

Makoya

December 2017

Official Newsletter of Umalusi



South Africa will be the first country to have sign language offered as a subject at Home Language level and as part of a qualification – National Senior Certificate (NSC) at NQF Level 4.



Empirical cross-unit research into early childhood development under way

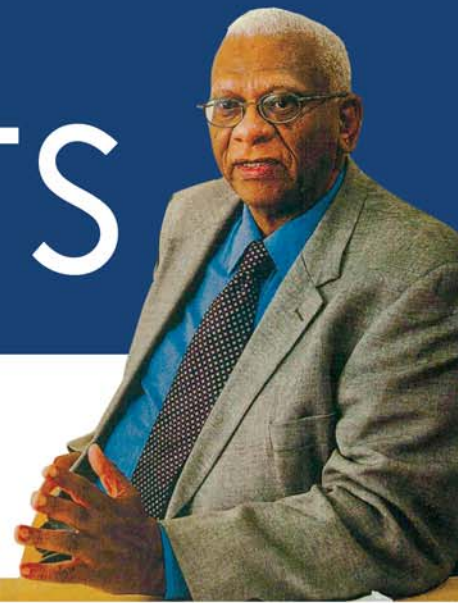
Competition
Stand a chance to **WIN** a prize

Certification:

What every examination candidate should know



Contents



4 Prof John Volmink

12 Early Childhood Development



What's Inside



9



6

Page No Contents

3	Editor's Pen
3	Competition
4	Prof John Volmink
5	From the CEO's Desk
6	Literacy in a digital world – a new multiliterate generation
8	National Certificate (Vocational) reviewed
9	Sign language study provides assessment guide
12	Empirical cross-unit research into early childhood development under way
13	Certification: What every examination candidate should know
15	Infographic on NSC & NCV
16	Contact Information



a letter
from the editor

From the Editor's Pen

It gives me great pleasure to be your editor assigned to deliver this edition of Makoya to our loyal readers. Education is the backbone in which the strength of societal development is embedded to accelerate both social and economic advancement. Such an aspiration can be realised only through quality assurance. Umalusi is a key institution in the sector through its significant contribution to upliftment, by setting and monitoring standards for general and further education and training in South Africa.

To this end Umalusi continues to live up to its mission statement, 'To meet educational and societal needs, to assure the provision of valid, reliable and equitable examinations and a range of assessment services in a professional, innovative, efficient and effective manner.'

There are many pockets of excellence to celebrate in the work of Umalusi. It is the hard-working men and women at Umalusi who ensure that private providers and assessment bodies comply with all statutory requirements, and allow Umalusi to deliver on its mandate.

In this edition you can look forward to exciting features on empirical research in Early Childhood Development (ECD), what every examination candidate should know about certification, a review of the National Certificate (Vocational), and news on South African Sign Language Home Language (SASL HL).

In conclusion, Umalusi wishes the class of 2017 the best of luck with their results.

Happy reading!



Kgaugelo Sekokotla

Kindly forward your suggestions for making this publication a joy to read. Write to the editor in the PR and Communications Unit at: info@umalusi.org.za

Enter the competition below by answering five questions and stand a chance to win a hamper, courtesy of the PR & Communications Unit. The competition closes on Wednesday, 28 February 2018. Submit your entries to the editors at: kgaugelo.sekokotla@umalusi.org.za



Name: _____ Surname: _____
Occupation: _____ Institution/organisation: _____
Tel/Cell: _____ Email: _____

1. What is the public holiday celebrated on 16 December annually in South Africa?

2. In 2014 Umalusi was mandated by the Minister of Higher Education and Training to review the current NC(V) L2, L3 and L4 qualification offered by public Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and accredited private colleges. **True** or **False**?

3. The first important aspect is that for Umalusi to issue a certificate for a qualification, the qualification must be registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework. **True** or **False**?

4. Name the qualifications that Umalusi is responsible for certifying in schools: Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges (TVET colleges) and in adult learning centres?

5. Candidates may apply to combine subjects passed during different examination cycles if the subject results conform to qualification requirements. **True** or **False**?



Prof John D Volmink

John Volmink was born and raised in Cape Town, South Africa. He began his academic career at the University of Western Cape, where he completed the BSc degree in Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Physics; and the BSc (Hons) degree in Physics in 1975. He later attended Cornell University, Ithaca NY, where he completed the MSc (1983) and PhD (1988) in Mathematics Education.

Prof Volmink began working as a high school teacher, later becoming the Head of Mathematics at the then-named Peninsula Technikon. He subsequently held teaching positions at the University of Western Cape, University of Cape Town and Cornell University.

In 1990 he returned to Southern Africa after almost a decade in the USA. After a brief stay at the University of Botswana in Gaborone, he returned to South Africa in 1991. He immediately involved himself in development initiatives as the Director of the Centre for Advancement of Science and Mathematics Education at the then-named University of Natal in Durban, as well as other partnership programmes in KwaZulu-Natal and elsewhere in South Africa.

