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2025/2026 NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS REGISTRATION GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

NESA organizes national examinations at the end of each academic year for Primary Six (P6), Senior Three (S3), and Senior Six (S6) / Level 5 / Year 3. This guide outlines the registration procedures for both school-based and private candidates.

2. Registration Timeline

Start Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026.
Deadline: Friday, March 27, 2026.
Platform: School Data Management System (SDMS).
Responsible:

- Head teachers for school-based candidates.
- Private candidates (they register themselves in SDMS. Candidates attending private coaching centres must select the centres where they receive coaching).

3. Registration for School-Based Candidates

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

Level	Requirements
P6	- Be Registered in SDMS for P1–P6 without skipping grades - Enrolled in P6 with a clear and recent passport photo
S3	- Completed successfully the Primary Leaving Examinations - Completed S1–S3 without skipping grades - Registered in SDMS with clear and recent passport photo ***Note**: Students who passed PLE before the 2021/2022 academic year, or those who studied in other education systems are required to provide a P6 result confirmation or equivalence certificate and report cards for the previous two school years (S1 and S2).*

Level	Requirements
S6 / L5 / Y3	- Completed successfully the S3 National Examinations - Completed S4–S6 (or Y1–Y3 / L3–L5) without skipping grades or changing combinations - Registered in SDMS with clear and recent passport photo - A National Identification Card or Passport. - The information entered in SDMS must exactly match records from the National Identification Agency (NIDA) to prevent errors. If a candidate does not yet have a National ID, they may be registered using their full names, but schools must take extra care to ensure the accuracy of all personal details. ***Note**: Students who passed S3 National Exams before the 2021/2022 academic year, or who studied in other education systems are required to provide a S3 result confirmation or equivalence certificate and report cards for the previous two school years (S4/L3/Y1 and S5/L4/Y2).*

3.2. Candidate Photo & Document Support

Schools must assist students with clear and recent passport photos and document scanning **free of charge**.

3.3. School Selection & Orientation Choices for P6 and S3 candidates

All Primary Six (P6) and Senior Three (S3) candidates are requested to select the schools where they wish to continue their studies—either in day schools or boarding schools.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to actively participate in this process and to confirm the identity details of their children to ensure accuracy and transparency.

Each P6 and S3 candidate is therefore requested to:

Choose **4 boarding schools** and **2-day schools.**

S3 candidates must include **at least two orientations/trades from Technical Secondary School (TSS)** among the four boarding schools.

S3 Candidates will choose from **36 orientations** across **Technical Secondary Schools**, **Professional Education**, and **General Education**:

SN	Type of Education	Orientation Full Name	Orientation Short Name
1	Technical Secondary School	Agriculture	AGR
2	Technical Secondary School	Animal Health	ANH
3	Technical Secondary School	Automobile Technology	AUT
4	Technical Secondary School	Building Construction	BDC
5	Technical Secondary School	Computer System and Architecture	CSA
6	Technical Secondary School	Electrical Technology	ELT
7	Technical Secondary School	Electronics and Telecommunication	ETE
8	Technical Secondary School	Fashion Design	FAD
9	Technical Secondary School	Food and Beverage Operations	FBO
10	Technical Secondary School	Food Processing	FOP
11	Technical Secondary School	Forestry	FOR
12	Technical Secondary School	Fine and Plastic Arts	FPA
13	Technical Secondary School	Interior Design	IND
14	Technical Secondary School	Land Surveying	LSV
15	Technical Secondary School	Manufacturing Technology	MAT
16	Technical Secondary School	Multimedia Production	MMP
17	Technical Secondary School	Music and Performing Arts	MPA
18	Technical Secondary School	Networking and Internet Technology	NIT
19	Technical Secondary School	Plumbing Technology	PLT
20	Technical Secondary School	Public Works	PWO
21	Technical Secondary School	Renewable Energy	REN
22	Technical Secondary School	Software Programming and Embedded Systems	SPE
23	Technical Secondary School	Software Development	SWD
24	Technical Secondary School	Tourism	TOR
25	Technical Secondary School	Water and Irrigation	WIR
26	Technical Secondary School	Wood Technology	WOT
27	Professional Education	Accounting	ACC
28	Professional Education	Associate Nursing Program	ANP
29	Professional Education	Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education	ECLPE
30	Professional Education	Languages Education	LE
31	Professional Education	Science and Mathematics Education	SME
32	Professional Education	Social Studies Education	SSE
33	General Education	Arts and Humanities	-
34	General Education	Languages	-
35	General Education	Mathematics and Science (stream one)	-
36	General Education	Mathematics and Science (stream two)	-

Note: the list of schools and their trades/pathways is available on the NESA website to guide candidates in making their choices.

