



Province of the  
**EASTERN CAPE**  
EDUCATION

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

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**DEPARTMENTAL CIRCULAR NO 20 OF 2018**

<b>TO</b>	<b>DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERALS CHIEF DIRECTORS HEAD OFFICE DIRECTORS DISTRICT DIRECTORS CHIEF EDUCATION SPECIALISTS EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS (EDO'S) PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOL OF SKILLS</b>
<b>FROM</b>	<b>SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ADMISSION GUIDELINES TO SCHOOL OF SKILLS</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>14 MAY 2018</b>

**INTRODUCTION**

The Directorate: Inclusive Education have formalised the following guidelines for the admission of learners to School of Skills.

These guidelines should be considered as supportive to the School of Skills admission policies and will reflect on general admission guidelines, documentation required and the admission process as indicated by the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy (2014).

## THE PURPOSE OF THE CIRCULAR

The purpose of the circular is to set the standards and criteria for the admission of learners to Schools of Skills. Circuit Based Support Teams and District Based Support Teams must ensure that all learners that are placed at Schools of Skills are admitted through the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Process (SIAS) and by complying with the standards as set below.

## ADMISSION GUIDELINES

### Admission Guidelines

1. Schools of Skills cater for learners who have primarily intellectual barriers to learning and they therefore find the standard of work done in the mainstream schools beyond their capabilities;
2. The Primary Domain of Specialization at a School of Skills is to accommodate learners with mild to moderate intellectual barriers to learning;
3. Learners who fall within the moderate level of intellectual functioning must prove to have sufficient adaptive skills on a conceptual, social and general functioning level. These levels of functioning are important in mitigating risks factors associated with the workshops;
4. Learners who do not meet the official diagnoses of mild intellectual disability, and whose abilities exceed this level of functioning, can be considered for admission, based on their weak academic performance over an extended period, permitted that their intellectual ability falls within the intellectual category of the borderline range;
5. The learners must be at least two (2) years behind their peers, having started at school at the correct age and most likely having repeated once in the Foundation Phase and once in the Intermediate Phase. The intellectual potential of learners will not only be based on the intellectual score of an intelligence test alone, but will largely be determined by academic achievements;

6. Where a learner experienced a delayed start to school, over the age of 6, the admission criteria for placement at a School of Skills will still apply, but maturity levels for his/her age will also be considered;
7. The secondary domains of specialisation, as an additional barrier to learning to the primary disability, can be:
  - Vision (partially sighted)
  - Hearing (hard of hearing)
  - Motor (learner must be mobile)
  - Specific Learning Disabilities (within the borderline intellectual range)
8. It is noted that learners who have been officially diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Conduct Disorder will not be considered for placement at a School of Skills. This school category is not equipped to address severe behavioural barriers to learning as this falls outside the domain of specialization of the school of skills;
9. Learners with mild or moderate behavioural barriers will not be excluded from the school's programme, but an Individual Support Plan (ISP) on prior interventions and planned levels of support must be provided at the DBST placement meeting;
10. As a minimum academic requirement, all learners should at least be able to read, write and speak at a level equivalent to Grade 5, as measured by official reading and writing assessment tests within this field. Learners who come from deprived home backgrounds, who fall below this level of efficiency, will be enrolled in a reading and writing bridging program where their basic reading and writings skills will be developed.

### **Extra Mural Activities**

1. The Schools of Skills will offer a variety of sport and recreational activities to promote the holistic development of learners placed in their care. Learners are encouraged to participate in one summer and one winter activity throughout the year. Learners are expected to commit to their choice of activity for at least a term to encourage habits of perseverance and responsibility;
2. Schools of Skills are expected to state their sport and cultural activities in the school's admission policy.

### **Admission Procedure**

1. The school will follow the SIAS process to guide the placement of learners. Parents/caregivers can apply at the district for admission by completing the application package, individualised for each School of Skills, provided at the school or district office;
2. Each School of Skills must state the information that is required, additional to the SIAS process documentation, within their admission policy;
3. The District Based Support Team will conduct placement meetings (District Placement Committee) in the third term to screen all new applications to the school for the following year;
4. Schools and district offices are mandated to advocate on the time frames of placements at Schools of Skills at mainstream and relevant Special Schools. This can be done as an annual information day for feeder schools where information is disseminated;
5. The following information, per the SIAS process, must be submitted before an application will be considered:
  - Admission to School Form (Parental questionnaire (customized by school))



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- School Needs Assessment (SNA) Form 1
  - SNA 2
  - SNA 3
  - ISP
  - Birth certificate
  - Parent's ID documents
  - Professional Reports (inclusive of a Psychologist Report)
  - Examples of class work;
6. The District Based Support Team, in collaboration with the SBST, will screen all applications and present individual learner applications at the District Based Support Team meeting;
  7. The DBST (District Placement Committee) will communicate with parents if there are outstanding documentation to support the application, or request additional assessments to support the profile of the learner;
  8. The psychologist report, as part of the admission process, must reflect on the learner's intellectual functioning, mentioning the learner's adaptive skills to support the Individual Support Plan of the learner and motivate appropriate placement of the learner to the District Placement Committee;
  9. It is of paramount importance that the psychologist report states the learner's reading and writing abilities and whether the learner is environmentally deprived. This information will support the correct diagnoses of the learner and support the intervention plan, ensuring that a deserving learner is not marginalised from the occupational programme;
  10. The following circumstances will be considered before a learner is placed:
    - The availability of the spaces per field and/or workshops;
    - The availability of spaces as related to specific occupational programmes;
    - All applicants will be placed in Year 1 of the four- year program of the occupational stream



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- Admission to School of Skills is for learners aged 14 years, but not yet 17 years on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in the year of admission;
  - If the school runs at full capacity, preference will be given to learners who require hostel accommodation first to ensure utilization of hostel facilities and to support a wider district region for placements;
  - Learners found to need care and support should be provided with an official social worker report that states social interventions and supporting structures such as parental care or alternative care options. Where needed, necessary SASSA grants documentation must accompany the application;
  - Learners that are placed must be able to comply with the physical demands of the occupational component.
11. All applications will be submitted by the District Placement Committee to the Provincial Placement Committee for approval;
  12. Once the final decision has been made, parents/caregivers of all candidates will be informed by the DBST (District Placement Committee) with an official departmental letter of approval **or** non-acceptance **or** waiting list placement.

### Exit Strategy

1. The progress of each learner will continuously be evaluated to determine the best type of support the learner will require to succeed;
2. Learners who fail to master the outcomes of the curriculum for a specific year will be evaluated to determine whether that learner will benefit from repeating a year. Emphasis will be placed on the learner's ability to cope with the occupational program rather than his/her academic progress. The lack of achievements in academic subjects will not necessarily indicate a repeat year;
3. The decision whether a learner should be considered to exit the school's programme will be based on evaluations of occupational achievements and

outcomes of professional assessments after the age of 16 years, or upon completion of the fourth year;

4. Learners, who have not yet reached the fourth year, may only be recommended to exit the school programme by the DBST at the district placement meeting. Parents must be consulted during this process.

  
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**TS KOJANA**

**SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL**

**EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

25/05/2018  
DATE