Quality Assurance of the 2014 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations and Assessment of the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI)

UMALUSI

Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE 2014 NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC) EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE (SACAI)

DECEMBER 2014

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Executive Summary

Umalusi is mandated by the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act no. 58 of 2001, amended in 2008) to quality assure all exit-point assessment practices for all registered and accredited assessment bodies.

All aspects of the assessment programme have been moderated, verified and quality assured. The purpose of this report is to present the findings reported by Umalusi's external moderators and monitors. The information contained in it serves to inform the Umalusi Council of the processes followed, as well as the areas of good practice and the areas where there is cause for concern. This should place the Council in a position to take an informed decision regarding the acceptance and ratification of the results of the NSC examinations administered and presented by the assessment body.

Seven aspects of assessment and examination have been quality assured by Umalusi as follows: the external moderation of the examination question papers and the memoranda set by the SACAI panels of examiners and internal moderators (Chapter 1); the moderation of school-based assessment (SBA) (Chapter 2): the monitoring of writing (Chapter 3); the monitoring of marking (Chapter 4); the approval of the final memoranda (Chapter 5); the on-site verification of marking (Chapter 6); and finally, the standardisation of marks and the verification of mark capturing (Chapter 7). Reports on each of these aspects were submitted by the Umalusi external moderators and monitors. Summaries and interpretations of the contents of these reports have been captured in each of the seven chapters.

The moderation of question papers and the corresponding memoranda for the final NSC examination in October/November is undertaken every year. The purpose of the external moderation is to ensure that the question papers and the memoranda comply with the relevant curriculum and assessment policies, are of appropriate rigour, and are academically and technically correct in all respects. Moderation also ensures that the standard and rigour of question papers do not differ too radically from the question papers of previous years, so that candidates of different year groups are not advantaged or disadvantaged because of a difference in rigour.

The memoranda are set simultaneously with the question papers, and great care is taken to ensure that they are as comprehensive as possible to make provision for all possible (correct) interpretations and approaches. They should also be structured in such a way that they are accessible to the markers in order to encourage consistency and fairness in marking.

A total of 46 question papers were moderated for the November 2014/NSC examinations for the SACAI. The external moderation process was conducted between April and August 2014.

The setting and moderation of question papers was generally successful. However, most papers required a second, third and even a fifth moderation prior to final approval. Twenty-eight per cent of papers were approved at the first moderation, whilst 54% were approved at the second. Only 13% of papers were approved at the third moderation, with Maths Literacy being approved only at the fifth

moderation. A large proportion of non-compliance at the first moderation (85%) was because the technical criteria were not met; 65% a lack of/poor internal moderation; 65% unequal weighting of cognitive levels, poor scaffolding of questions, non-inclusion of the analysis grid. Fifty-six per cent of non-compliance was due to poor phrasing of questions, inappropriate text selection and incorrect mark allocation.

The next step to be subjected to moderation was the SBA undertaken at centres affiliated to the SACAI. Umalusi conducted SBA moderation in the months of August and November for the first two terms and the third term respectively. Only fourteen subjects were preselected for external moderation by Umalusi for the SBA.

It was reported that the SBA process is managed appropriately in some subjects. Most subjects were commended for evidence of good practice and improvement in that they had followed Umalusi external moderators' recommendations. It was found, however, that while internal moderation is being done in many subjects, in some instances its quality remains an area of concern. Equally so is the lack of constructive feedback in the learner portfolios. It was also found that technical problems are a persistent problem in some subjects (Life Orientation). Assessment aspects were found to be problematic in some of the subjects where there was non-compliance in the quality of assessment, cognitive demand and marking tools used.

The next phase was the monitoring of examinations for the SACAI. The reports by Umalusi monitors were divided into two sections, namely, monitoring of writing and monitoring of marking. In the case of the former, Umalusi monitors visited ten SACAI examination centres across the eight provinces. The purpose of the process was to ensure that SACAI implements appropriate policies intended to regulate the conduct, administration and management of the examination.

Some of the observations made by the Umalusi monitors included the following:

Generally, the administration, management and conduct of the examinations were carried out according to the policies for conducting NSC examinations. The invigilators arrived early at all the centres, making sure that the administrative duties were carried out effectively.

In terms of question papers, it was found that they were received sealed at all times and were also recorded. Strict security measures were in place at most of the centres, with the exception of Estin Akademie (the safe was too small to store all question papers) and City College Welkom (the cleaner kept the safe key). It was also reported that SACAI head office had appointed and trained invigilators in August 2014. Training was mainly on the management of the examination process.

In terms of monitoring, however, Umalusi found that invigilator training had not been done at all the centres and that not all invigilators and markers had received appointment letters.

In terms of preparation for writing the examination, Umalusi monitors reported that most centres were

conducive for writing and that measures had been put in place to ensure the smooth running of the process. Venues were clearly labelled and seating arrangements were clearly indicated at most centres. There were, however, some centres where the examination rules were not read, question papers were not checked for technical errors, there was no invigilation timetable, and no directions to the examination venues were displayed. In one isolated case, an irregularity occurred where a candidate wrote the paper on the wrong day. This was largely the invigilator's fault as he/she had not consulted the timetable.

The final stage in monitoring the writing process was the packaging of the examination answer scripts. Umalusi reported that the papers were counted and checked in the presence of chief invigilators and invigilators. The papers were then placed in sealed plastic bags, provided by SACAI then transported via courier service to the SACAI head office for marking. On the whole, the process was well executed, with the exception of the few cases that needed urgent attention.

The monitoring of marking was the second phase conducted by Umalusi monitors. SACAI uses a national marking model where all the scripts are marked at one venue, namely, the SACAI head offices in Pretoria.

All examination scripts were marked at a central venue, the SACAI head office. They were stored in a strong room, marked, and then returned to the strong upon completion. Markers were appointed on the basis that they had to be teaching Grade 12 during the current year and had to have at least five years' experience in the subject they were marking. All examination assistants were final-year university students. This criterion ensured that marking ran smoothly. SACAI has a fail-proof electronic system for the capturing of marks, since it is done at a central venue. The double-capturing system helps in eradicating any possible errors. The assessment body is to be commended for this. The moderators commended the SACAI for the highly satisfactory marking facilities, but raised a concern about the absence of security personnel at the centre.

The memoranda discussion meetings took place during November and December 2014. The meetings were held at the SACAI head office in Garsfontein, Pretoria. The aim of the memoranda discussion meetings was to ensure that the memoranda incorporated as many alternative responses as possible and to finalise the memoranda before marking commenced. The attendance for each subject paper included the assessment body representatives, the chief marker, the internal moderator and the Umalusi moderators. In terms of logistics and arrangements, 63% of the stakeholders attended the memo discussions this year; 58% of the pre-memo discussions were not held; 42% of the markers came ill-prepared, whilst 52% were well prepared; 32% of the markers had not marked scripts prior to the memo discussions; and 42% of the markers did not receive any training and were not provided with scripts to mark at the training centre. In some subjects it was reported that poor communication and lack of time were the cause of non-compliance with marker training.

The memo was changed in 89% of papers; however, the changes were deemed not to have had any impact on the cognitive levels and were therefore approved. What was of concern were the subjects

Agricultural Sciences and IT, where a reduction in cognitive levels occurred during the discussion on some of the questions in the papers. This could be attributed to gaps in the moderation processes. In Business Studies, too many changes were made to the memo. The external moderator subsequently highlighted concerns over the correlation between no training and no marking and the general lack of preparedness.

The SACAI's verification of marking process followed one approach only, namely, the on-site verification of marking. This was done at the marking centres from 2 to 4 December 2014 at the SACAI head office situated in Garsfontein, Pretoria. Umalusi moderators randomly selected scripts in each of the identified subjects. The scripts had to be randomly selected according to candidates' achievement (high, medium, low) and submitted together with the appropriate memorandum.

Umalusi external moderators reported on the fair, reliable and generally accurate marking practices of markers and internal moderators. Whilst marking was found to be generally fair, valid and reliable, there were some instances where some markers and internal moderators were found to be lax in marking and moderating. Some internal moderators often overlooked unnecessary omissions/errors in marking; some of the novice markers needed more training; and the substitution or replacement of markers during the marking process is a worrying factor.

A total of 1400 SACAI candidates wrote the NSC examination this year (2014). Subsequently, a total of 27 subjects were presented for the standardisation process which was held on 18 and 19 December 2014 at Umalusi.

The Umalusi Assessment Standards Committee made use of pairs' analysis, post examination analysis, and internal and external moderators' and examiners' reports as a basis for the decision-making process. The standardisation meeting for the SACAI took place on 19 December 2014. The adjustments to marks occurred as follows: three subjects were adjusted upward; no downward adjustments were made; and in 24 subjects the raw marks were accepted.

Generally, the SACAI is commended for having administered and conducted the NSC examinations successfully for the first time in 2014. It is to be further commended for the smooth running of the examination process, although some aspects relating to the marking of examinations need to be improved.

Although there are still some areas that are in need of urgent attention, there are signs of improvement. The hope is expressed that the areas where there are still some issues that cause concern will be addressed in the coming year.

Acronyms

AB	Assessment Body	
AS(s)	Assessment standard(s)	
CAT	Common assessment task	
DBE	Department of Basic Education	
FAL	First additional language	
HL	Home Language	
EM	External moderator	
IM	Internal moderator	
HOQ(s)	Higher order question(s)	
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching	
LO(s)	Learning outcome(s)	
LOQ(s)	Lower order question(s)	
memo	memorandum	
MOD	Moderation	
MOQ(s)	Middle order question(s)	
NCS	National Curriculum Statement	
NSC	National Senior Certificate	
PET	Physical Education Task	
P1, P2, etc.	Paper 1, Paper 2 etc.	
Q(s)	Question(s)	
QI(s)	Quality indicator(s)	
QP	Question paper	
SACAI	South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute	
SAG(s)	Subject Assessment Guideline(s)	
Umalusi	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training	

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Chapter 1

Question Paper Moderation

1   INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The external moderation of question papers is a critical quality assurance measure put in place to assess whether the examination papers are of the required quality and standard. Umalusi upholds a single purpose for the external moderation of examination question papers and marking memoranda – to ensure that quality standards are maintained. The moderation is aimed at ensuring that the question papers are correct, fair, valid and reliable; that they have been assembled with rigour; and that they comply with the policies of the National Curriculum Statement, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and related subject assessment guidelines.

This chapter reports on the moderation of the examination question papers and marking memoranda for the 2014 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations of the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI). It outlines the number of subjects moderated and the stages of approval. The chapter further summarises the findings obtained from the reports of the paper moderations. It also highlights areas of good practice and areas of concern and makes recommendations for future processes.

2   SCOPE AND APPROACH

In 2014, the Umalusi moderation of question papers for SACAI focused on the eight organising fields of learning from which 25 subjects were chosen over the others. These subjects were selected from the various fields of learning as indicated below:

No.	Organising fields of learning	Selected subjects within the fields
1.	Agriculture and Nature Conservation	Agricultural Science
2.	Business, Commerce and Management Studies	Accounting; Business Studies; Economics
3.	Communication Studies and Languages	Afrikaans Home Language; Afrikaans First Additional Language; English First Additional Language; English Home Language
4.	Human and Social Studies	Geography; History; Life Orientation; Religion Studies
5.	Physical, Mathematical, Computer, and Life Sciences	Life Sciences; Mathematical Literacy; Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Computer Applications Technology; Information Technology
6.	Culture and Arts	Dramatic Arts ; Visual Arts
7.	Manufacturing, Engineering, and Technology	Civil Technology; Electrical Technology; Engineering Graphics and Design
8.	Services	Hospitality Studies, Tourism; Consumer Studies

All question papers and marking memoranda were submitted to Umalusi and moderated between the months of April and August 2014. In total, 46 question papers of the SACAI assessment body were moderated.

