

FreeFACTS

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Matric results stable after tough year

This edition of *FreeFACTS* looks at the matric results for the past three years.

Although there was a slight decline in the proportion of people passing this was likely to be expected given the difficult school year faced by teachers and pupils due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There was also a smaller decline in the proportion of people who passed well enough to be admitted to study at a university.

However, what will be of concern is the quality of matric passes and there are questions about how well matric prepares South Africa's young people for the world of work and further study.

For example, only 35.6% of those who wrote Mathematics got a mark of more than 40% in 2020. The proportion of those who achieved a mark of 80% above was even lower, with only 3% of the nearly 250 000 people who wrote Mathematics passing with that mark.

The figures were similar for subjects such as Mathematical Literacy and Physical Science. Fewer than 2% of those who wrote Mathematical Literacy managed a mark of more than 80% and only 3.7% of those who wrote Physical Science did so.

A further concern is throughput. In 2009 there were 1.1 million children in Grade One – they would go on to become the matric class of 2020. By the time they reached Grade 10 in 2018 there were just over 1 million people in this cohort with about 60% of those reaching matric in 2020. Some 440 000 people wrote matric in 2020 and 210 000 passed well enough to gain entry to university.

In other words, about 40% of 2009's Grade Ones passed matric in 2020 and 20% with a bachelor's pass. More concerning is that only 7 000 people passed Mathematics with a mark of 80% or higher, about 0.7% of 2009's Grade Ones.

Passing matric is an important stepping stone for many young South Africans as they enter the world of work and tertiary education. However, it remains an open question if matric and the previous eleven years of schooling are preparation for the next phase of their lives.

— **Marius Roodt**

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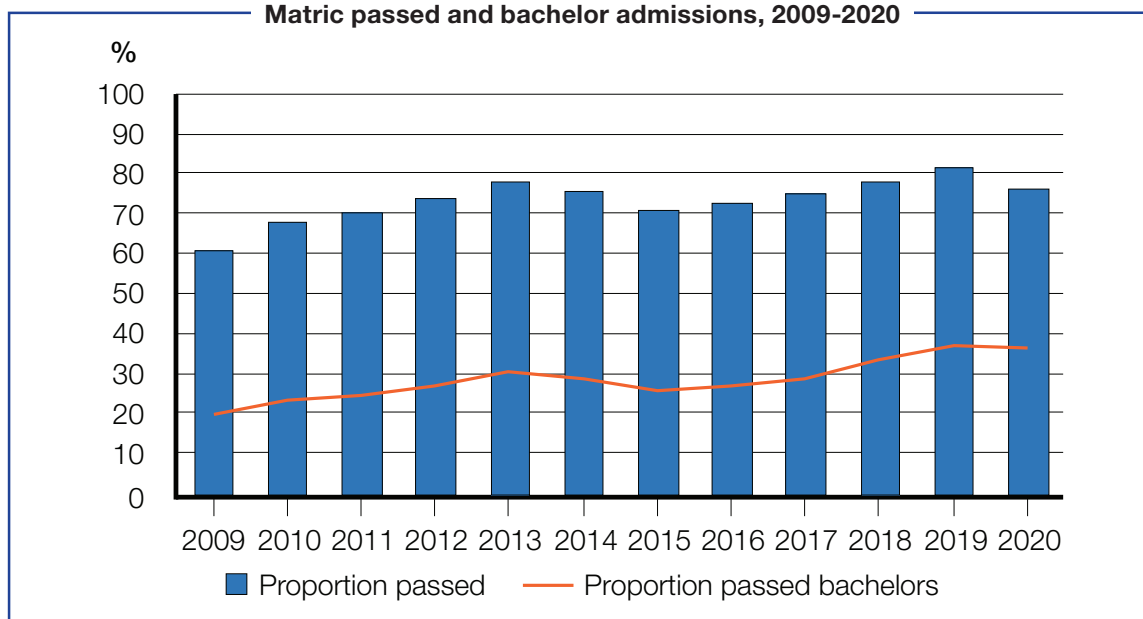
Education

