAVING IT ON THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK  |
|-----|---|---|
| 12  | Fine Art  | It is an integral part of the development of each human being. Fine Art develops neural systems that produce broad spectrum of benefits ranging from fine motor skills to creativity, improved emotional balance and appreciation of the environment as well as preservation of cultures.   |
| 13  | Religious Education                                   | It caters for the development of the acceptable moral values, particularly in respect for one another and harmonious living. It promotes the development of values to produce an acceptable and morally right citizen.  |
| 14  | Performing Arts                                       | Inspires the development for a love of music and increases self-confidence, creativity and sense of achievement. It contributes to the development of a critical engagement with music, through composition, and to the ability to listen with discrimination to the best in the musical canon.   |
| 15  | Agriculture   | Use modern innovative skills to increase production and add value to agricultural product. It allows learners to acquire practical skills relating to the occupation of the greater majority of Ugandans. Learners also acquire skills for self-employment.   |
| 16  | Nutrition and Food Technology                         | It caters for the appreciation of nutritional and health-related issues that influence and promote the well-being of individuals, families, communities, and the environment. Learners also acquire skills for self-employment.   |
| 17  | Entrepreneurship                                      | It addresses the issue of unemployment for youth by promoting innovativeness and creative thinking so as to maximize available resources and opportunities for wealth creation. It also incorporates concepts of all the other Business Education subjects such as (Commerce, Accounts and Office Practice). This strengthens the NDP II theme: Strengthening Uganda's Competitiveness for Sustainable Wealth Creation, Employment and Inclusive Growth and Goal: "To achieve Middle Income status by 2020. |
| 18  | Physical Education                                    | Provides for the development of the skills, knowledge, and competencies required for healthy living. Learners involved in physical activity better control their weight and have a better chance of avoiding obesity-related problems, including diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Physically active learners are also more likely to make wise health and dietary choices later in life. It also provides for further studies in sports science and other sports related careers.        |
| 19  | Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Skills | It is a critical and topical issue in the modern times and a key requirement for engaging in the 21st century. Since the world is moving technological it supports the teaching and learning process by providing a wide range of resources while preparing learners for the modern workplace. It also prepares learners for programmes like computer science, cyber security, computer programming and other IT related careers.   |
| 20  | Technology and Design                                 | It provides a variety of skills and abilities essential for employment in today's economy. Learners are exposed to life situations that form the basis for problem-solving skills. Learners are also prepared for engineering programmes and other TVET related programmes. This is in line with the NDP II objective 1: to Increase Sustainable Production, Productivity and Value Addition in Key Growth Opportunities.   |

