



2008

**Report on the Quality Assurance
of the Vocational Education
and Training Assessment**

UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

2008
REPORT ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE
OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING ASSESSMENT

PUBLISHED BY:



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

COPYRIGHT 2008 UMALUSI COUNCIL FOR
QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GENERAL AND FURTHER
EDUCATION AND TRAINING. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Contents

FOREWORD.....	vi
SECTION ONE.....	vii
OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT.....	viii
1. Background.....	viii
2. Purpose of the report.....	ix
3. Scope of the report.....	ix
SECTION TWO: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF NATED EXAMINATIONS.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: MODERATION OF QUESTION PAPERS.....	2
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Purpose of the chapter.....	2
3. Scope.....	2
4. Approach.....	3
5. Findings.....	3
6. Areas of good practice.....	4
7. Areas for improvement.....	6
8. Conclusion.....	7
CHAPTER TWO: MONITORING OF EXAMINATIONS.....	8
1. Introduction.....	8
2. Purpose of the chapter.....	8
3. Scope.....	8
4. Approach.....	9
5. Findings.....	9
6. Areas of good practice.....	11
6.1 General.....	11
6.2 Examination centres.....	11
6.3 Marking centres.....	11
7. Areas for improvement.....	11
8. Conclusion.....	12
CHAPTER THREE: MODERATION OF MARKING.....	13
1. Introduction.....	13
2. Purpose of the chapter.....	13
3. Scope.....	13
4. Approach.....	14
5. Findings.....	14
6. Areas of good practice.....	15
6.1 General.....	15
6.2 Memorandum discussions.....	15
6.3 Moderation of marking.....	15
7. Areas for improvement.....	15
7.1 Memorandum discussions.....	15
7.2 Marking.....	16

8. Conclusion	16
CHAPTER FOUR: STANDARDISATION OF RESULTS	17
1. Introduction	17
2. Scope	17
3. Approach	17
4. Findings	17
5. Conclusion	18
SECTION THREE: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF NCV ASSESSMENT	19
CHAPTER ONE: MODERATION OF QUESTION PAPERS	20
1. Introduction	20
2. Purpose of the chapter	20
3. Scope	20
4. Approach	22
5. Findings	22
6. Areas of good practice	24
7. Areas for improvement	25
8. Conclusion	27
CHAPTER TWO: MODERATION OF INTEGRATED SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT TASKS (ISATs)	28
1. Introduction	28
2. Purpose of the chapter	28
3. Scope	28
4. Approach	30
5. Findings	31
5.1 Moderation of ISATs	31
5.2 Moderation of the conduct of ISATs	31
6. Areas of good practice	32
6.1 Quality of ISAT	32
6.2 Conduct of ISAT	32
7. Areas for improvement	32
7.1 Quality of ISAT	32
7.2 Conduct of assessment tasks	33
8. Conclusion	34
CHAPTER THREE: MODERATION OF INTERNAL CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (ICASS)	35
1. Introduction	35
2. Purpose of the chapter	35
3. Scope	35
4. Approach	38
5. Findings	38
6. Areas of good practice	41
7. Areas for improvement	42
8. Conclusion	45
CHAPTER FOUR: MONITORING OF THE CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS	46
1. Introduction	46
2. Purpose of the chapter	46
3. Scope	46

3.1 Monitoring of the state of readiness	46
3.2 Monitoring of the writing phase	47
3.3 Monitoring of the marking phase	48
4. Approach	48
4.1 Monitoring of the design phase	48
4.2 Monitoring of the writing phase	48
4.3 Monitoring of the marking phase	48
5. Findings	48
6. Areas of good practice	50
6.1 Monitoring of the state of readiness phase	50
6.2 Monitoring of the writing phase	50
7. Areas for improvement	51
8. Conclusion	51
CHAPTER FIVE: MODERATION OF MARKING	52
1. Introduction	52
2. Purpose of the chapter	52
3. Scope	52
4. Approach	54
5. Findings	54
6. Areas of good practice	56
6.1 Memorandum discussions	56
6.2 Moderation of marking NCV level 2	56
6.3 Moderation of marking NCV level 3	56
7. Areas for improvement	56
7.1 General	56
7.2 Memorandum discussions	57
7.3 Moderation of marking	58
8. Conclusion	59
CHAPTER SIX: STANDARDISATION OF RESULTS	61
1. Introduction	61
2. Purpose of the chapter	61
3. Scope	61
4. Approach	61
4.1 Principles of standardisation	61
4.2 Standardisation meeting	62
5. Findings	62
6. Conclusion	62
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION – CHALLENGES WITH NATIONAL CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL	63
1. Introduction	63
2. Areas of concern	63

Foreword

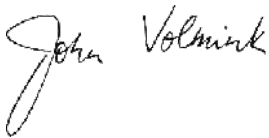
Umalusi has quality assured the NATED Report 190/191 instructional offerings since 2003. The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) level 2 was implemented in 2007 and the NCV level 3 was introduced this year. The NATED "N" courses are being phased out. As a result of this Umalusi has focused on the quality assurance of the NCV.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of assessment through application of the following quality assurance processes:

- moderation of question papers, including the integrated summative assessment tasks;
- monitoring and moderation of internal continuous assessment;
- monitoring of the different phases of the examinations;
- moderation of marking; and
- standardisation of marks according to agreed statistical and educational principles.

The introduction of the National Certificate (Vocational) has presented challenges in terms of its implementation. This has resulted in certain challenges arising with the assessments of the various components (viz. the integrated summative assessment task and the internal continuous assessment component as well processes relating to the quality assurance of the question papers and marking.

A more concerted effort is required by all stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of the NCV receives maximum attention, if it is to be the "saviour" in solving the countries skills shortages.



Prof J D Volmink

23 December 2008

Section One

Overview of the report

1. BACKGROUND

In terms of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (No 58 of 2001) Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, is responsible for the quality assurance of general and further education and training in South Africa. The Council executes this function through, inter alia:

- monitoring and reporting on the adequacy and suitability of qualifications and standards;
- carrying out quality assurance of all exit point assessments;
- certificating learner achievements; and
- quality promotion amongst providers.

This report focuses on the quality assurance of the Vocational Education assessments for the year 2008. Umalusi reports on the standard of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) assessment on an annual basis. In this regard, Umalusi reports on each of the quality assurance of assessment processes and procedures, which together allow Umalusi to make an evaluative judgement on the credibility of the VET assessments. These processes ensure that all aspects of the assessment are monitored against prescribed criteria thus ensuring that standards are both maintained and improved upon.

Six NATED Report 190/191 examinations were conducted during the year. The Natural Sciences examinations were conducted during April, August and November and the Business and General Studies examinations were conducted during March (supplementary N3/NSC examination), June and November. Umalusi quality assures the N1 - N3 as well as the NIC and NSC Report 190/191 qualifications. These programmes are currently being phased out.

The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) level 2 supplementary examination was conducted during February/March 2008 and the NCV level 2 and 3 examinations were conducted during October/November 2008.

Umalusi quality assured aspects of each of the above mentioned NATED and NCV examinations.

The Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) of a sample of the NCV subjects that are currently moderated by Umalusi was carried out during August and October 2008. This process involved the moderation of portfolios of evidence and portfolios of assessments.

The Integrative Summative Assessment Tasks (ISATs) of a sample of programmes was evaluated during September and October 2008. This involved monitoring the conduct of the ISATs as well as the moderation of the completed tasks.

Examinations in this sector are written at different types of centres, namely public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, private FET colleges, correctional-services centres and schools. The N2, N3, NSC and NCV level 3 scripts were externally marked and the N1, NIC and NCV level 2 scripts were internally marked.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of assessments by determining:

- the level of adherence to policy in implementing assessment-related processes;
- the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems, processes and procedures for the monitoring of the conduct of examinations, the quality of marking as well as the quality and standard of internal assessment;
- the cognitive challenge of examination question papers;
- the appropriateness and weighting of content in question papers in relation to the syllabus/subject and assessment guidelines;

- the quality of the presentation of examination question papers; and
- the quality of the marking and moderation of answer scripts.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to detail Umalusi's quality assurance of the 2008 VET examinations with respect to the following:

- the salient findings from the external moderators' and monitors' reports, which are analysed and used to make judgements on the standard of the VET examinations;
- the quality and standard of the marking of the VET assessments;
- the efficiency and effectiveness of the systems and processes for the conduct of the VET assessments;
- areas for improvement of the assessment processes; and
- the moderation of marks during the standardisation process.

3. SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report covers all the 2008 VET examinations and reports on the quality assurance of assessment processes used by Umalusi to ensure that the VET assessments are of the required standard, namely the:

- moderation of question papers and integrative summative assessment tasks;
- moderation of internal assessment (for the NCV);
- monitoring of the conduct of the VET examinations;
- moderation of marking; and
- moderation of examination marks.

Section 1 of this report describes the quality assurance processes used by Umalusi to ensure that the VET assessments meet the required standards. It outlines the purpose and scope of the report.

Section 2 reports on the quality assurance of the Natural Sciences, as well as the Business and General Studies examinations. Section 3 reports on the quality assurance of the NCV level 2 and 3 assessments.

Sections 2 and 3 capture the salient findings with respect to each of the quality assurance processes, identify good practice and highlight areas requiring improvement.

Section Two

Quality assurance of NATED examinations

Chapter 1

Moderation of question papers

1. INTRODUCTION

Umalusi moderates question papers to ensure that they are of the required standard and cover the appropriate content as prescribed in the syllabus.

Six NATED Report 190/191 examinations are conducted annually.

These are the:

- Natural Sciences examinations during April, August and November; and
- Business and General Studies examinations that take place during February, June and November.

Examinations are conducted at different types of centres, namely, public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, private FET colleges, correctional-services centres and schools.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- provide data on the question papers moderated for each of the above mentioned examinations;
- give an overview of the crucial findings relating to the quality and standard of the externally moderated question papers, as provided by the external moderators;
- highlight areas of good practice; and
- highlight areas for improvement observed, including some recommendations that will enhance the quality of question papers set.

3. SCOPE

Since the NATED Report 190/191 programmes have been phased out, a limited number of N3 subjects were moderated during 2008.

Table 1 : Subjects moderated for each of the examinations

NATURAL SCIENCES				
No	SUBJECTS	April	August	November
1	Engineering Drawing N3	✓	✓	✓
2	Industrial Electronics N3	✓	✓	✓
3	Mathematics N3	✓	✓	✓
4	Mechanotechnology N3	✓	✓	✓

BUSINESS AND GENERAL STUDIES				
No	SUBJECTS	February	June	November
1	Business English 1st Language N3	✓		✓
2	Business English 2nd Language N3	✓		✓
3	Computer Practice N3		✓	
4	Public Administration N3	✓	✓	✓
5	Sakeafrikaans 1ste Taal N3 Vraestel 2	✓		✓
6	Sakeafrikaans 2de Taal N3 Vraestel 2	✓		✓
7	Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship N3			✓

4. APPROACH

Umalusi uses external moderators who are subject matter experts and experienced in the field of assessment to moderate a sample of question papers with every examination. The findings and recommendations are based on the reports received from the Umalusi moderators. Findings are reported against the following criteria:

- adherence to policy;
- content coverage;
- cognitive challenge;
- technical criteria;
- language and bias; and
- quality and standard of internal moderation.

5. FINDINGS

Table 2 : Approval status of question papers after first moderation

QUESTION PAPER APPROVAL STATUS			
NATURAL SCIENCES			
SUBJECT	APRIL	AUGUST	NOVEMBER
Engineering Drawing N3	Approved	Approved	Approved
Industrial Electronics N3	Approved	Conditionally approved	Conditionally approved
Mathematics N3	Conditionally approved	Conditionally approved	Approved
Mechanotechnology N3	Approved	Approved	Approved
BUSINESS AND GENERAL STUDIES			
SUBJECT	FEBRUARY	JUNE	NOVEMBER
Business English 1st Language N3, Paper 1	Not approved; Resubmit		Conditionally approved; Resubmit
Business English 2nd Language N3, Paper 1	Rejected		Rejected
Business English 1st Language, Paper 2	Approved		Approved
Business English 2nd Language N3, Paper 2	Approved		Approved
Computer Practice N3		Approved	

QUESTION PAPER APPROVAL STATUS			
BUSINESS AND GENERAL STUDIES			
SUBJECT	FEBRUARY	JUNE	NOVEMBER
Public Administration N3	Conditionally approved	Conditionally approved	Approved
Sakeafrikaans 1ste Taal N3	Conditionally approved		Conditionally approved, no resubmission
Sakeafrikaans 2de Taal N3	Conditionally approved		Conditionally approved, no resubmission
Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship N3			Conditionally approved, no resubmission

The table below provides a general overview of the findings with regard to the moderation of the question papers:

Table 3:

Criteria	Findings
Technical criteria	The papers were well laid out and the instructions to candidates were clear.
Internal moderation	Although excellent internal moderation of some question papers was reported the general standard was not acceptable and needs to be improved.
Content coverage	Content and skills were adequately covered in most of the question papers.
Cognitive skills	Some papers did not allow for enough challenging and creative questions.
Marking memorandum	The marking memoranda were, in most cases, acceptable but there were mistakes and, in some cases, no alternative correct answers.
Language and bias	The language of the question papers was student friendly, fair and pitched at the appropriate level. Gender, race and cultural bias were not evident in the question papers.
Overall impression of question papers	The papers were mostly of an acceptable standard although some required major review and adjustments.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Technical criteria

90% of the question papers adhered to the set technical criteria. The layout, instructions, mark allocation, numbering, sketch and diagram sheets of most of the question papers were of an acceptable standard.

Internal moderation

The Mechanotechnology question papers were sent to the moderator with the full history of the question paper. The external moderator commended the internal moderator on the effort put into the internal moderation of the question papers and memoranda to ensure that they were of an appropriate standard.