The moderation was conducted using the 2014 Umalusi Instrument for the Moderation of Question Papers. The instrument consists of 12 criteria for moderating both the question paper and the memorandum. Each criterion is divided into specific indicators.

The papers were moderated to gauge their compliance or lack thereof with the quality indicators within each criterion. The moderation instrument is captured in Figure 1.1 below:

Part A Moderation of question paper	Part B Moderation of marking memo	Part C Overall impression and remarks

1. Technical criteria
   (14 indicators)
2. Internal moderation
   (4 indicators)
3. Content coverage
   (5 indicators)
4. Text selection, types and
   quality of questions (22
   indicators)
5. Cognitive skills
   (5 indicators)
6. Language bias
   (8 indicators)
7. Predictability
   (3 indicators)
	8. Development
	   (3 indicators)
	9. Conformity
	   (2 indicators)
	10. Accuracy and reliability
	    of memo/marking
	    guideline
	    (12 indicators)
		11. General impression
		        (6 indicators)
		12. General remarks

Figure 1.1: The Umalusi Instrument for the Moderation of Question Papers

3   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings are summarised to show the overall compliance at the different stages of moderation and the levels of compliance per criteria. Where necessary, examples of some papers where compliance was low are provided.

Compliance per moderation cycle
Whilst it is desirable that all papers are approved after the first moderation, this was not achieved. As Figure 1.2 below shows, most papers required a second, third, fourth and even fifth moderation.

46 Exam Papers
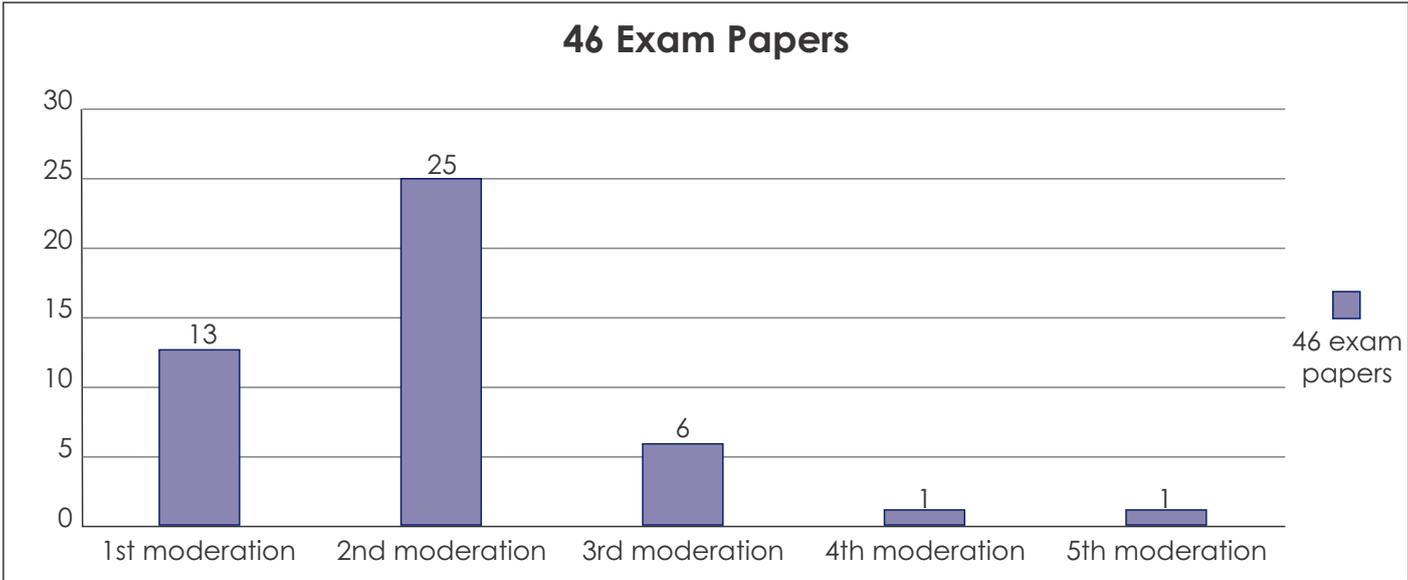
Figure 1.2: Number of papers approved at each moderation

The vertical axis on the graph (Figure 1.2) shows the number of papers approved at each level of moderation and the horizontal axis shows the stages of moderation that the papers were subjected to before approval.

Of the 46 papers that were moderated, 13 (28%), were approved at the first moderation and 25 (54%) at the second moderation. The six (13%) papers approved at third moderation were Business Studies, Civil Technology, Computer Application Technology, Afrikaans FAL and Home Language. Information Technology was the only paper approved at the fourth moderation and Maths Literacy at the fifth moderation.

Compliance per criteria

An analysis of the percentage of papers that did not comply with each of the criteria at the first moderation is presented in Figure 1.3 below.

Total Question Papers with non-complaince
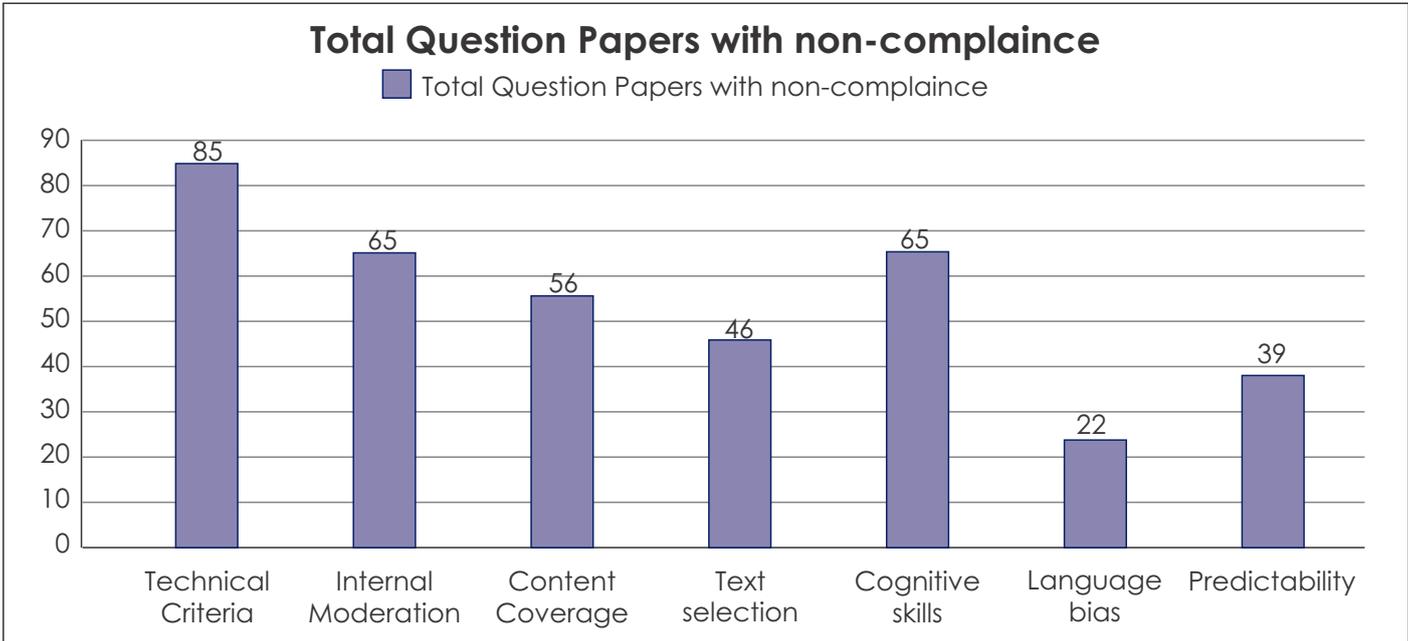
Figure 1.3: Percentage of papers that did not comply with each criterion at first moderation

The vertical axis shows the total percentage of papers that did not comply with each criterion at first moderation. The horizontal axis shows the seven moderation criteria.

The graph indicates that at the first moderation a high percentage of papers did not comply in terms of the technical criteria, internal moderation, cognitive skills and text selection.

To be deemed compliant, the examination papers should be set in accordance with established examination guidelines and policy documents. The high percentage of papers in non-compliance, especially in terms of criteria 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, is a signal that many papers are not adhering to the guidelines and policies.

The details of where papers fall short are discussed under each criterion.

Please note: All concerns indicated below were corrected at the point of approval.

Question paper moderation criteria

Technical criteria

As shown in Figure 1.3, technical criteria were not met in a high percentage of the papers (85%). The problems identified concerned the format, unclear instructions and diagrams; recycling of visuals from previous papers (e.g. in Dramatic Arts); unclear and ambiguous questions (e.g. in English HL P1) and a lack of evidence of internal moderation (Dramatic Arts, Information Technology). Information Technology had the highest total in terms of non-compliance indicators, failing to comply in 28/84 indicators – a 30% non-compliance.

Internal moderation

Problems were observed in all four indicators in this criterion. The major problems revolved around lack of evidence of moderation and the poor quality of the moderation. For example, in Maths Literacy the internal moderator's report was scanty; the paper had issues with length, cognitive skills levels and adherence to the CAPS requirements. Under this criterion, nine papers had no report from the internal moderator, while in seven papers the moderation was deemed poor and unhelpful. Other moderations displayed serious oversights, as was the case with English HL, where internal moderation followed all the necessary processes, but many inaccuracies which discredited the standard and quality of the paper were detected.

Content coverage

Non-compliance under this criterion was widespread, including subjects such as Afrikaans FAL P2, History, English HL, English FAL, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Maths Literacy and Religious Studies. In Life Sciences, it was noted that questions had been set on content that was not included in the syllabus. Some questions set in the Dramatic Arts paper were also noted as being outside the discipline.

Text selection, types and quality of questions

The fact that there was a 49% non-compliance rating is an indication that this criterion was problematic. Problems include poor phrasing of words; incorrect mark allocation; poor and inappropriate text selection; wordiness of language and the omission of some of the question types required by CAPS.

Cognitive skills

This criterion, as seen in the graph in Figure 1.3, was one of those which ranked high on non-compliance. Problems ranged from the unequal weighting of the cognitive levels to poor scaffolding, to questions with low cognitive demand and others with too high cognitive demand. There were papers where the analysis had not been done at all; in others, if done, the old learning outcome (LO) analysis had been used.

Language bias

Even though this criterion ranked low in terms of non-compliance, there were papers where the subject-specific terminology used was incorrect and factual errors were detected (e.g. Visual Arts and Mathematics). Under this section some grammatically incorrect language was also identified in Electrical Engineering, Mathematical Literacy, Tourism, Consumer Studies and Mechanical Technology.

Predictability

For a criterion with only three indictors, 39% can be considered high on the non-compliance scale. The major problem reported relating to this criterion was in the use of past examination papers and a lack of innovation in setting questions. In at least four papers, questions from previous papers were used and in another four papers there was no evidence of innovation or originality in the creation of questions.