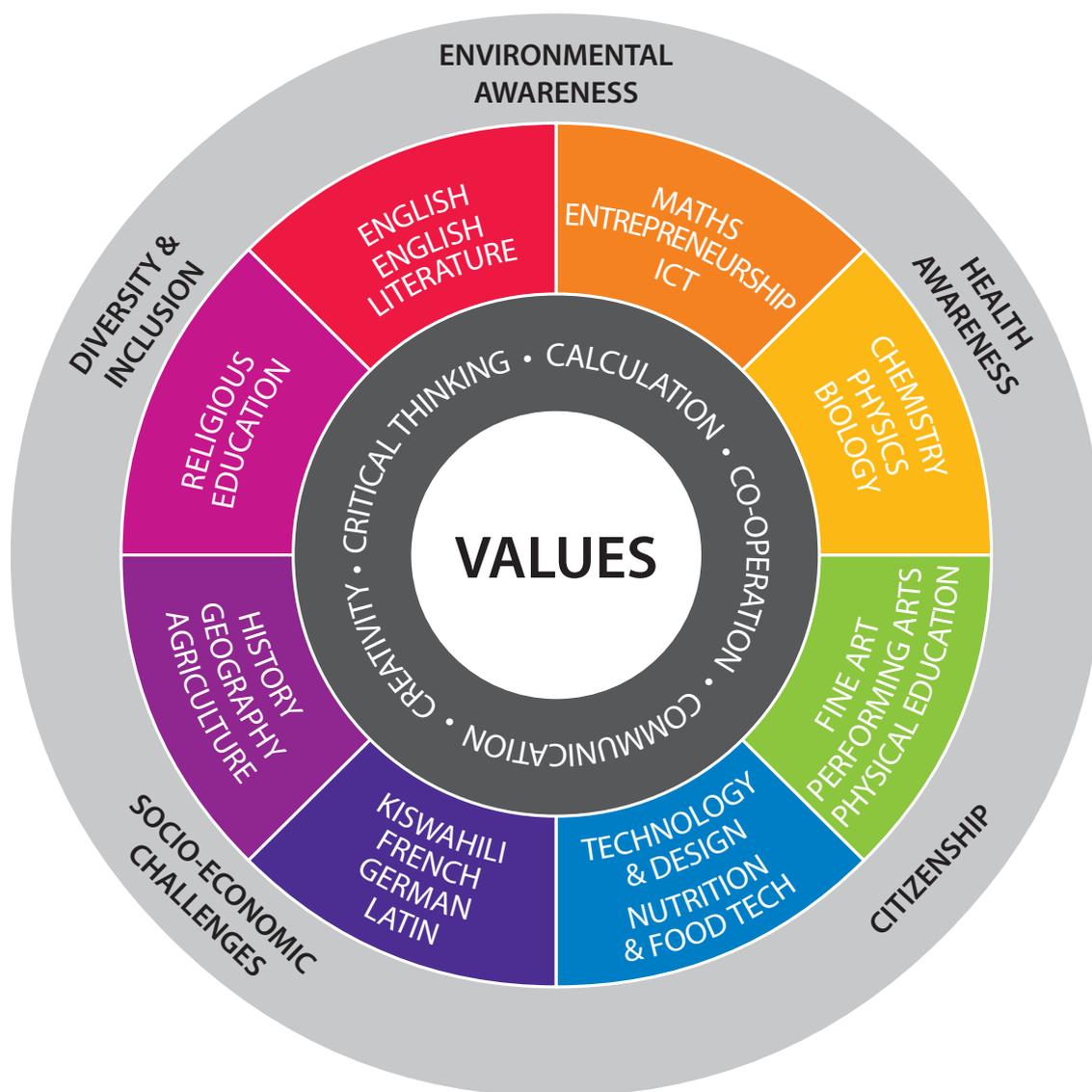
## THE OVERALL FRAMEWORK MODEL

Five different elements of the new curriculum have been referred to:

- Values
- Key Learning Outcomes
- Generic Skills
- Cross-cutting Challenges
- Subjects

How do all these elements come together to form a holistic curriculum? The model below helps show this.

In this model, the values can be seen at the very heart of the curriculum, core to all learning. Surrounding the values are the five generic skills. These are developed through each of the Subjects surrounding that surround them. The five cross-cutting challenges link the subjects together.



# IMPLEMENTING THE NEW CURRICULUM

## Teaching and Learning

The thrust of the new syllabuses is experiential and towards deeper understanding. This will require shift from 'knowledge-transmission' mode to a more 'active-learning' approach in which learners are challenged to think for themselves, draw conclusion solve problems and make their own judgements.

Learners will need take some control of their own learning, by sharing the use of appropriately-designed textbooks and accessing multimedia content where available. The reformed curriculum encourages schools to provide learners with increased opportunities to build work-related knowledge, experience and skills. The generic skills have been integrated throughout the curriculum and can only be acquired through active approaches.

The role of the teacher is to build on learners' existing knowledge and experience, but to extend that by posing problems to the learners. This makes them think about their own ideas and experiences as well as adding new knowledge and skills to it.

Learners need to interact with real situations inside and outside the classroom. They need to look at pictures or diagrams, examine statistics, or read texts from a range of sources. They need to find out knowledge and ideas for themselves. They should then be expected to express these in their own words, not those of the teacher, and so demonstrate that they have understood what they have learnt.

In this approach, learners are encouraged to:

- Be responsible for their own learning
- Think for themselves and form their own ideas and opinions
- Become critical thinkers, ready to face new challenges and situations for themselves

There is a wide range of strategies to encourage this approach. Some of these are set out in the diagram below.



## Gender Equity

The curriculum applies equally to male and female learners. There is no subject that applies to only one gender.