The Public Administration N3 and Business English 1st and 2nd language second question papers were also extensively moderated. The Business English 1st Language first question paper was submitted to the external moderator with the internal moderator's report.

Content coverage

The Mechanotechnology and Engineering Drawing external moderators commended the examiners on setting high standard, well-structured question papers. In these question papers the syllabi were well covered, questions reflected the appropriate weighting and spread of content and different/prescribed levels of cognitive demand. The Industrial Electronics papers were also of a good standard. The Mathematics moderator reported a considerable improvement in the August question paper.

Most of the Business Studies question papers covered the content and skills of the subject as prescribed by the syllabi, although the weighting was not always as prescribed by the syllabi.

Cognitive demand

It was reported that the Engineering Drawing N3 question papers reflected a fair ability to reason, graphic communication and the ability to translate from verbal to graphic interpretation. The high standard of the Public Administration N3 paper was commended.

The majority of the Business Studies question papers adhered to the prescribed distribution in terms of the cognitive level. It was reported that the Sakeafrikaans 2de Taal question papers and the Computer Practice question paper showed a marked improvement in cognitive demand.

Marking memoranda

There was an improvement in the quality of the marking memoranda for most of the subjects. The majority of the memoranda of the question papers moderated was of the required standard and would facilitate marking. No errors were found in the memoranda of some of the April papers (Mechanotechnology and Engineering Drawing), as well as the August papers (Engineering Drawing and Industrial Electronics).

Language and bias

The language used in most of the question papers was clear, fair and pitched at an appropriate level. Instructions and questions were generally clear and unambiguous. The moderators reported that candidates would have no difficulty in accessing the question papers, as terminologies were appropriate for English 2nd language candidates. In the Afrikaans 2de Taal question paper English words provided in brackets simplified the meaning of difficult words in Afrikaans.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Technical criteria

Not all changes proposed by the external moderator were effected to the question papers and memoranda, e.g., changes to the memorandum of Industrial Electronics N3, April examination (picked up during the marking of the question paper).

The diagrams of one question in the English version of one of the Mechanotechnology question papers were of poor quality. The translated question papers sometimes pose a challenge as the meaning of the translation does not have exactly the same meaning as the original, e.g., line drawing versus “lyn diagram”.

Internal moderation

The lack of evidence of thorough internal moderation is still of concern – this has been reported for a number of examinations and there is little improvement. Furthermore, the reports that were received were substandard and papers were accepted with very little critical comment. No history of the question papers was included. This impacts negatively on the quality and standard of the question papers submitted for external moderation and on the external moderation process.

The Engineering Drawing N3 and Sakeafrikaans question papers were received without any history or evidence of internal moderation. There was some evidence that some of the other question papers e.g. Mathematics and Industrial Electronics were moderated by way of signature of the internal moderator and/or some corrections, there was, however, no report as evidence.

The internal moderation of question papers must be done rigorously. All question papers must be accompanied by a full history of the question paper and a typed internal moderator's report.

Content coverage

Both the February and November Business English 2nd Language first papers were rejected after the first external moderation due to the fact that the Comprehension of the February question paper was too short and badly written, and the November question paper was of a very poor standard. The marks were inflated and some questioning was unreasonable for second language candidates.

Cognitive demand

A very limited number of challenging questions was observed in the April Mathematics N3 paper as well as some of the Industrial Electronics question papers. It was reported that the passage in the February Business English 1st Language examination paper was too easy for 1st Language candidates. This resulted in too many marks being allocated for content and too little for application, analysis, insight and evaluation. The level of cognitive challenge, especially of the Business English 2nd Language question papers, remains a challenge.

It should be ensured that the cognitive demand of question papers is appropriate. To improve the level of cognitive demand the inclusion of more comparative questions and evaluative questions is recommended.

Marking memoranda

Unnecessary typing and spelling errors occurred, especially in the language papers' memoranda. A number of errors also appeared on the April, as well as the August, Mathematics question paper

and memoranda. There were no alternative correct methods on the Mathematics memoranda.

All question papers and memoranda must be checked and finally signed-off before being sent for printing.

Timeframes

The late submission of some of the question papers to the external moderators is of serious concern as it puts them under tremendous pressure and could compromise the quality of the question papers. The external moderators received some question papers less than a month before the examination date of the question papers. The following are examples:

Questions papers were received by the external moderators from 22 January 2008 to 15 February 2008 for an examination that commenced on 28 March 2008; the Engineering Drawing paper was received on 10 June for an examination written on 30 July; the Mechatronics paper was received on 2 July for an examination written on 25 July. Due to the tight timeframes, the Umalusi moderator for Computer Practice had to effect certain changes on the Afrikaans version of the question paper.

The assessment bodies must submit the question papers to the external moderators on or before the due dates.

8. CONCLUSION

Although there was an improvement in the standard of the question papers, the cognitive challenge of some of the question papers remains a challenge.

The poor quality or absence of internal moderation for the question papers remains of serious concern. This was registered as a concern in all the previous reports on the quality assurance of the VET examination but, unfortunately, the practice continues.

Another burning issue is the late submission and consequent tight deadlines for the external moderation of question papers.

It is the responsibility of the assessment bodies to ensure that issues that have been repeatedly raised in these reports are addressed.

Chapter 2

Monitoring of examinations

1. INTRODUCTION

The monitoring of the different phases of the examination is one of the quality assurance processes used to ensure the credibility of the VET examinations. Umalusi judges the standard of the examinations by determining the examination and marking centres' levels of adherence to policy in terms of establishing systems and implementing the required procedures and processes for the examination.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- outline the approach and the extent of the 2008 monitoring of the NATED examinations;
- present a summary of the findings emanating from the monitoring of the writing and marking phases; and
- highlight some recommendations for improvement in the future management and administration of the examinations.

3. SCOPE

The monitoring/verification of the writing phase made provision for the inclusion of examination centres at public and private FET colleges. The table below provides a summary of the different examinations included in Umalusi's monitoring of the writing phase and indicates the number and types of centres per province during the February, April, June and August examinations.

Table 1: Monitoring of the writing phase

Examination	Public FET Colleges				Private FET Colleges		
	February	April	June	August	April	June	August
Eastern Cape	1	1	1	1			
Free State	1	1					
Gauteng		2	1				1
KwaZulu-Natal			1	1			1
Limpopo						2	1
Mpumalanga		1					
North West				1			
Northern Cape			1				
Western Cape			1				
TOTAL	2	5	4	3	0	2	3

The marking phase was monitored during the June and August examinations at the marking centres as indicated in the table below:

Table 2: Marking centres monitored

EXAMINATION	PROVINCE	MARKING CENTRE
June	Gauteng	Alexandra
August	KwaZulu-Natal	Durban

4. APPROACH

Umalusi deployed 12 monitors to visit a pre-selected sample of examination centres during the February, April, June, August and November examinations. (Please note that the information for the November examination is contained in Section 3 Chapter 4 as the NATED and NCV examinations ran concurrently at the same examination centres.)

A sample of marking centres was selected for the monitoring of marking during two of the examinations.

5. FINDINGS

In general, the examination centres and marking centres visited were well prepared for the 2008 examinations. The expected findings have become highly predictable in the sense that numerous deviations from policy at the examination centres of private colleges, as well as public colleges, in certain provinces (especially the rural colleges in the Eastern Cape) were expected – and found. This contrasts with the provinces that have developed and implemented the necessary systems. In those provinces where there is a lack of systems and support, the impression is that certain colleges cope well on their own, while others lack the necessary support and/or commitment.

The major concern at public colleges is that not enough computers are available for the examinations of subjects where computers are needed for the conduct of the examination.

The table below provides a brief overview of the findings at the majority of examination and marking centres monitored:

Table 3:

Monitoring of writing phase	
Criteria	Findings
General management of the examination	In general, the examinations were very well managed. There is overall compliance with policy; there were minor procedural deviations at some sites. There are credible processes related to the planning for administration and conduct of the examination in place and most sites.
Planning for examinations	There was some late registration of candidates – some colleges do not put in enough effort to ensure that the preliminary schedules are checked rigorously. Planning activities such as the appointing and training of invigilators and chief invigilators, the preparation of invigilation timetables and the readying of venues were carried out.
Question papers	Measures were in place to ensure that all question papers were received. Question papers were stored in strong rooms/safes. Examination stationery was securely stored and controlled effectively.
Examination rooms	The venues were mostly conducive to the writing of examinations.
Before the commencement of the examination	The venues were well prepared. The invigilators were on time, most of the candidates were on time. The requirements in terms of admission into examination rooms were not applied consistently – different documents were allowed for identification (ID, driver's licence, passport, student card with admission permit).
During the examination	The correct procedures were followed in terms of the seating of candidates, reading of regulations on conduct of examinations, allowance of reading time, opening of envelopes containing question papers, etc., at most of the examination centres.
Packaging and transmission of answer scripts	The scripts were carefully checked and good records of the dispatch of scripts to marking centres were kept. There was good control of the scripts marked internally.
Monitoring of marking phase	
Security	The security at the entrances of some of the centres visited was not as effective as it should be.
Appointment and training of markers	The markers were recommended by the colleges and appointed by the DoE. Training was done during memorandum discussions.
Marking procedure	Good records were kept of the flow of scripts, markers and marking.
Internal moderation	There was no uniformity in the approach to the marking. 10% of the marked scripts were moderated by the chief markers – a good standard was maintained.
Handling of irregularities	There were no irregularity registers at most sites.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 General

The necessary systems to ensure that the examinations are conducted in a credible manner were found to be in place at the majority of sites visited. Overall, the examinations were well organised and the sites handled the large numbers of candidates in an acceptable manner (e.g., at Pretoria West Campus 36 venues were used to accommodate more than 1700 candidates that wrote Mathematics on the day of the monitoring visit during the April examinations).

There were good security measures in place, e.g., access control, the use of identity and visitor cards, burglar alarms and security gates at most of the centres.

6.2 Examination centres

- The question papers and examination material were securely stored.
- The planning for the conduct of the examinations was done in a professional manner.

6.3 Marking centres

- There were effective measures in place to control the flow of scripts from the time that they were received until the time they were returned to the DoE.
- The training of markers included the discussion of the memorandum as well as the administration and logistical issues around the marking.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The way in which the large number of Computer Practice N3 candidates was handled during the June 2008 examination was unacceptable. The difference between the number of candidates enrolled for Computer Practice and the computers available for the examination at the centres monitored is of great concern (not only for the conduct of the examination but also because of implications in terms of effective teaching and learning).

The following are examples:

- At Kwa-Gqikazi the examination was written in four sessions - 170 candidates had to be accommodated. This raises issues relating to whether or not the college obtained permission from the DoE to conduct four sessions; how four three-hour sessions were handled on the same day; how computers were cleaned before each group started; the number of printers available for printing candidates' work and the quarantine of candidates over this extended period.
- At Idutywa the majority of the 144 candidates did not write the examination at the examination centre but was transported with hired taxis to three other sites, namely, Umtata (15), Willowvale (95) and Butterworth (few). The examination only started at 9:20 (at Idutywa). The fact that the examination was conducted at premises other than the registered examination centre is against policy. Furthermore it is doubtful whether the examination started on time if the available transport, distances that had to be travelled and the number of candidates that had

to be transported are considered. Some of the computers were out of order and there was only one technician responsible for the computers at all four sites.

- At the Roodepoort Campus, 26 venues were used to accommodate 705 candidates that wrote Computer Practice N3 and N5 Computer Practice on the same day. Although the large number of candidates wrote the examination on the day, the examinations were controlled effectively and the centre could prove that they obtained the necessary permission to conduct the examination in more than one session. The monitor, however, pointed out that there were loop holes in terms of access to information between candidates.

The following is an example of the unacceptable practices that prevail at private colleges. At Seshego Computer College the candidates were allowed into the examination room without proper identification and were seated very close to one another. There was no evidence of a seating plan. There were also not enough invigilators and there was no provision for relief invigilators. The examination was conducted in more than one session and the first session commenced before the official starting time of the examination. The venue was not conducive to the writing of examinations.

Since the provincial Departments of Education are not mandated to do the quality assurance at the private colleges and correctional services centres, the DoE must take up this responsibility. The same standards should apply when it comes to private and public examination centres.

8. CONCLUSION

The examinations were, in general, apart from the problem of the shortage of computers and the problems observed at private colleges, conducted in a professional manner and compliance with examination policy and procedures was high.

Chapter 3

Moderation of marking

1. INTRODUCTION

The moderation of marking is a critical process which Umalusi uses in its role as the custodian of quality and standards. Marking comes at the latter part of the chain of assessment and it is critical in determining the level of the learners' achievements. Umalusi moderates the marking to ensure that marking standards are maintained and that learner performance is not compromised.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to report on Umalusi's:

- approach used, and the extent of the 2008 moderation of marking of the NATED examinations; and
- present findings on the memorandum discussions and the outcomes of the moderation of the marking including some areas for improvement.

3. SCOPE

Nine of Umalusi's moderators were deployed to marking centres across the country to attend memorandum discussions and moderate the marking of a sample of nine subjects during one or more of the 2008 NATED examinations.

The table below gives a detailed account of the N3 subjects and the centres at which the memorandum discussions were attended and marking was moderated for each of the NATED examinations:

Table 1:

SUBJECT	MARKING CENTRE				
	February	April	June	August	November
Applied Accounting			Springs		
Business English					Springs * Kimberley
Computer Practice	Roodepoort		Welkom		Roodepoort * Richtek
Industrial Electronics		Goodwood			Durban * Atteridgeville
Mathematics				Potchefstroom	Potchefstroom * Mamelodi
Mechanotechnology		Springs			Springs * Springs
Public Administration					Msunduzi * City(College of Cape Town)
Sake Afrikaans					Mpondonzankomo * Centurion
Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship					Springs *

* Memorandum discussions attended

4. APPROACH

A sample of the NATED subjects that are currently moderated by Umalusi was selected for each of the examinations to be moderated. Factors in decisions for the selection of subjects included, amongst others:

- the sites at which the marking of the subject was moderated for previous examinations;
- the findings from the previous moderation of marking; and
- the student enrolment for the subjects.