Memorandum moderation criteria
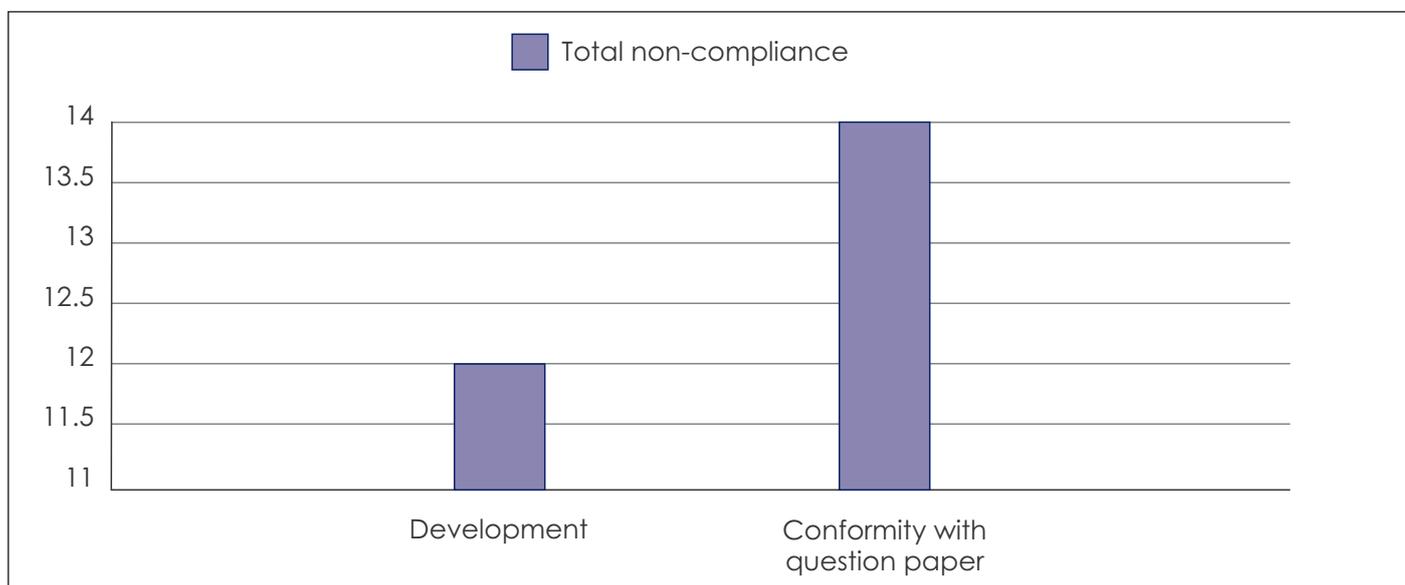
Figure 1.4: Number of papers that did not comply with memo moderation criteria 8 and 9

Figure 1.4 below shows the differences in compliance between memorandum development and conformity with the question paper.

Development

The majority of the memoranda were developed in line with the guidelines. However, in cases where the question paper did not comply, the memo would have been deemed to be not valid or reliable.

Conformity with question paper

It was observed that where the question paper was deficient in criteria 3, 4 and 5, the level of compliance would be affected and so would accuracy and conformity to question papers. For example, in papers such as Afrikaans HL P2, Civil Technology, Dramatic Arts, Business Studies, English HL P2 and P3, Information Technology, Mathematical Literacy and Visual Arts, the compliance levels were high in 3, 4 or 5. This affected compliance in the memo-related criteria.

Accuracy and reliability of the memo

Based on the comments under memo conformity, a few memos required revisions in order to align with the question paper.

4   AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The following areas of good practice were identified:

- It is commendable that while there are many areas that need improvement, the indicators in which papers complied are not much higher than those in which there was no compliance. For example, in a count of 360 indicators of criteria 1 to 9 combined, it was found that papers complied in 160 indicators and did not comply in 200 quality indicators, amounting to a difference of 40 indicators.
- A number of papers such as Agricultural Sciences, Engineering Graphics and Design, and Religion Studies had a very low incidence of non-compliance and, as would be expected, were approved at the first moderation.
- It can be deduced from the findings that examiners are taking the moderation processes seriously because, as seen in Figure 1.2, more papers are being approved at the second moderation and very few at the third, fourth and fifth moderation.

5   AREAS OF CONCERN

The quality and standard of papers seems to be compromised by

- the high levels of non-compliance in the areas of internal moderation, content coverage and cognitive levels
- the failure by both examiners and internal moderators to interpret and analyse the cognitive levels
- the submission of papers for external moderation despite the many technical errors the paper may have
- the lack of compliance with the CAPS and examination guidelines
- papers being approved after the fourth and even fifth moderation

- the practice by some examiners of copying questions from past examination questions; even if a question is good, if it has been used before its reuse compromises its unpredictability
- negligence on the part of assessment bodies to make the necessary documentation available to external moderators, as was the case with Computer Applications Technology
- internal moderators who do not present evidence of moderation or, if they do, the moderation is substandard.

6   REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE AND / IMPROVEMENT

The following recommendations are made:
- Examiners and internal moderators should revisit and familiarise themselves with all the examination policies, guidelines, CAPS documents and Umalusi paper moderation standards. It may be necessary to provide training programmes for this purpose.
- There is clearly a need to assist examiners and internal moderators with the analysis and application of the cognitive taxonomies.
- There is a dire need for the assessment body to recruit a team of examiners that comes with experience and exposure in national moderation.
- It is up to the assessment body to ensure that the concerns raised over assessment instruments are addressed in order to improve the standard.

Chapter 2

Moderation of School-based Assessment

1   INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

In keeping with its mandate, Umalusi undertakes to monitor and verify the implementation and effectiveness of the quality assurance of assessment processes at the exit point of qualifications that falls within its sub-framework.

With school-based assessment (SBA) being a component of assessment in the National Senior Certificate (NSC), the justification of the SBA mark, which counts 25% towards certification, cannot be over-emphasised. Umalusi verifies the degree of consistency, validity and fairness in the awarding of SBA marks as a means to justify teachers' judgements and give way to a statistical moderation process for the standardisation of marks.

The focus of this chapter is to
- present the findings of the moderation and verification conducted on the teachers' files and the evidence of learner performance
- identify areas of good practice observed
- highlight critical areas for improvement
- present recommendations for improvement.

2   SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi verified the internally moderated evidence of learners' performance at centres affiliated to SACAI. The SBA verification was conducted in August and November 2014 for the first two terms and the third term respectively, and only fourteen (14) subjects were pre-selected by Umalusi for this purpose.

The list of subjects that were verified includes the following:

List of verified subjects in August	List of verified subjects in November
Accounting	Accounting
Afrikaans Home Language	Afrikaans Home Language
Afrikaans First Additional Language	Afrikaans First Additional Language
Agricultural Sciences	Agricultural Sciences
Business Studies	Business Studies
Computer Application Technology	Computer Application Technology
English First Additional Language	English First Additional Language
Economics	Economics
History	History
Geography	Geography
Life Orientation	Life Orientation
Life Sciences	Life Sciences
Mathematics	Mathematics
Physical Science	Mathematical Literacy
	Physical Science

The scope of the verification statistics is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Total schools and teachers' and learners' files moderated in August and November 2014

Item	August moderation	November moderation	Totals
No. of subjects	13	14	27
No. of centres	91	86	176
No. of teachers' files	97	85	182
No. of learners' files	210	206	416

The verification was conducted using the Umalusi Instrument for the Moderation of School-based Assessment shown in Figure 2.1 below.

SBA verification criteria for teachers' files	SBA verification criteria for teachers' files
1. Techical criteria 2. Content coverage quality of assessment tasks 3. Cognitive demand and difficulty of tasks 4. Quality of marking tools 5. Adherence to policy on internal moderation	1. Learners' performance 2. Quality of marking 3. Internal moderation
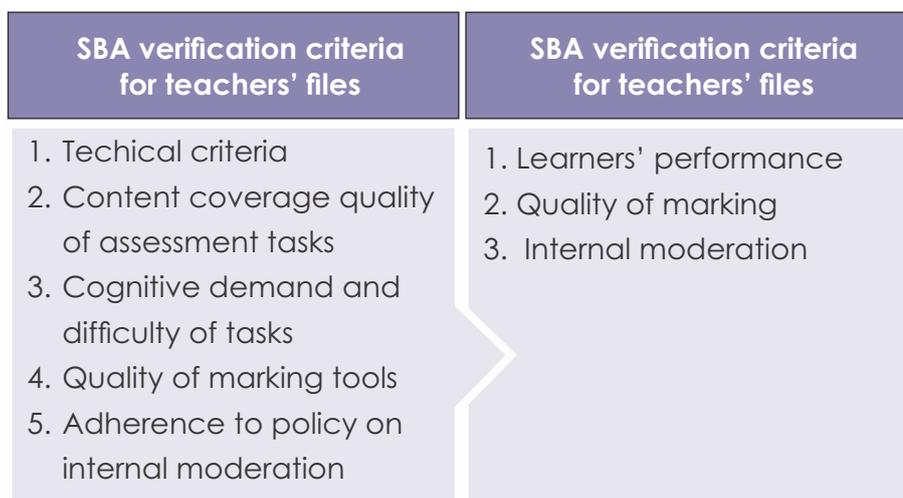
Figure 2.1: Umalusi SBA moderation criteria

3   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Teachers' files

This section first presents a graphical overview of the level of compliance in teachers' files gleaned from a survey of the subjects which were verified during November 2014. The analysis of the November submission was deemed to be a good indicator of the levels of readiness of subjects after a year's work and after the Umalusi verification of August 2014.
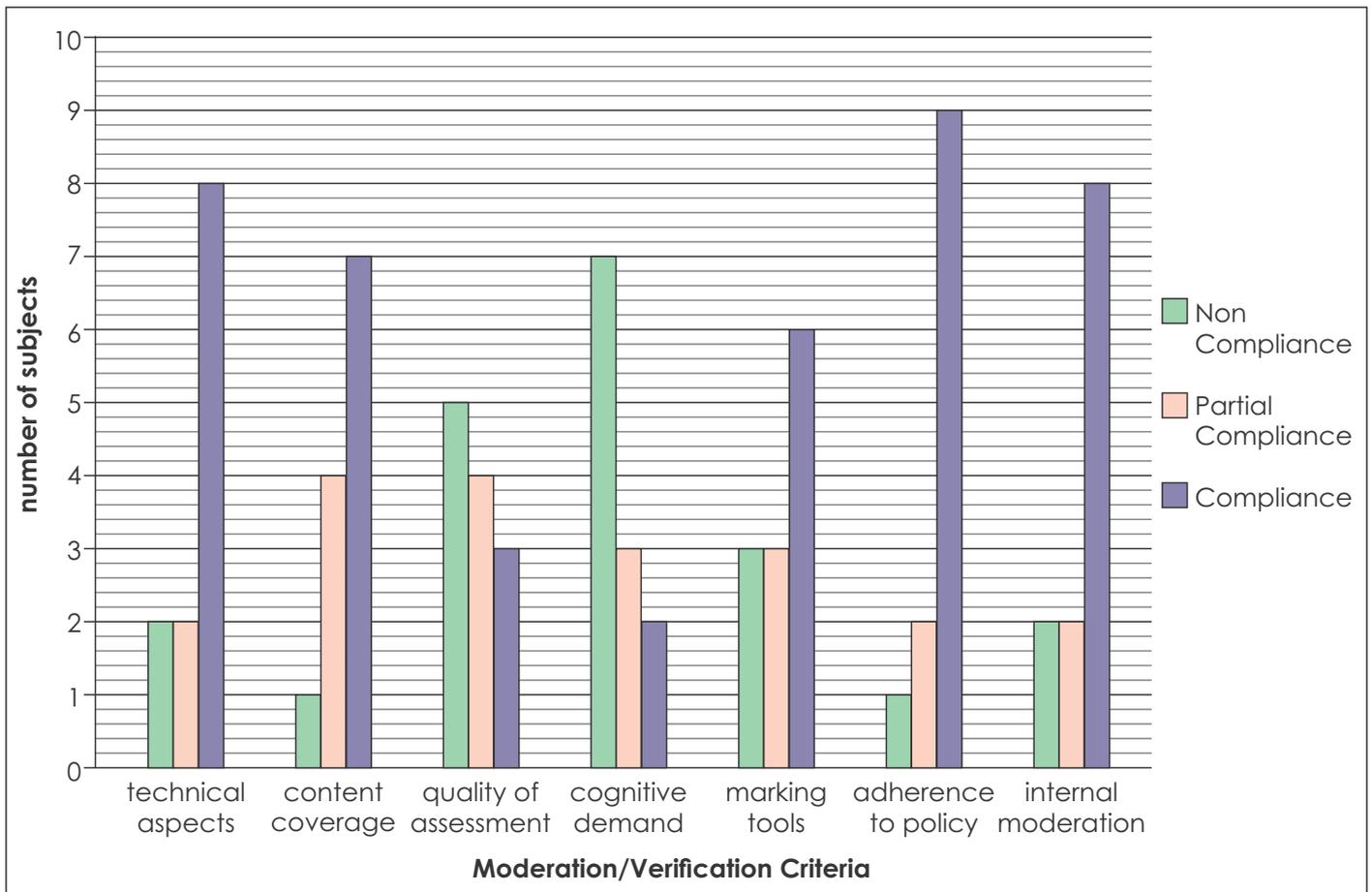
Figure 2.2: Levels of compliance in the August session of moderation per subject and technical criterion

The graph in Figure 2.2 records cases of non-compliance (none of the criteria was met), partial compliance (where subjects in some schools did not comply) and compliance. The compliance levels are summarised by subject and not by school; however, in the discussion examples of schools are given where necessary.