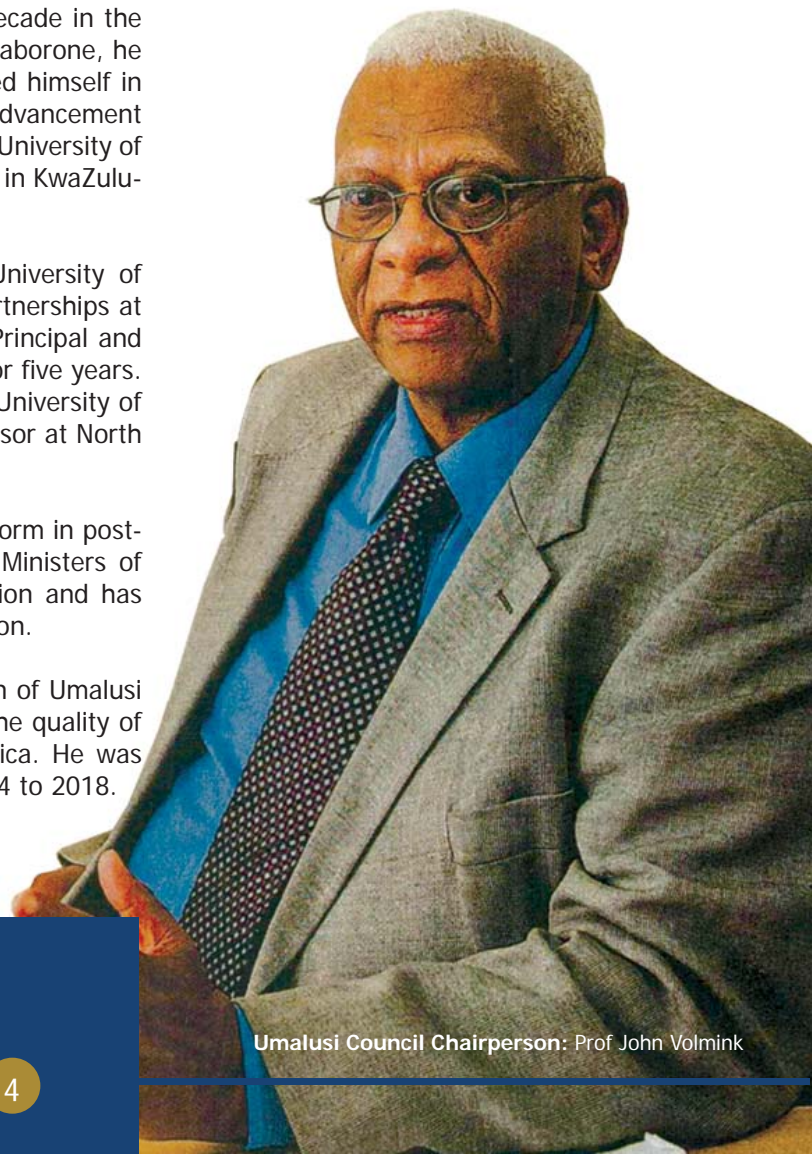
Prof Volmink served as Campus Vice-Principal at the University of Natal, Durban, and later became Pro-Vice Chancellor: Partnerships at the University of KwaZulu-Natal until 2004. He was the Principal and Chief Executive Officer of Cornerstone Christian College for five years. He also served as Interim Vice-Chancellor at the Durban University of Technology and holds the position of Extraordinary Professor at North West University, Mafikeng Campus.

Prof Volmink has been centrally involved in curriculum reform in post-apartheid South Africa. He has been asked by all four Ministers of Education to play a leading role in transforming education and has served on several ministerial task teams involving education.

Prof Volmink has served for four years as the Chairperson of Umalusi Council, the statutory body that monitors and improves the quality of general and further education and training in South Africa. He was reappointed as Chairperson of Umalusi for the period 2014 to 2018.

More recently, he was appointed as the CEO of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU).

Prof Volmink continues to provide leadership on the boards of several South African non-governmental development organisations and foundations involved in education and health and community upliftment. He has also been involved in a Leadership Development Programme for members of Parliament.



Umalusi Council Chairperson: Prof John Volmink



From the CEO's Desk

Welcome to this issue of Makoya, Umalusi's official newsletter. It gives me pleasure to report to our stakeholders that in the past few months Umalusi Council has continued to play a vital role in the educational landscape in South Africa, with specific reference to the setting and monitoring of standards in general and further education and training. This is in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008 and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act No. 58 of 2001.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Nelson Mandela.

Umalusi can certainly say, with confidence, that through quality assuring all exit point examinations in line with the GENFETQA Act, the work of Council contributes significantly to the growth of our society. This is achieved by ensuring the qualification output of our basic education system retains the quality required to compete favourably with other education systems around the globe.