5. FINDINGS

The table below provides a broad overview of the findings at the memorandum discussions and moderation of marking:

Table 2:

Criteria	Findings
Changes effected to question papers as recommended	The memoranda were not always adjusted in accordance with the changes effected to the question papers.
Preparedness of markers	Not all the markers came prepared to the memorandum discussions (with their own worked out memoranda).
Attendance	Not all the markers attended the memorandum discussions, e.g., Mechanotechnology (Springs Campus November examination).
Participation in discussion	Most of the markers participated actively in the memorandum discussions.
Adjustments to the memoranda	All the proposed changes were justified. The changes were mostly alternative possible correct answers and corrections to the memoranda (errors, incorrect numbering and mark allocations).
Pre-marking	A process of pre-marking was followed for most of the subjects. A sample of between 5 and 10 scripts was marked in most cases, which were then moderated by the chief marker before the actual onset of the marking.
Moderation of marking	
Adherence to marking memorandum	Most markers adhered to the memorandum. Marking was mostly consistent.
Marking procedure	Procedures differed. Some markers applied question-wise marking and others, whole-script marking.
Standard of marking	The marking was of a good standard.
Administration	The prescribed procedure for marking was followed. Calculation errors and errors in the transfer of marks were found.
Internal moderation	The chief markers acted as the internal moderators and were subject matter experts. The internal moderation was mostly of a good standard.
Performance of candidates	In general, the candidates' performance was poor. The appallingly low standard of language is of concern.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 General

Marking centres were well organised. Great care was taken to put the necessary systems in place to secure and manage the flow of scripts effectively.

6.2 Memorandum discussions

- Markers came prepared for memorandum discussions, e.g., Computer Practice (Roodepoort – November examination), Mathematics (Potchefstroom – November examination).
- Logistical and administrative responsibilities, as well detailed discussions of the memoranda, were included in the training and the memorandum meetings.

6.3 Moderation of marking

- The majority of markers were experienced markers.
- The standard of marking of the majority of markers was good, as could be detected from remarks made by the moderators as well as by the small differences in the marks allocated by the markers, internal moderators and external moderators, e.g., Computer Practice and Public Administration (in both cases, only 1 script where there was a substantial difference in the mark allocated by the marker versus the moderator. Most of the mistakes that occurred were calculation errors and marking of accuracy errors in Computer Practice).
- Great care was taken to moderate 10% of the marked scripts of all markers and to ensure that a wide spectrum of performance was included in the moderation sample. Where there were substantial differences in the marks allocated by the marker and internal marker, the marker had to remark the whole batch of scripts.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

7.1 Memorandum discussions

Memoranda were not always adjusted in accordance with the changes effected to the question papers, e.g., Mathematics.

It must be ensured that the memoranda sent to the marking centres are the final approved versions and are devoid of inaccuracies.

The markers were sometimes not prepared when they attended the memorandum discussions, e.g., Business English Second language and Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship (Springs), Sakeafrikaans (Mpondonzankomo and Centurion). All markers should be prepared when they attend memorandum discussions to ensure that they can make a meaningful contribution.

Not all markers attended the memorandum discussions, e.g., not all the markers attended the memorandum discussion of Computer Practice N3 (November examination at Roodepoort), and Mechanotechnology N3 (November 2008 examination) and Small Business Management and

Entrepreneurship (both at the Springs Campus). These markers were however guided and marked a sample of scripts that were moderated before they started with the marking. Only markers that attend memorandum discussions should be allowed to mark.

It is sometimes a challenge to find suitable markers for certain subjects, e.g., Afrikaans (Phalaborwa marking centre).

The minutes that were prepared at the memorandum discussion meetings differed tremendously. More guidance should be given from the DoE on what is expected in terms of the minutes of memorandum discussions.

7.2 Marking

There is limited communication between the different marking centres although it was reported by Potchefstroom marking centre (Mathematics – November), Springs marking centre (Mechanotechnology – November) and Roodepoort (Computer Practice – November) that updated memoranda were faxed to the other marking centres. The Public Administration moderator discussed the changes with markers at the marking centre in Cape Town and the relevant changes were effected.

The marking was, in general, of a good standard but substantial deviations in the marks allocated by the markers, internal moderators and external moderators did occur. Differences of up to 18% were reported, e.g., Business English 2nd Language (Kimberley) – substantial differences in eight of 22 scripts moderated, Mathematics (Mamelodi) – substantial differences in four of 20 scripts.

8. CONCLUSION

The moderation of marking reports clearly indicated that in terms of external marking there were effective systems, processes and procedures in place at the marking centres; memoranda were discussed in detail to ensure that all possible answers were provided for and that marking and moderation were in general up to standard.

Chapter 4

Standardisation of results

1. INTRODUCTION

To foster equity in examinations, the examination scores of candidates are adjusted towards a calculated norm. This increases the probability that candidates with equal ability, who write different examination papers in a particular subject, will obtain equivalent achievements. In this way, differences in standards between examination papers, over time, are largely neutralised.

2. SCOPE

All the N1 - N3 subject results of the April, June, August and November examinations were standardised in accordance with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness of fit procedure in conjunction with historical averages. For the February 2008 supplementary examination the standardisation decisions of the November 2007 examinations were applied.

3. APPROACH

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness of fit procedure in conjunction with fixed norms was used for the standardisation of the VET results. The norms were reviewed and adjusted where necessary. For subjects with an enrolment of less than 25 candidates no norms were determined and the raw marks were accepted, except in cases where there were compelling reasons to effect an adjustment.

The current mark distributions and the corresponding average distribution over the last six examinations of all the N1 – N3 subjects were compared and considered in the standardisation decisions. The examination raw scores were compared per percentage interval with the norm and where raw scores fell outside the confidence band, they were adjusted up to the band, while the scores falling within the band were not adjusted.

The statistical moderation of examination marks as well as year marks was undertaken. After the examination scores had been statistically moderated, the mark was compared to the mean of the year/term mark. If the mean of the year mark was within a certain range of the examination mean, then the year mark was accepted as is. If the mean of the year mark was either too low or too high, it was brought within a certain range of the examination mean.

4. FINDINGS

The following information provides an overview of the challenges that were experienced with the standardisation of the 2008 examination results:

- Large numbers of candidates enrolled for level 3 without passing level 1 or 2. This impacted on the norms (April examination).
- There was a lack of qualitative reports from chief markers and internal moderators. This substantial data could and should inform the standardisation decisions.

- There were a large number of unprepared candidates. Large numbers of candidates obtained marks between 0 and 19%.
- The markers adjusted marks for certain subjects. This was evident from the large numbers of candidates that obtained 40% in certain subjects.
- Due to the fact that the courses are being phased out and only certain colleges were granted permission to offer N1 and N2 courses, the performance of candidates in certain subjects was exceptionally good. There was, however, not enough data available to determine the reasons for the good performance.

The table below provides data on the standardisation of results.

Table 1: Standardisation of results

DESCRIPTION	EXAMINATION			
	April	June	August	November
Number of subjects that could not be standardised because less than 80% of the results were available	14	0	15	+/- 15
Number of subjects where raw marks were accepted	41	39	61	127
Number of subjects for which marks were adjusted	16	3	9	17
Number of subjects for which ½ computer adjustment were applied	25	2	24	25
Number of subjects for which block adjustments were made	0	3	0	1
Number of subjects standardised	82	47	94	170

5. CONCLUSION

The 2008 NATED examinations were administered in a professional manner and, in general, standards were maintained. No serious incidents that could jeopardise the credibility of the examinations were reported by any of the monitors, moderators or the DoE and the results of all the examinations could be approved.

Section Three

Quality assurance of NCV assessment

Chapter 1

Moderation of question papers

1. INTRODUCTION

The examination question paper is central to the assessment of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and cognitive abilities of a learner at a given level. Therefore, it is imperative that the question paper is of a sufficiently high standard and quality.

The National Department of Education (DoE) is responsible for the setting and internal moderation of question papers for the NCV examinations. Umalusi externally moderates these question papers to ensure that the papers are fair, valid and reliable and of an acceptable standard in terms of norms which are nationally acceptable.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of question papers by determining the level of adherence to policy in the setting of the question papers, the cognitive challenge of the question papers, the appropriateness and weighting of the content in the question papers in relation to the syllabus, and the quality of presentation of these question papers.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- provide an overview of the number of question papers moderated;
- give an overview of the crucial findings relating to the quality and standard of the externally moderated question papers as provided by the external moderators after the question paper moderation process as well as after the actual writing of the question papers;
- to highlight areas of good practice; and
- to indicate areas for improvement including recommendations that will enhance the quality of the question papers set.

3. SCOPE

This report covers the findings on 35 externally moderated NCV Level 2 examination papers that were written during the February/March 2008 supplementary examination and 46 Level 2 and 34 Level 3 papers for the November 2008 examination.

The table below provides a list of the subjects that were covered:

Table 1

No	SUBJECTS	MARCH	NOVEMBER	
		Level 2	Level 2	Level 3
1	Advertising and Promotions	✓	✓	
2	Afrikaans 1ste Addisionele Taal	✓	✓	✓
3	Animal Production	✓	✓	✓
4	Applied Accounting	✓	✓	✓
5	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	✓	✓	✓

		MARCH	NOVEMBER	
No	SUBJECTS	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3
6	Business Practice	✓	✓	
7	Client Service and Human Relations		✓	✓
8	Construction Carpentry and Roof Work		✓	
9	Construction Materials	✓	✓	✓
10	Construction Plant and Equipment	✓	✓	✓
11	Construction Plumbing		✓	
12	Drawings, Setting Out, Quantities and Costing		✓	✓
13	Economic Environment	✓	✓	✓
14	Electrical Principles and Practice	✓	✓	✓
15	Electronic Control and Digital Electronics	✓	✓	✓
16	Engineering Fabrication	✓	✓	
17	Engineering Fabrication (Boiler-making)			✓
18	Engineering Fundamentals	✓	✓	
19	Engineering Graphics and Design			✓
20	Engineering Practice and Maintenance			
21	Engineering Systems	✓	✓	
22	Engineering Technology	✓	✓	
23	English 1st Additional Language		✓	
24	Entrepreneurship	✓	✓	
25	Financial Management	✓		
26	Fitting and Turning	✓	✓	✓
27	Food Preparation	✓	✓	✓
28	Hospitality Generics		✓	✓
29	Introduction to Information Systems	✓	✓	
30	Introduction to Systems Development		✓	
31	Isixhosa 1st Additional Language		✓	✓
32	Life Orientation		✓	
33	Management Practice	✓	✓	
34	Marketing	✓	✓	✓
35	Mathematical Literacy	✓	✓	✓
36	Mathematics	✓	✓	✓
37	New Venture Creation	✓	✓	✓
38	Office Data Processing	✓	✓	
39	Office Practice		✓	
40	Operation Management	✓		
41	Physical Science	✓	✓	✓
42	Plant Production	✓		✓
43	Project Management			✓
44	Science of Tourism		✓	✓
45	Soil Science	✓	✓	✓
46	Sustainable Tourism in SA and Regional Travel	✓	✓	
47	Systems Analysis and Design			✓
48	Tourism Operations		✓	✓

Note: A number of question papers, intended to be moderated, were not moderated

4. APPROACH

Subject matter experts were appointed by Umalusi to externally moderate a sample of level 2 and level 3 question papers. The criteria used by the moderators to moderate the question papers cover the following aspects:

- content coverage;
- cognitive demand of the questions;
- internal moderation conducted;
- language and bias;
- predictability of the questions;
- adherence to policy and guideline documents;
- relevance and correctness of the marking memorandum;
- technical criteria relating to the presentation of the question papers; and
- judgement on overall impression and standard of the papers.

Meetings of the Umalusi NCV (level 3) external moderators and the DoE internal moderators and examiners were conducted during March and April 2008. The meetings were intended to afford the examiners, internal moderators and external moderators the opportunity to liaise with each other and exchange meaningful details regarding the expectations (standards, criteria and general ideas) generated by Umalusi's moderation processes. These expectations were discussed in terms of the setting of external question papers for the various NCV programme offerings.

The purpose of these meetings was to:

- explain the external moderation process and answer any relevant questions;
- discuss issues emanating from the 2007 moderation of examination papers and focus on drafting the 2008 examination papers;
- reach agreement on the format and content of the examination papers; and
- finalise subject assessment frameworks/grids.

5. FINDINGS

The table below indicates the approval status of the question papers after the first round of moderation:

Table 2

APPROVAL STATUS OF QUESTION PAPERS			
	MARCH	NOVEMBER	
	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3
Approved	3	11	8
Conditionally approved, no resubmission	22	24	12
Conditionally approved, to be resubmitted	5	5	7
Rejected	3	3	0

It should be noted that the majority of question papers that were conditionally approved and which were required to be resubmitted were not resubmitted for second moderation as requested. In many cases, the recommendations made by the external moderators were not applied to the question papers. It has also been observed that in some instances the incorrect version of the question papers was printed.

The table below provides a general overview of the findings with regard to the moderation of the question papers.