The graph (Figure 2.2) reveals that except for two criteria, the overall levels of compliance are higher than partial and non-compliance. The criteria with the highest cases of non-compliance are quality of assessment tasks (7), cognitive demand (7), followed by quality of assessment (4) and marking tools (3). This suggests that the weakest area for SBA in schools lies with assessment practices, as the three criteria with higher levels of non-compliance relate to assessment.

Details of the level of compliance are discussed under each criterion below. It should be noted that the format of reporting on each of the criteria varied from one Umalusi moderator to another. For example, the report for Business Studies gave details on each school, while other subjects gave global comments. For that reason a narrative summary was considered most appropriate for reporting this section.

Technical aspects
The technical aspects that external moderators focused on include the quality of file presentation, the inclusion of guideline documents, the inclusion and quality of marking tools, evidence of

assessment, language clarity and correctness, and clear appropriate diagrams/illustrations.

As shown in Figure 2.2, most subjects complied with this criterion. For the subjects that did not comply, the following problems were observed:

- The use of data sources that do not reflect current trends
- Non-alignment with CAPS examination requirements and omission of some examination papers (Economics)
- Poor presentation in terms of teachers' files (Afrikaans)

Life Orientation had the highest number of technical problems, ranging from incorrect wording, omission of instructions, confusion with questions and responses, marks not well captured, incorrect grammar and sentence construction, improper mark allocation, incorrect length of texts, disjunction between the memo and the question papers, and problems with punctuation.

Content coverage

As noted in Figure 2.2, the compliance under this criterion could be said to be good. However, the same problems emerged from both the August and the November moderations. These problems include irrelevant topics (Life Sciences, Maths, Accounting [Term 1 and 2, however it was not noted in Term 3]), insufficient coverage of tasks (Economics), recycling of old papers, and use of tasks outside the CAPS.

Quality of assessment tasks

The compliance levels were generally low for most subjects under this criterion. Many schools did not comply in subjects such as Afrikaans FAL, Economics, Life Orientation, English FAL and Maths. Tasks were poorly presented and designed, there were errors in the memo (Maths), questions were irrelevant to the syllabus (Economics), the wrong rubrics were used (English FAL [all three terms], Afrikaans), difficult and sometimes vague questions (Computer Applications Technology [CAT]). This affected learners' performance in several subjects.

Cognitive demand and difficulty of tasks

Of the cases where non-compliance was observed, this criterion was ranked highest. Accounting, Economics and Business Studies are examples of some of the subjects that did not comply. In Economics and Life Orientation there was a lack of balance with regard to the different cognitive levels; there was also evidence of more low cognitive level questions than higher cognitive level questions. At some centres there was no evidence that the analysis grid for the cognitive levels had been used (Maths Literacy). Where efforts had been made to use it, the quality was questionable as the feedback to learners was poor or not evident (Afrikaans, Agricultural Sciences, and even in History, which by comparison was well balanced in terms of compliance).

Quality of marking tools

Comments on the marking tools include the following:
- *Examination papers* – the mismatch between the standard of internal papers and the preliminary

examination papers (Life Orientation)

- *Mark allocation* – English FAL, Agricultural Sciences
- *Marking memoranda* – incomplete, did not correspond to question paper (Life Orientation)
- *Incorrect use of the rubric* – Business Studies, English FAL, Economics

Adherence to policy

With regard to the adherence to policy, reports by Umalusi external moderators ranged from whether policies had been included in the files to the level of application of the policies. Application included the appropriate awarding of marks in question papers, programmes of assessment and adherence to CAPS requirements.

Although some subjects did not include the essential policies as required in the files, this aspect was complied with in most subjects. However, the application of this tended to pose some challenges.

Internal moderation

In general there was evidence of internal moderation, albeit at varying levels in the majority of subjects. In History and Physical Sciences, for example, there was evidence to show that the quality assurance of the papers had been conducted. The same was true of Agricultural Sciences. However, in subjects such as Accounting and Life Orientation there was no evidence of internal moderation, nor was there evidence of constructive feedback to the learner at any level. It was noted that despite the SBA distributing the moderation instrument to all schools, some did not use it (IMPAK, My Tutor, Nukleus Onderwys and Almega). In addition, despite the frequency with which moderation was conducted, problems were still apparent in the process (History).

A comparative analysis of compliance levels between August and November

An attempt was made to map the qualitative improvement in the submission made in November, given that external moderators had made suggestions during the August submissions. While some improvements were observed in Maths, Geography, Life Orientation, English FAL, Physical Sciences, Business Studies, Agricultural Sciences and Accounting, problems were still identified. Most of the recurring problems related to assessment processes such as mark allocation, incorrect rubrics, omission of tasks, poor analysis of grids and, most glaringly, feedback to learners. It was accordingly found that Maths and Physical Sciences had made the most positive progress.

By the November moderation the picture with regard to compliance levels was as shown in Figure 2.3.
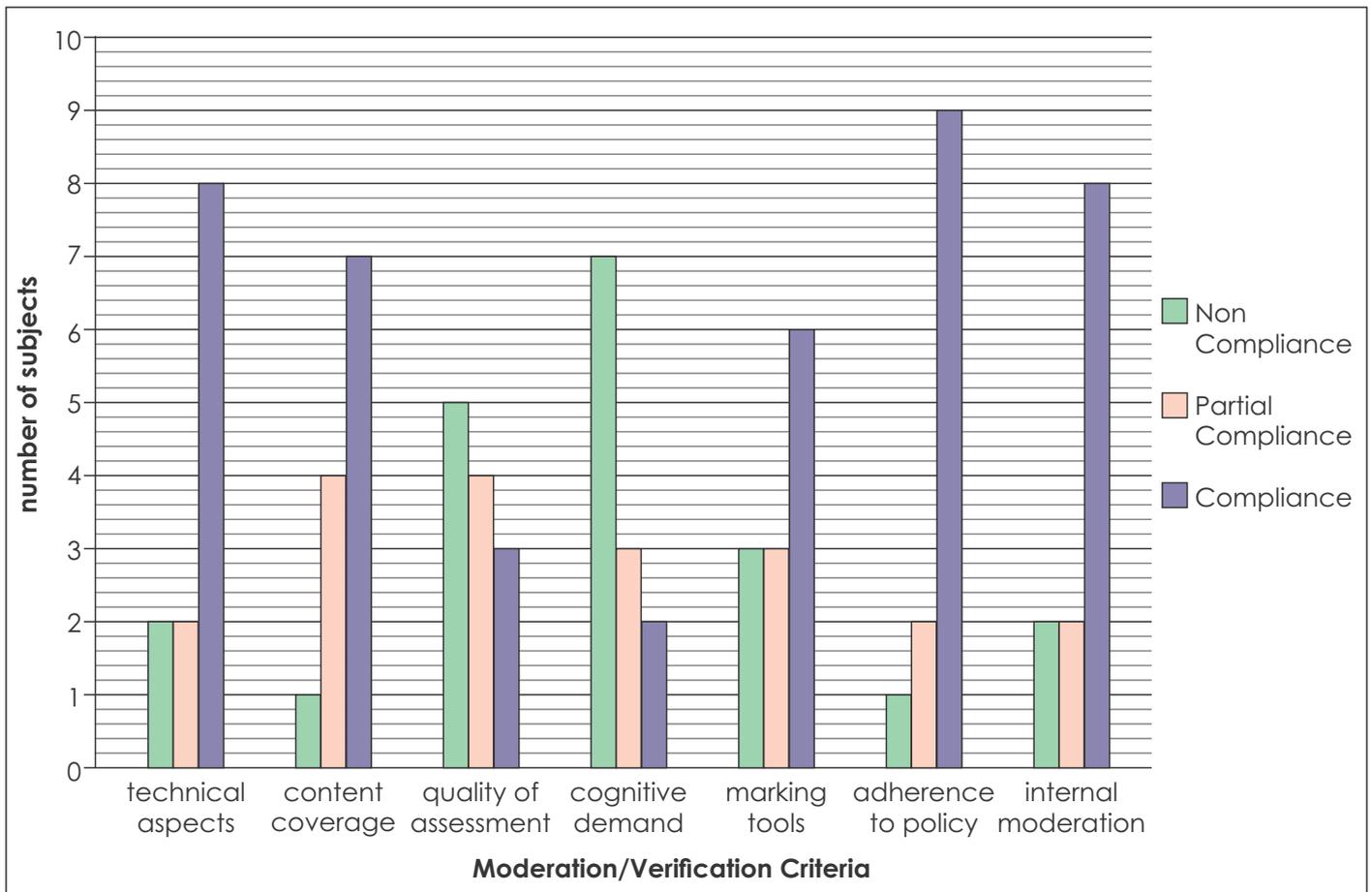
Figure 2.3: Compliance levels evident in the November moderation session

Figure 2.3 shows that the levels of compliance were higher than the levels of non-compliance, suggesting that the Umalusi moderation is having a visible impact on the quality of SBA practices. A good example taken from the Business Studies report is that the total of 27 areas of concern listed by the external moderator reduced to 20 in the November moderation session; similarly in Accounting a two-page list of concerns was reduced to just one page. The quality of the assessment and cognitive demand criteria remain high in terms of non-compliance, however. As has been implied elsewhere in this report, this weakness is closely linked to the quality of the moderation.

Findings from learners' files

Learners' files

Learner performance
The findings with regard to the evidence of learners' performance is summarised to cover the August and November sessions of the moderation. It was found that learners' marks ranged from weak to very good, with a few outstanding cases. In some subjects such as Maths there was evidence of extreme ranges; in one centre the range was 1% to 31% and in another the range was 39% to 80%. In Life Orientation, some centres (Impak, SAAAC and Volskool) were identified as doing well. Sloppy writing and language use was cited in Economics. In some subjects it was noted that learners' performed better in tasks set by the centre than in the common papers set outside the centre.

Quality of marking
Problems with inaccurate awarding of marks, significant differences in marks awarded between the levels of moderation, and subjective and shadow-marking were reported in, for example, Maths, Accounting and Business Studies. A problem that stood out in almost all the subjects was the poor and insufficient feedback given to the learners.