As we look back to the milestones we achieved in the current Financial Year 2017/18 as a quality council, we salute the 'matric' class of 2017, which has doubtless worked very hard throughout this year. We wish the class of 2017 the best of everything as they exit the school system to pursue multiple dreams, such as tertiary education, artisanship, entry level jobs and skills-based courses of various kinds.

The fact that the 2017 cohort will be knocking on different doors for more opportunities attests to the currency of our qualifications and the fact that our qualifications are a key to unlocking endless opportunities, both in our country and the world over.

In conclusion, 2017 can be summarised in a few words: "In the face of significant challenges, we made significant progress." I would like to thank the staff of Umalusi for their continued commitment to ensuring that we deliver on our mandate.

Notwithstanding the fact that there is still much work to do, there are significant milestones to celebrate. We ended 2017 stronger and better able to serve the South African public.

On that note, I hope you all had a safe and wonderful festive season and spent time with your family and loved ones – and that you are recharged and reignited energy for 2018.

Wishing you all a prosperous 2018!

Dr Mafu S Rakometsi



Literacy in a digital world – a new multiliterate generation

Dr Eva Sujee

Introduction

Heitin (2011) argues that a gap exists between what happens in the lives of learners outside the school and inside the classroom. In today's digital environment, learners are used to the quick distribution of information and expect quick feedback from teachers. This article focuses on the changes in literacy in today's digital environment. It emphasises the importance of the teacher as a lifelong learner and the need for teachers to look at innovative ways of using technology to fulfil the needs of learners.

Digital Literacy

Outside of school, learners use digital writing which includes audio, visual and text. The technological environment has brought about huge changes in the socialising aspect of society through social media. Learners are increasingly engaging in written instead of oral communication and constantly convey messages, feelings and emotions via social media. They use texts as their primary method of communication. Digital writing is becoming more collaborative; and digital writing skills are crucial for both tertiary education and the corporate world. Learners require exposure to, and experience in, digital writing to match the real world.

Learners seldom use handwritten reports outside of school, so why are they still using them in class?

Shinas (2013) highlights the demands placed on teachers to learn to use and integrate new tools into their lessons because of rapidly evolving technologies. The demands are intensified by computer-based assessments in schools. Teachers are lifelong learners and it is important that they equip themselves with the knowledge and skills to plan and teach pedagogically relevant, technology-integrated, standards-based lessons to develop skilled, 21st century learners.

Multiliteracy for the 21st century

Traditional literacy may no longer be adequate for survival. Literacy practices are changing because of the broad social, economic and technological changes in everyday life, education, the media and workplace. We need an expanded literacy to account for a culturally and linguistically diverse context and a more globalised society. With globalisation, an increasing number of interrelated multifarious cultures and plurality of texts are emerging. More text forms, such as visual images, are arising because of information and multimedia technologies, and it is essential that people understand and competently

engage with multimodal texts. People need to equip themselves with these new literacies if they are to engage in meaningful communication in this new environment. Language and print literacy are no longer sufficient for the multimodal content used to communicate (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

New literacies are referred to as "new media literacies", "new literacies" or "digital literacies" (Kimmons, 2014). This confirms the notion of Carneiro and Gordon (2013) that new literacies are as essential as a driving license in this high-tech, 21st century society. Huffaker (2005) refers to this digital-literate skill as being "digital fluent". It refers to how comfortable an individual is with the use of computers. New literacies need to be considered in terms of the use of technology because the emergence of new technologies has changed the nature of literacy (Tapscott, 1998). Learners require the ability

More text forms, such as visual images, are arising because of information and multimedia technologies

to read, comprehend and interact with technology to survive in the new media ecology (Coiro, 2003). According to a review conducted by Cervi, Paredes and Tornero (2010), literacy has evolved from reading and writing to electronic media to digital media and to a more comprehensive literacy that refers to both the internet and Web 2.0. Hobbs, Felini and Cappello (2011) use the term “expanded literacy” to describe the focus that shifted from the alphabetic and written texts to a literacy that encompasses social communication and ideology.



Chen, Wu and Wang (2011) argue that it is vital that individuals become new media “literate” in this new society. The term “multiliteracies” was coined by the New London Group and focuses on the multiple communication channels resulting from the increased linguistic and cultural diversity (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). In addition, Jewitt (2008) notes that the pedagogic aim of multiliteracies is to expose learners to opportunities to engage with the range of literacy practices and multiple and multimodal texts confronting them daily. Multiliteracies promote individualised learning because they recognise the multiple ways in which learners make meaning. Furthermore, they encourage pedagogies that afford equal opportunities to traditional and non-traditional learners to learn in ways that enable them to participate fully in private, community, public and economic life (Newfield & Maungedzo, 2006). Being “multiliterate” also implies ability to handle social meanings and identities that each social setting evokes, the capacity to make meaning for different audiences, the ability to move between discourses and across genres, and to apply the appropriate linguistic practice to each setting (Devereux & Wilson, 2008).