3.4. Registration to National Examinations for S6 / L5 / Y3 candidates

In 2025/2026 National Examinations, **both School Based and Private Candidates** will register in the following combinations / Trades / Options:

SN	Type of Education	Orientation Full Name	Orientation Short Name
1	Technical Secondary School	Agriculture	AGR
2	Technical Secondary School	Animal Health	ANH
3	Technical Secondary School	Automobile Technology	AUT
4	Technical Secondary School	Building Construction	BDC
5	Technical Secondary School	Computer System and Architecture	CSA
6	Technical Secondary School	Electrical Technology	ELT
7	Technical Secondary School	Electronics and Telecommunication	ETE
8	Technical Secondary School	Fashion Design	FAD
9	Technical Secondary School	Food and Beverage Operations	FBO
10	Technical Secondary School	Food Processing	FOP
11	Technical Secondary School	Forestry	FOR
12	Technical Secondary School	Fine and Plastic Arts	FPA
13	Technical Secondary School	Interior Design	IND
14	Technical Secondary School	Land Surveying	LSV
15	Technical Secondary School	Manufacturing Technology	MAT
16	Technical Secondary School	Multimedia Production	MMP

SN	Type of Education	Orientation Full Name	Orientation Short Name
17	Technical Secondary School	Music and Performing Arts	MPA
18	Technical Secondary School	Networking and Internet Technology	NIT
19	Technical Secondary School	Plumbing Technology	PLT
20	Technical Secondary School	Public Works	PWO
21	Technical Secondary School	Renewable Energy	REN
22	Technical Secondary School	Software Programming and Embedded Systems	SPE
23	Technical Secondary School	Software Development	SWD
24	Technical Secondary School	Tourism	TOR
25	Technical Secondary School	Water and Irrigation	WIR
26	Technical Secondary School	Wood Technology	WOT
27	Professional Education	Accounting	ACC
28	Professional Education	Associate Nursing Program	ANP
29	Professional Education	Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education	ECLPE
30	Professional Education	Languages Education	LE
31	Professional Education	Science and Mathematics Education	SME
32	Professional Education	Social Studies Education	SSE
33	General Education	History Geography Literature in English	HGL
34	General Education	History Literature in English Psychology	HLP
35	General Education	Literature in English French Kinyarwanda Kiswahili	LFK
36	General Education	Mathematics Chemistry Biology	MCB
37	General Education	Mathematics Computer Science Economics	MCE
38	General Education	Mathematics Economics Geography	MEG
39	General Education	Mathematics Physics Computer Science	MPC
40	General Education	Mathematics Physics Geography	MPG
41	General Education	Physics Chemistry Biology	PCB
42	General Education	Physics Chemistry Mathematics	PCM

Note:

a. ***Subject combinations that were phased out in previous school years are no longer available for examination registration***
b. *Unlike the 2024/2025 repeating candidates and private candidates in General Education—some of whom did not sit for all examinations due to the phasing out of certain combinations—all candidates for the 2025/2026 school year (both school-based and private) will sit for the same set of examination papers.*
c. *Students with disabilities shall have equal access to all orientations, trades, and pathways.* ***Disability must never be used as a criterion to restrict or deny registration or admission to any program****.*

3.5. Parents Involvement in Candidate Registration

Parents or guardians must be actively involved in guiding students' school choices before the registration process begins. In addition, **parents' contact details (phone numbers) must be accurately entered in SDMS** to ensure that each parent receives all notifications related to the national examination process on behalf of their child.

Once a candidate is registered, an **SMS** will be sent to the parent or guardian confirming the selected schools. ***If any changes need to be made, the parent must notify IMMEDIATELY the school before the registration application for their child is validated***.

School leaders are responsible for accurately recording each student's choices, ensuring that parent's input is respected and properly documented.

3.6. School Administration Responsibilities

The school administration is responsible for:

Ensuring accurate candidate data in SDMS (names, gender, ID, birthdate, residence, parent / guardian contact, students' choices, information on student's disability).

Verifying all registration forms before submission.

Prevent duplication and mismatches—S6/Y3/L5 candidates must use their National ID.

Verifying student's IDs into SDMS.

Printing and securely storing registration forms.

Notifying parents via SMS after registration; corrections must be made promptly.
School leaders for the selected Practical Examination Centres are requested to support Private Candidates to sit for Practical Examinations: Teaching Practice (TTC), Integrated Assessments (TSS), ICT in Accounting (ACC) and Science Practical assessment (PBA).

3.7. Role of NESA inspectors and District & Sector Education Officials

NESA inspectors, in collaboration with District Directors of Education (DDEs) and District Education Officers (DEOs), are responsible for overseeing the smooth execution of the online registration process.
Sector Education Inspectors (SEIs) must monitor the process daily and collect reports from schools to ensure no student is left unregistered in their sector of responsibility.

3.8. Role of Data Processing Officers (DPOs)

The role of Data Processing Officers (DPOs) is to support Head Teachers with SDMS registration tasks throughout the entire registration period. In addition, DPOs are responsible for assisting in the identification of learners with disabilities or Special Educational Needs (SEN), ensuring their accurate registration, and facilitating the provision of appropriate examination accommodations.

3.9. Special attention to Special Needs Candidates

The School Data Management System (SDMS) includes categories for students with disabilities. **Head Teachers must document each learner's support needs to guarantee equitable access to National Examinations and school placement**. They must also ensure that all information related to students with disabilities is accurately recorded in SDMS.

School administrators, Sector Education Inspectors (SEIs), Data Processing Officers (DPOs), District Education Officers (DEOs), and District Directors of Education (DDEs) are collectively responsible for the early identification of learners with disabilities or Special Educational Needs (SEN), their accurate registration, and the provision of appropriate examination accommodations.

4. Registration for Private Candidates

4.1. Who Can Register as a Private Candidate?

Eligible individuals include:

Those who previously sat A-Level exams in Rwanda or abroad (with verified certificates).

Those who completed O-Level at least **five years ago (2020/2021 school year or earlier).**

Those who completed S3 before 2000 school year (when no S3 national exams were conducted).