National Senior Certificate results, 2018-2020

	2018			2019		
	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed
Eastern Cape	65 733	46 393	70.6%	63 198	48 331	76.5%
Free State	24 914	21 806	87.5%	25 572	22 602	88.4%
Gauteng	94 870	83 406	87.9%	97 829	85 342	87.2%
KwaZulu-Natal	116 152	88 485	76.2%	116 937	95 017	81.3%
Limpopo	76 730	53 254	69.4%	70 847	51 855	73.2%
Mpumalanga	44 612	35 225	79.0%	43 559	34 995	80.3%
North-West	29 061	23 578	81.1%	26 819	23 272	86.8%
Northern Cape	9 909	7 264	73.3%	9 138	6 990	76.5%
Western Cape	50 754	41 350	81.5%	50 404	41 502	82.3%
South Africa	512 735	400 761	78.2%	504 303	409 906	81.3%
	2020			Change. 2018-2020		
	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Total wrote, change	Total passed, change	Proportion passed, change
Eastern Cape	72 926	49 691	68.1%	10.9%	7.1%	-3.5%
Free State	27 928	23 779	85.1%	12.1%	9.0%	-2.7%
Gauteng	110 191	92 285	83.8%	16.1%	10.6%	-4.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	135 225	104 938	77.6%	16.4%	18.6%	1.8%
Limpopo	78 695	53 634	68.2%	2.6%	0.7%	-1.7%
Mpumalanga	53 391	39 367	73.7%	19.7%	11.8%	-6.7%
North-West	36 871	28 093	76.2%	26.9%	19.1%	-6.0%
Northern Cape	11 608	7 665	66.0%	17.1%	5.5%	-10.0%
Western Cape	51 633	41 250	79.9%	1.7%	-0.2%	-2.0%
South Africa	578 468	440 702	76.2%	12.8%	10.0%	-2.6%

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p7; *National Senior Certificate 2020 Examination Report*, February 2021, p7

Matric passed and bachelor admissions, 2009-2020



Education

National Senior Certificate results, 2018-2020 (bachelor's passes)						
	2018			2019		
	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors admission	Proportion passed with bachelors admission	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors admission	Proportion passed with bachelors admission
Eastern Cape	65 733	18 001	27.4%	63 198	20 419	32.3%
Free State	24 914	9 333	37.5%	25 572	9 992	39.1%
Gauteng	94 870	41 410	43.6%	97 829	43 494	44.5%
KwaZulu-Natal	116 152	38 571	33.2%	116 937	44 189	37.8%
Limpopo	76 730	17 999	23.5%	70 847	19 022	26.8%
Mpumalanga	44 612	13 199	29.6%	43 559	14 228	32.7%
North-West	29 061	9 449	32.5%	26 819	9 964	37.2%
Northern Cape	9 909	2 589	26.1%	9 138	2 769	30.3%
Western Cape	50 754	21 492	42.3%	50 404	21 981	43.6%
South Africa	512 735	172 043	33.6%	504 303	186 058	36.9%
	2020			Change. 2018-2020		
	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors admission	Proportion passed with bachelors admission	Total wrote, change	Number of Bachelor passes, change	Proportion of bachelor passes, change
Eastern Cape	72 926	21 886	30.0%	10.9%	21.6%	9.5%
Free State	27 928	11 284	40.4%	12.1%	20.9%	7.7%
Gauteng	110 191	49 680	45.1%	16.1%	20.0%	3.4%
KwaZulu-Natal	135 225	51 060	37.8%	16.4%	32.4%	13.9%
Limpopo	78 695	22 907	29.1%	2.6%	27.3%	23.8%
Mpumalanga	53 391	16 251	30.4%	19.7%	23.1%	2.7%
North-West	36 871	11 822	32.1%	26.9%	25.1%	-1.2%
Northern Cape	11 608	3 296	28.4%	17.1%	27.3%	8.8%
Western Cape	51 633	22 634	43.8%	1.7%	5.3%	3.5%
South Africa	578 468	210 820	36.4%	12.8%	22.5%	8.3%

Source: Department of Basic Education, *Report on the National Senior Certificate Examination*, January 2020, p7; *National Senior Certificate 2020 Examination Report*, February 2021, p48