Social media

Another reason for lifelong learning for individuals is social media. Teachers and researchers are also eager to investigate the learning that takes place in online social settings. Mere access to social media is not enough; new media literacies are needed to fully engage in online settings. There is, thus, a gap between those who know how to fully engage in social media and those who do not. Therefore, it is vital for teachers to understand the literacies necessary for effective engagement in online settings.

Literacy in schools

Computer technologies are not new in language and literacy education. Multimedia tools such as Word, PowerPoint, digital storytelling software and social networking Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, wikis, Twitter and Facebook are being used extensively in schools (Shin, 2013). Mobility in the new digital era requires new academic and professional literacy practices and

it is essential that schools extend and enrich learners’ everyday literacies (Devereux & Wilson, 2008). Education technology should promote traditional literacy as well as the new. Blogs represent a perfect medium for both types of literacy: blog writers read and write as they would on paper, while increasing their computer and internet skills.

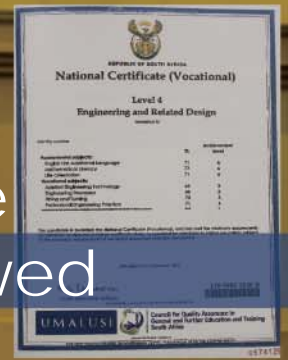
Language practices through internet-related technologies can change learners’ social relationships and enable new ways of sharing and creating knowledge. Reading and writing online may also enhance literacy development. The more learners communicate in the target language the more they will learn correct sentence structure and expand their vocabularies (Shin, 2013). It is vital that conceptualisations of literacy be broadened to maximise learner development. Instead, they are being reduced to reading and writing because of standardised testing (Parr & Campbell, 2012). In conclusion, it is imperative that the gap between the outside world and what is happening in schools should be narrowed. Technology could be used innovatively to solve education system problems and also equip learners with skills needed in a digital society. The amount of internet information available and the fact that anyone may contribute to or create knowledge, bring about a crucial need for critical skills that enable learners to evaluate information.





Dennis Twala

National Certificate (Vocational) reviewed



Background

One of Umalusi's mandates, as outlined in the General and Further Education Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001), is to develop and review new and existing qualifications and part-qualifications on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 1-4 sub-framework. In 2014 Umalusi was mandated by the Minister of Higher Education and Training to review the current NC(V) L2, L3 and L4 qualification offered by public Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and accredited private colleges. The Minister had identified certain aspects of the qualification for reconsideration. These had impacted on its provision, implementation and uptake, which made it difficult to articulate with other qualifications on the NQF.

The Minister directed Umalusi to collaborate with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to address issues, specifically those related to internal/external assessment, certification, quality assurance, modes of delivery, provision of credit transfer/recognition and articulation arrangements, in reviewing the NC(V). The gamut of these issues emanated from recommendations by the Ministerial Task Team that was appointed in 2011 to look at challenges facing education and training provision in the college sub-system.

The review process

Umalusi constituted a Qualifications Reference Group (QRG) whose members were drawn from, among others, higher education institutions, SETAs, industry and private providers. This collective was deemed knowledgeable, with vast experience and expertise in a number of areas of programmes offered in the TVET sector. The QRG operated under the auspices of the Qualifications Standards Committee (QSC), a committee of Umalusi Council. The QSC is responsible for supporting and guiding Umalusi in developing or amending qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualification Sub-framework.

After many months of hard work, the QRG submitted a draft on the qualification policy to the QSC, who ultimately recommended it for endorsement to Umalusi Council. The qualification was gazetted for comment and the public, college sub-system, as well as the Curriculum Development & Support and Examinations & Assessment sections of the DHET, made valuable and substantive contributions. These were later finalised for submission to the Minister for consideration.

Current status

The current NC(V) qualification has undergone expansive changes in a number of areas, per ministerial directive. The nascent qualification is now structured as a 360-credit, three-year curriculum with NQF Level 4 as an exit level when an external examination will be written. The proposed changes impact significantly on how, what, where and for whom the qualification will be delivered and assessed. The reviewed qualification

fundamentally proposes a flexible, semesterised mode of delivery to accommodate full-time, part-time and distance-learning students. Inherent in the reviewed NC(V) are improved pass requirements and associated minimum requirements to higher certificate, diploma and bachelor degrees. These have been re-aligned to reflect the vocational orientation of the qualification. More information about the proposed changes in the NC(V) will be shared with the public and stakeholders through Umalusi advocacy programmes once the Minister has approved the policy.

More work remains to be done on re-curriculating the subjects and programmes to align their content and weighting with the proposed changes. The implication is that it will take some years before the qualification is implemented. However, the hope is that the proposed amendments will find comprehensive acceptance and help to clarify issues that were a concern for both implementers and beneficiaries. It is also anticipated that the manner in which the reviewed qualification has been rationalised and packaged will make it more accessible to a broader student base. It should benefit those who need it to access higher education, training and career path mobility and progression, as well as articulate with other NQF qualifications.

This qualification can contribute to, and enhance, individual personal development as well as economic and social transformation more broadly.