Schools need to ensure that all learners have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of gender. To this they need to consider:

- Giving equal support and encouragement to girls as well as boys
- Ensuring that gender stereotypes are avoided and challenged
- Setting equally high expectations for both genders
- Making sure that the school is welcoming to both genders
- Ensuring that girls as well as boys are listened to with respect and given full opportunity to contribute to lessons
- Encouraging girls to attend, and supporting them to achieve

Every encouragement needs to be given to girls to help them complete their schooling successfully.



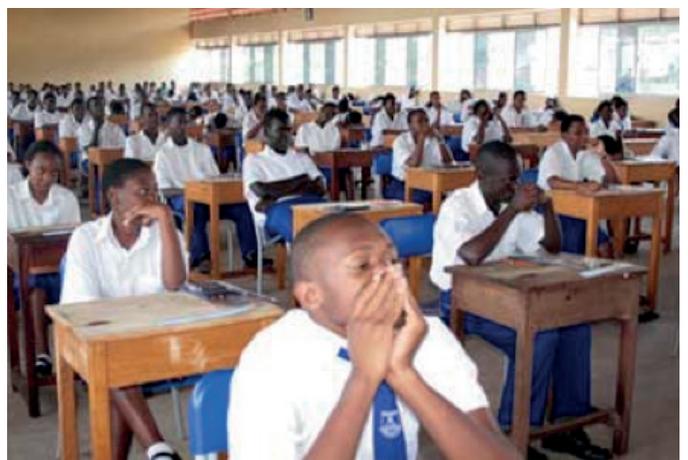
## Inclusion and Special Educational Needs

It is essential that all young people should be enabled to access education. They must all be included. This includes those with disabilities, those from minorities and those with particular learning difficulties. The curriculum will apply to all schools and learners, but the way in which it is interpreted and taught will need to be adapted to ensure that all learners are included. Schools should aim to give every student the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible.

To do this, schools will need to consider:

- Creating effective and supportive learning environments
- Providing appropriate support to learners with special educational needs
- Providing specialist equipment or materials where appropriate
- Varying teaching approaches where necessary to ensure that all learners are learning

Learners with visual impairment should have opportunities to access and have physical contact with artefacts and materials, and, where necessary, texts in Braille. Learners with hearing impairment should have opportunity to experience sound through physical contact with musical instruments and other sources of sound. Provision should be made for these learners to learn and use sign language where necessary.



## Learning Environments

The learning environment can assist learners to learn. It does not need to be expensively decorated. As a minimum, classrooms should:

- Be clean without rubbish on the floors and with clean windows
- Have furniture arranged so learners can work in groups
- Have talking walls that display learners' work, posters for information and learning materials
- Be owned by learners

In addition to textbooks, learners will also need access to other learning materials. These include improvised, no cost and low-cost materials which are available within a local community or environment. They will also include chemicals for Science experiments, calculators for Mathematics, instruments and materials for Creative Arts and tools for Technology and Enterprise. These materials will enable learners to learn for themselves and to ensure a greater depth of understanding is achieved.

Above all the learning environment should be welcoming and supportive.



## Assessment

The reformed, outcomes-based, curriculum requires a revised, skill-oriented approach to assessment that will support learning and reward achievement at all levels. This will be criterion-referenced to ensure that standards can be maintained year by year.

The new approach to assessment will support the changed emphasis in the nature of learning and teaching under the new curriculum by:

- Assessing the learners' understanding, not just their knowledge, of key concepts in each subject;
- Focusing on the learner's ability to apply their knowledge in a range of situations;
- Enabling the learner to demonstrate a selection of relevant generic skills;
- Using a diversified range of assessment techniques like oral, written, performance, practical skills demonstrations;
- Encouraging the development of learners' abilities to reflect on their own learning and carry out self-assessment.

