

# Makoyda

Official Newsletter of Umalusi

June 2019



**South African Sign Language:**  
Occupying its rightful place in the NSC qualification

**Granting assessment concessions:**  
Why, and in what circumstances?

**Combating NSC examination malpractice:** The case of the DBE

UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in  
General and Further Education and Training



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## From the Editor's Pen

*Lucky Ditaunyane*



Welcome to this issue of Makoya, Umalusi's official external newsletter. It is amazing that the first half of 2019 is already gone. This shows that, as the old adage says, 'time and tide wait for no man'. While this is true, one can only maximise the use of time through careful planning and judicious implementation of the plan.

As a Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, Umalusi remains committed to the achievement of its strategic objectives and goals in the medium to long term. To this end, the organisation can only achieve its goals if there is collaboration on different levels of the organisation. It is this teamwork that has enabled the organisation to implement its strategic plan in the first six months of this year.

Once again, we are delighted to bring you stories that depict key moments in the work of Umalusi so far. This publication highlights, in the main, the work done by Umalusi's Quality Assurance of Assessment units, which entails quality assurance of the administration, management and conduct of national examinations in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.

As usual, Makoya contains vital information about the work of Umalusi. Over the years, Umalusi has positioned itself as one of the key stakeholders in education. We are constantly looking for opportunities to communicate significant, strategic messages about the mandate and work of the organisation to our external stakeholders. Makoya – Umalusi's official newsletter – is one of the platforms that we use to achieve this goal. Enjoy!



## From the CEO's Desk

*Dr Mafu Rakometsi*

In the past three months I have had the opportunity to interact with various stakeholders with the aim of sharing crucial information on Umalusi's work and mandate. Among them, I've lined up a series of information sessions for Education faculties of some universities with the aim of communicating the mandate of Umalusi in relation to higher education and training, e.g. the value of Umalusi qualifications; and the implications of quality issues for higher education. The information sessions also touch specifically on the standardisation of exit point results. This is an area of our work that needs to be explained to our stakeholders.

My aim is to also take this advocacy campaign to provincial legislatures and provincial departments of education. As a public entity, we are aware of our responsibility to account to the South African public on all aspects of our work, in particular issues pertaining to our legislative mandate.

It gives me great pleasure to express my thoughts regarding the work of Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training. Umalusi is a statutory body that was founded by an Act of Parliament, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act No. 58 of 2001. In addition to the GENFETQA Act, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008 gives effect to the work and mandate of Umalusi as a quality council in the general and further education and training band of our education system.

There is no doubt that the work of Umalusi is constantly changing in tandem with the ever-changing landscape of our education system. This is caused by undulations in external environmental factors such as socio-cultural, political, legal, technological, economic and global influences. As a public entity and a significant player in education, Umalusi is constantly looking for ways to make itself relevant within the context in which it operates.

This issue of Makoya contains important information regarding the work of two of our core units, the Quality Assurance of Assessment units for School Qualifications [QAA-SQ] and Post-School Qualifications [QAA-PSQ], whose main task is to quality assure the administration, management and conduct of national exit-point examinations. Part of our mandate as a Quality Council is to ensure that the national examinations that learners write are fair and credible.



*“Many lessons were learnt during the process...”*

*Mary-Louise Madalane*

*Senior Manager, QAA-SQ*

## South African Sign Language: Occupying its rightful place in the NSC qualification

### INTRODUCTION

In 2018 the Department of Basic Education (DBE) examined the subject South African Sign Language Home Language (SASL HL) for the first time. This subject was introduced in Grade 10 in 2016. A total of 58 candidates from 10 schools registered for the 2018 National Senior Certificate (NSC) SASL HL subject. Umalusi, as a quality council, is

mandated by the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act to quality assure the qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualification Sub-framework (GFETQSF) of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); as a result, the SASL HL was subjected to Umalusi quality assurance processes.



In 2017 Dr P Mchunu of Umalusi conducted a study to investigate how the assessment and examinations of the SASL HL should be conducted. The findings assisted the Quality Assurance of Assessment – School Qualifications (QAA-SQ) team to understand the intricacies of the SASL, which are important and necessary for the assessment and examination of the subject.