Umalusi would like to thank the former senior manager, Ms Elizabeth Burroughs, for her efforts and contribution in driving and coordinating the review process of the NC(V) policy.



Dr Stephan Mchunu



Sign language study provides assessment guide

An intensive study on assessment and quality assurance of assessment, of South African Sign Language Home Language (SASL HL) has been conducted. The research was designed to provide guidance to Umalusi about its role in the quality assurance of SASL HL school-based assessment (SBA) and examinations.

This research project forms part of an ongoing, larger undertaking by Umalusi that investigates the standard of new curricula introduced into the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and examined at the end of Grade 12. The SASL HL project forms part of the Maintaining Standards project, which advises Umalusi's Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) on the standing of subjects being examined for the first time.

South Africa will be the first country to have sign language offered as a subject at Home Language level and as part of a qualification – National Senior Certificate (NSC) at NQF Level 4. This article discusses some essential issues regarding assessment; among others ethical issues in testing the deaf, sign language test development, appropriate standards for the assessor, and the description of the SASL HL examination room/laboratory.

South African Sign Language, like all other spoken/written home languages, has four end-of-year signed examination question papers:

- Paper 1 – Language in context
- Paper 2 – Literature
- Paper 3 – Recording ("Writing")
- Paper 4 – Observing and signing ("orals")



Assessment addresses the content that is covered. Due to the conceptual progression of the content across the grades, content and skills from Grades 10-12 are assessed in the external papers at the end of Grade 12.

Essential issues in assessment

The literature indicates that certain guidelines need to be followed in developing tests. Haug, T., Mann, W., Boers-Visker, E., Contreras, J., Enns, C., Herman, R., & Rowley, K. (2016) in their document titled "Guidelines for sign language test development, evaluation and use", provide the ethical issues in testing and working with deaf communities, issues (specific aspects) regarding sign language test development, and general issues in testing deaf children in different contexts. Haug, et al, 2016 also give guidelines on technical issues for test takers that use technology-based testing. The issues raised in this discussion are outlined.

i. Ethical issues in testing and working with the deaf community

Test administrators should be qualified to use sign language tests, e.g. [display a] level of sign proficiency, adequate training in sign language assessment and interpretation of test results, among others. They should set and maintain high personal standards of competence in the delivery of sign language assessments and interpretation of test results. It is important that they keep current with changes and advances in test use and development, including in legislation and policy, which may impact on tests, test use and updating test norms. Test administrators should make sure that test materials (e.g. test instructions, items) and test data are kept securely at all times, with limited access. They should respect copyright law and agreements that exist with respect to a test, including any prohibitions on the copying or transmission of materials in electronic or other forms to other people, whether qualified or otherwise.

ii. Issues regarding sign language test development

Regarding the development of a sign language test, native signers should be involved at each stage of the process (from development to dissemination). These should ideally include deaf native signers with academic or other relevant training, or experience. This is motivated because for some sign languages, limited research is available;

SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE



native signers can ensure test items appropriately reflect the structure of the particular sign language. It is also essential to involve deaf and hearing people with different areas of expertise, such as linguists, psychologists, high level interpreters, media design experts, computer programmers (for web- and mobile-assisted sign language testing). The materials used in test development should be age appropriate; visually clear and accessible to the target population; avoid high memory load; and should not require written responses.

Test developers should assure that the choice of elicitation techniques, item formats, test conventions and procedures are readily accessible by all intended populations. They should also ascertain that item content and stimulus materials are familiar to all intended populations. For examples, images suitable for children might not be appropriate for adults. The language used in the directions and items themselves, as well as in the handbook/manual, should be appropriate for all cultural and language populations for whom the test or instrument is intended. For test adaptations, test developers and publishers should ensure that the adaptation process takes full account of linguistic and cultural differences among the populations for whom adapted versions are intended.

// A child is likely to be most relaxed in a familiar setting; and likely to respond differently depending on the test environment //

iii. General issues in testing deaf children in different contexts

In assessments it is important to use different approaches to obtain as much information as possible about the child's language skills. This can be achieved using a range of methods.

Assessors should include both receptive and productive instruments to assess sign language. Different instruments that focus on different aspects, such as vocabulary, grammar and narrative skills should be included.

A child is likely to be most relaxed in a familiar setting; and likely to respond differently depending on the test environment. It is important to realise that all testing will be "inauthentic". However, we can try to achieve the closest to natural settings. Assessors should try to use more than one sign language test, if available. Different tests may yield different results or test slightly different aspects of a child's language skills.

iv. Appropriate standards for assessors

Assessors should have high level sign language skills and preferably be fluent in the given sign language. They should also have the ability to communicate flexibly to meet the needs of individual deaf children, as many deaf children have exposure to a sign language (e.g. BSL), sign systems (e.g. Signed English) skills, sign-accompanying-spoken-language (e.g. Sign-Supported English). They should also have experience in working with deaf children.

Haug, et al stress the importance of deaf and hearing teamwork when carrying out language assessments as each member of the team will have a different set of skills.