Internal moderation
Although moderation was generally evident, it was invalidated by the practice of shadow-marking (History, Life Orientation) and the discrepancies in mark allocations between the moderators.

4   AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

A generally high compliance level in the technical aspects was found in most of the moderated files and this is commendable.

A number of good practices were seen in overall performance in Agricultural Sciences, History, Business Studies and Economics, especially after the August moderation session.

A few subjects have taken into account the Umalusi recommendations and their compliance levels have improved. Here we can mention Maths, Physical Science and Business Studies, which all showed an improvement following the August moderation.

The SACAI moderation was lauded by a number of the Umalusi moderators for its quality; however, as the reports from English FAL and Afrikaans FAL noted, at that level it can be too late to take corrective measures.

5   AREAS OF CONCERN

The following areas of concern were noted:
• Some educators submit one file for several subjects.
• While internal moderation is being done at several levels, its quality remains an area of concern.
• The lack of constructive feedback to learners stands out as being highly problematic in almost all the subjects.
• Non-compliance in terms of the tasks used, the rubrics used, balancing the levels of cognitive demand in questions and the use of marking tools was still observed even in the November moderation session.
• The use of common papers that do not adhere to the CAPS requirements persists.
• Learners are performing well in the centre-based examinations, but poorly in preliminary examinations.

6   REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE AND / IMPROVEMENT

The following recommendations are made:
- Combining subjects in one file must be discouraged.
- SACAI must train subject specialists on how moderation should be done.
- If teachers are to give constructive feedback to the learners, they would benefit from discussing the memoranda and the guidelines.
- A system of feedback based on the Umalusi report should be put in place so that it reaches the centres before the second session of moderation.
- Centres should discuss the general memo in order to avoid problems with its application.
- The preceding recommendation will also help to boost teachers' confidence in giving feedback to the learners and may also give them the confidence to design their own memos which, as noted in several subjects, were found to be ill matched to the question papers.

Chapter 3

Monitoring of Writing

1   INTRODUCTION

During the writing of the 2014 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, as administered by the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI), Umalusi undertook monitoring visits to a selected sample of examination centres. According to section 18 of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act of 2001, the assessment bodies must take adequate measures to combat irregularities at assessment and marking centres and put in place adequate security measures to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the assessments. Furthermore, section 17A(5)(b) of the GENFETQA Act stipulates that the Umalusi Council must, with the agreement of the Director General and after consultation with the relevant assessment body or education institution, approve the release of the learners' results if the Council is satisfied that the assessment body or educational institution has conducted an assessment that is free from any irregularity that may jeopardise the integrity of the assessment or its outcomes.

The purpose of the external monitoring of the writing phase is to ensure that the SACAI implements appropriate policies intended to regulate the conduct, administration and management of national exit examinations. The SACAI's policies are required to be consistent with policy documents pertaining to the NSC. This chapter outlines key observations made by Umalusi staff and its external moderators during their monitoring of the conduct of the writing of the NSC.

2   SCOPE AND APPROACH

As noted earlier, Umalusi officials visited ten examination centres administered by SACAI across eight provinces, as depicted in the table below. Table 3.1 below lists the examination centres visited during the writing phase.

Table 3.1 Examination centres visited during the writing of the 2014 NSC examinations

Examination centre	District/region	Subject written	Number of candidates
MSC Business College	East London	Life Sciences	2
Welkom City College	Welkom	Consumer Studies L4	1
		Hospitality Studies L4	2
Phoenix Examination Centre	Tshwane North	Life Sciences P1	18
Alpha Examination Centre	Umgungundlovu	Religion Studies P2	1
		English HL P3	13
		English FAL P3	1

Examination centre	District/region	Subject written	Number of candidates
Zeerust Combined School	Ngaka Modiri Molema	Geography P1	1
MSC Business College Rustenburg Campus	Bojanala	Afrikaans HL P2	34
		Afrikaans FAL P2	4
City College Potchefstroom Campus	Dr K Kaunda	Business Studies	5
Volkskool Orania	Northern Cape	Life Sciences L4	4
High School Bredasdorp	Overberg	Civil Technology L4	1
Estin Akademie	Ehlanzeni	Afrikaans HL	7
		Afrikaans FAL	2

3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Delivery and storage of examination material

All question papers are couriered to the examination centres from the SACAI head office on a weekly basis. In all cases, the question papers were received and then stored in the strong rooms and the keys were kept by the chief invigilators at some examination centres. At all the centres monitored, the question papers that were received were kept sealed at all times and their details recorded. Other security measures in place at the centres included surveillance cameras, burglar alarms and security guards.

The invigilators and their training

The chief invigilators appointed for the examinations are mainly principals of schools and, in few instances, they are campus managers. They are appointed by the SACAI head office and their appointment is confirmed in writing.

The chief invigilators are trained by the SACAI officers from head office responsible for research and development and the training took place during August 2014. All invigilators were appointed in writing by the chief invigilators in August 2014. In all cases, training focused on the management and conduct of examinations, including the handling of irregularities. As a result, examination manuals and attendance registers were seen during the visits. At most centres, relief invigilators were also appointed and trained together with the invigilators, although there were some centres where this did not happen.

Preparations for writing and the examination room

Most centres visited had put up directions to the examination rooms. The examination rooms were conducive for the writing of examinations as they had good ventilation, were suitable and had

enough furniture. They were also clean. There were no sharing of tables and all centres had clocks.

At most centres, seating plans were prepared for each subject and pasted on the examination room doors, although there were a number of centres where this was not done. At centres where such plans were available, candidates were seated in numerical order according to the candidates' examination numbers.

Time management

At all centres, invigilators arrived at the examination rooms at least 30 minutes before the commencement of the examination. Candidates were then allowed into the examination rooms 30 minutes prior to writing the examination. Candidates who arrived more than an hour after writing had commenced were not allowed to sit for the examination.

Answer sheets and question papers were distributed at least 15 to 17 minutes before the examination started and candidates were allowed ten minutes' reading time before they started writing. The examination started at the scheduled time at all centres. However, many centres did not check the question papers for technical errors; if errors are not detected prior to writing some learners could be disadvantaged.

Invigilators moved around the venue at all examination centres. Attendance registers were signed as candidates entered the examination rooms. Invigilators made a point of ensuring that candidates had completed the cover page of the answer sheets before the examination could start. Candidates who finished writing before the scheduled time were not allowed to leave the examination room before an hour had elapsed or during the last 15 minutes.

Cell phones were not allowed in the examination room at most centres. A concession of 15 minutes extra for every hour of the examination was given to one candidate at the Alpha Examination Centre owing to dyslexia and severe ADHD.

Packaging and transmission of answer scripts

Answer scripts were counted and recorded in the examination rooms in the presence of the chief invigilators and invigilators. They were then packed according to the mark sheets, except at Bredasdorp where a mark sheet had not been provided by SACAI head office. The answers scripts were then transported in sealable plastic bags provided by SACAI and kept in boxes until they were collected by the courier company for transportation to the SACAI head office for marking.

Monitoring by the assessment body

SACAI had monitored some examination centres under its control and copies of the monitoring reports were left at all centres, except for the Phoenix Examination Centre where there was no evidence of any monitoring having been done. All reports from the assessment body indicate that the centres complied with their examination guidelines.

Irregularities

Not all centres visited had irregularities registration forms. One irregularity occurred at High School Bredasdrop where a candidate wrote a subject on the wrong day because the chief invigilator had not checked the timetable.

Criteria *not* adhered to

Table 3.2 below depicts a summary of criteria NOT adhered to by the examination centres.

Table 3.2: Criteria not adhered to by the respective examination centres

Criteria	Findings and challenges	Examination centre(s) that did not comply
Reading examination rules	Examination rules not read	Alpha Examination Centre
Checking question papers for technical errors	Not checked	Alpha Examination Centre
Invigilation timetable	No invigilation timetable	Alpha Examination Centre Zeerust Combined School
Deputy chief invigilators' and relief invigilators' appointment	Not appointed in writing No relief invigilators	Alpha Examination Centre Zeerust Combined School High School Bredasdorp
Directions to the examination rooms	No directions displayed to the examination rooms	MSC Business College (East London) Zeerust Combined School
Relief invigilator timetable	Not available Examination timetable used as an invigilation timetable	MSC College Volkskool Orania
Seating plan	Did not correspond to the arrangement of candidates in the examination No seating plans	MSC College High School Bredasdorp
Training of invigilators	Trained telephonically Not trained	MSC College High School Bredasdorp
Custody of strong room key	Key kept by a cleaner	City College Welkom
Monitoring by assessment body	No monitoring took place No monitoring register	Phoenix Examination Centre Volkskool Orania
Irregularities forms	Not available	Zeerust Combined School
Toilets	Not checked to see if they contained something that could assist candidates	Zeerust Combined School
Absentee forms	Not available	Zeerust Combined School MSC College Rustenburg

Criteria	Findings and challenges	Examination centre(s) that did not comply
Absentee forms	Not available	City College Potchefstroom Campus
Emergency plans	Not drawn up	Zeerust Combined School MSC College Rustenburg
Examination file	Not available	Volkskool Orania
Mark sheets	Not provided by SACAI head office	High School Bredasdorp
Storing of question papers	Safe too small to hold the question papers	Estin Akademie
Chief invigilator	Not present at the centre and deputy chief not appointed	City College Potchefstroom Campus

4   AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The following areas of good practice were noted:
- Invigilators at all centres arrived early at the examination rooms. This gave them sufficient time to admit candidates early to the exam rooms and to do other administrative duties related to the exams.

5   AREAS OF CONCERN

The following areas of concern were identified:
- The training of invigilators is not done at all the SACAI centres.
- Not all markers were appointed in writing.
- Some centres did not have relief invigilators.
- Security at some centres was not up to standard – at one centre keys were kept by a cleaner.
- Some centres did not have seating plans.
- One centre did not have an examination file, and some centres did not have all the necessary documents such as absentee forms and a monitor register.
- Not all centres had been monitored by the assessment body
- Non-adherence to the examination timetable could have compromised the credibility of the national examination.
- No time was allocated for checking the question papers for technical errors; if errors are not detected before writing learners could be disadvantaged.
- Not all centres had been provided with mark sheets.

6   REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE AND / IMPROVEMENT

The following recommendations are made for the writing of exams in the future:
- All invigilators should be trained properly so as to enhance the standard of invigilation.
- The appointment of invigilators should be done earlier and in writing.

- All centres should have a timetable for relief invigilators.
- The security and safety of examination material should be prioritised at all centres. Storage facilities should be adequate and keys should be controlled by an accountable officer at all times.
- Seating plans should be developed.
- Monitoring by the assessment body should be done at all centres to provide guidance and support.
- The assessment body should supply all centres with all the relevant documentation, for example absentee forms and mark sheets.

Chapter 4

Monitoring of Marking

1   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Planning for marking

SACAI uses a national marking model in terms of which all the scripts are marked at one venue, namely, the SACAI head oOffice in Pretoria. This model works well for SACAI as all the resources are located in one place and marking is easy to monitor and manage.

The marking centre

As already stated, SACAI uses its head office in Pretoria as the only marking centre for all its Grade 12 scripts. This venue has all the facilities and communication resources needed for such an exercise. While markers are not provided with accommodation, they are provided with meals and tea. The centre operates from 07h00 in the morning and marking ends at 18h30 to allow markers time to travel back home.

Security

There is reasonable security available at the marking centre. Although there were no security guards manning the gates on the day of monitoring, there was a security guard inside the building and all visitors were made to sign a register when entering. The building is also secured with an alarm system and surveillance cameras.