Education

Matric passes by gender, 2018-2020

	2018				2019			
	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)
Eastern Cape (boys)	29 128	21 269	73.0%	01:01.2	27 765	21 833	78.8%	01:01.2
Eastern Cape (girls)	36 605	25 124	68.6%		35 433	26 448	74.6%	
Free State (boys)	11 578	10 271	88.7%	01:01.2	11 549	10 348	89.6%	01:01.2
Free State (girls)	13 336	11 535	86.5%		14 023	12 254	87.4%	
Gauteng (boys)	42 475	37 444	88.2%	01:01.2	43 485	38 122	87.7%	01:01.2
Gauteng (girls)	52 395	45 962	87.7%		54 344	47 220	86.9%	
KwaZulu-Natal (boys)	50 761	39 296	77.4%	01:01.3	50 767	41 906	82.5%	01:01.3
KwaZulu-Natal (girls)	65 391	49 189	75.2%		66 170	53 111	80.3%	
Limpopo (boys)	34 613	25 116	72.6%	01:01.1	32 107	24 565	76.5%	01:01.1
Limpopo (girls)	42 117	28 138	66.8%		38 740	27 290	70.4%	
Mpumalanga (boys)	19 710	15 896	80.6%	01:01.2	19 396	15 964	82.3%	01:01.2
Mpumalanga (girls)	24 902	19 329	77.6%		24 163	19 031	78.8%	
North-West (boys)	13 347	10 980	82.3%	01:01.1	12 182	10 713	87.9%	01:01.2
North-West (girls)	15 714	12 598	80.2%		14 637	12 559	85.8%	
Northern Cape (boys)	4 318	3 233	74.9%	01:01.2	3 980	3 163	79.5%	01:01.2
Northern Cape (girls)	5 591	4 031	72.1%		5 158	3 827	74.2%	
Western Cape (boys)	22 162	18 418	83.1%	01:01.2	22 131	18 336	82.9%	01:01.3
Western Cape (girls)	28 592	22 932	80.2%		28 273	23 166	81.9%	
South Africa (boys)	228 092	181 923	79.8%	01:01.2	223 362	185 000	82.8%	01:01.2
South Africa (girls)	284 643	218 838	76.9%		280 941	224 906	80.1%	

	2020			
	Total wrote	Total passed	Proportion passed	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)
Eastern Cape (boys)	31 987	22 086	69.0%	01:01.2
Eastern Cape (girls)	40 939	27 605	67.4%	
Free State (boys)	12 601	10 754	85.3%	01:01.2
Free State (girls)	15 327	13 025	85.0%	
Gauteng (boys)	48 638	40 523	83.3%	01:01.3
Gauteng (girls)	61 553	51 762	84.1%	
KwaZulu-Natal (boys)	59 574	46 369	77.8%	01:01.3
KwaZulu-Natal (girls)	75 651	58 569	77.4%	
Limpopo (boys)	35 241	24 436	69.3%	01:01.2
Limpopo (girls)	43 454	29 198	67.2%	
Mpumalanga (boys)	23 706	17 746	74.9%	01:01.2
Mpumalanga (girls)	29 685	21 621	72.8%	
North-West (boys)	16 651	12 812	76.9%	01:01.2
North-West (girls)	20 220	15 281	75.6%	
Northern Cape (boys)	5 133	3 457	67.3%	01:01.2
Northern Cape (girls)	6 475	4 208	65.0%	
Western Cape (boys)	22 390	17 989	80.3%	01:01.3
Western Cape (girls)	29 243	23 261	79.5%	
South Africa (boys)	255 921	196 172	76.7%	01:01.2
South Africa (girls)	322 547	244 530	75.8%	

Source: Department of Basic Education, *National Senior Certificate 2020 Examination Report*, February 2021, p52