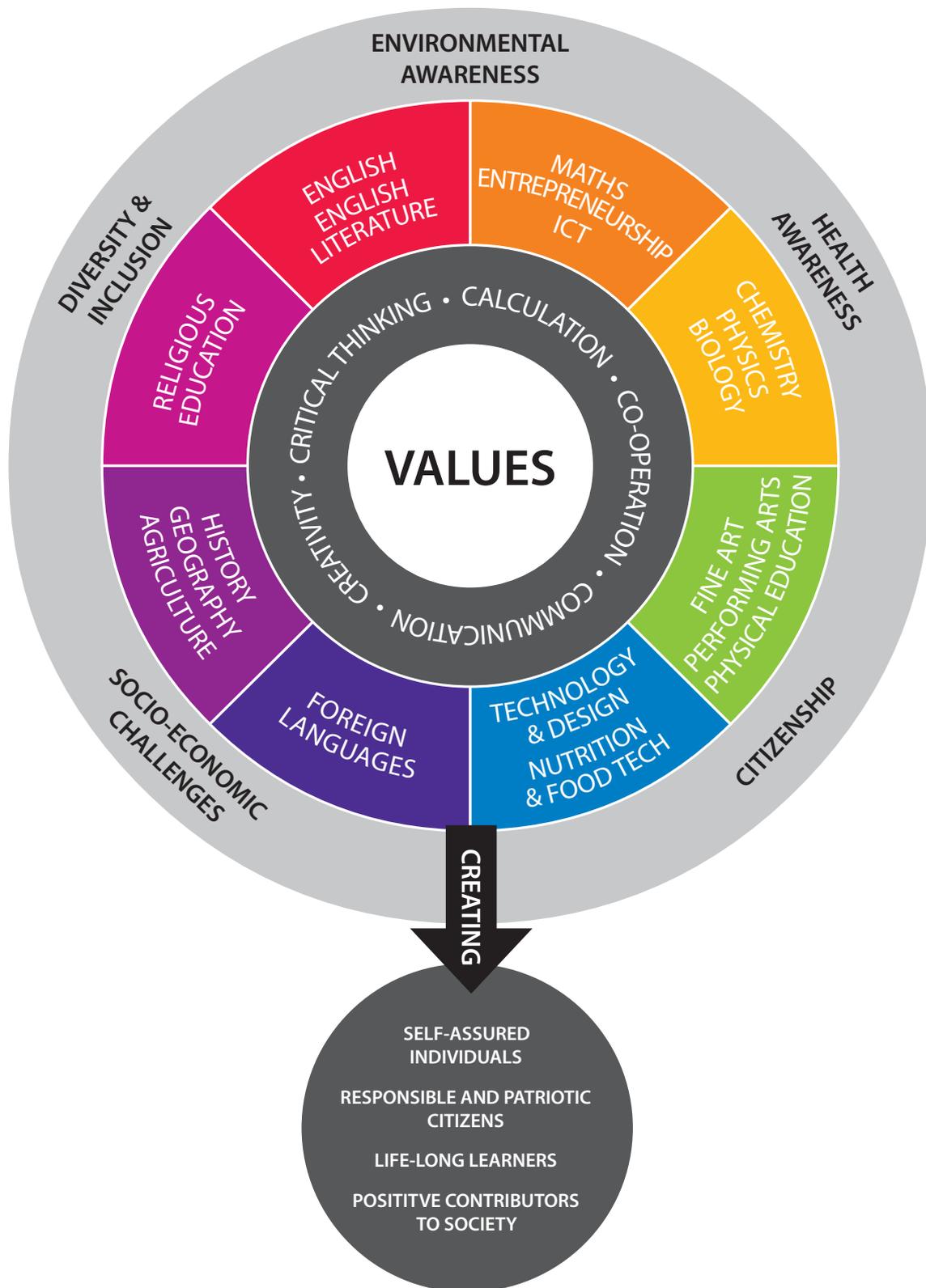
New materials will support classroom learning in the new lower secondary curriculum and provide for the assessment and reporting of achievement for all learners following the curriculum.

The new curriculum emphasises the assessment of the skills required for the world of work.

The previous UCE "O" level examination is being revisited to include classroom based assessment. Learners will still be formally assessed at the end of Senior 4, but the results of those assessments will lead to the award of a Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) that will consist of learner's achievement for both formative and summative assessment.



All the parts of the whole curriculum - subjects, generic skills, values, and cross-cutting issues - will come together and lead to the development of the four Key Learning Outcomes







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**Date:** 23rd January 2020

## **AMENDED CIRCULAR NCDC 1/2020**

All Chairpersons,  
Board of Governors/School Directors,  
Government Aided and Private Secondary Schools in Uganda.