Holders of qualification acquired in Rwanda previously: **A3**, **A4**, **D4**, **D5**, **ENI** (Ecole Normale Inférieure), **EMP** (Ecole Moyenne Pédagogique), **EMM** (Ecole Ménagère Moyenne), **EAP** (Ecole d'Apprentissage Pédagogique), **EMA** (Ecole de Moniteur Auxiliaire), **ENA** (Ecole Normale Auxiliaire), **ENTA** (Ecole Normale Technique Auxiliaire), **Section Familiale**, **CERAR** (Centre d'Education Rurale et Artisanale au Rwanda) or **CERAI** (Centre d'Education Rurale et Artisanale Intégrée).

TTC candidates with verified practical marks from previous years.

4.2. Required documents and fees

Valid National ID or passport (foreigners only).

Verified certificates or result confirmations.

Passport-size photo (≤200kb, white background, ears visible).

Payment of non-refundable 15,000 RWF through "***Irembo***" portal.

Note:

- *Pay only after receiving a bill number and PIN from Irembo. Bills numbers expire after 5 days and* ***are not renewable****.*
- *Foreign Candidates without a Rwandan National ID document should obtain payment confirmation via their email from NESA before making any payments. They get a phone call from NESA staff as well.*

4.3. Registration Process

Register via SDMS (www.sdms.gov.rw).
Choose one district in which he/she will sit for National Examinations.

Note:

a. *Private candidates are required to complete their registration independently. If a candidate opts to register through a third party—such as Irembo shops or Private Candidate Coaching Centres—**they shall bear full responsibility for any errors or omissions that may occur during the registration process**.*
b. *The private candidates attending the coaching centres for national examination preparation are requested to register within these respective Coaching centres as indicated in SDMS*
c. *TTC private candidates must register through any TTC school of their choice. Practical exams are organized by the school.*
d. ***Foreign private candidates** without Rwandan ID must email documents to privforeigners@nesa.gov.rw*
e. *The **Private Candidate Index Number** formatted as follows: DistrictCode + PC + CombinationCode + CandidateSerialNumber + SchoolYear.* ***Example**: 12PCPCB0052026*

4.4. Examination Centres

Each district has one or more number of Private Candidate Examination Centres.

Validated candidates must sit for examinations in the district where they registered. **No changes of examination centres are permitted**. The list of examination centres where validated private candidates will sit for practical and theory examinations will be published on the NESA website at least two weeks before the start of the exams.

4.5. Other information on registration for Private Candidates

Subject combinations that were phased out in previous school years are no longer available for examination registration

Unlike the 2024/2025 repeating candidates and private candidates in General Education—some of whom did not sit for all examinations due to the phasing out of certain combinations—all candidates for the 2025/2026 academic year (both school-based and private) will sit for the same set of examination papers.

Carrying forward grades achieved in previous A-Level National Examinations **is not permitted**. Any candidate wishing to retake A-Level National examinations is required to **retake all subjects** within their chosen subject combination, option or trade.

Examination malpractices: It is imperative that every candidate adheres to the established rules and regulations governing National Examinations. Non-compliance will lead to appropriate disciplinary measures and penalties in accordance with the guidelines and regulations governing National Examinations. Detailed guidelines will be provided to candidates separately.

Falsification of documents: If candidate is found to have registered using falsified documents, she/he will be disqualified upon the revelation of his/her ineligibility to register as a Private Candidate. Additionally, he/she will be reported to appropriate authorities (e.g. RIB) for further legal actions.

Requirements for Identification at Examination Centres: All registered Private Candidates are required to present a printed registration form issued by NESA and obtained from SDMS registration portal along with a valid National Identity Card for all examination sessions.

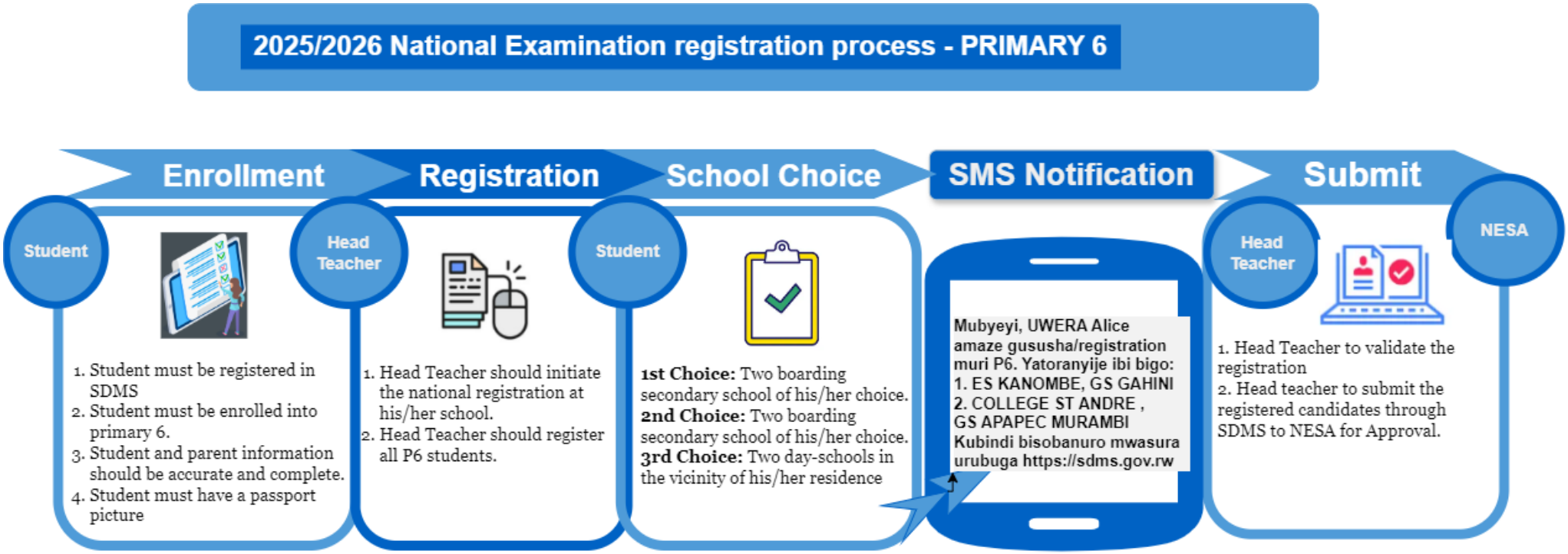
The National Examinations timetable will be published on NESA's **three months before the first day of National Examinations.**

