

## Press Release

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### SCS demands that Business Studies matric exam be declared invalid

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The Solidarity Movement, on behalf of the Support Centre for Schools (SCS), demand that the 2018 matric exam for Business Studies be declared invalid. This comes after an investigation by the SCS, indicating that more than 70% of the memorandum for the Business Studies exam paper correlates with the contents of the Mind The Gap study guide. This study guide is compiled by the Department of Basic Education for various subjects, including Mathematics and Accounting, and is distributed through the departmental website. Mind The Gap for Business Studies is the only edition that is not available on the department's website.

The SCS has been informed by various teachers that this guide was in fact distributed to learners from underperforming schools during educational camps held across the country. These camps take place during school holidays and are meant to assist promoted learners with preparation for the matric exams.

In an official letter sent to the DBE on Thursday 22 February, Solidarity demands an explanation for the extensive correlation between the memorandum for Business Studies and the Mind The Gap study guide. This guide does not form part of the list of prescribed text books for Business Studies and many learners did not have access to the guide.

“We do not expect that the contents of an official NSC memorandum would match the content of only one text book word for word, especially if this text book is not available to a large cohort of learners,” says Hugo Vermeulen, head of training at the SCS. “This is indicative of large-scale irregularities in the compilation of the exam paper for Business Studies.”

Vermeulen says learners that had access to the study guide would have had an unfair advantage over the rest of the matric group and would have been able to achieve excellent results in the Business Studies matric exam.

As a result, Solidarity demands that the NSC examination for Business Studies be declared invalid and that matriculates' SBA marks be accepted as their final matric mark for Business Studies. “In the interest of learners, should the department fail to meet our demands, we will have no other choice than to take further legal action,” says Werner Human, deputy chief executive of Solidarity.

The SCS brought the matter under the attention of the DBE on 16 January and has since provided the department with various written complaints received from teachers across the country. To date, the department has failed to take any actions to address these complaints. Senior officials of the DBE have



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also failed to provide the SCS with the outcomes of a departmental investigation into the above-mentioned complaints.

During a meeting between the SCS and senior officials from the DBE on 5 February, the department admitted there is a shortage of experienced Afrikaans markers for the Business Studies matric exam. This could have resulted in Afrikaans learners being disadvantaged ever further. The department also admitted that markers adhered to the memorandum too rigidly and did not leave room for learners' individual interpretation of exam questions.

According to these officials, some English learners' results for Business Studies increased by 50%, following the NSC exam. "It worries the SCS that exam marks should differ so drastically from SBA marks awarded to learners during their matric year. This is a further indication that irregularities took place during the compilation of the NSC exam paper for Business Studies, that could have unfairly disadvantaged certain learners," says Vermeulen.



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