There was little possibility of scripts being lost since all marking was done in-house, and the fact that scripts were not transported from one centre to another added to the level of safety.

The appointment of markers and examination assistants

Markers were appointed from among the facilitators teaching in SACAI schools. They had to have at least five years' teaching experience in the subject and had to be currently teaching Grade 12. The examination assistants (EAs) were all final-year university students in the field relevant to the subject being marked.

Marking procedure

All scripts were stored in the strong room at the marking centre and only the marking centre manager had control of this area. From the strong room, scripts were taken to the marking venues for marking. Once marked and moderated, they were then controlled and subsequently taken back to the strong room for safe storage. In all subjects, markers marked specific questions instead of marking entire scripts. This method helped to reduce errors and speeded up the pace of marking.

Handling of irregularities

Part of the training of markers is intended to emphasise the handling of irregularities. All markers were able to identify irregularities and they knew the procedure for reporting and dealing with them.

At SACAI, there is an Irregularities Committee comprising the chief executive officer, the marking centre manager, the academic head and members of the SACAI board. Ultimately, no irregularities were reported during the 2014 NSC examinations.

Electronic capturing of marks

SACAI has a fail-proof system as all marking and capturing is done in the same place. This means that no transporting of completed mark sheets from the marking centre to the capturing centre is involved. A double-capturing system is used where marks are captured onto the central computer system, eliminating any errors in the process.

2   AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The following areas of good practice were noted:
- As a new assessment body it is commendable that no major irregularities were reported during the 2014 examinations.
- SACAI is to be commended for the highly satisfactory facilities provided for marking.

3   AREAS OF CONCERNS

The following areas of concern were identified:
- The securing of the marking venue was inadequate, as there was no security guard stationed at the doors of the marking venues to ensure that no marker could leave the venue with any examination material, either deliberately or otherwise.

4   REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE AND / IMPROVEMENT

The following recommendation is made with regard to the venue for marking:
- A security guard should be stationed at the door of the marking venue to ensure the safety and security of examination materials.

5   CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the areas of concern noted for future improvement, it is easy to reach the conclusion that SACAI as an assessment body conducted credible examinations. Sufficient effort was made to ensure that the examinations were error-free and that adequate systems were in place to guide the performance of all involved.

Chapter 5

Memoranda Discussion Meetings

1   INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The memoranda discussion meetings took place between November and December 2014. The meetings were held at the SACAI head office in Garsfontein, Pretoria.

The aim of the memoranda discussion meetings was to ensure that the memoranda incorporated as many alternative responses as possible and to finalise the memoranda before marking started. The discussions focused on a variety of issues, depending on the subject matter of the question paper. In most cases no serious changes were made to the memoranda except in specific instances. The findings will clearly outline those specifics.

2   SCOPE AND APPROACH

The idea of the discussion was for the SACAI as an assessment body to discuss the papers and memoranda in the presence of Umalusi external moderators. As the external moderators had initially signed off both the question papers and the relevant memoranda it was imperative that they be present during the discussion to oversee any changes that might be made to the memoranda. Discussions were conducted in a number of subjects. The table below illustrates the subjects and dates discussed.

Table 5.1: Memoranda discussions attended by Umalusi moderators

SUBJECT
1.Engineering Graphic Design
2.Economics
3.Mathematics
4.Afrikaans FAL
5.Accounting
6.Agricultural Science
7.Business Studies
8.Civil Technology
9.Computer Application Technology
10.Hospitality Studies
11.Dramatic Arts
12.Electrical Technology
13.Geography
14.Mathematical Literacy
15.Physical Sciences
16.English Home Language
17.English FAL
18.Religion Studies
19. History

The attendance for each subject paper included the assessment body representatives, the chief marker, the internal moderator and the Umalusi moderators.

The purpose of the memorandum discussion meetings is as follows:

- It is an opportunity for the assessment body to present the memoranda to the provincial markers, to unpack them to ensure that all parties understand their contents and their subsequent application during marking.
- It is to ensure that any envisaged responses from the learners that are unspecified in the memoranda, are discussed and if necessary, the memoranda is adjusted.
- At the end of the discussion sessions, the memoranda are approved and endorsed as final by the examining body and the Umalusi moderators.

The moderation was conducted using the Umalusi instrument for memoranda discussion meetings. The instrument is captured in Figure 5.1 below:

Marking Memorundum Discussion Tool		
Part A Pre-memo discussion meeting: • 1 indicator Preparation by chief markers and internal moderators: • 3 indicators	**Part B** Processes and procedures: • 13 indicators	**Part C** Training at memo discussion meeting: • 6 indicators Quality of memo: • 9 indicators

Figure 5.1: Umalusi Marking Memorandum Discussion Tool

3   SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

For the purposes of this report, the criteria for the analysis of levels of compliance per subject have been split into two categories. The first category, as shown in Figure 5.2, combines the processes relating to the arrangements, preparations and logistics of the memoranda discussion meeting. The second category, presented in Figure 5.3, relates to the actual discussion of the memo.

The graphs have been used to capture the overall picture of the levels of compliance in each of the criteria set by Umalusi. The presentation of the findings in each of the criteria has been arranged in such a way that items which relate to each other are combined.
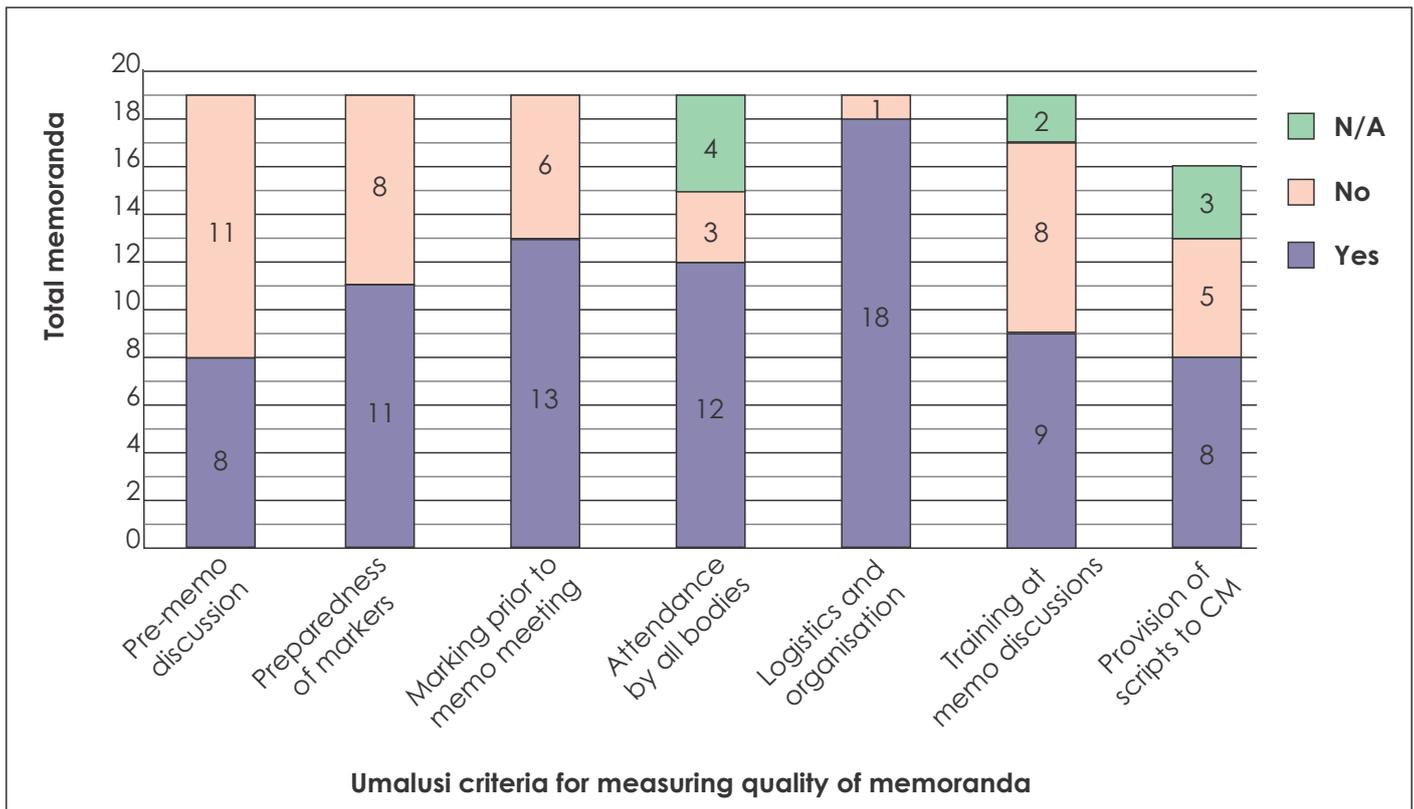
Figure 5.2: Levels of compliance in arrangements, preparations and logistics

The graph shows that the levels of compliance in the category of arrangements, preparations and logistics to ensure quality delivery of the memoranda vary from one criterion to another.

Based on the data in Figure 5.2, a summary of the first category is presented in Table 5.2 below followed by a discussion of the cases of non-compliance.

Table 5.2: Criteria for the organisation and logistical arrangement of the memo discussion

Criteria relating to the organisation and logistical arrangements of the memo discussion	
Pre-memo discussions:	In the majority of cases (58%), the pre-memo discussions were not held.
Preparedness of markers:	A total of 42% of the markers came ill-prepared for the discussion, while 58% were prepared.
Marking prior to the memo meeting:	In 32% of the subjects, markers had not marked any scripts prior to the discussion.
Attendance by stakeholders:	In 63% of papers, the moderators, the assessment body, markers and Umalusi were all in attendance.
Logistics and organisation:	This was almost fully complied with; Afrikaans being the exception.
Training at memo discussions:	In just under half of the papers (42%) no training of markers was done.
Provision of scripts to CM/IM:	In just under half of the papers (42%) markers were not provided with scripts to mark at the training centre.

Cases of not applicable (N/A) were noted in Religion Studies and English Home Language (HL). It was difficult to ascertain the meaning of N/A in the English HL; in Religion Studies there had been no training so all criteria under training were not applicable.

Pre-memo discussions

Two of the reasons advanced for why the pre-memoranda discussions were not held in eleven subjects include lack of time in Business Studies and Afrikaans and poor communication in English HL P1. In some cases the discussion was held but not all stakeholders, markers, examination panel or moderators were in attendance, for example in Civil Technology and Hospitality. No reasons were given for the failure to hold such discussions in Maths Literacy, Geography, English FAL, P1, Economics and IT P1, 2 &3.

Preparedness of markers

As can be seen in Figure 5.2, at least 42% of the subjects reported a lack of preparedness of markers for the process. In English HL, for example, only the examiner who conducted the discussion was familiar with the exam paper as no one else attending the meeting had seen it before. With regard to Maths Literacy, Information Technology (IT) and Business Studies, the memoranda and exam papers were only issued to the markers on the day of the memoranda discussion meeting.

The following discussion combines the criteria of marker preparedness, marking occurring prior to the memo discussion meeting, and marker training at the memo discussion meeting. The results show that in eight papers (42%) training did not take place. In interrogating the data, there would seem to be a correlation between the subjects in which no pre-marking was done and no pre-memo discussion was held. In these subjects, markers had also not marked prior to the meeting and training had not taken place. This is illustrated in Table 5.3 below:

Table 5.3: Subjects where no pre-memo meetings were held, and subsequently no marking prior to memoranda discussion meetings

Item	Pre-memo discussion	Marking prior to the memo meeting	Marker training at meeting
English HL P1 & 2	none	none	yes
Maths Literacy	none	none	none
Business Studies	none	none	none
Afrikaans	none	none	none
IT	none	none	none
Economics	none	none	yes
Civil Technology	none	none	none
Religious Studies	yes	yes	none

Logistics and organisation

Afrikaans was the only subject that reported dissatisfaction with the assessment body, citing the lack of clear guidelines for the procedures to be followed and insufficient space to hold the meeting.