Table 3

Criteria	Findings
Technical criteria	<p>There was an improvement in the technical quality of the question papers and most were to a large extent compliant.</p> <p>Aspects of non-compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • many question papers were received without the corresponding analysis grids; • the marks were not always clearly indicated; • the mark allocation on papers and memoranda differed in some cases; and • the quality of the illustrations, graphs, tables, etc., was not appropriate and print ready.
Internal moderation	<p>Although excellent internal moderation of some question papers was reported, the general standard was not acceptable and needs to be improved upon.</p>
Content coverage	<p>A variety of questioning techniques and questions of various types were used.</p> <p>Content and skills were adequately covered but substantial deviation from guidelines in terms of weighting and distribution occurred in some subjects.</p>
Cognitive skills	<p>Most of the papers did not contain enough challenging and creative questions. There were insufficient questions requiring learners to see casual relationships, to interpret, to show ability to think, to argue, etc.</p>
Marking memorandum	<p>The marking memoranda were, in most cases, detailed and flexible but contained too many mistakes (of different natures).</p>
Language and bias	<p>The language of many of the question papers was pitched at the right level but there were some cases of language usage that was too difficult for second and third language speakers.</p> <p>Gender, race and cultural bias were not evident in the question papers.</p>
Adherence to Policies/ guideline documents	<p>Some of the question papers were fully compliant with the current policy and guideline documents.</p>
Predictability	<p>No verbatim repetition of questions was identified although some questions were repeated in different forms.</p>
Overall impression of question papers	<p>There was a marked improvement in the standard of the level 3 question papers.</p>

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Meeting between different stakeholders

The meetings between the examiners, internal moderators and external moderators were very productive and resulted in most of the level 3 question papers reaching a better standard. The level 3 external moderators expressed appreciation of these meetings with examiners and internal moderators who were very open to suggestions. The meetings also contributed to a vast improvement in the internal moderation of the level 3 question papers, particularly evident in the better quality of the moderation reports prepared by the internal moderators.

Internal moderation

For the March supplementary examinations 20 of the 35 question papers showed evidence of internal moderation. Four external moderators reported an excellent standard of internal moderation for these question papers. The November level 3 question papers showed a vast improvement in internal moderation, including the writing of high quality reports by the internal moderators.

Content coverage

Most of the question papers covered all content as prescribed by the subject and assessment guidelines. There was an acceptable relationship between mark allocation, level of difficulty and time allocation. 18 of the March level 2 question papers complied in terms of formulation of questions that allowed for creative responses and were also set at the correct cognitive level. 56% of the moderated question papers complied with the correct weighting and distribution of marks.

Cognitive demand

Some of the November level 2 question papers were of a high standard and an improvement on previously set papers. The level 3 question papers showed a visible improvement in the distribution of cognitive levels in comparison with the previous level 2 question papers. Some papers included higher-level questions that were challenging and many of the application questions required a mastery of the necessary skills. The examiners also made appropriate reference to the latest development in certain subject fields. The trend to include different forms of cognitively stimulating questions and questions that reflect some of the latest technological developments, which may provide interesting and creative responses, is commendable. Some examples of such questions included in the papers are the following:

- Introduction to Information Systems - the question on Bluetooth technology.
- Applied Accounting - analysis of source documents under the accounting equation.
- Financial Management - the challenging questioning on the interpretation of results and the effect of various transactions on owner's equity.

The growing tendency to use relevant case studies that allow for cognitive reasoning and the ability to recognise and solve problems within a familiar well-defined context is also commendable. Comprehension and translation of knowledge into a new context was well defined and demonstrated by certain questions, especially in Operation Management.

Language and bias

In most of the examination papers the language used was clear, fair and pitched at an appropriate level.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Technical criteria

There were too many unnecessary language/typing errors, which is an indication that the editing and final proofreading was not rigorously done.

Typing errors made in the re-typing of certain question papers is a concern.

A lack of precision in the translation of some of the question papers into Afrikaans was observed.

Proofreading and final signing-off, including a declaration that all proposed changes have been effected, before question papers are printed is an essential and non negotiable step in the quality assurance process. This will ensure that issues mentioned above like errors on question papers and inconsistencies in the marking memoranda, as well as errors brought about during typing, are addressed.

Some illustrations were directly copied from textbooks, which may constitute copyright infringement. Overall the graphs were acceptable but could have been larger and darker and some pictures needed to be enlarged for clarity.

Examiners should take care that all necessary answer sheets, graph and drawing paper are included in the examination paper when submitting question papers for moderation.

The November 2007 and March 2008 supplementary question papers were not submitted for external moderation at the same time, thus making it impossible to compare the standard of the two papers. It is critical that the November and supplementary question papers be submitted simultaneously in order to ensure comparable standards.

Internal moderation of question papers

Whilst it is acknowledged that the level of internal moderation has improved on that of last year, this aspect still requires much attention. The quality of the internal moderation, in some cases, was either limited or too technical. Only 27% of the November level 2 question papers included the internal moderator's report, although 88% showed some evidence of internal moderation. Only 60% of the November level 2 question papers included a grid/assessment framework indicating the weighting and spread of content. In the absence of a grid/framework, the external moderators lost valuable time in trying to determine whether the weighting and spread of the content were appropriate.

It is of the utmost importance that the full history of each question paper, such as all drafts, the internal moderator's report, the grid/assessment framework, etc., be included in that paper's file to show the progress in the development of the question paper.

Cognitive demand

There is still too much emphasis on knowledge questions. There was a general lack of creativity among examiners with regard to the new approach of questioning and how to utilise case studies when formulating higher cognitive level questions. There were insufficient questions that challenge and require learners to see casual relationships, to interpret, to show ability to think, to argue, etc. Although there were some examples where the concepts assessed were representative of the latest developments in particular knowledge fields, in the majority of subjects candidates could be

challenged more. Relevant examples from the fields of study should be used and application concepts that relate to more recent developments in the fields of study and their respective industries should be introduced.

Some moderators reported that examiners should take care that the cognitive level is not too high and that questions are specific and stated in a simplified language that would not disadvantage second language learners.

Marking memoranda

There were inconsistencies, inaccuracies and wrong answers in some of the memoranda that were not picked up during internal moderation.

15% of the memoranda of the March supplementary examination had serious errors concerning factual data and 37% of the level 2 November memoranda were inaccurate. The reports indicated that there were too many errors, such as: mark allocations on memoranda that did not correspond with their question papers; lack of correlation between questions and answers; too many marks allocated to particular questions; queries on factual accuracy; not all questions had mark distributions within the questions; and numbering on memoranda often did not correspond with the numbering on question papers. The mark allocation on memoranda was also sometimes not clearly indicated and thus would not facilitate marking.

Allowances were made, to a degree, for alternative response/answers in the March papers and it was reported that 93% of the level 2 papers and 96% of the level 3 November papers also made the required allowances. There is, however, still room for improvement. The provision of alternative possible correct answers, the inclusion of illustrations used in the question papers on the memoranda and clear indications of how the marks should be allocated will facilitate marking and ensure that the marking will be more fair, unambiguous and valid.

It would also be helpful if the marks awarded for each question and each sub-question in a question were categorised according to the topic and cognitive level involved.

Timeframes

The timeframes regarding the setting and moderation of question papers remain a critical issue. There were cases where question papers were not submitted for external moderation. Furthermore question papers were sent to external moderators with such tight timeframes that the moderators had to finalise papers under extreme pressure. The late submission of question papers for external moderation also meant that the external moderators did not have enough time for rigorous interrogation of the papers and that important changes to the question papers were not always implemented. These are recurring problems that have to be resolved.

Planning around the setting and moderation of question papers needs to be strengthened. Timeframes must be set and adhered to as this will eliminate the problems that occur when the setting and moderation of papers are done under pressure. The DoE is advised to work towards the 18-month examination cycle.

8. CONCLUSION

Examiners should be commended for their efforts to compile interesting question papers, which assessed the outcomes, aims and objectives of the syllabi in accordance with policy documents. However, more could be done to demonstrate application of knowledge and to challenge the intellect of learners.

Although there was an improvement in the standard of the question papers, the level of cognitive challenge of some of the question papers remains an issue. The lack of creativity in the setting of questions should also be addressed.

The moderation reports also show that examiners should ensure that the level of questioning is appropriate for the intended level of the paper.

The inclusion of relevant case studies in some question papers is commendable and is indicative that there is a much-needed movement in the right direction to make the questioning more relevant to industry.

It is the responsibility of the assessment body to ensure that there is rigorous internal moderation of all papers before they are submitted for external moderation. The poor quality of or absence of evidence of the internal moderation of question papers is of serious concern as it impacts negatively on the quality and standard of the question papers.

The late submission of question papers for external moderation unavoidably led to the compromising of the quality of some of the question papers as substandard papers were printed due to the time constraints.

Chapter 2

Moderation of integrated summative assessment tasks (ISATs)

1. INTRODUCTION

The external summative assessment portion of the National Certificate's vocational subjects is comprised of a theoretical question paper and a practical integrated summative assessment task (ISAT). The task contributes 30% of the external summative assessment mark and it is therefore critical that the tasks, as well as the administering thereof, are moderated.

There are two types of ISATs, namely:

- core ISATs that integrate a substantial amount of the practical work of the three compulsory vocational subjects; and
- subject-specific ISATs for the optional subjects.

Tasks are completed in phases throughout the year, over a specific period of time or as a once-off task.

The main objectives of the moderation of the ISAT and the conduct thereof are to:

- ascertain the appropriateness and standard of the practical assessment tasks;
- confirm that a candidate has demonstrated the required skills and competence as well as the necessary underpinning knowledge;
- ensure that evidence of successful performance is collected and documented effectively;
- ensure quality by verifying that the practical assessments fulfil the principles of being fair, valid, reliable and practicable;
- ensure that assessments across different sites of delivery are consistent and that standards are maintained; and
- ensure that proper processes and procedures are followed.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- provide an indication of the number of ISATs moderated;
- give an overview of the crucial findings relating to the quality and standard of the ISATs and the conduct thereof at various sites, as reported by the external moderators;
- highlight areas of good practice; and
- highlight areas for improvement and give some recommendations that will enhance the quality of the ISATs set and conducted.

3. SCOPE

This report covers the findings concerning four core (programme) and five subject level 3 ISATs moderated by Umalusi's external moderators, as well as the findings from the moderation of the conduct of seven core and nine subject ISATs (levels 2 and 3) at 31 different sites. In some cases more than one ISAT was moderated at a specific site.

The table below provides a list of the programme and subject ISATs that were covered in the moderation of the tasks.

Table 1

CORE ISAT		
No	PROGRAMME	LEVEL
1	Civil Engineering and Building Construction	3
2	Hospitality	3
3	Primary Agriculture	3
4	Office Administration	3
SUBJECT ISAT		
1	Fitting and Turning	3
2	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	3
3	Engineering Fabrication	3
4	Project Management	3
5	Electronic Control and Digital Electronics	3

Although the above tasks were moderated, the limited timeframes meant that the changes proposed by the external moderators could not be effected by the DoE before the tasks were distributed to the colleges.

The table below provides a list of the programme and subject ISATs included in the moderation of conduct exercise as well as the sites visited for moderation purposes.

Table 2: Core ISATs

No	PROGRAMME	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
1	Civil Engineering and Building Construction	2	Eastern Cape	Buffalo City	John Knox Bokwe
		3	Gauteng	Central Johannesburg	Johannesburg
		2	Western Cape	Malmesbury Correctional Services	
2	Electrical Infrastructure Construction	2	KwaZulu-Natal	Coastal	As Salaam
3	Engineering and Related Design	2	KwaZulu-Natal	Thekwini	Springfield
		2	Mpumalanga	Nkangala	Mpondozankomo
4	Hospitality	3	Free State	Motheo	Bloemfontein
		2	Western Cape	Northlink	Bellville
5	Management	3	Gauteng	Westcol	Randfontein
		3	KwaZulu Natal	Thekwini	Umbilo
6	Office Administration	2	Limpopo	Waterberg	Lebowakgomo
		2	Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	Nelspruit

No	PROGRAMME	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
6	Office Administration	3	Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural	Kathu
		3	Western Cape	West Coast	Atlantis
7	Primary Agriculture	2	Free State	Maluti	Sefikeng
		3	Limpopo	Vhembe	Mashamba
		3	Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	Mthimba

Table 3: Subject ISATs

No	SUBJECT	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
1	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	2/3	KwaZulu-Natal	Thekwini	Springfield *
		2	Mpumalanga	Nkangala	Mpondozankomo *
2	Construction Carpentry and Roof Work	2	Eastern Cape	Lovedale	Zwelitsha
		2	Mpumalanga	Nkangala	CN Mahlangu
3	Construction Plumbing	2	Gauteng	Orbit	Odi
		2	Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	Mapulaneng
4	Engineering Fabrication	2	KwaZulu-Natal	Thekwini	Springfield *
		3	North West	Orbit	Rustenburg
		2	Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural	Kathu
		2	Western Cape	West Coast	Vredenburg
5	Entrepreneurship	2	Free State	Motheo	Thaba Nchu
		2	Gauteng	Sedibeng	Sebokeng
6	Fitting and Turning	2	KwaZulu-Natal	Thekwini Umfolozi	Springfield * Richtek
		2/3	North West	Orbit	Mankwe
7	Marketing	2/3	Gauteng	Central Johannesburg	Parktown
8	Physical Science	2	Free State	Motheo	Hillside View
		2	Western Cape	South Cape	Mossel Bay
9	Project Management	3	Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth	Dower

* Site or subject not originally included in moderation plan but monitored while moderator was at the site.

4. APPROACH

Off-site moderation was used to moderate the ISATs. The external moderators evaluated the ISATs and submitted reports to Umalusi and the DoE.

On-site moderation was used to monitor and moderate the conduct of the ISATs. This exercise focused on the process, as well as the ISAT product. Moderators had to observe the process of candidates completing the task or moderate the completed product and evidence of the completion of the task.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Moderation of ISATs

The table below indicates the approval status of the level 3 tasks after the external moderation.