Done at Kigali, on 23/02/2026.

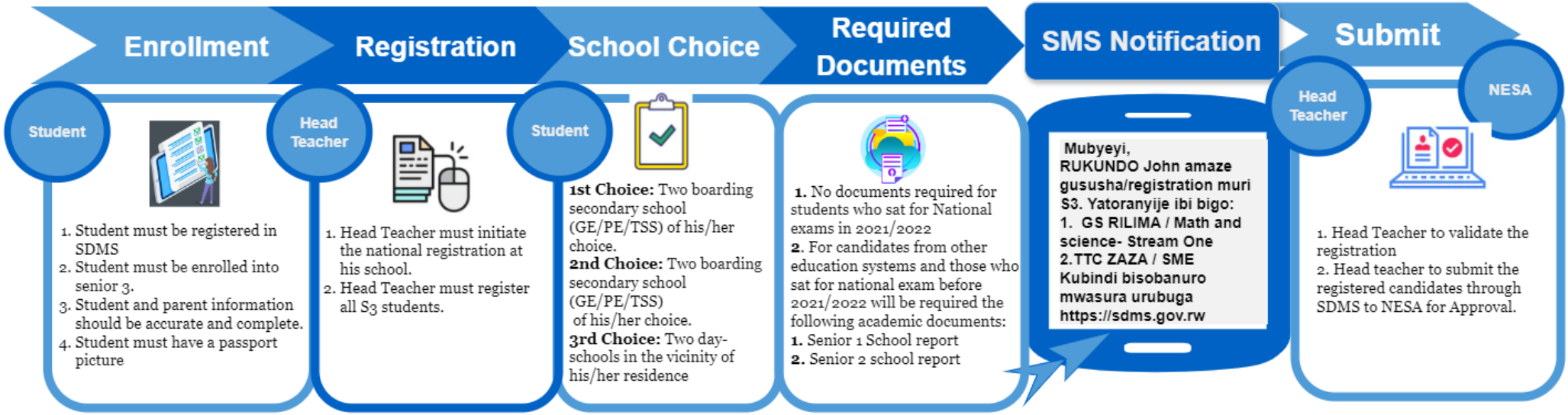
Head of Department BE&TVET Examination	Jean Claude Nzeyimana	Redrafter	23/02/2026 03:15 PM	
Deputy Director General	Carlène Seconde UMUTONI	Reviewer	23/02/2026 05:52 PM	
Director General	Dr Bernard BAHATI	Approver	24/02/2026 02:56 PM	

ANNEXES

SUMMARY OF REGISTRATION PROCESS



2025/2026- National Examination registration process - Senior 3



2025/2026 - National Examination registration process - School Candidates - S6/L5/Y3

Enrollment

Student

1. Student must be registered in SDMS.
2. Student must be enrolled into S6/L5/Y3.
3. Student should have a national ID recorded in SDMS.
4. Student must have a passport picture.

ID Verification

Head Teacher

1. The ID to be verified by NIDA
2. NIDA information will be updated in SDMS.
3. Student will be allowed to register to National Examination\
4. All S6/L5/Y3 should be registered

Registration

1. Head Teacher must initiate the national registration at his/her school.
2. Head Teacher should register all S6/L5/Y3 students.

Documents

1. No documents required for students who sat for National exams in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023