A competent test administrator makes necessary practical arrangements: ensuring locations and facilities are arranged well in advance; and that the physical environment is accessible, safe, quiet, free from distractions and appropriate for the purpose (Haug, et al. 2016). Administration staff should be familiar with administering the test and have the required language skills. Appropriate arrangements should be made to support and assist test takers with additional needs, e.g. visually accessible stimuli and a slower presentation rate of test items.





SASL laboratory descriptions

The general observation from the schools visited in Gauteng is that the SASL HL lab should have the following items:

- Cubicles or a private space for each candidate. Cubicles should be set up in such a way that candidates cannot copy answers from each other. Cubicles should have a plain background of a preferred colour that does not have a negative effect on signed answers or present challenges to markers;
 - The SASL lab should have curtains or blinds on windows to minimise sunrays; and sufficient light;
 - It should have laptops with webcams. There should be no hard-copy question papers. All questions and answers should be signed.
- Make sure to have high-speed Internet access when the test includes sign language videos;
 - Where the test includes online video-recording, check that a webcam is available and works with the browser. Make sure to have appropriate lighting conditions and background when sign language videos are recorded;
 - Know how to access technical support (online as well as at the testing site);
 - Have read the instructions and looked at any supporting materials needed to successfully complete the test. This includes completing any online tutorials (where available);
 - Be familiar with operating the computer or other device and the software functions required by the test;
 - Inform test takers about the purpose of the test, the content included in the test, and the type of test (e.g. picture-matching, multiple choice), where appropriate;
 - Provide clear instructions on how to take the test;
 - Make sure the test is administered in a comfortable and quiet environment with minimal distraction and appropriate lighting conditions;
 - Make sure to follow standard administration procedures;
 - Make sure that the test takers do not have access to other programmes

Haug, et al (2016) argue that while computer-based assessments are becoming popular for their efficiency, these do not always capture a child's ability to use language interactively. They provide the following guide to technology-based testing for competent test administrators:

- Ensure the system (e.g. computers to be used for test administration) meet the hardware and software requirements defined by the test developer prior to administering any tests. For web-based tests, this includes making sure there are no browser (type of browser like Firefox or Chrome and version of browser) or operation system (e.g. Windows, Linux, Apple) restrictions;



on the computer to look up information while being tested (i.e. they should only have access to the test);

- Make sure that the test takers cannot store/copy the test on devices they bring (e.g. external hard-drive);
- If possible, make sure that the computer has some sort of logbook file to prevent a test takers claim that "the recording is lost";
- Make sure that test takers do not see each other as information in sign language is easily passed over a distance, for example, when assessing adult students in a sign language interpreter training programme.

In brief, the SASL lab should have private spaces for each individual candidate and be technologically flawless.

We are looking forward with interest to the first group of deaf learners who will write SASL HL in 2018.



Sisanda Loni



Shannon Doolings



Empirical cross-unit research into early Childhood Development under way

As a Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, Umalusi advocates grounding its work in research to ensure informed positions and approaches. The organisation can best achieve this goal with collaboration between operational units.

The first phase of an investigation into Early Childhood Development (ECD) in South Africa included an appraisal of The South African National Curriculum Framework for Children from Birth to Four (NCF). The empirical phase followed, which required preparing semi-structured interviews and site visits. The success of the recent ECD site visits to Cape Town was due to good teamwork between the Statistical Information and Research (SIR) Unit and the Qualifications, Curriculum and Certification (QCC) Unit.

The writers embarked on this second, qualitative phase of the project by visiting ECD centres for classroom observations and interviews with centre managers and practitioners. The semi-structured interviews with managers focused mainly on administration, learner support, levels of parental involvement and staff development. The practitioners provided information on philosophies underpinning their teaching, approaches to teaching and learning, learner participation and models used to report on learner progress.

The main purpose of the visits was to gather empirical information on the application value of different approaches in ECD. These included the Waldorf, Montessori and other interpretations of

// it has already become clear that different interpretations of a social constructivist approach are implemented //

a social constructivist approach, which foregrounds the construction of meaning through mediation and interaction in a particular context.

While the research team has still to conduct observations in two more provinces, it has already become clear that although different interpretations of a social constructivist approach are implemented, signs of other theories are also evident in practice.

These research findings will feed into a final composite investigation report, which aims to make recommendations to strengthen a curriculum framework and provide direction in an approach that underpins the effective development of ECD in South Africa. The intended exit level identified in the framework analysis will feed into a longitudinal study planned for 2018.