Table 4:

PROGRAMME	ISAT			
	Approved	Conditionally approved, no resubmission	Conditionally approved, resubmit	Rejected
Civil Engineering and Building Construction	✓			
Hospitality				✓
Primary Agriculture		✓		
Office Administration		✓		
Electrical Infrastructure Construction: Only Electric Control and Digital Electronics			✓	
SUBJECT ISAT				
Fitting and Turning	✓			
Automotive Repair and Maintenance				✓
Engineering Fabrication		✓		
Project Management		✓		

5.2 Moderation of the conduct of ISATs

The table below provides a broad overview of the findings with regard to the conduct of the ISATs.

Table 5:

Criteria	Findings
Planning for conduct of ISAT	The tasks were received late, between April and September. Some not received at all.
	Approximately 30% of the sites did not have schedules for the conduct of the ISATs.
	38% of the sites did not have enough equipment or consumables.
Conduct of ISAT	At four of the sites the ISAT was not yet implemented – at one site the lecturer was unaware that it was compulsory to do the task.
	The tasks were often not conducted in simulated or structured environments.
	25% of the tasks were not completed as per the specifications.
	25% of the tasks were not assessed according to the agreed criteria, however marking was mostly reported as appropriate.
	There was a lack of reports; reports that were available usually contained limited information.

Criteria	Findings
Internal moderation	No internal moderation was carried out at the majority of sites. There was very little evidence of internal moderation apart from moderators' signatures.
	Where moderation was carried out, it included the conduct, product and marking of the ISATs.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 Quality of ISAT

The external moderators reported that most of the ISATs were in line with policies and guidelines, reflecting core-learning outcomes at an acceptable level and covering activities of various types. It was also a pleasant observation that some tasks encouraged liaison with industry and the workplace.

Some of the ISATs had detailed instruments and sufficient guidelines to effectively assess the performance of candidates.

6.2 Conduct of ISAT

Well-designed laboratories, workshops and simulation rooms at some sites were conducive to successful implementation of the ISATs.

Some colleges were well informed on the assessment processes of the NCV programmes, and this resulted in the conduct of the ISAT being of an acceptable standard. This together with experienced academic staff and the relevant policies and processes in place led to:

- tasks being assessed according to the agreed criteria and thus to appropriate scoring;
- good records being formulated of scores supported by reliable evidence; and
- excellent moderation systems and procedures with well-documented moderation evidence at college and campus level.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

7.1 Quality of ISAT

Technical criteria

The format of the ISATs differed substantially. Some tasks had no indication of scoring and no proper guidelines for the conduct of the ISAT. Sequencing of sub-tasks and time schedules were lacking in some ISATs. Very few guidelines as to how ISATs should be assessed were provided. The lack of explicit checklists for every sub-task was a major concern in programmes/subjects such as Civil Engineering, Electrical Infrastructure Construction and Engineering Fabrication. Without checklists as part of the assessment tool, different results might be obtained under varying contexts. Assessment results would therefore not be consistent.

Some ISATs provided assessors with options that could affect consistency in implementation across the spectrum of examination centres.

Unnecessary and repeated errors were found in assessment tasks.

Clearer guidelines need to be provided regarding the tasks that need to be completed and the assessment thereof. The assessors need to be provided with detailed rubrics, memoranda, and/or checklists in order to ensure the fairness and consistency of assessment practice.

Standard of ISATs

The level of content coverage and demand of the ISATs differed between subjects.

The quality of the ISATs needs to be improved extensively in terms of the scope and criteria for completion thereof.

Internal moderation

No evidence of internal moderation could be established.

7.2 Conduct of assessment tasks

Timeframes

ISATs were either completed in a single assessment or in phases throughout the year. During the site visits it was apparent that some of the ISATs had not yet been completed, or had been completed a long time before the verification process.

The late receipt of ISAT tasks and the consequent delayed and tedious process of the procurement of consumables for the conduct of the ISAT were stated as reasons why the ISAT could not be completed at the prescribed time or was not conducted at all at some colleges. Further contributing factors were the high staff turnover rate and the high rates of absenteeism of learners. Many colleges had no schedules in place for the conduct of the ISATs.

It is of concern that a lack of knowledge and understanding at some colleges resulted in no execution of the ISAT at all. At some sites the lecturers did not have the basic knowledge concerning practical work or had limited knowledge of the implementation of the ISAT – some lecturers had problems differentiating between the ISAT and the ICASS. Some lecturers even indicated that they were not aware of the ISAT. Although it would in certain cases be possible to conduct the task before the final date for the submission of marks, it would be impossible to do so in other cases. Umalusi is concerned that this could lead to the submission of fabricated marks.

The assessment bodies must submit the ISATs to colleges at a much earlier stage in order to ensure that planning and implementation is done effectively. The support and quality assurance systems and processes at the colleges must be improved upon to ensure that staff are well informed about expectations in terms of the ISATs.

Resources/infrastructure

It was observed that certain colleges offer programmes without the necessary infrastructure, equipment and human resources in place. In addition, the infrastructure at some sites was very

limited and not conducive to conducting ISATs. A shortage of workspace, important tools and equipment (due to too large enrolments) and a lack of availability of material and consumables for practical work – for ISATs in particular – were reported. At some sites classrooms were used as simulated workshops and laboratories.

Although a task might be considered fair in itself, the overall actual fairness is a product of the task content and the conditions under which the assessment is undertaken. The lack of availability and poor standard of physical resources and consumables at certain sites of delivery is therefore of concern.

Umalusi is of the view that colleges should not be allowed to offer programmes if they do not have the necessary resources. Colleges and campuses should be evaluated to determine if they possess the necessary infrastructure before being allowed to offer programmes.

Learners should not be disadvantaged as a result of insufficient resources and poor delivery.

Quality and standard of scoring

Some sites amended the tasks while other sites implemented the ISAT as is. The tasks administered were thus of different standards which impacts on the credibility of the national results as some learners will have been disadvantaged and some advantaged. It is also of concern that at some of the sites visited, only sections of the tasks were done, yet marks were awarded for the entire task.

The reports that should be completed for each student that carries out the assessment were often not completed properly and were often far from sufficient. The scoring and recording of marks were also inadequate. These areas need prompt attention.

Internal moderation

Moderation was lacking in most cases. Where internal moderation occurred it was often not of an appropriate standard.

Rigorous internal moderation needs to be done to ensure confidence in the conduct and outcome of the ISATs.

External moderation

At some of these sites no external moderation could be done due to the fact that no evidence was available.

Detailed planning for the conduct of the ISATs must be done and evidence kept of the execution of tasks.

8. CONCLUSION

Many of the ISATs are not yet at the required level in terms of the standard of the task and assessment instruments as well as clear guidance on the execution of the task.

The reports received from the external moderators with regard to the conduct of the tasks show that despite the shortcomings, most of the ISAT assessments were not compromised at the majority of sites of delivery. The reports, however, also clearly indicate that there are major challenges in the system that need to be addressed, particularly in both human and physical resources and the administration of the tasks, to ensure that results are valid, reliable and credible.

Chapter 3

Moderation of internal continuous assessment (ICASS)

1. INTRODUCTION

Internal assessment allows for assessment to take place at the time of learning or, more importantly, to be integrated with teaching. In many cases this has led to internal assessment components including an even wider range of learning outcomes than traditionally assessed by an external examination.

Due to the fact that the internal assessment of the NCV qualification is seen as equally important as the external assessment in terms of contribution to the final mark, Umalusi quality assures internal assessment through the application of a rigorous moderation process.

Umalusi also deems it necessary to monitor the progress made with the systems for internal assessment, as internal assessment is set (mostly), marked and graded at site level. Furthermore, ensuring the reliability of internal assessment in a system with vast differences in available resources remains a major challenge.

The main objective of the moderation of internal assessment is to:

- ascertain the appropriateness and standard of the assessment tasks;
- ensure that evidence is collected and documented effectively;
- assure that sufficient tasks of different types have been administered;
- ensure that assessment across different sites of delivery is consistent and that standards are maintained; and
- assure that the quality assurance of the internal assessment component of the NCV is effectively managed.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- outline the approach used for the 2008 moderation of internal assessment;
- highlight the findings of the moderation exercise with a particular focus on areas of good practice; and
- highlight areas needing improvement and to provide a few recommendations based on the findings reported.

The evaluation is based on findings from visits to selected sites, the interviews and observations conducted there and observation of documentary evidence, as submitted to Umalusi by its external moderators.

3. SCOPE

Umalusi monitored the state of internal assessment for a sample of 21 level 2 and/or level 3 subjects across the colleges in all nine provinces during the last week of August.

The sites and subjects included in the August visits are indicated in the table below:

Table 1:

No	SUBJECT	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
1	Advertising and Promotions	2	Eastern Cape	East Cape Midlands	High Street
			Eastern Cape	King Sabata Dalindyebo	Mthatha
		3	Gauteng	South West	Dobsonville
			Limpopo	Capricorn	Polokwane
2	Afrikaans 1ste Addisionele Taal	2, 3	Free State	Motheo	Bethlehem
			Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural	Kathu
3	Animal Production	2, 3	Eastern Cape	Lovedale	Alice
			Free State	Goldfields	Tosa
4	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	2, 3	Northern Cape	Northern Cape Urban	City
			Western Cape	False Bay	Westlake
5	Client Services and Human Relations	2	Western Cape	Northlink	Protea
				South Cape	Oudtshoorn
6	Construction Plumbing	2	Limpopo	Vhembe	Techniven
			Mpumalanga	Nkangala	C N Mahlangu
7	Drawings, Setting Out, Quantities and Costing	3	Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth	Iqhayiya
			Gauteng	Central Johannesburg	Johannesburg
8	Engineering Fabrication	2	Gauteng	Tshwane North	Temba
			Western Cape	West Coast	Vredenburg
9	Engineering Fundamentals	2	KwaZulu-Natal	Majuba	Majuba Technology
					New Castle Technology
10	English 1st Additional Language	2	Gauteng	Ekurhuleni East	Isidingo (Daveyton)
			Limpopo	Waterberg	Mokopane
11	Financial Management	3	Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	Mlumati
12	Fitting and Turning	3	Gauteng	Orbit	Rustenburg
			KwaZulu-Natal	Thekwini	Springfield
13	Hospitality Generics	3	Gauteng	South West	Roodepoort
14	Introduction to Information Systems	2	KwaZulu-Natal	Thekwini	LC Johnson (Melbourne)
			Mpumalanga	Nkangala	Middelburg
15	Life Orientation	2	North West	Vuselela	Potchefstroom
			Western Cape	Northlink	Protea
16	Office Data Processing	3	Eastern Cape	Northlink	Parow
			Western Cape	Lovedale	King
17	Operations Management	3	Gauteng	South West	Krugersdorp
			Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	Barberton

No	SUBJECT	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
18	Physical Science	2, 3	Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth	Russel Road
			Western Cape	South Cape	Mossel Bay
19	Plant Production	2	Free State	Maluti	Sefikeng
20	Principles of Computer Programming	3	Western Cape	Boland	Worcester
21	Sustainable Tourism in SA and Regional Travel	3	Gauteng	Tshwane North	Pretoria
			KwaZulu-Natal	Umgungund-lovu	Msunduzi

During October 2008 Umalusi moderated the colleges' level 2 and level 3 internal assessment (portfolios of evidence and portfolios of assessment) of a selected sample of the NCV subjects that are currently moderated by Umalusi at centralised venues in all nine provinces. Special attention was given to the subjects and provinces indicated below:

Subjects

- Applied Accounting
- Engineering Systems
- Electrical Systems and Construction
- Mathematical Literacy
- Mathematics

Provinces

- Eastern Cape
- Gauteng
- Mpumalanga
- Western Cape

The subjects as well as the provinces where the portfolios were moderated are indicated in the table below:

Table 2: Moderation of ICASS portfolios – October 2008

	SUBJECT	PROVINCE								
		Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape
1	Advertising and Promotions									
2	Afrikaans 1ste Addisionele Taal									
3	Animal Production									
4	Applied Accounting									
5	Automotive Repair and Maintenance									
6	Client Services and Human Relations									
7	Construction Plumbing									
8	Drawings, Setting Out, Quantities and Costing									

	SUBJECT	PROVINCE								
		Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape
9	Electrical Systems and Construction									
10	Engineering Fabrication									
11	Engineering Fundamentals									
12	Engineering Systems									
13	English 1st Additional Language									
14	Entrepreneurship									
15	Financial Management									
16	Fitting and Turning									
17	Hospitality Generics									
18	Introduction to Information Systems									
19	Life Orientation									
20	Mathematical Literacy									
21	Mathematics									
22	Office Data Processing									
23	Operations Management									
24	Physical Science									
25	Principles of Computer Programming									
26	Sustainable Tourism in SA and Regional Travel									
	TOTAL	9	2	13	4	2	8	4	2	12

4. APPROACH

On-site monitoring/moderation was done during August and central moderation of portfolios was done at the provincial level during October. Provincial Departments of Education, colleges and campuses were informed beforehand of the intended visits. For the moderation of portfolios during October, a sample of sites was requested to submit a predetermined number of portfolios of evidence accompanied by the relevant portfolios of assessment.

5. FINDINGS

The table below provides a brief overview of the findings in terms of the state of internal assessment during August 2008.