Education

Matric bachelors passes by gender, 2018 and 2019

	2018				2019			
	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors entry	Proportion passed with bachelors entry	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors entry	Proportion passed with bachelors entry	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)
Eastern Cape (boys)	29 128	8 328	28.6%	01:01.2	27 765	9 358	33.7%	01:01.2
Eastern Cape (girls)	36 605	9 673	26.4%		35 433	11 061	31.2%	
Free State (boys)	11 578	4 300	37.1%	01:01.2	11 549	4 545	39.4%	01:01.2
Free State (girls)	13 336	5 033	37.7%		14 023	5 447	38.8%	
Gauteng (boys)	42 475	17 412	41.0%	01:01.4	43 485	18 358	42.2%	01:01.4
Gauteng (girls)	52 395	23 998	45.8%		54 344	25 136	46.3%	
KwaZulu-Natal (boys)	50 761	17 051	33.6%	01:01.3	50 767	19 649	38.7%	01:01.2
KwaZulu-Natal (girls)	65 391	21 520	32.9%		66 170	24 540	37.1%	
Limpopo (boys)	34 613	8 683	25.1%	01:01.1	32 107	9 214	28.7%	01:01.1
Limpopo (girls)	42 117	9 316	22.1%		38 740	9 808	25.3%	
Mpumalanga (boys)	19 710	6 062	30.8%	01:01.2	19 396	6 549	33.8%	01:01.2
Mpumalanga (girls)	24 902	7 137	28.7%		24 163	7 679	31.8%	
North-West (boys)	13 347	4 295	32.2%	01:01.2	12 182	4 517	37.1%	01:01.2
North-West (girls)	15 714	5 154	32.8%		14 637	5 447	37.2%	
Northern Cape (boys)	4 318	1 053	24.4%	01:01.5	3 980	1 174	29.5%	01:01.4
Northern Cape (girls)	5 591	1 536	27.5%		5 158	1 595	30.9%	
Western Cape (boys)	22 162	9 347	42.2%	01:01.3	22 131	9 384	42.4%	01:01.3
Western Cape (girls)	28 592	12 145	42.5%		28 273	12 597	44.6%	
South Africa (boys)	228 092	76 531	33.6%	01:01.2	223 362	82 748	37.0%	01:01.2
South Africa (girls)	284 643	95 512	33.6%		280 941	103 310	36.8%	

	2020			
	Total wrote	Total passed with bachelors entry	Proportion passed with bachelors entry	Ratio of boys to girls (passes)
Eastern Cape (boys)	31 987	9 465	29.6%	01:01.3
Eastern Cape (girls)	40 939	12 421	30.3%	
Free State (boys)	12 601	4 989	39.6%	01:01.3
Free State (girls)	15 327	6 295	41.1%	
Gauteng (boys)	48 638	20 348	41.8%	01:01.4
Gauteng (girls)	61 553	29 332	47.7%	
KwaZulu-Natal (boys)	59 574	22 377	37.6%	01:01.3
KwaZulu-Natal (girls)	75 651	28 683	37.9%	
Limpopo (boys)	35 241	10 406	29.5%	01:01.2
Limpopo (girls)	43 454	12 501	28.8%	
Mpumalanga (boys)	23 706	7 167	30.2%	01:01.3
Mpumalanga (girls)	29 685	9 084	30.6%	
North-West (boys)	16 651	5 269	31.6%	01:01.2
North-West (girls)	20 220	6 553	32.4%	
Northern Cape (boys)	5 133	1 434	27.9%	01:01.3
Northern Cape (girls)	6 475	1 862	28.8%	
Western Cape (boys)	22 390	9 491	42.4%	01:01.0
Western Cape (girls)	29 243	13 143	44.9%	
South Africa (boys)	255 921	90 946	35.5%	01:01.3
South Africa (girls)	322 547	119 874	37.2%	

Source: Department of Basic Education, *National Senior Certificate 2020 Examination Report*, February 2021, p52

Education

Pass rate by school quintile, 2020						
		Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
Pass rate: 0-19.9%	Number*	27	15	9	0	0
	Proportion	1.5%	0.9%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Pass rate: 20-39.9%	Number	141	101	77	7	4
	Proportion	7.8%	6.1%	5.2%	1.1%	0.5%
Pass rate: 40-59.9%	Number	387	333	278	53	23
	Proportion	21.4%	20.0%	19.0%	8.7%	3.1%
Pass rate: 60-79.9%	Number	611	616	609	225	109
	Proportion	33.8%	37.0%	41.5%	36.9%	14.8%
Pass rate: 80-100%	Number	642	600	494	324	601
	Proportion	35.5%	36.0%	33.7%	53.2%	81.5%
Total	Number	1808	1665	1467	609	737

Source: Department of Basic Education, *National Senior Certificate 2020 Examination Report*, February 2021, p55

*The number of schools in that particular quintile which achieved the relevant pass rate. For example a pass rate of between 80 and 100% was achieved by 642 schools in quintile one.