A discussion of the second category follows; that is, the processes involved in the actual memo discussion. A graphical summary is given in Figure 5.3. The bottom band indicates the total memoranda in which moderators ticked "yes" with regard having carried out the process and the top band indicates the total number of moderators that ticked "no".
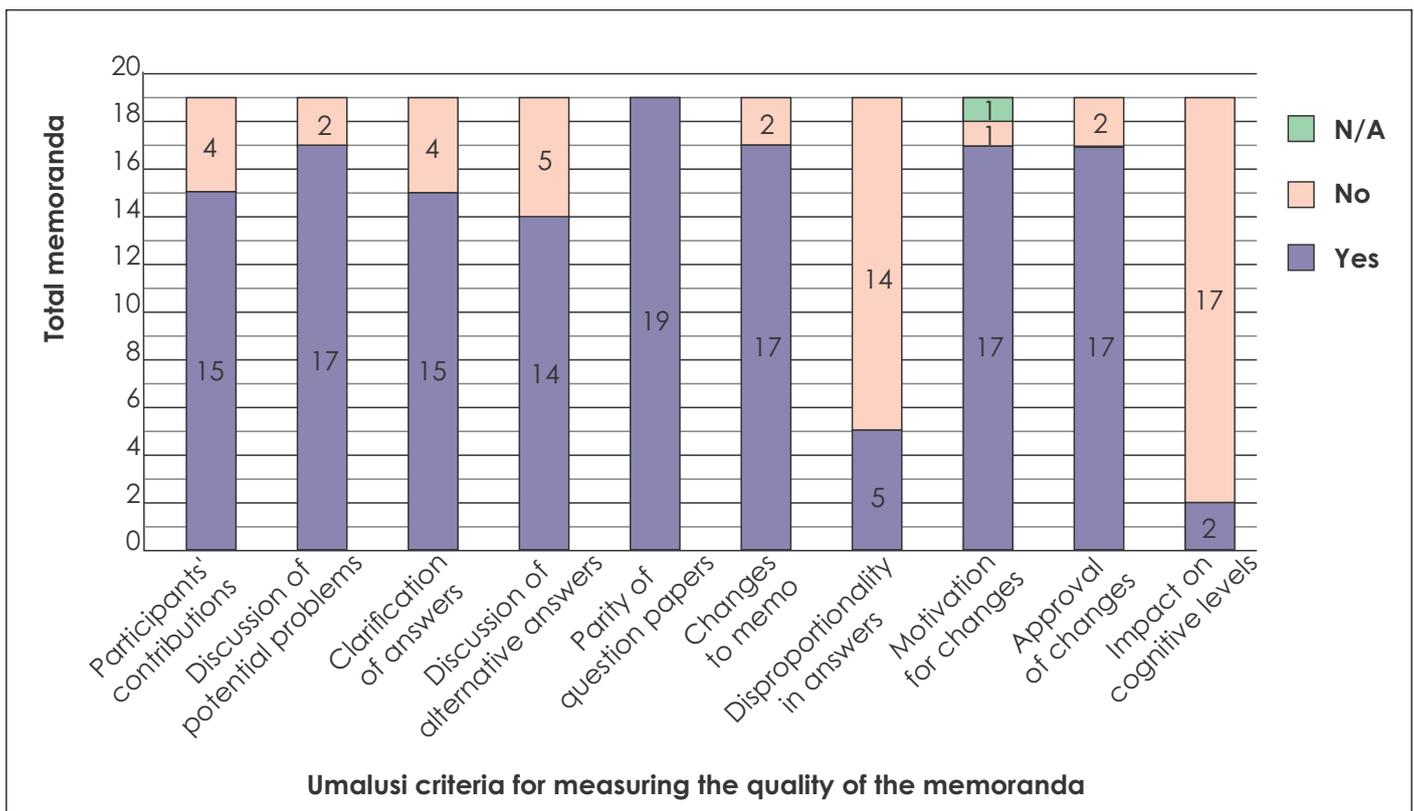
Figure 5.3: Levels of compliance in the discussions of the memoranda

As shown in Figure 5.3, there was a high level of participation when potential problems were discussed, answers clarified and alternative answers generated. The level of participation is closely linked to the significant number of papers (89%) in which changes to the memoranda were made. The changes in 89% of the papers were deemed to have no impact of the cognitive levels and were therefore approved.

Of interest are the two cases in which the cognitive levels were affected, that is, Electrical Technology and Business Studies. In Business Studies marks for one question had to be reduced; no explanation was given for the other subject. In Agricultural Sciences and IT no changes were effected to the memo.

Changes made to memos and their impact on the cognitive levels

The rigour with which the discussion of papers was conducted related to the high number of papers in which changes to the memoranda were effected. Two of the nineteen (19) papers moderated reported having made no changes to the memo. The changes made were largely alternative answers added to increase marking quality and did not affect the core memoranda. In some papers the changes were listed, while in others they were summarised. Business Studies recorded the highest number of changes; while Agriculture Sciences and IT reported no changes to the memoranda.

Open-ended criteria

Processes for discussing the memo

The processes of discussion were similar in almost all the meetings, with the exception of IT where the Umalusi moderators led the discussion. In all cases the examiners and/or internal moderators led the proceedings.

The role of Umalusi moderators

The role of the moderators was described using an "assortment" of adjectives: observers, arbitrators, mediators, technical and content advisors, and quality assurers. In summary, their input, as summarised in Economics P1, was accepted as ensuring the fairness, reliability, validity, consistency and integrity of the papers. In two papers, IT and Electrical Engineering, the external moderators led the discussions to assist the SACAI assessment body to understand the CAPS expectations. The key role played by Umalusi moderators was to make sure that the paper attained the standards set by CAPS.

4   AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The following areas of good practice were identified:
*   The memoranda discussion process emerged as having more areas of good practice than, for example, the question paper setting and the SBA processes of the SACAI assessment body.
*   The high number of subjects in which potential problems (89%) were discussed and where changes were made to the memoranda (89%) is an indication of the rigour with which discussions were held.

5   AREAS OF CONCERN

The following areas of concern were noted:
*   While one of the purposes of the memo discussion is to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged, cases where a reduction in cognitive levels occurred, namely, in Electrical Technology and Business Studies, could be an indication of gaps in the moderation processes. This should be addressed.
*   Similarly, too many changes were made to some memoranda, soaring to 55 changes in Business Studies. This needs to be interrogated.
*   The correlation between no training, no prior marking and the general lack of preparedness in

markers is of significant concern.

6   REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE AND / IMPROVEMENT

The following recommendations are made for future memo discussions:
- There is a need to consider modifying the time allowed for the memoranda discussion process in order to deal with incidences where markers are not prepared for the meeting.
- The cases of Electrical Technology and Business Studies should be investigated to establish whether there are indeed weaknesses in the moderation processes.
- The assessment body should avoid too many changes being made to the memoranda as this may load the memoranda and in some cases confuse the markers.

Chapter 6

Verification of Marking

1   INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

In order to ensure that the Grade 12 final examination is fair, valid and reliable, it is imperative that Umalusi quality assures the verification of marking process for each of the subjects. Verification of marking is a necessary and final step in the quality assurance process and is intended to ensure that standards have been maintained throughout. The verification of marking process of this assessment body, SACAI, followed one approach only, namely, the on-site verification of marking. This was done at the marking centres from 2 to 4 December 2014 at the SACAI head office situated in Garsfontein, Pretoria. Umalusi moderators randomly selected scripts in each of the identified subjects. The scripts had to be randomly selected according to candidates' achievement (high, medium, low) and submitted together with the appropriate memorandum.

The purpose of this exercise was to identify any challenges that might emerge during the marking phase at the marking centres, provide intervention strategies where necessary and later ensure that all recommendations made by the external moderators had been implemented at the centres.

2   SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi external moderators were deployed to conduct on-site moderation of marking using the set criteria in a report format. The moderators were expected to submit detailed reports, indicating the processes and possible challenges they had encountered during the verification of marking process. Table 6.1 below illustrates the subjects moderated during the on-site verification of marking.

Table 6.1: Subjects moderated during the on-site verification of marking

SUBJECT	
1. Accounting	11. History P2
2. Agricultural Sciences P1	12. Life Sciences P1
3. Agricultural Sciences P2	13. Life Sciences P2
4. CAT P1	14. Maths P1
5. CAT P2	15. Maths P2
6. Economics P1	16. Mathematical Literacy P1
7. Economics P2	17. English FAL
8. Geography P1	18. Physical Science
9. Geography P2	19. English Home Language
10. History P1	

3   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Adherence to marking memoranda

The marking memoranda for each of the above subjects were generally adhered to. Where additions/amendments to the marking guidelines were made, these were often warranted and were generally minor, with the aim of expediting the marking process. In Mathematical Literacy P1, the marking guidelines included an additional change to Q5.2 in order to make provision for consistency in marking. In this case, the external moderator suggested that this subsection should be remarked in all the scripts to ensure fairness. In Geography P1, the external moderator found that the marking guideline was generally adhered to but that it had been reviewed partly for higher order questions so as to cater for candidates who provided relevant responses not necessarily captured in the marking guideline. In Life Sciences P2, there was general adherence to the memo but alternative responses were included for Q4. However, this observation was only communicated to the external moderator during the marking verification process. In Mathematics P1 & 2, the marking guidelines were also generally adhered to with the exception of two minor changes, each for 1 mark, in P1. The external moderator reported on a number of slight and minor variations that did not warrant alarm for this subject.

Quality and standard of marking

Marking was found to be mostly fair and consistent, with the exception of a few isolated cases/subjects. By and large the Umalusi external moderators found the overall standard of marking fair, reliable and consistent. For instance, in Economics P1 & 2, the external moderator commented that the markers and internal moderator were good and competent; that markers were flexible in the allocation of discretionary marks in the higher cognitive level responses; that they had marked with great accuracy; and that the variance between the markers and internal moderator was indicative that the marking memo had been consistently applied. In History P1 & 2, it was found that the marking and internal moderation were good and consistent; the internal moderator had provided appropriate and valuable guidance; and the calculation and recording of marks was accurate. In Mathematics P2, the marking was reported to be generally good.

In Agricultural Sciences it was found that marking was generally fair in both papers, with the exception of the answer to Q1.2.2   (Paper 1)in a few scripts wherein it was marked correct but was in fact incorrect. In Geography P1, a few errors in mark allocation/addition were noted. In Life Sciences P1 & 2, minor discrepancies in mark allocation were found particularly for the essay question. This could be attributed to subjective marking.

Candidates' performance

Candidates' performance ranged from high to low. The variation was found to be mostly subject specific rather than general. For instance, in Mathematical Literacy P1 the average candidate performance was recorded as 50,4%. In Geography P1 & 2, it ranged around 36,7% for both, while Life Sciences P1 & 2 were 53,6% and 54,6% respectively.

With regard to candidates' responses, it was found that in Economics P1 the candidates struggled with both higher order questions and long-answer questions (Section C of the question paper). Poor performance was also observed in the data response question. In Accounting P1 the candidates' general performance was fair but many of them performed poorly in Q3, 4 and 6 of the paper. In Mathematics P1 the external moderator reported major challenges encountered by candidates in the application of calculus (Q6.4 and 6.5), which proved challenging particularly for the weaker candidates. The Geometry section of Mathematics P2 was reported to have been generally badly answered by most candidates. However, the questions on statistics and coordinate geometry were well answered by most.