Table 3:

Criteria	Findings
Resources	
Physical resources	<p>80% of the sites have practicum rooms (workshops, simulation rooms or laboratories), but these rooms are not always well equipped and the available facilities are not always in line with the number of learners enrolled.</p> <p>Around 60% of the workshops/laboratories do not comply with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations.</p>
Media centre	<p>Approximately 70% of the sites have media centres with good control systems.</p> <p>60% of the sites have computers and internet as well as other resources, e.g., software and books for learners' use.</p>
Human resources	<p>80% of the lecturers received some form of NCV subject content training and around 75% received appropriate training in outcomes based education, assessment of practical work and integration of assessment within the programme. Many indicated that they feel the training was insufficient and that they need more training.</p> <p>Almost all staff indicated that they receive support.</p> <p>80% of the level 2 educators indicated that they have workplace experience/exposure where as only 40% of the level 3 lecturers have workplace experience/exposure.</p>
Learning and training material	<p>Most of the level 2 lecturers were satisfied with the textbooks, however, only 60% of the level 3 lecturers were satisfied.</p> <p>The majority of textbooks were received late.</p>
Financial resources Teaching and learning	<p>Most of the sites have a budget for consumables.</p> <p>Dates on which classes commenced differ substantially.</p> <p>Numerous challenges that impact on teaching and learning are experienced with the implementation of the NCV. Some sites have innovative measures in place to manage these inhibiting factors.</p>
Assessment	
Assessment policy	<p>Most of the colleges have appropriate assessment policies although some are still in draft format.</p>
Assessment tasks	<p>80% of the sites have systems to ensure that tasks are of an acceptable standard. There are also measures in place to ensure that different types of tasks are developed and to ensure consistency across the campuses.</p>
Portfolios	<p>Most portfolios were well organised and most of the tasks were appropriate for the outcomes assessed. The variety of tasks used differs from site to site. Tasks are not always varied in the level of difficulty (mostly knowledge and application). Instructions in most cases are clear and correct. The memoranda /rubrics/score cards, etc., used are not always up to standard. Of the marking methods available, memoranda are used most often.</p>

Criteria	Findings
Administration of internal assessment	Assessments are recorded effectively. The time allocated for practical work is unrealistic and not sufficient.
	There is not enough evidence of the reviewing of assessment tasks.
	Learners are regularly assessed and assessed according to agreed criteria.
	Re-assessment is applied at approximately 50% of the sites – there are many challenges around re-assessment.
	There is evidence of feedback but the feedback is limited in nature.
Quality assurance of assessment	There is some form of quality assurance of assessment system in place at most sites, but most are not fully functional and effective (in terms of feedback, reporting to the next level, follow-up and meetings/communication at different levels).
Moderation of internal assessment tasks	Most of the tasks are moderated – processes differ – not all aspects receive the necessary attention (e.g., record keeping, feedback, follow-up)
Moderation of conduct of internal assessment	The moderation of completed tasks is done – 10% of the scripts are moderated.
Moderation of portfolios	The moderation of portfolios is done – the frequency is once per term or quarter or bi-annually. In reality, this is often auditing rather than moderation.
Irregularity register	Only approximately 40% of sites maintain irregularity registers.

The table below provides a broad overview of the findings from the moderation of portfolios during October 2008.

Table 4:

Criteria	Findings
Educator portfolios	
Content	Professionalism varies from excellent to sub-standard.
	Policies are available but often not implemented.
	Outdated Subject and Assessment Guidelines (SAG) were found in some of the files.
	Very few good work schedules were found, more often these were poorly designed and utilised.
Assessment tasks	Some good attempts at designing relevant assessment instruments/tasks were noted, some were however of very poor quality. The cognitive level was mostly of the lower order. Differentiating between practical and theoretical tasks seems to be a challenge. Educators need more training in respect of assessment planning and administration.
	Assessment tools (memoranda, rubrics, etc.) were often incomplete or non-existent,

Criteria	Findings
Educator portfolios	
	In terms of scoring, different interpretations of the weighting of instruments/tasks were found, thus the calculation of ICASS marks differs from college to college.
Internal moderation	There are good systems in place but the implementations are not fully functional. The moderation varies from excellent to inferior to non-existent.
Recording and reporting	There were records of learner achievements in most of the Portfolios of Assessment – some discrepancies between those marks and the marks in learner portfolios were found. Progress reports were seldom available.
Learner portfolios	
Structure of portfolios	The portfolios were mostly neat but not always well organised. Documents were sometimes omitted or incomplete (e.g., no signatures or dates).
Assessment tasks	There were substantial differences in the number and standard of assessment instruments/tasks between students. Some provinces exhibited a high degree of uniformity; others differed from site to site.
Internal moderation	Most instruments were found to have been moderated before implementation; there was also evidence of moderation of some of the products. There was limited visible evidence of internal moderation at the higher levels – what evidence there was often seemed to be more audit-like in nature. Sometimes only signatures of approval were evident.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Policies

There is a marked improvement in the availability and quality of relevant policies.

Portfolios

The moderators observed examples of outstanding portfolios with all relevant documentation and evidence of effective planning and record keeping.

In the Western Cape and Mpumalanga there is a high degree of convergence between the colleges on the quantity and quality of the ICASS requirements, and the organisation of the portfolios. This suggests a high level of provincial support, monitoring and control that is useful for standardisation purposes.

Assessment

It is observed that the NCV implementation is gaining momentum at some colleges and that these colleges are gradually becoming better resourced. Good attempts were made at designing and implementing relevant assessment instruments. An example is the Life Orientation in the Western

Cape where very good standardised assessment tasks developed by focus groups, as well as good standards of marking and comprehensive internal moderation were observed.

Some good examples of practical assessments that cover large sections of the curriculum but have been effectively compiled to integrate outcomes were observed, e.g., at Kathu (Automotive Repair and Maintenance).

The use of subject committees, focus groups or other similar structures to develop and share good practice has proven to be very valuable.

Education and Training

A substantial number of the lecturing staff is suitably qualified and many have workplace experience, e.g., Client Services (Oudtshoorn) – lecturer previously employed as travel agent; Sustainable Tourism (Pretoria) – lecturer worked at travel agency; and Advertising and Promotions (High Street) – lecturer had his own business and was previously employed in the marketing section of a car manufacturer.

There are measures in place at certain colleges to deal with challenges and inhibiting factors, e.g.:

- exposure of learners to Plato on a regular basis;
- Saturday classes;
- incentives for learners to attend class;
- extra classes; and
- remedial work.

Learning and teaching material

A good practice observed was the keeping of textbooks to be used by the next group of learners. This can reduce the cost of learning material.

Internal moderation

Some examples of good moderation templates were found. Some colleges have good management plans for college and provincial moderation.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Policies

It was found that policies were not implemented. Outdated SAG documents were found in some files. Policies must be implemented to improve the quality of work.

Portfolios

The omission of properly designed and utilised work plans speaks of poor planning and a lack of quality assurance.

The very low standard of some of the portfolios is a cause for major concern; this is evidence of poor delivery and a definite lack of quality assurance. For example, the external moderator is of the opinion that the learners enrolled on the Electrical Systems and Construction course at Ingwe have been severely prejudiced. This appalling standard also displays a lack of pride and professionalism. Some of the portfolios were neat but the information was compiled in a very confusing manner. Incomplete templates and documents (e.g., omission of signatures and dates) do not serve any

purpose.

There is a need to standardise portfolio documentation.

Assessment

Educator training in respect of assessment planning and administration still appears as an area that needs to receive more attention. With some guidance from the national and provincial departments, areas of concern could improve, such as the:

- design of assessments to improve quality, creativity and assessment demand;
- design of policies/flowcharts to guide learners through preparation for assessments;
- design of relevant templates to document required learner information;
- visible evidence of internal moderation; and
- evidence of authenticity.

Educators have not always been able to differentiate between assessment methods, assessment instruments and assessment tools. Differentiating between practical tasks and theoretical tasks seems to be another challenge. There appears to be no consistency in this regard. In many cases, the practical tasks had essentially be presented as test items. Memoranda were often incomplete or non-existent. Rubrics need to be more comprehensive and task specific to eliminate unfairness.

While some provinces have facilitated a process of setting common assessment tasks, the process started late and did not always achieve the desired results. There is a need for the development of common assessment tasks through an item bank where colleges can obtain instruments and tools to standardise internal assessment.

Scoring and recording

The following inconsistencies could challenge the credibility of the internal assessment marks. There was:

- a high degree of variance in the interpretation and application of tasks;
- work presented in portfolios that was not authenticated by lecturers and learners; and
- poor moderation at all levels.

The calculation of internal assessment marks differs. Of great concern is the interpretation of the weighting of tasks. The inconsistency across colleges and provinces provides too much variance in scoring and compromises the internal assessment marks' validity nationally.

Recording instruments require attention.

The implementation of re-assessment and the practicality thereof remains an area of contention. The general feeling is that re-assessment should only be allowed where there is a valid reason as timeframe constraints do not allow for re-assessment. Re-assessment should also be cautiously applied to prevent abuse and to prevent any unfairness to learners that prepared in time.

It is important that the national DoE provides clear directives regarding the calculation and recording of internal assessment marks.

Moderation

Good moderation templates were included but were often not properly utilised. Some colleges have good management plans for college and provincial moderation, these are, however, not implemented.

In most cases where moderation took place at the campus and college level, it was in the form of a checklist. Moderation should show evidence of follow-up on initial findings, as it is crucial for setting standards.

Feedback to learners on progress was lacking and no evidence of intervention was found although marks are very poor. Feedback to learners should indicate what is required and should clearly show the difference between the learner's response and that which is expected. This level of content is required in order that feedback may serve a productive purpose.

The higher levels of moderation are usually too late to make a difference to the current set of learners. The higher levels of moderation should give more attention to the standards of the instruments and tools, and the quality of learner performance, than the organisation of the portfolios.

The format of the moderation reports should be standardised nationally. The moderation models need some refinement as they seem to be too labour intensive and therefore reduce teaching time. The three-tiered moderation system is seen as unwieldy and over-complex in addition to being resource and time intensive, and may result in a lack of consistency across colleges and provinces.

Physical resources

A serious lack of facilities and equipment was observed at some of the sites, e.g., Operations Management (Barberton) – the building is in poor condition; Primary Agriculture (Tosa); Automotive Repair and Maintenance (Northern Cape City) – a lack of equipment, students were not issued with protective clothing, OHS rules were not obeyed, space was too limited.

The necessary facilities and equipment must be available so that learners can adequately engage in the various practical tasks and projects as outlined in the subject guidelines. The available resources must be considered when decisions are taken on the number of learners to admit.

Education and Training

Some educators not trained for NCV or not qualified for the subjects that they offer, e.g., Fabrication (Temba) – artisan that teaches fabrication needs training in assessment; Advertising and Promotions level 3 (Dobsonville) – lecturer has not received any training for the NCV.

Many of the staff do not have any workplace experience.

Lecturers that do not have workplace experience should be given the opportunity to gain such experience through job shadowing.

Learning and teaching material

A common complaint was that textbooks were received very late, especially the level 3 textbooks.

In some cases the textbooks were received on time but the facilitator's/educator's guide was received late (during August) or not at all (Advertising and Promotions level 3)

8. CONCLUSION

Many good practices were observed. These practices should be maintained and replicated. There are, however, critical issues that are inhibiting successful implementation and need to be addressed.

Student performance has been rather poor. This calls for serious investigation at the national level into possible causes in order that ways of improving the situation may be generated. Some moderators reported that poor performance could be attributed to the quality of learning and teaching. Questions have arisen around the competence of many lecturers to deliver the NCV curriculum: some of those from an NCV background may lack the experience to undertake the practical components, while those who have come from industry may lack the required theoretical knowledge. College councils do not appear to have sufficient financial resources to recruit and retain staff with the required expertise.

Many of the assessment tasks were not of a particularly high standard. Given that the internal assessment represents 50% of the total mark of the vocational subjects, it is crucial that there is some comparability in terms of acceptable standards across colleges and across provinces. Much development needs to go into the setting of quality assessment in order to achieve credible results.

Chapter 4

Monitoring of the conduct of examinations

1. INTRODUCTION

The monitoring of the November 2008 VET examination covered all three phases of the examination, namely, the state of readiness to administer the examinations, the writing of the examinations and the marking of scripts.

Monitoring the state of readiness is essential because it provides Umalusi with a sense of whether the assessment bodies, as well as the sites of delivery are ready to administer and manage the examinations. The other two phases are monitored to ensure adherence to policy and that examinations are not compromised in any manner.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the:

- state of readiness of the provincial Departments of Education for the monitoring of the examination in the nine provinces;
- state of readiness of the examination centres for the November examination;
- effectiveness of the systems in place for the appointment of chief invigilators, invigilators, marking centre managers, chief markers, marking moderators and markers;
- security measures in place for the safety of the examination material; and
- processes related to the administration and conduct of the examination.

3. SCOPE

Umalusi deployed 21 monitors to visit a pre-selected sample of examination and marking centres in all nine provinces.

3.1 Monitoring of the state of readiness

The table on the next page indicates the colleges/campuses included in Umalusi's monitoring of the state of readiness phase before the onset of the November examinations.

Table 1: Colleges monitored during the state of readiness phase

PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth	Russel Road
Free State	Motheo	Thaba Nchu
Gauteng	Ekurhuleni West	Alberton
KwaZulu-Natal	Coastal KZN	Umbumbulu
Limpopo	Waterberg	Lebowakgomo
Mpumalanga	Nkangala	CN Mahlangu
North West	Orbit	Mankwe
Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural	Upington
Western Cape	Northlink	Tygerberg

3.2 Monitoring of the writing phase

The table below provides a list of the sites included in the monitoring of the writing phase per province.

Table 2: Centres monitored during the writing phase

PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
Eastern Cape (4 sites)	King Sabata Dalindyebo Public	Mthatha
	East Cape Midlands	Graaff-Reinet
	King Hintsa	H B Tsengwa
	St Albans Correctional Services	
Free State (2 sites)	Motheo	Botshabelo
	Maluti	Leraletsepe
Gauteng (2 sites)	South West	George Tabor
	Ekurhuleni West	Lazarus Nhlapo
KwaZulu-Natal (3 sites)	Centre for People Development	
	Mthashana	Maputa
	Umfolozzi	Emandleni
Limpopo (2 sites)	Lephalale	Lephalale
	Waterberg	Lebowakgomo
Mpumalanga (2 sites)	Ehlanzeni	Barberton
	Ehlanzeni	Sibanesethu
Northern Cape (2 sites)	Northern Cape Rural	Kuruman
	Northern Cape Rural	Upington
North West (3 sites)	Vuselela	Taung
	Taletso	Lichtenburg
	Orbit	Mankwe
Western Cape (3 sites)	West Coast	Malmesbury
	College of Cape Town	Crawford
	Drakenstein Correctional Services	

The writing phase was monitored at a total of 20 public colleges, one private college and two correctional services examination centres.