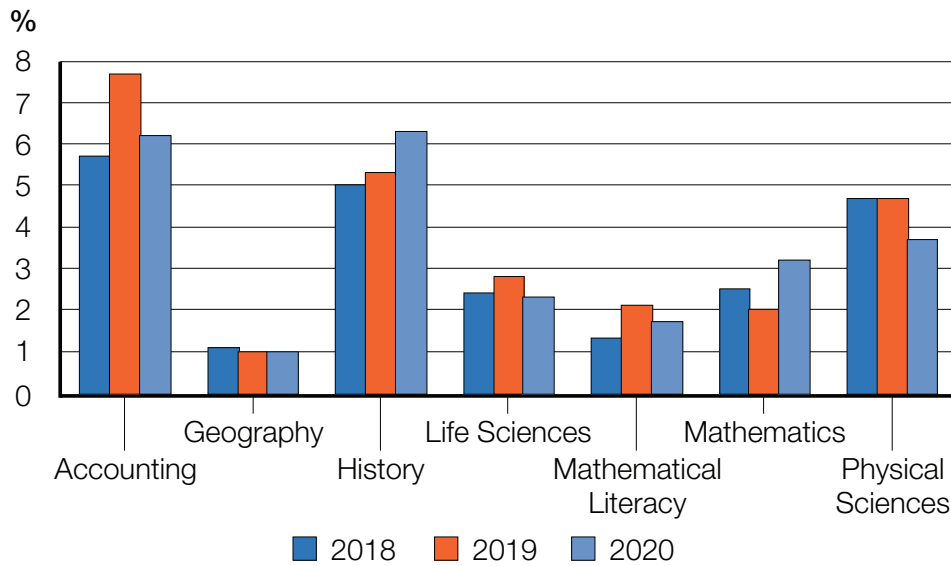
Note: Quintile 1 schools cater for the poorest 20% of learners. Quintile 2 schools cater for the next poorest 20%, and so on. Quintile 5 schools are those schools that cater for the least poor 20% of learners.

Selected subject performances, 2018-2020										
	2018					2019				
	Number wrote	Number achieved above 40%	Proportion achieved above 40%	Number achieved above 80%	Proportion achieved above 80%	Number wrote	Number achieved above 40%	Proportion achieved above 40%	Number achieved above 80%	Proportion achieved above 80%
Accounting	90 278	43 831	48.6%	5 169	5.7%	80 110	42 113	52.6%	3 875	7.7%
Geography	269 621	126 011	46.7%	2 934	1.1%	271 807	144 755	53.3%	2 752	1.0%
History	154 536	112 266	72.6%	7 656	5.0%	164 729	121 936	74.0%	8 702	5.3%
Life Science	310 041	160 208	51.7%	7 507	2.4%	301 037	147 436	49.0%	8 525	2.8%
Mathematical Literacy	294 204	133 568	45.4%	3 957	1.3%	298 607	162 877	54.5%	6 280	2.1%
Mathematics	233 858	86 874	37.1%	5 828	2.5%	222 034	77 751	35.0%	4 415	2.0%
Physical Science	172 319	84 002	48.7%	8 135	4.7%	164 478	85 034	51.7%	7 763	4.7%
2020										
	Number wrote	Number achieved above 40%	Proportion achieved above 40%	Number achieved above 80%	Proportion achieved above 80%					
Accounting	92 767	49 103	52.9%	5 777	6.2%					
Geography	287 629	132 955	46.2%	2 755	1.0%					
History	173 498	134 610	77.6%	10 935	6.3%					
Life Science	319 228	153 028	47.9%	7 317	2.3%					
Mathematical Literacy	341 363	197 131	57.7%	5 696	1.7%					
Mathematics	233 315	82 964	35.6%	7 424	3.2%					
Physical Science	174 310	73 982	42.4%	6 368	3.7%					

Source: FreeFACTS, January 2020; Department of Basic Education, *National Senior Certificate 2020 Examination Report*, February 2021, pp61, 64, 65, 67, 69, 70, 71, and 72

Education

Proportion of learners that achieved distinctions (selected subjects)



Throughput, 2009-2020

Number of grade ones, 2009	1 116 889
Number of grade tens, 2018	1 033 799
Number of grade 12 candidates, 2020	578 468
Number of matric passes	440 702
Number of bachelor passes	210 820
Number of mathematics passes at above 40%	82 964
Number of mathematics passes at above 80%	7 424

Source: Department of Basic Education, *School Realities*, 2010, p2; *School Realities*, 2018, p3; *National Senior Certificate 2020 Examination Report*, February 2021, pp7 and 48

Throughput, Class of 2020