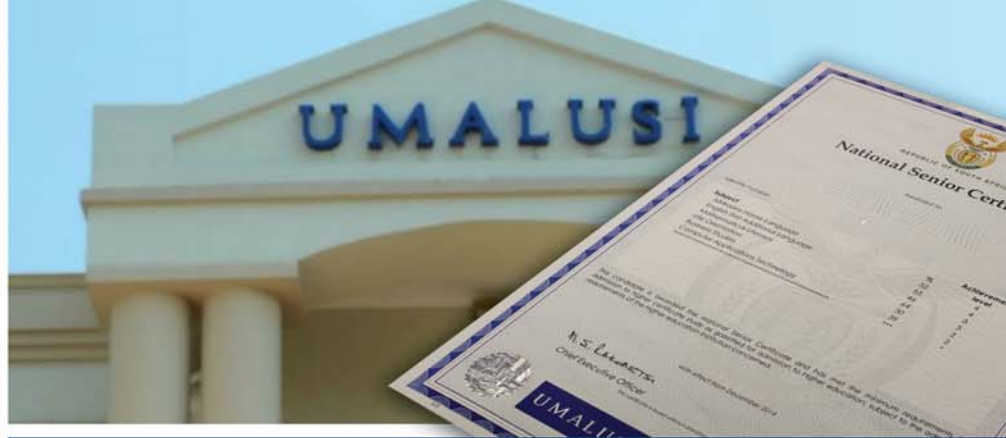
This research will enable Umalusi to provide guidance in the very early stages of development. No stone is left unturned to find substantial evidence of how very young South Africans could be prepared for the requirements of the 21st century.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT





Zolile Hlabeni



Certification: what every examination candidate should know

The certificate that Umalusi issues to a candidate who has complied with the requirements for a qualification is one of the most important documents in the life of that person. This certificate is a crucial pathway to continuous education and the labour market. It is, therefore, important to be as informed as possible, even in the early stages of a school career.

The certificate is the crown of success and reflects the hard work of several role players over a number of years. The role players may include the school or institution of learning, the candidates and their parents, the assessment body (education department or private assessment body) and Umalusi (Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training). Several processes are undertaken by these role players before a certificate is issued.

The first important aspect is that for Umalusi to issue a certificate for a qualification, the qualification must be registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework.



Umalusi is currently responsible for the certification of the following qualifications:

In schools:

- Senior Certificate (as amended) (SC) – examination written in June annually
- National Senior Certificate (NSC) – replaced the Senior Certificate in 2008

In further education and training colleges:

- National Technical Certificate (N3)
- National Senior Certificate (Vocational) – being phased out
- National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)) Levels 2–4

In adult learning centres:

- General Education Training Certificate (GETC): Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) equivalent to Grade 9 on schools level.

Secondly, the qualification and its underpinning curricula should be offered by either the Department of Basic Education (NSC, SC (a)); Department of Higher Education and Training (NC(V)); or by a private assessment body accredited by Umalusi. Private assessment bodies offer a range of qualifications from NQF Level 1 to 4.

Registration

It is of the utmost importance that candidates enter the correct information on their registration forms, including:

i. The applicable subjects to qualify them for the qualification and intended continuous study. Learners/candidates must ensure that they fully understand the status of a qualification or programme.

ii. Personal details, exactly as they appear in one's identity book, birth certificate or passport must be entered on the registration forms. The personal details on the certificate issued by Umalusi will be as provided by candidates at the point of registration. If no ID number is supplied, no certificate can be issued. It is essential that the candidate ensures that personal details such as name, surname, date of birth and ID number are correctly registered at their institution before they depart from the school after the last examination.

In cases where there is a change in a candidate's personal particulars or it is noted that a school has incorrect information, such changes should be brought to the attention of the school and be corrected before the final examination.

If candidates are not enrolled at a public school, they must fully understand the accreditation status of the institution offering the qualification. Private institutions must be accredited by Umalusi. Depending on the qualification, it must be registered at either the Department of Basic Education or Higher Education and Training to offer tuition for qualifications certified by Umalusi. If an independent school is not accredited by Umalusi, or loses its accreditation status, there is a danger that candidates at that school will not be issued with certificates.



Certification process

The certification process for the final examination in November of each year starts with the quality assurance and approval of the results by Umalusi. Before the Ministers of Education release the results for the November examination, Umalusi will have conducted several quality assurance steps to ensure that the examination was fair and was conducted properly.

After the main examination in November and the release of the results in January the following year, re-marking, re-checking of scripts and any supplementary examinations follow. Once these processes have been completed, the assessment bodies ask Umalusi to certify and issue certificates to those candidates who qualify and comply with the requirements for achievement of the qualification. This process usually takes place during April or May for the main examination and in July/August for the supplementary examination. It is important to note that Umalusi only accepts and deals with assessment bodies and does not engage directly with candidates.

Umalusi issues certificates for full qualifications, as well as subject statements for candidates who have passed subjects, but have not yet qualified for a full qualification. Candidates may apply to combine subjects passed during different examination cycles if the subject results conform to qualification requirements.

The certification process continues throughout the year for adult and vocational qualifications when examinations are conducted other than during November. These qualifications include the N courses and the GETC for Adults.

Throughout the year there is a steady flow of requests from assessment bodies for re-issues, combinations and replacement certificates. Such applications are made by the candidate through their respective assessment body, either the public assessment bodies (Departments of Education) or an accredited assessment body via an independent school.