Findings and suggestions

Most Umalusi external moderators were complimentary regarding the quality of internal moderation and some of the marking being done this year. They reported on the impact of generally good marking and internal moderation on the overall marking process.

Umalusi external moderators reported on the fair, reliable and generally accurate marking practices of markers and internal moderators. They highlighted the slight deviations they had found, but stated that these were generally not a cause for concern. In some cases, the external moderators commended the internal moderator for executing the process well (Mathematics P1 & 2; History P1 & 2). In almost all instances, the internal moderation and marking were reported to have been satisfactory, efficient and fair. In the case of Agricultural Sciences P1, the internal moderation was said to be efficient and any deviances in mark allocation were corrected immediately. Moreover, no shadow-marking was found and the examiner and markers were commended. Marking of Agricultural Sciences P2 was found to be commendable but a suggestion was made that the internal moderator should in future ensure that correct and incorrect answers are marked accordingly to ensure fairness and consistency.

In Geography P1 & 2, the internal moderator suggested that the markers be more vigilant when adding up marks. A further recommendation was the need for more preparation of candidates at school level. In the case of Life Sciences, the internal moderator was thorough but a recommendation was made to provide immediate feedback to the relevant markers for intervention purposes and correction where necessary. It was also pointed out that markers needed to constantly revisit the marking memo and question paper to avoid being overconfident and thus negligent in marking scripts.

In Accounting, the external moderator reported that marking and internal moderation were fair. However, a concern was raised about the 24 scripts that were marked by a novice marker, as the marking was found to be of a poor standard compared with the rest of the scripts. The Umalusi moderator recommended that the assessment body should be more vigilant especially when it comes to novice markers; moreover, intense training of novice markers should be done. It was also recommended that rigorous training be conducted where replacements for markers may be needed.

4   AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The verification of marking was thorough during the SACAI marking guideline discussions and the standard of marking was found to be adequate on all levels. The impact these have had on the smooth running of the marking process is evident.

Very few instances were found where internal moderators and markers had to improve on marking. Where this did happen mainly technical errors were involved.

This assessment body is responsible for a fairly small number of learners; therefore challenges were easily detected and corrected.

5   AREAS OF CONCERN

Although the good practices outnumber the bad, the few areas of concern are as follows:
- There are still some novice markers who require further training and guidance, particularly when assessing higher cognitive level and essay questions.
- Some internal moderators tend to be lax when moderating scripts and often overlook the unnecessary errors/omissions and discrepancies in mark allocation made by some markers.
- The substitution or replacement of markers during the marking process is a worrying factor as it happened in Accounting.

6   REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE AND / IMPROVEMENT

The following recommendations are made with regard to the marking verification process:
- The appointment and thorough training of markers should be taken more seriously so as not to have a negative impact on the quality and fairness of marking.
- Internal moderators should exercise more caution when moderating scripts and call immediate, brief meetings once they identify a problem in the marking practices.
- Internal moderators should check that unnecessary omissions/errors in calculations or mark allocations are eliminated.
- Although the amendments to some of the marking guidelines were reported to be minor, it is imperative that any amendments be reported immediately to the external moderator and be communicated to the rest of the marking centres to ensure fairness and consistency.
- Questions on a high cognitive level should be given to more experienced markers to mark.

7   CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the 2014 Grade 12 marking process conducted for the first time by the SACAI, for the assessment of the NSC Grade 12 examinations, can be highly commended. It is evident from the reports presented by the Umalusi external moderators that efforts to ensure fair and reliable marking practices have been increased.

Here and there, however, there is still a need for marker training and caution should be exercised in relation to novice markers and those unable to assess higher order and novel responses.

While we acknowledge some improvement in the way the marking was conducted, concerns about the challenges that were raised remain, as these are indicative of the quality of people appointed to mark, for example, Accounting.

While there is always room for improvement, the marking process was generally found to have been fair, valid and reliable.

Chapter 7

Standardisation and Verification of Results

1   INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

In 2014, SACAI administered a full National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination for the first time, with approximately 1400 candidates. SACAI caters for a unique cohort of candidates in this country, consisting mainly of home scholars, part-time candidates and a few independent schools.

2   SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi has monitored the dry runs of the data submitted by SACAI and has tested the data sets successfully. The standardisation and verification of data set processes were conducted in a manner that is acceptable and just.

A total of 27 subjects were presented for the standardisation process which was held on 18 and 19 December 2014 at Umalusi. As there was no historical data available for this new assessment body, the Assessment Standards Committee made use of pairs' analysis, post examination analysis, internal and external moderators' reports and examiners' reports as a basis for the decision-making process.

3   DECISIONS

The following standardisation decisions were made by the Umalusi Council at the standardisation meeting which took place on 19 December 2014. The table below outlines the number of subjects that were adjusted and those for which the raw scores were accepted.

Raw marks	24 subjects
Upward adjustment	3 subjects
Downward adjustment	0

4   AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

SACAI standardisation data was presented in accordance with Umalusi requirements. This requires special mention considering that it was SACAI's first NSC examination.

5   AREAS OF CONCERN

The following areas of concern were noted:
- Incorrect calculations on the raw scores and adjustments in the languages. Corrections were sent to Umalusi during the pre-standardisation meeting.
- There was no alignment between the table of contents and the page numbers in the pairs' analysis booklet.

6   REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANCE AND / IMPROVEMENT

The following areas of improvement were identified:
- SACAI should pay more attention to detail in preparing and developing the standardisation booklets.
- An internal quality assurance process should be developed for the standardisation booklets prior to their submission to Umalusi.

7   CONCLUSION

SACAI is commended for having administered and conducted the 2014 NSC successfully for the first time in 2014. Umalusi has monitored the dry runs of the data submitted by SACAI and has tested the data sets successfully. The standardisation and verification of data set processes were conducted in a manner that is acceptable and just.

SACAI's standardisation booklets were delivered on time and were well prepared. The results of candidates were verified and found to be correct.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In 2014 SACAI administered the NSC examinations for the first time. When one looks at the outcome of the 2014 NSC exam and assessment quality assurance processes in relation to the 2013 processes when SACAI administered the NSC as a trial examination, one can see some pockets of improvement. The quality of question papers received at first moderation is one of the areas where some improvement has been noted. SACAI also deserves to be commended on the manner in which marking was conducted. Reports from external moderators on marking verification bear testimony to the fact that efforts to ensure fair and reliable marking practices have been increased. Standardisation data/booklets were delivered on time and presented in accordance with Umalusi requirements.

Having said this, SACAI's attention is drawn to the following areas which require attention for further improvement:

Question paper moderation
- The high levels of non-compliance in the areas of internal moderation, content coverage and cognitive levels
- The lack of compliance with the CAPS and examination guidelines in some subjects
- The practice by some examiners of copying questions from past examination papers.
-

SBA moderation
- While internal moderation is being done at several levels, its quality remains an area of concern.
- The lack of constructive feedback to learners stands out as being highly problematic in almost all subjects.
- Non-compliance in terms of the tasks used, the rubrics used, balancing the levels of difficulty in questions and the use of marking tools was still observed even during the November moderation session.
- The use of common papers that do not adhere to the CAPS requirements persists.

Monitoring of writing
- The training of invigilators is not done at all the SACAI centres.
- Not all invigilators are appointed in writing.
- Some centres do not have relief invigilators.
- Not all centres have been monitored by the assessment body.
- Security at some centres is not up to standard – at one centre keys were kept by a cleaner.
- Centres should all keep the necessary exam administration documents in their file: mark sheets, absentee forms, monitors' register etc.

Monitoring of marking
- The security of the marking venue needs to be tightened by having security guards stationed at the doors of the marking venues to ensure that no marker can exit with any examination material,

either deliberately or otherwise.

Memoranda discussion meetings
- Too many changes were made to some memoranda, soaring to 55 changes in Business Studies.
- The correlation between no training and no prior marking and the general lack of preparedness in markers was noted in some subjects.

Marking verification
- There are still some novice markers who require further training and guidance, particularly when marking higher cognitive levels and essay questions.
- Some internal moderators seemed to be lax when moderating scripts and often overlooked the unnecessary errors/omissions and discrepancies in mark allocation made by some markers.

Standardisation and verification of results
- Incorrect calculations on the raw scores and adjustments in the languages.
- There was no alignment between the table of contents and the page numbers in the pairs' analysis booklet.

It should be noted though that corrections to the errors found in the standardisation booklets were sent to Umalusi during the pre-standardisation meeting.

Notwithstanding the few concerns raised above, Umalusi Council approved the release of the SACAI 2014 NSC results at the approval meeting held on Sunday, 28 December 2014. The results were approved on the basis that, after careful consideration of all the qualitative reporting on the quality assurance conducted, Umalusi found no reason to suggest that the credibility of the SACAI 2014 NSC examinations was compromised in any way.

To this end Umalusi wishes to thank SACAI for ensuring that assessment standards are maintained, and that the credibility of the NSC examination is upheld.

Acknowledgements

A special word of appreciation goes to the following individuals and groups of people for their contribution in compiling this report:

(I)   The Umalusi team of external moderators for their tireless dedication to the moderation work, as well as providing comprehensive reports which resulted in the compilation of this report:

Subjects	External moderators
Accounting	Mr J Mamaile
Afrikaans FAL & SAL	Ms M Venter
Afrikaans HL	Prof A Coetser
Agricultural Sciences	Mr S Gcwensa
Business Studies	Mr D MacPherson
Civil Technology	Mr T Haas
Computer Applications Technology	Ms W Uys
Consumer Studies	Ms M van Pletzen
Dramatic Arts	Mr F Hoosain
Economics	Mr E Pretorius
Electrical Technology	Mr D Hanekom
Engineering, Graphics & Design	Mr M Moodley
English FAL & SAL	Dr L Bull
English HL	Dr V Moodley
Geography	Ms E Powell
History	Mr E Smuts
Hospitality Studies	Ms C Koekemoer
Information Technology	Dr D Govender
Life Orientation	Ms M Bernard-Phera, Ms F Hendricks
Life Sciences	Ms P Majozi
Mathematical Literacy	Mr M Hendricks
Mathematics	Prof N Heideman
Mechanical Technology	Mr P Naidoo
Physical Sciences	Mr P Struweg, Ms P Zuma
Religion Studies	Mr A Botha
Tourism	Dr L Punt
Visual Arts	Prof K Skawran

(ii)   Ms Princess Bembe who consolidated the individual chapters from the external moderators' reports into the relevant chapters of this report.

(iii)   Staff of Umalusi Quality Assurance of Assessment (QAA) Schools unit who evaluated, synthesised and consolidated the individual chapters and the final report, and saw to the final product of this report:
- Ms Confidence Dikgole
- Mr Andy Thulo
- Mr Siphmandla Nxumalo
- Ms Nomsa Mdunana

(iv)   Ms Confidence Dikgole - Manager Quality Assurance of Assessment - Schools, for coordinating and overseeing the writing, editing, design and printing of this report, and presenting it to

Council approval committee.

(v)   Members of Umalusi Assessment Standards Committee for providing insight and guidance which assisted in refining the contents of this report.

(vi)   Ms Eugenie Rabe and Ms Faith Ramotlhale for being critical readers.

(vii)   The Monitoring and Evaluation sub-unit; Mr Kgosi Monageng and Mr Clifford Mokoena who contributed the chapters on monitoring of the NSC exams and marking thereof.

(ix)   The editor Ms Alexa Barnby for editing the report under tight time constraints.

(x)   Ms Annelize Jansen van Rensburg for the effective layout, typesetting and printing of the report.

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