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Education department investigates illegal sale of matric marks

Edumarks offers results early to NSC students for R100

13 January 2025 | By Kirav Doolabh and Veer Gosai



Matric results are being released on 14 January. Archive photo: Ashraf Hendricks

- **Matric results are embargoed until 14 January 2024.**
- **A company called Edumarks has been offering learners their matric results in advance of this date for R100.**
- **The Department of Education has described the company as a “bogus business” and says a criminal case has been opened.**

Thousands of matriculants eagerly await their National Senior Certificate (NSC) matric results. In the past, many students were frustrated by overloaded government and media result websites. Then a service, called Edumarks, claimed that for a payment of R100, it would deliver to the subscriber their official matric results up to seven days earlier.

GroundUp asked the Department of Basic Education, in December, to investigate the legitimacy of Edumarks. After extensive scrutiny, the department concluded: “Edumarks is a bogus business offering a service it cannot deliver on”, and if Edumarks’s claims were true, then “they are committing fraud on multiple levels” by colluding with individuals who have unauthorised access to sensitive matric marks databases.

Edumarks has reportedly been operating since 2021 and claims a 97% accuracy rate for marks sent to the class of 2023..

When we tested the service with students from the class of 2023, we found Edumarks emailed accurate results. However, the results were from January 2024 and did not reflect final updates after optional matric exam paper remarks, which are typically released in March. This means that Edumarks issues results from the original matric mark database sent out in January.

We then purchased the matric marks of a 2024 NSC matriculant. On 11 January 2025 at 4:06pm, Edumarks emailed us the results of the student. Shockingly, the Department of Education confirmed the results emailed to us were authentic. At the time, however, the department clarified that only Universities South Africa (USAf) had received the marks to distribute to the country’s public and private institutions and that media providers only receive the matric marks on the evening of 13 January 2025.

The marks were sent to USAf on 11 January 2025 at 13:10 SAST, suggesting that someone within USAf or a higher educational institution may be colluding with Edumarks to leak this information. The results are embargoed until 14 January.

Great news! We have your results:

Exam Number : ///////////////
Exam Year : 2024

SL	Subject	Marks	Percent
1	English Home Language 01210	7	80
2	Afrikaans 1st Add Language 01410	6	75
3	Mathematics 02510	6	78
4	Physical Science 02610	6	70
5	Accounting 03410	5	68
6	Information Technology 07010	6	71
7	Life Orientation 90510	6	73

We wish you the very best with your future studies.

Regards
Edumark Group

Email from Edumark with matric results for a 2024 matriculant.

823//////////
Edumark Result list results moreply@-
To: ///////////////
2024/11/07
If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.
Exam Number : 823//////////
Exam Year : 2023

1 English Home Language
2 Afrikaans 1st Add Language 4
3 Mathematics
4 Physical Science
5 Life Sciences
6 Information Technology
7 Life Orientation

We wish you the very best with your future studies.
Regards
Edumark Group
Matric Marks From Edumarks
Purchased On 27 November 2024

Original Matric Certificate
(January 2024)

Remarkd Matric Certificate
(March 2024)

Edumarks uses the original results from January 2024 which do not reflect final updates after the optional matric exam paper remarks, which are typically released in March.

Such a service undermines trust in South Africa's education system and creates an environment where matric results are treated as a commodity. It also poses serious questions about internal governance, as the breach likely stems from an insider leak. Such breaches not only harm students but also tarnish the credibility of the organisations responsible for managing this data.

The Department of Basic Education needs to identify the vulnerabilities in its data-sharing processes, tighten access controls, and hold any involved parties accountable.

Spokesperson for the department, Elijah Mhlanga, said, "The Department is investigating the early and unauthorised access of the National Senior Certificate results data by a company ... A criminal case has been opened and The Hawks are investigating the matter."

Efforts are also underway to shut down the service entirely and prevent future breaches of this nature.

Edumarks has stated on social media: "The matric results should be free. However, we charge this once off fee for development costs.

"We're doing what our government is struggling to do. Instead of using taxpayers' money to build a system that's POPI compliant, they'd rather waste it on a rather pointless legal battle."

Regardless of its claims, Edumarks is acting illegally by selling matric results before the official release on 14 January 2025, which undermines the integrity of the education system.

The incident reminds us of the need for stronger data protection measures and accountability across all institutions managing sensitive personal information.