Re-issuing of certificates

Umalusi, in meeting its certification responsibility, makes every effort to ensure the credibility and validity of the certificates it issues. In cases where a certificate has been found to be issued with incorrect personal particulars or subject details, and where sufficient evidence can be presented by the certificate holder and the assessment body to Umalusi that an error occurred during processes that preceded certification, Umalusi will consider re-issuing the certificate with the correct details.

Re-issue of certificates issued by Umalusi can be requested under the following conditions:

i. The original certificate has been lost and could not be traced by the certificate holder. The following is required:

- a. The certificate holder must prepare a detailed affidavit duly signed and certified by a commissioner of oaths stating what happened to the certificate; and
- b. The application, affidavit and certification fee must be submitted to the assessment body.

ii. For correction of errors or amendments to personal details on an original certificate and a request for a re-issue, the following is required:

- a. The original certificate issued by Umalusi must accompany all requests for the correction of information;
- b. A detailed affidavit certified by a Commissioner of Oaths noting the change requested, the reason for the request and the reason the error was not detected and corrected prior to the certificate being issued by Umalusi;
- c. Certified copy of ID/birth certificate issued prior to the writing of the examination;
- d. Completed application form and certification fee payable to the assessment body;
- e. A certified copy of the legal document issued by the Department of Home Affairs indicating changes effected to the population register (where applicable).

Umalusi is currently reviewing its policy on the re-issuing of certificates previously issued by Umalusi or its predecessor. The policy will provide the parameters for the re-issuing of a certificate and what documentation will be required as supporting evidence for Umalusi to consider any changes.

Verification of qualifications

Umalusi is the only institution that can verify a certificate it has issued to a candidate. The definitive attribute on the certificate is the certificate number: this is unique for every document Umalusi issues. A proper validation of a candidate's qualification can only be done against this unique number.

It is important to note that verification of certificates is done against what was printed on the certificate – not necessarily what is reflected on the Identity Document. For example, a certificate issued that includes a nickname that is not reflected on an ID cannot be verified.

Umalusi has records of all learner achievements from November 1992 to date. All certificates issued before November 1992 must be verified by the Department of Basic Education (school qualifications) or the Department of Higher Education and Training (vocational and adult qualifications) as appropriate.

Umalusi does not engage directly with members of the public on verification services. Umalusi provides a verification function to clients, by means of signed contracts, to perform the validation of a candidate's qualification. Individuals or companies that require validations must apply for the service through a verification agency. The contact details for some verification agencies can be accessed on the Umalusi website at www.umalusi.org.za under the certification and verification heading. A complete list of active verification clients can also be obtained from Umalusi.

The National Senior Certificate and the National Certificate (Vocational) are registered on the same NQF Level (NQF L4), but serve different purposes

PURPOSE OF QUALIFICATION

- Equip learners with skills, knowledge and values for self-fulfillment and meaningful participation in society
- Facilitate transition to the workplace
- Provide access to further education



- Equip learners with practical skills, applied competence and knowledge required for employment in a particular occupation or trade
- Facilitate transition to the workplace
- Provide access to further education

YEARS TO COMPLETE

- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12

Each grade takes minimum one year



- NC(V) Level 2
- NC(V) Level 3
- NC(V) Level 4

Each level takes minimum one year

TO OBTAIN THE QUALIFICATION

Register for 7 subjects:

- Home Language
- First Additional Language
- Maths/Maths Literacy
- Life Orientation
- 3 subjects chosen from 1 of the 12 organising fields of learning including Agriculture, Services and Human and Social Studies



Register for 7 subjects:

- 1 Official language
- Life Orientation
- Maths/Maths Literacy
- 4 subjects chosen from 1 of the 19 learning programmes including Engineering, Finance, IT, Tourism, etc

PASS REQUIREMENTS

- To obtain the qualification one must pass at least 6 subjects

40%

minimum in 3 subjects including Home Language

30%

minimum in 3 subjects



- To obtain the qualification one must pass 7 subjects

40%

in required official language

30%

minimum in Maths/ Maths Literacy

40%

in Life Orientation

50%

minimum in each of 4 vocational subjects

WHERE IT IS OFFERED

Public Schools or Independent Schools accredited by Umalusi



Public or Private Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges accredited by Umalusi



The 12th Southern Africa Association of Educational Assessment (SAAEA) Conference

Venue: The Capital Hotel, Menlyn Maine, Pretoria, Gauteng Province

Date: 14 – 16 May 2018

Keynote Speakers



- **Dr Jeanne Gamble**
Honorary Research Associate in the School of Education, University of Cape Town, South Africa



- **Prof Desmond Laubscher**
Chief Executive Officer: The Design Centre, Cape Town, South Africa



- **Prof Richard Tabulawa**
Dean of Education, Acting Vice-Chancellor at the University of Botswana, Botswana



- **Dr Joseph Kivilu**
Former CEO: Kenya National Examinations Council

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UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training