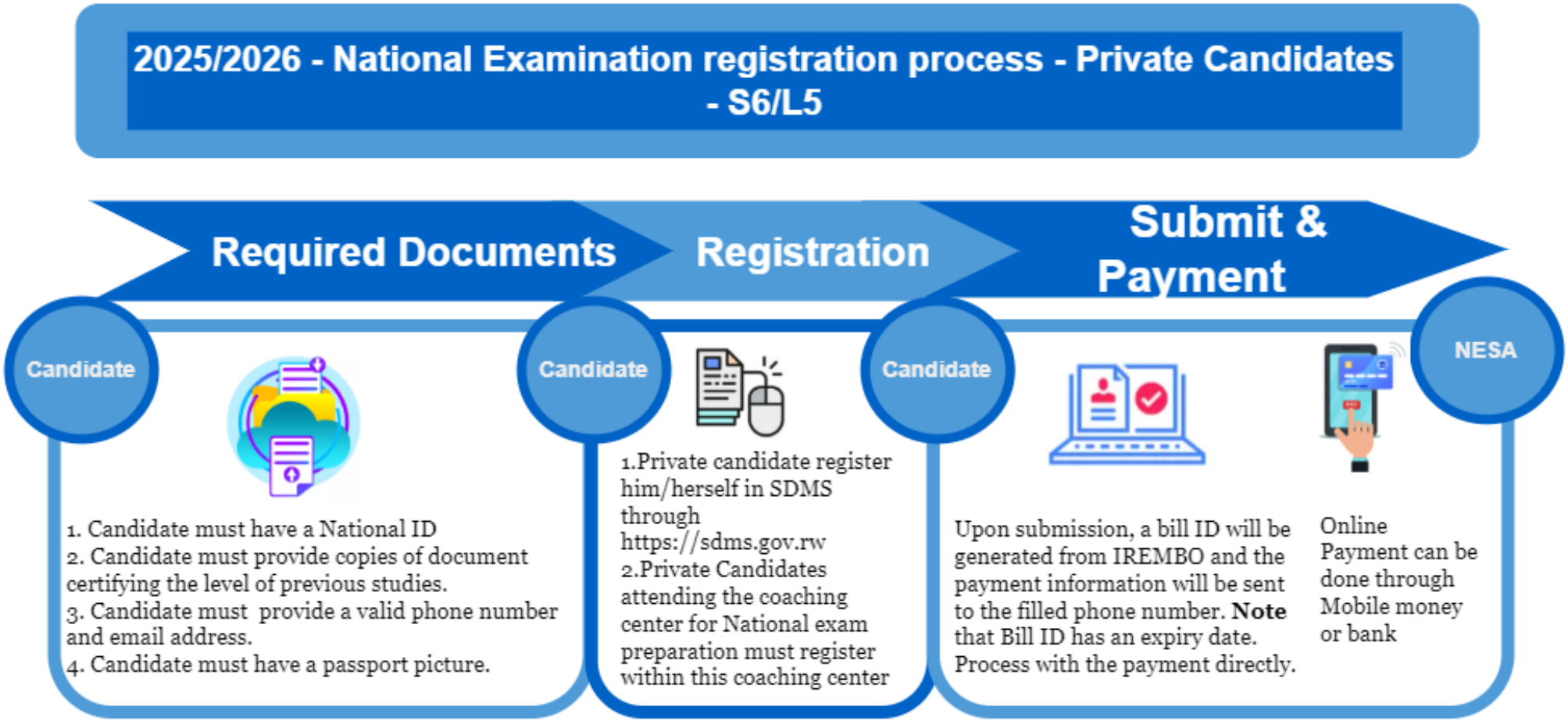
2. For candidates from other education systems and those who sat for national exam before 2021/2022 will be required the following academic documents:

1. S3 Result slip
2. S4/L3/Y1 School report
3. S5/L4/Y2 School report

Submit

NESA

1. Head Teacher to validate the registration
2. Head teacher to submit the registered candidates through SDMS to NESA for Approval.


2025/2026 - National Examination registration process - Private Candidates - S6/L5
Required Documents
Registration
Submit & Payment
Candidate
Candidate
Candidate
NESA
1. Candidate must have a National ID
2. Candidate must provide copies of document certifying the level of previous studies.
3. Candidate must provide a valid phone number and email address.
4. Candidate must have a passport picture.
1.Private candidate register him/herself in SDMS through https://sdms.gov.rw
2.Private Candidates attending the coaching center for National exam preparation must register within this coaching center
Upon submission, a bill ID will be generated from IREMBO and the payment information will be sent to the filled phone number. Note that Bill ID has an expiry date. Process with the payment directly.
Online Payment can be done through Mobile money or bank

SUMMARY OF REGISTRATION PROCESS (PRIVATE CANDIDATES)

A. Foreigners without Rwandan ID document

Candidates from foreign countries without Rwandan ID document should not apply directly from SDMS. They will submit the following application documents to NESA through email: privforeigners@nesa.gov.rw

1. **Candidate information:**
   - Full Names
   - Father's Names
   - Mother's Names
   - Date of Birth
   - Gender
   - Nationality
   - Official Document Number
   - Own valid Email
   - Phone
   - Residential Information (Province, District, Sector, Cell, Village)
   - Type of Special Educational Needs.

2. **Registration Centre** (all districts)

3. **Registration type** (TSS or GE, PE -Accounting)

4. **Combination or Trade** (see section 3.4)

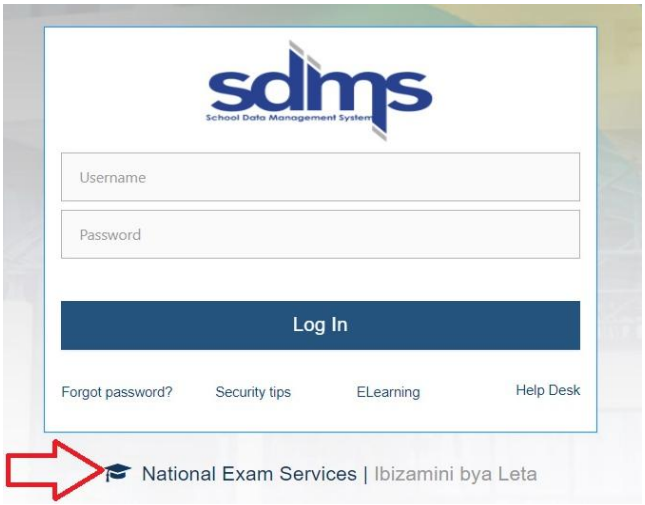
5. **Attachments**:
   - ***Passport Photo*** (200Kb /JPE Format)
   - ***Official Identification Document***: National ID or Passport (200Kb/PDF Format)
   - ***Previous school year Documents*** (Equivalence for O-Level or A-level Certificate/ 200Kb/PDF Format). Equivalence is a must.