3.3 Monitoring of the marking phase

Marking was only monitored in two provinces, namely, KwaZulu Natal at the Qadi and Umbumbulu campuses and Gauteng at the Parktown campus.

4. APPROACH

4.1 Monitoring of the design phase

The convenors of the monitors of the nine provinces were deployed for one day before the onset of the November examinations to monitor the state of readiness of the provincial Departments of Education, as well as examination and marking centres. All nine provincial Departments of Education were visited as well as one examination centre in each of the provinces.

4.2 Monitoring of the writing phase

Umalusi deployed monitors to visit examination centres during the writing of the November examinations. The monitoring/verification of the writing phase made provision for the inclusion of examination centres at public FET colleges, private FET colleges and correctional-services centres. Morning as well as afternoon sessions of the examination were monitored.

4.3 Monitoring of the marking phase

The NCV level 2 marking was done at the campus/college level. Marking was done in between other college responsibilities during the examination, which made it difficult to determine when subjects would be marked. Only two provinces and one marking centre in each of the two provinces were included in this exercise.

5. FINDINGS

Colleges administer examinations on a regular basis and manage to do so very effectively in most cases. The deviations from policy are mostly minor in nature.

The table below provides a broad overview of the findings during the monitoring of the examinations:

Table 3

State of readiness	
Provincial Departments of Education	
Criteria	Findings
Planning for monitoring of assessment	<p>Almost all the provincial Departments of Education could provide evidence of monitoring plans. The different phases of the examination would be monitored at a sample of public colleges and, in some cases, correctional services centres. The Eastern Cape and Free State also monitor private FET institutions.</p> <p>Not all the invigilators and full compliment of markers had been appointed by the time of the state of readiness visits.</p>
Examination centres	
Planning for examinations	The processes related to the planning of the administration and conduct of the examination are credible. Most of the deadlines have been met.
Question papers	Measures were in place to ensure that all question papers were received. Question papers were stored in strong rooms/safes. The examination stationery was securely stored.
Preparation for invigilation	<p>Invigilators and chief invigilators were appointed in writing and trained.</p> <p>Invigilation time tables were prepared.</p>
Marking centres	
	The model and planning for the marking of the NCV examinations were confirmed at a late stage which delayed planning at all levels.
Monitoring of writing phase	
General management of the examination	In general, the examinations were very well managed; there was compliance with most aspects of policy.
Examination rooms	Examination rooms were mostly conducive to the writing of examinations.
Before the commencement of the examination	<p>Venues were well prepared.</p> <p>Invigilators were on time, most candidates were on time.</p> <p>There was some confusion about whether only ID documents (together with examination permits) are acceptable for admission into examination rooms – there are conflicting stipulations in the NATED policy and the NCV policy.</p>
During the examination	The correct procedures were followed in terms of the seating of candidates, reading of regulations on conduct of examinations, allowance of reading time, opening of envelopes containing question papers, etc., at most of the examination centres.
Packaging and transmission of answer scripts	<p>Scripts were carefully checked and good records of the dispatch of scripts to marking centres were kept.</p> <p>There was good control of scripts that were marked internally.</p>

Monitoring of marking phase	
Criteria	Findings
Security	The security at the entrance of one of the two centres visited was not as effective as it should be.
Appointment and training of markers (level 2)	The lecturers marked their own learners' scripts. There was no register of the markers.
Marking procedure (level 2)	There was no uniformity in the approach to marking. There are serious concerns about the quality of the memoranda which could impact on the quality and consistency of the marking. Dissatisfaction was evident in the markers as there is no remuneration for marking.
Internal moderation	10% of the marked scripts were re-marked by heads of departments or senior lecturers.
Handling of irregularities	There were no irregularity registers.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 Monitoring of the state of readiness phase

Planning by provincial Departments of Education

In some provinces the systems for the appointment of markers and examination staff are very effective.

Planning by campuses

The operational arms of colleges in relation to the examinations have established procedures which are constantly being refined, and these contribute to effective administration of the examinations in most provinces.

In general, the examination centres visited were well prepared for the 2008 November examination. Most of the examination papers were received in advance and follow-ups were made where question papers were still outstanding. Question papers, stationery and other examination materials were stored in strong rooms and/or safes at all of the examination centres. Access to question papers was limited to either the examination officer or chief invigilator. Strict control measures were in place for the issuing of examination materials.

6.2 Monitoring of the writing phase

In general, the necessary systems and processes to ensure that examinations are conducted in a credible manner were found to be in place.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Many of the examination and marking centres do not have irregularity registers.

The following deviations from policy were observed at some of the examination and marking centres:

- Some colleges use examination stationery for non-examination related uses after the examination is completed instead of storing it for the next examination.
- Extra time was granted to two candidates without consent – one was injured on his way to the examination and other one was sick.
- A lecturer was allowed to invigilate when his own subject was written. The reason given for the inclusion of the lecturer was that he was needed as an invigilator because of the large number of candidates – external invigilators should be used in such circumstances.
- The centre number was displayed on the examination room door and not inside the room.
- Calculators and other programmable devices were not checked.
- The regulations on the conduct of examinations were not read to candidates at some of the centres.
- The chief invigilators at some of the centres did not read the instructions on the question papers to the candidates.
- The candidates were not instructed to verify that they were writing the correct paper.
- The number of pages in the examination booklets was not checked at some of the centres.
- At some centres there was no dispatch of scripts registers – waybills were kept as proof.
- The NCV level 2 memoranda were of a poor quality – centralised memorandum discussions should be held to finalise and approve memoranda before they are sent to marking centres for implementation.
- The memoranda arrived late at some of the marking centres.

8. CONCLUSION

The provincial Departments of Education and the examination centres were in general very well prepared for the conduct of the examination, especially for the writing of the examination.

The late decisions on the marking of the NCV caused certain delays in terms of the arrangements for marking. The poor quality of some of the memoranda could impact on the quality and consistency of marking.

Chapter 5

Moderation of marking

1. INTRODUCTION

The moderation of marking is of critical importance as it largely determines the standard and quality of marking and ensures that marking happens according to established practices and standards. Umalusi also moderates marking to promote confidence in the VET examination results. Planning for the memorandum (marking guideline) discussions and moderation of marking was complicated by the DoE's indecision on the marking model to be followed. The DoE then decided that the NCV level 2 should be internally marked.

2. PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the:

- standard of the memoranda and memorandum discussions;
- standard and quality of marking and internal moderation; and
- reliability and practicability of the systems, processes and procedures as planned and implemented at the marking centres.

3. SCOPE

Umalusi deployed 26 moderators to attend memorandum discussions and moderate the marking of level 2 and level 3 scripts. The marking of a sample of 14 NCV level 3 subjects was moderated across eight of the nine provinces. The marking of a sample of eight level 2 subjects was moderated at the Alberton campus. Most of the level 3 moderation of marking took place in Gauteng because of the larger number of enrolments for NCV level 3 in this province. The marking guideline discussions of the following 15 NCV level 3 subjects were attended.

Afrikaans 1ste Addisionele Taal
Automotive Repair and Maintenance
Construction Plant and Equipment
English 1st Additional Language
Financial Management
Food Preparation
Life Orientation
Marketing
Material Technology
Mathematical Literacy
Mathematics
Office Practice
Principles of Computer Programming
Project Management
Tourism Operations

The tables below provide a summary of the subjects and sites included in the moderation of marking exercise:

Table 1: Moderation of marking NCV level 3

Subject	Province	Marking centre
Afrikaans 1ste Addisionele Taal	Western Cape	Tygerberg
Construction Plant and Equipment	Gauteng	Alberton
Engineering Practice and Maintenance	KwaZulu-Natal	Majuba
English 1st Additional Language	Gauteng	Alberton
	Free State	Hillside View
Financial Management	Gauteng	Alberton
Food Preparation	Gauteng	Alberton
Life Orientation	Eastern Cape	East London
	Western Cape	Tygerberg
Mathematical Literacy	Northern Cape	Upington
Mathematics	Gauteng	Alberton
	Mpumalanga	C N Mahlangu
Office Practice	Gauteng	Alberton
	North West	Mankwe
Physical Science	Gauteng	Alberton
Project Management	Gauteng	Alberton
Science of Tourism	Gauteng	Alberton

Table 2: Moderation of marking NCV level 2

Subject	Number of provinces included in sample	Provinces included in the sample
Applied Accounting	7	Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, North West, Western Cape
Electrical Systems and Construction	4	Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Western Cape
English 1st Additional Language	9	All nine
Engineering Systems	9	Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, North West, Northern Cape, Western Cape
Introduction to Systems Development	4	North West, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape,
Life Orientation	5	Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, North West, Northern Cape
Mathematical Literacy	9	All nine
Mathematics	6	Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Western Cape

4. APPROACH

To fulfil the moderation of marking function, Umalusi appointed external moderators that are experienced in the moderation of assessment. They were deployed to the marking venues and expected to carefully evaluate and report on the systems, processes and practices at the discussion meetings and marking centres. In addition, Umalusi staff also attended some of the marking guideline discussion meetings and visited the marking venues.

The centralised memorandum discussion meetings for NCV level 3 took place over two days during the weekends of November. Umalusi's moderators and some Umalusi staff attended the first day of each of the memorandum discussions.

The centralised marking for NCV level 3 commenced on 29 November and concluded on 6 December 2008. Umalusi moderated the marking of a sample of subjects at eight of the marking centres.

There were no centralised memorandum discussions for NCV level 2. The memoranda for the marking of NCV level 2 were forwarded to the marking centres on a weekly basis after the writing of the question papers.

The DoE provided for an additional layer of quality assurance for the NCV level 2 marking in the form of a centralised post-marking moderation of scripts process that was conducted at the Alberton campus from 8 – 10 December. Umalusi participated in this moderation process and moderated the marking of a sample of subjects.

5. FINDINGS

The table below provides a brief overview of the findings during the memorandum discussions and moderation of marking:

Table 3:

Criteria	Findings
Memorandum discussions	
Preparedness of markers and chief markers	The markers often did not come prepared for the memorandum discussions (with their own worked out memoranda). Most chief markers also did not mark a sample of scripts before the memorandum discussions.
Attendance	Not all the chief markers attended the memorandum discussions.
Participation in discussion	Most of the chief markers participated actively in the memorandum discussions.
Adjustments to the memoranda	All the proposed changes were justified. The changes were mostly alternative possible correct answers and corrections to the memoranda (errors, incorrect numbering, mark allocations).

Pre-marking	A process of pre-marking was followed for the majority of subjects. A limited number of scripts from a limited number of centres were available for pre-marking.
Moderation of marking NCV level 2	
Adherence to marking memorandum	The marking of objective questions was of a good standard, but the standard of marking of subjective questions was fair – especially in certain subjects. Problems were noted in certain subjects, especially with open-ended questions.
Standard of marking	The standard of marking varied; substantial inconsistency in marking was observed.
Administration	The prescribed procedure for marking was not always followed. Calculation errors and errors in the transfer of marks were found.
Internal moderation	Some examples of good internal moderation were observed, but the impression given by some of the moderation is that some of the moderators were not subject matter experts.
Performance of candidates	The candidates' performance was, in general, very poor.
Moderation of marking NCV level 3	
Preparedness of markers	Some markers did not come prepared for the memorandum discussions (with their own worked out memoranda).
Pre-marking	A process of pre-marking was followed for the majority of subjects. A sample of between five and ten scripts was marked in most cases. These scripts were then moderated by the chief marker before the actual onset of the marking.
Marking procedure	Procedures differed. Some markers applied question-wise marking and others whole-script marking. In some cases duplicated questions were both marked and the candidates given the better mark, in others only the first answer was marked (as stipulated in the policy).
Adherence to marking memorandum	Markers mostly complied with the memoranda – there were some problems in certain subjects, especially with open-ended questions.
Standard of marking	The standard of marking was mostly good.
Internal moderation	The chief markers usually acted as internal moderators – the internal moderation was mostly of a good standard.
Performance of candidates	The candidates' performance was mostly poor, even though the question papers were of an appropriate standard. Poor attendance and poor preparation for the examination were stated as reasons for the low standard of performance.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 Memorandum discussions

The chief markers of some of the subjects (Afrikaans, Financial Management, Marketing, Mathematics, Project Management and Tourism Operations) came prepared for the memorandum discussions.

A process of pre-marking was applied for some of the subjects, e.g., Mathematical Literacy, Tourism Operations, Automotive Repair and Maintenance, English, Financial Management, Marketing, Afrikaans, Principles of Computer Programming and Project Management.

The chief markers participated actively in the memorandum discussions and provided input in terms of corrections to the memoranda, alternative correct answers, allocation of marks, etc. All changes were justified. The need for substantial additions to the memoranda emphasises the importance of interrogation with the question papers and memoranda as well as pre-marking before the memorandum discussions.

6.2 Moderation of marking NCV level 2

The moderation of the marking of the Engineering Systems at the Northern Cape site as seen on the papers included in the sample of scripts moderated was of a very good standard.

6.3 Moderation of marking NCV level 3

Some markers came prepared to marking centres, e.g., for the marking of Mathematics (at the CN Mahlangu marking centre) and for Mathematical Literacy, Afrikaans, Marketing, Project Management and Principles of Computer Programming.

The standard of the marking of the majority of markers was appropriate. This could be detected from remarks made by the moderators as well as the fact that there were only small differences in the marks that were allocated by the markers, internal moderators and external moderators.