### **GUIDELINES TO SCHOOLS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

In a bid to provide quality secondary education to all school going learners in Uganda, the Ministry of Education and Sports reviewed the Lower Secondary School Curriculum. The review aimed at reducing content overload, contact hours in the classroom; fostering learner centred pedagogy, competence based approach, and criterion referenced assessment. The purpose of the review is to produce **a secondary school graduate with employable skills that are competitive in the job market**. It is also intended to improve efficiency and effectiveness in curriculum delivery.

The revised Lower Secondary Curriculum is due to start in 2020 with Senior One. The teaching syllabi for 11 compulsory subjects to be studied in Senior 1 and 2 have been distributed to all Government Aided and Private Schools.

For smooth implementation of the new Curriculum, the following implementation guidelines should be noted:

A School may identify up to 15 subjects; 11 of which are compulsory in Senior 1 and 2, plus 4 elective subjects depending on the capacity and availability of resources.

The learner is free to choose one elective subject in Senior 1 and 2, which will give him/her a total of 12 subjects. On transition to Senior 3 and 4, the learner will study 7 compulsory subjects plus **a maximum of 2 electives OR a maximum of 3 electives for learners with special learning needs**, as per the subject grouping shown below. The rest of the classes will continue with the curriculum of 2008 (for UCE).

## THE LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM MENU

The new Lower Secondary curriculum menu consists of 20 subjects.

### a) COMPULSORY SUBJECTS FOR SENIOR 1 AND 2

| Subject                           | Subject                              |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.English Language                | 8.Entrepreneurship                   |
| 2.Mathematics                     | 9. Kiswahili                         |
| 3.History and Political Education | 10.Physical Education                |
| 4.Geography                       | 11. Religious education [CRE or IRE] |
| 5.Physics                         |                                      |
| 6.Chemistry                       | General Science for SNE*             |
| 7.Biology                         |                                      |

\* Learners who have been assessed and declared to have special learning needs such as visual impairment and dyslexia will study General Science as an alternative to the major Science subjects.

### b) ELECTIVES FOR SENIOR 1 AND 2

The choice for the elective subjects will be made from the following groupings;

| Electives 1                            | Electives 2                                      |
|--|--|
| 1.Foreign Languages                    | 1.Agriculture                                    |
| 2.Local Languages/Uganda Sign Language | 2.Art and Design                                 |
| 3.Literature in English                | 3.Performing Arts                                |
|  | 4.Information and Communication Technology [ICT] |
|  | 5.Nutrition and Food Technology                  |
|  | 6. Technology and Design                         |

At **Senior 3 in 2022**, the curriculum menu will change as follows:

### a) COMPULSORY SUBJECTS FOR SENIOR 3 AND 4

| Subject                           |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1.English Language                |                         |
| 2.Mathematics                     |                         |
| 3.History and Political Education |                         |
| 4.Geography                       |                         |
| 5.Physics                         |                         |
| 6.Chemistry                       | General Science for SNE |
| 7.Biology                         |                         |

### **b) ELECTIVES FOR SENIOR 3 AND 4**

The choices for the two elective subjects OR three elective subjects for learners with special learning needs, will be made from at least two of the following groupings;

| <b>Elective 1</b>       | <b>Elective 2</b>                                | <b>Elective 3</b>               |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 1.Uganda Sign Language  | 1.Performing Arts                                | 1.Christian Religious Education |
| 2.Kiswahili             | 2.Art and Design                                 | 2.Islamic Religious Education   |
| 3.Literature in English | 3.Agriculture                                    |                                 |
| 4.Local Language        | 4.Entrepreneurship                               |                                 |
| 5.Foreign Language      | 5.Physical Education                             |                                 |
|                         | 6.Nutrition and Technology                       |                                 |
|                         | 7.Information and Communication Technology [ICT] |                                 |

#### **Further Guidance**

1. All Secondary Schools shall be obliged to offer the 11 compulsory subjects for Senior 1 and 2 as indicated in [a] above.
2. School instructional time is from 8.00am to 2.55pm but the school day will run up to 4.30pm each working day.
3. Each lesson is 40 minutes which will total to 40 periods per week.
- 4. Schools are requested to submit formal requests to the Director, NCDC, for the instructional materials required to teach a maximum of four (4) elective subjects, to be selected from the list of electives for Senior 1 and 2 above. On delivering the request letter, the school will accordingly be issued with the elective teaching syllabus of the identified elective subjects.**



Grace K. Baguma  
**DIRECTOR**