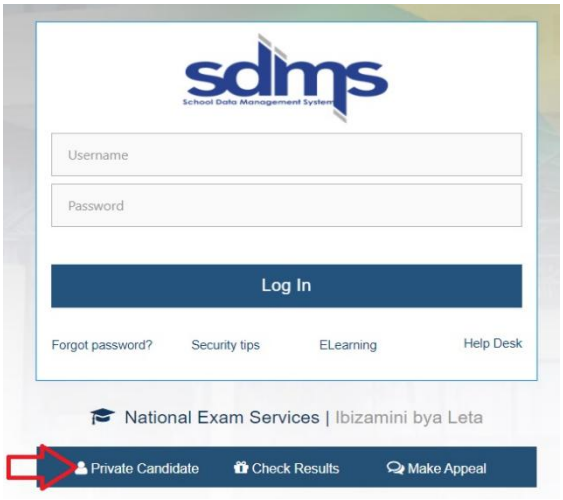
Note: Make sure you also send the above personal identification details indicated in paragraph 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the space of email message.

B. Candidates with Rwandan Nationality OR Refugees with National ID for Refugees

STEP ONE:

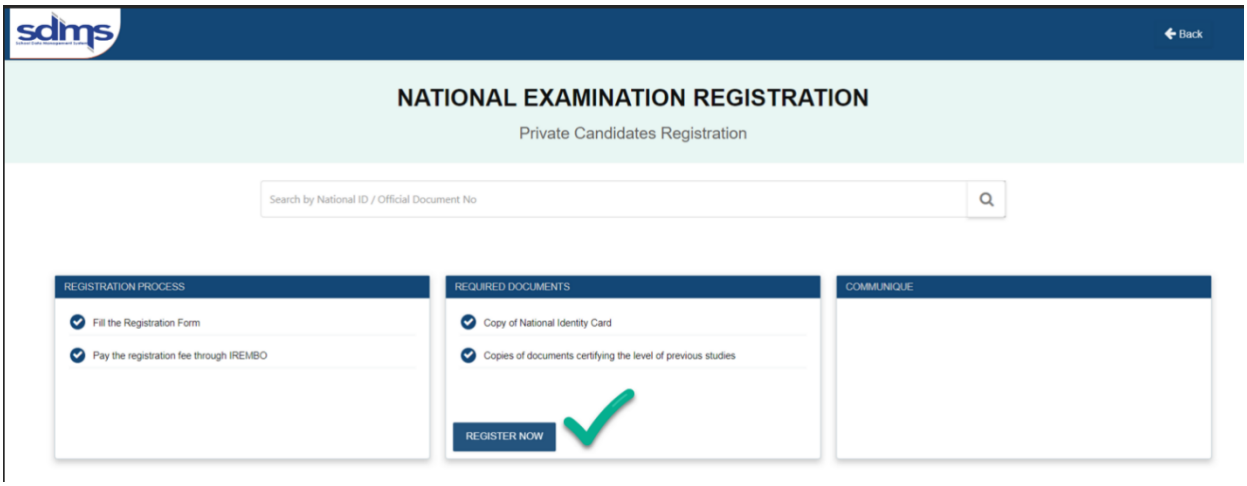
Open the browser and type this link: ***https://sdms.gov.rw/sas-ui/login.zul*** or type: ***www.sdms.gov.rw***. Then, click on: 2026 National Examination-Private Candidate





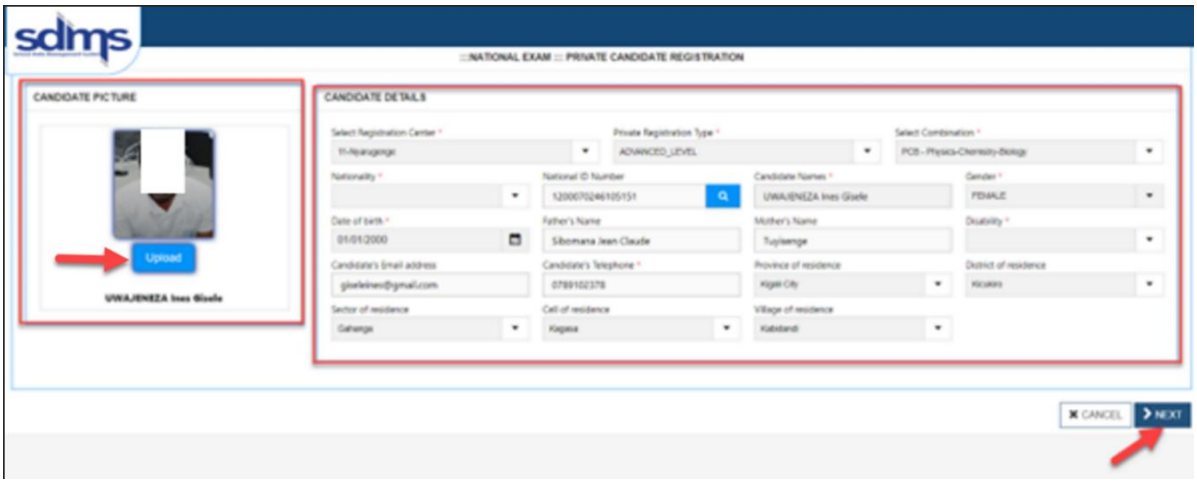
Step two:

Click on **REGISTER NOW**



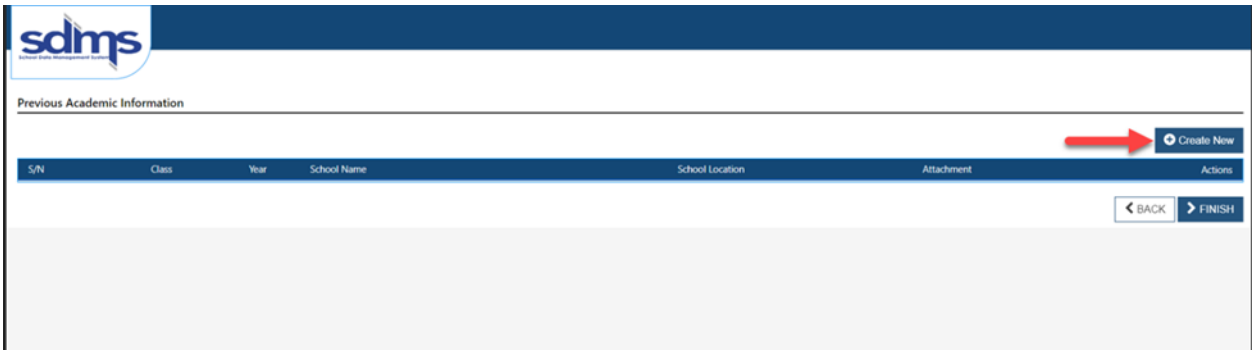
Step Three:

Fill in the provided form, upload a photo and click on NEXT

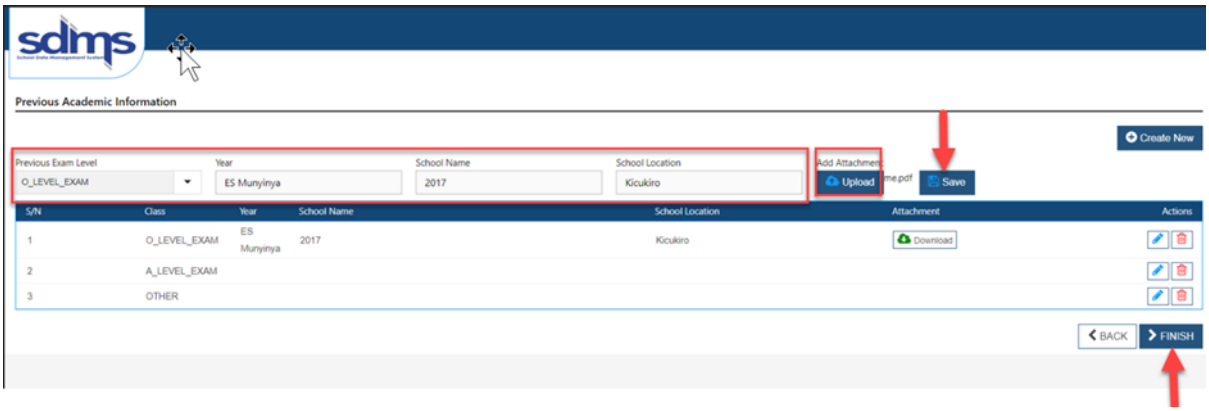


Step Four:

Click on CREATE NEW and fill in your academic details

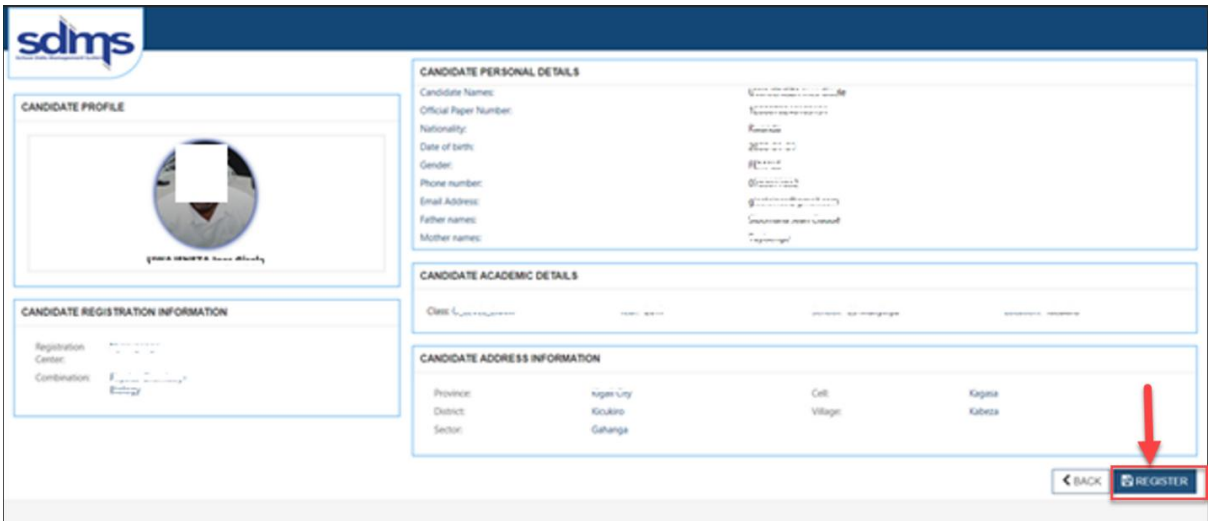


Having filled in academic detail and uploaded the required documents, click on save and go to **FINISH**.