The internal moderation was mostly of a good standard. Great care was taken to moderate 10% of the marked scripts of all markers and to ensure that a wide spectrum of performance was included in the moderation sample. Where there were substantial differences in the marks allocated by the marker and internal moderator, the marker had to remark the whole batch of scripts.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

7.1 General

The chief markers, markers and internal moderators were appointed at a very late stage. The identification, appointment and training of suitably qualified and experienced markers and internal

moderators remains a challenge. Umalusi is also concerned about the level of moderation at NCV level 2 and 3. It was observed that moderators were appointed to moderate more than one subject and, in some cases, subjects for which it is doubtful they have the necessary expertise. The NCV level 3 marking was delayed because of a dispute concerning marking tariffs. This impacted negatively on the moderation of the marking of the following subjects: Physical Science, Principles of Computer Programming, Construction Plant and Equipment and Food Preparation. The model for marking must be reviewed and planning for marking must start immediately after the enrolments have been processed. Detailed planning at all levels is essential. Colleges and provinces must observe due dates.

7.2 Memorandum discussions

Preparedness for memorandum discussions

The chief markers and markers did not come prepared for the memorandum discussions, e.g., Mathematics (Alberton), Mathematical Literacy, Automotive Repair and Maintenance, Construction Materials and Equipment, English 1st Additional Language (not all), Food Preparation, Life Orientation, Material Technology, Engineering Practice and Maintenance.

Attendance of memorandum discussions

Not all the chief markers attended the memorandum discussions. It is not clear whether chief markers that did not attend the memorandum discussions were informed about the changes effected to the memoranda and then allowed to mark or whether the scripts were sent to other marking centres to be marked.

Quality of memoranda

The memoranda were not always adjusted in accordance with the changes effected to the question papers and there were also too many other errors (incorrect answers, omission of answers, incorrect mark allocation, incorrect numbering, etc.) on the memoranda. The memoranda therefore had to be corrected, which led to the waste of valuable discussion time. In certain cases, e.g., in Introduction to Systems Development, candidates were unduly penalised by approximately 5% because of the non-adjustment of the memorandum. Because of misprints/incorrect information on question papers candidates had to be credited with 4 marks (Mathematical Literacy, paper 1, level 3), 3 marks (Afrikaans 1ste Addisionele Taal, vlak 3) and 2 marks (English 1st Additional Language, level 3) respectively.

The marking memoranda and question papers need to be reconciled and fully moderated to save time and avoid unnecessary ratifications and adjustments during marking memorandum discussions. It must be ensured that memoranda sent to marking centres are the final approved versions and are devoid of inaccuracies.

If internal marking is to be reliable then marking memoranda must be of a very good standard. The finalisation of the memoranda needs to be done by a small group of subject matter experts, before the memoranda are submitted to marking centres and markers.

Pre-marking

Pre-marking was not applied for some of the subjects, e.g., Afrikaans, Construction Plant and Equipment, Food Preparation, Life Orientation, Material Technology, Mathematics, Project Management, Engineering Practice and Maintenance and English (at Hillside View).

There is no evidence of set criteria that are used for the selection of the sample of scripts for pre-marking. A limited number of scripts were available for pre-marking. For English, all the chief markers marked the same script. This is a good practice to establish the standard of marking. It is, however, necessary to mark a good sample of scripts from different examination centres to ensure that alternative correct methods and answers used by candidates are catered for in the memorandum.

The impression is that the moderation of pre-marked scripts was done for certain subjects, but not all. A good practice would be to ensure that the moderation of the scripts of all chief markers/markers of all subjects is done before the onset of the actual marking process.

7.3 Moderation of marking

Quality of marking

As expected the standard, quality and reliability of marking for, especially, level 2 but also certain level 3 subjects varied. The moderator of Applied Accounting level 2 indicated that the standard of marking was not of the same standard as that of 2007. The marking at certain centres was inconsistent, e.g., for the following level 2 subjects: Applied Accounting, Electrical Systems and Construction, Introduction to Systems Development, English, Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics (both levels) and Life Orientation (both levels). From the small sample of scripts moderated, differences of up to 30% in the marks allocated by the marker, internal moderator and external moderator were observed.

Markers, in general, adhered to the marking memorandum for the objective questions, but the marking of the subjective questions was more problematic. Some of the markers overlooked correct responses or marked incorrect answers as right – this might be due to the limited experience and scope of the marker in that particular field of study. Some markers in Mathematics level 3 (observed at Alberton) lacked the ability to make judgements with respect to equivalent part marks for responses that deviated from the memorandum. There were instances where responses were overlooked or part marks were not allocated for acceptable responses. Most of these instances were, however, detected by the chief markers.

Some mistakes in the addition and transfer of marks were also found – some of these mistakes were even overlooked by the examination assistants. Examination assistants must be screened before appointment to ensure that they add value to the marking process.

The large number of open-ended questions in Life Orientation (both levels) and the limited provision for alternative answers posed serious challenges to the moderators. Marking was found to be inconsistent, inaccurate and unfair. The moderators are of the opinion that the results are not a fair reflection of the candidates' learning and predicted a high failure rate in provinces where they marked strictly according to the memorandum.

Subjects with open-ended questions e.g. Life Orientation must be marked centrally by experienced markers to ensure that candidates are not disadvantaged. Provision must be made for subjects with low enrolments to be marked centrally.

Markers did not use the same format when marking. Examination instruction 14 of 2004 provides clear guidance on marking. Clear guidelines and instructions were also given during the NCV level 3 memorandum discussions. The procedure that should be followed when marking must be brought to the attention of all staff involved in marking to ensure consistency.

Moderation

The sampling of level 2 scripts for moderation of marking impaired the decision on the validity of the assessment judgements. The reason being the sample of scripts available for moderation of level 2 marking was too limited, both in terms of numbers and representation of the different provinces and examination centres. The scripts were often not accompanied by mark sheets and only two or three moderated scripts were available from certain centres. On 9 December, the second day of this moderation process, there were, for example, only approximately 90 Applied Accounting scripts, most from a few examination centres in Gauteng available for external moderation (approximately 8800 candidates enrolled for this subject). There were only two Mathematical Literacy scripts from only one centre in the Eastern Cape available for moderation. This subject is offered at approximately 28 centres and approximately 2949 candidates are enrolled in the Eastern Cape. The DoE brought some more scripts – as requested by Umalusi – but these unfortunately only arrived on the afternoon of 9 December and some of the external moderators had already left by that time.

The original Introduction to Systems Development question paper was withdrawn, but the moderator came across two sites that wrote the withdrawn paper.

The internal moderation of the level 2 marking at the marking sites was often not of an appropriate standard. The moderation was often little more than “rubber stamping” of the markers' work without any objectivity (e.g., Applied Accounting, Introduction to Systems Development, Engineering Systems).

A moderator came across unmarked scripts (Mathematical Literacy). This moderator also observed that a specific question was not marked at a specific marking centre because it was claimed not to be part of the subject guidelines.

The moderator for Mathematics level 2 found that at a few of the centres included in the sample, the marks of borderline candidates were inflated to a pass mark.

Difficulty level of question papers

The markers felt that the standards of the question papers were appropriate but the candidates performed poorly. Only a few candidates performed excellently (e.g., Mathematics, level 3, paper 2).

8. CONCLUSION

The planning for the memorandum discussions and moderation of marking started at a very late stage and details continually changed, which led to major confusion at all levels and with all stakeholders. Many issues were raised at different levels around the decision to mark NCV level 2 internally.

Some effective systems, processes and procedures were in place at the marking centres. The level 3 memoranda were discussed in detail and marking and moderation were, in general, up to standard. The challenges are to ensure that effective systems, processes and procedures are put in place to ensure accurate and detailed memoranda and effective marking and moderation at all marking centres.

The additional layer of moderation put in place to ensure the quality of level 2 marking is commendable. Umalusi is, however, concerned about the planning for this process, e.g., the sample of scripts available for moderation purposes and the quality of moderation.

The model for marking must be reviewed and all stakeholders must start planning for marking in due time.

Chapter 6

Standardisation of results

1. INTRODUCTION

Umalusi aims to ensure that the VET examinations yield results that are comparable across the examinations of a specific year and also from year to year through the standardisation of results and other quality assurance processes.

The standardisation of the examination and internal assessment marks is necessary to address the variation in the standard of the examination question papers, internal assessment and the standard of marking that may occur from examination to examination and between sites of learning. The challenge with the NCV level 3 examination results was that because it was the first time that this examination was written there were no norms or history of previous examinations with which results could be compared. It was the second November NCV level 2 examination thus there was some history and the median marks of 2007 and 2008 could also be compared.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the:

- moderation of the NCV level 2 and 3 marks; and
- extent of the moderation of marks.

3. SCOPE

This chapter outlines the decisions reached during the standardisation meeting of the November 2008 NCV examinations. These are reported on very briefly and mainly highlight the main points of the meeting.

4. APPROACH

The November NCV level 2 and 3 examination results were standardised on 17 December.

4.1 Principles of standardisation

The following are some of the principles that were applied in the standardisation of results:

- The Means analyses test was used as a guideline to establish the external assessment results of the NCV examinations in the absence of a history. The assumption is that the raw means of the compulsory vocational subjects of a programme as well as the optional subject should be close to one another (within a tolerance range of 3 – 4).
- Where the subject was an optional subject across programmes, the most favourable adjustment was taken.
- Where the subject was a compulsory subject in another programme, the adjustment of the compulsory subject was accepted.
- The aim was to accept as many raw scores as possible.

- No adjustment in excess of 10%, either upwards or downwards, was applied.
- No adjustment was made if the recommended adjustment did not make a significant difference in the percentage of passes and distinctions.
- Where the standardisation of marks of a subject was not possible (less than 80% of the marks were captured), the chairman and a sub-committee appointed by the Standardisation committee will take the necessary decisions when the results are made available to Umalusi.

4.2 Standardisation meeting

A preliminary discussion was held regarding the adjustments to be recommended at the standardisation meeting on the morning of 17 December 2008. A statistical moderation meeting took place on the afternoon of 17 December 2008, at which the examination results for each subject were discussed and adjustments (including no adjustment) were agreed upon.

5. FINDINGS

Although a number of challenges were experienced, the meeting was conducted in a collegial spirit. In most cases either the raw marks were accepted or modest adjustments were agreed upon.

The lack of qualitative data in reports received from chief markers and internal moderators was raised as a concern.

The majority of subjects could be standardised. A total of 53 level 2 and 55 level 3 subjects were presented for standardisation. The results of two NCV subjects were outstanding and will be standardised when more than 80% of the results have been processed.

The table below summarises the adjustments that were effected. From the table it is evident that in the majority of subjects the raw marks were sufficiently close to the mean to be accepted without adjustments.

Table 1:

	Number of subjects	
	Level 2	Level 3
Raw marks accepted	39	39
Computer adjustment upwards	10	11
Computer adjustment downwards	4	5
TOTAL	53	55

6. CONCLUSION

Umalusi is satisfied that the final examination marks, which in many cases comprise the raw marks, represent a fair reflection of the candidates' performance in the November examination.

Chapter 7

Conclusion – Challenges with National Certificate Vocational

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance in the vocational education and training of the VET sector, especially with the NCV, has been a major challenge during 2008. Although the DoE has systems and procedures in place, the slow development and lack of implementation of proper plans compromise the standard of external assessment. The lack of systems and resources at some of the sites of delivery is also of serious concern.

It is acknowledged that any new qualification and the assessment thereof will experience implementation challenges. This chapter intends to provide a brief overview of the challenges experienced as indicated in the reports received from the monitors and moderators and as indicated by Umalusi staff observations and experiences.

2. AREAS OF CONCERN

The following are some of the commonly mentioned challenges that impact on the delivery of the NCV:

- The high staff turnover rate – experienced and qualified lecturers are lost to industry.
- The lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff.
- A feeling of insecurity because of the transition of staff from state to college employment.
- The inability to attract suitable learners – many learners that enter for the programmes are drop-outs from schools (with social and behavioural problems).
- The academic profile of learners is a challenge. The low numeracy and literacy levels of learners means the level of understanding of the learning material is a major challenge.
- There are misconceptions about what the programmes entail – learners think the programmes are practical courses and do not realise that they have a strong theoretical component, this leads to lack of dedication and interest among the learners.
- There is a lack of commitment from the learners and a poor culture of learning.
- There are high rates of absenteeism with consequent non-submission of tasks and a lack of exposure to practical work.
- Some of the ISATs are pitched at too high a level and are too demanding in terms of resources.
- The resources are not available when needed due to lengthy procurement procedures.
- The age differences among the students cause problems. There are mixed classes of varying ability, this has serious implications for teaching and assessment.
- There is a lack of specification of learning outcomes;
- There is insufficient time to cover the curriculum, especially the practical component.
- The lecturers are often insufficiently prepared.
- There is too much administration work – which results in too little time for teaching and learning, e.g., lecturers do not have enough time to provide individual attention to learners.
- There is a lack of facilities and equipment at learning centres.
- The timetabling is ineffective.

The markers and moderators identified the following shortcomings in teaching and learning:

- Candidates performed well in questions that required one-word responses but poorly in questions where answers required paragraph-type responses. This indicated that candidates could not express themselves well in English.
- There was inadequate preparation of the learners for the examination.
- Some centres perform poorly – these centres should be identified and adequate training and support must be provided for the facilitators.

Although most of the above mentioned are issues around teaching and learning, they directly or indirectly impact negatively on assessment and the quality assurance of assessment. The issues need to be addressed and workable solutions need to be found to ensure the success of the NCV.

37 General Van Ryneveld Street, Persekor Technopark, Pretoria
Telephone: 27 12 349 1510 • Fax: 27 12 349 1511 • info@umalusi.org.za



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training