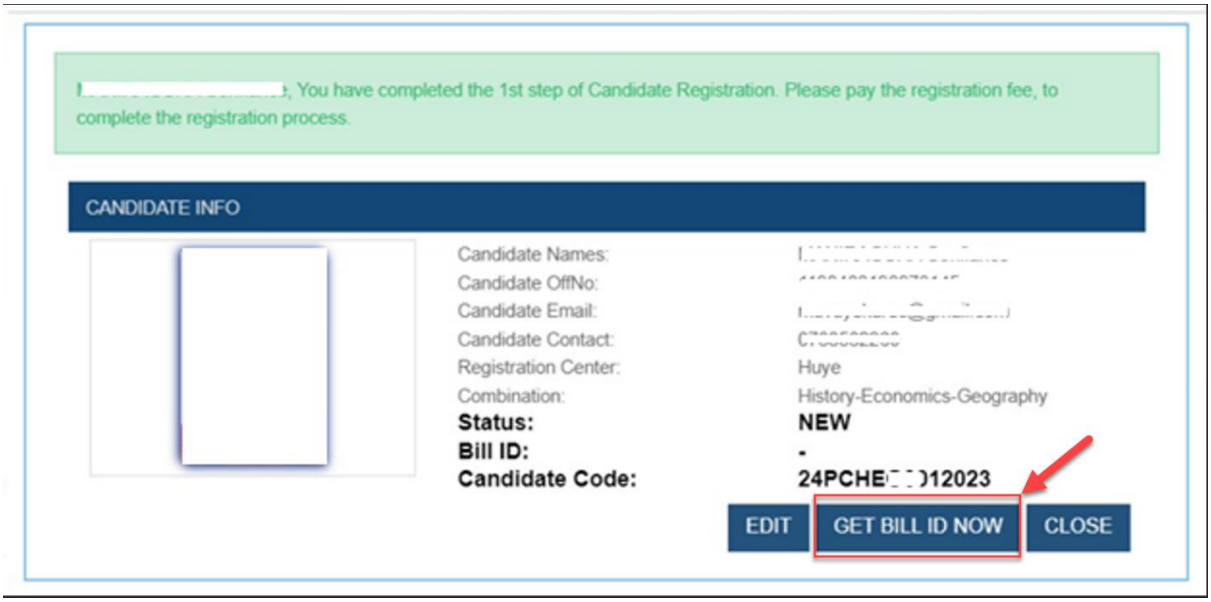
Step Five:

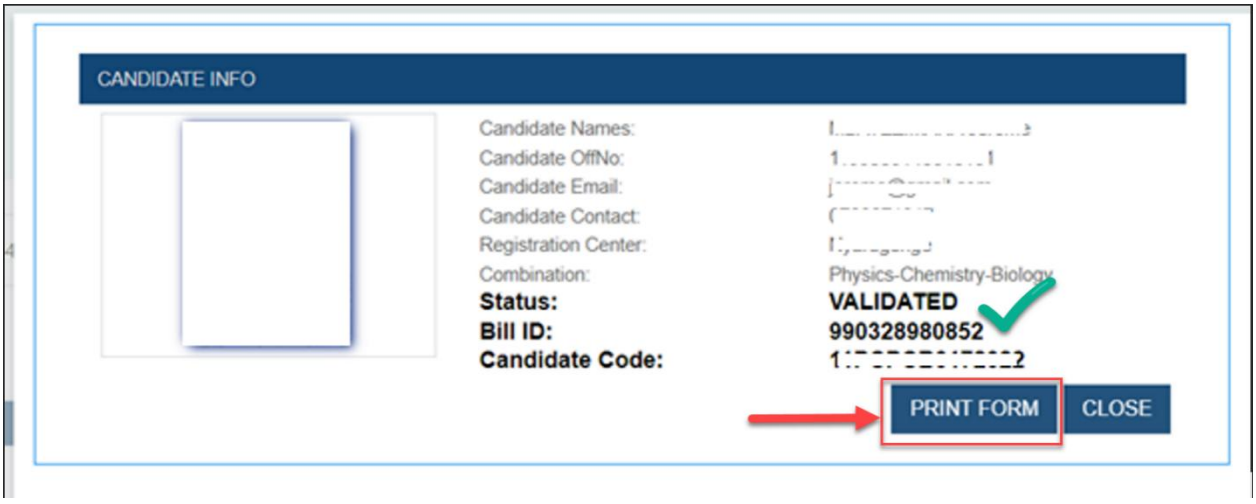
Click on **REGISTER**



STEP SIX:

Click on get bill ID to be able to pay. ***Note that the bill ID expires after 5 days*.**



STEP SEVEN:

After payment, print your registration form by clicking on print form