Among others, the following are important issues for creating a conducive environment for an SASL assessment/examination. The test developers must include native signers (qualified deaf academics and/or qualified hearing SASL professionals). Additionally:

- A panel or team of external moderators is encouraged for SASL HL moderation. Each panel or team should comprise one deaf SASL academic and two qualified SASL hearing professionals;
- The examination must take place in a SASL laboratory;
- No pen and paper should be used except when doing rough work;
- Assessments should be in the form of sign language with questions presented via laptops and answers recorded on laptops with webcams;
- Candidates' responses should be recorded and saved in the laptop drives;
- Learners' responses must be saved on flash drives and these are to be used during marking.

The findings were beneficial for Umalusi in conducting the quality assurance of the SASL HL assessment and examination.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE NOVEMBER 2018 SASL HL

In quality assuring the DBE assessment and examination of the SASL HL, the QAA-SQ Unit engaged in the following process:

- Moderation of question papers;
- Moderation of school-based assessment (SBA);
- State of readiness to conduct the SASL HL examination;
- Monitoring of the writing of the examination;
- Verification of the marking of the examination.

### • Moderation of question papers

All three SASL HL question papers, i.e. Paper 1, Paper 2 and Paper 3 written during the November 2018 NSC examinations, were externally moderated and approved by Umalusi.

### • State of readiness to conduct the SASL HL examination

The DBE formed a task team to help the schools prepare for the examinations. The team was comprised of DBE officials, educators from the 10 schools participating in the writing of SASL HL in the November 2018 NSC examinations and provincial education department officials.

Several meetings were held during which the schools were guided through the basic requirements for the conduct, administration and management of the SASL HL examinations.



Umalusi monitors visited the schools to establish how ready the schools were to conduct, administer and manage the SASL HL examinations. The schools were found to be ready for the examinations.

- **Moderation of the SBA tasks**

The SBA tasks sampled for moderation from the 10 schools were found to be at different levels of compliance with both SBA requirements and the assessment body's moderation.

Umalusi compiled feedback reports for the individual schools to help strengthen future SASL HL SBA.

- **Monitoring the writing of the examinations**

The SASL examination rooms were equipped with a sufficient number of laptops fitted with webcams for each candidate. The laptops complied with hardware and software requirements.

During the writing of the examinations each examination room had a technician on standby in case anything went wrong with the equipment used.

- **Verification of the marking of the examinations**

The marking of the scripts was centralised because the subject was being marked for the first time and the small number of scripts.

This provided the DBE with an opportunity to manage the process and attend timeously to any challenges experienced during marking. Umalusi quality assured the process.

The marking was not done in a conventional manner. The candidates' responses, which were signed and saved on flash drives, were projected on laptops and a rubric was used to score responses.

Umalusi SASL HL moderators, one deaf and three others, who were all deaf professionals, verified a sample of scripts marked by the DBE markers.

## CONCLUSION

Many lessons were learnt during the process; however, the DBE's conduct, administration and management of the November 2018 SASL HL examinations was satisfactory. It was a good first time experience, and one that will be used to strengthen quality assuring the assessment and examinations of this subject.

The quality assurance of the SASL HL assessments and examinations is covered in the document, "Report on the Quality Assurance of the Department of Basic Education November 2018 National Senior Certificate Examinations and Assessment", available on the Umalusi website [www.umalusi.org.za](http://www.umalusi.org.za).



*Marisa du Toit*  
*Senior Manager, QAA-PSQ*

## Granting assessment concessions: Why, and in what circumstances?

Umalusi must ensure the credibility of both the internal assessment and external examinations leading to qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.

Applications for assessment concessions for both internal assessment and external examinations are from time to time received from assessment bodies. Concessions

(also known as accommodations) are implemented where warranted to ensure that candidates are not unfairly disadvantaged because of administrative errors, omissions or other valid reasons.

Situations that might warrant assessment concessions could arise either during assessment or thereafter. As much as examination question papers go through a series of quality assurance processes,





errors might still creep in. Examples of such are missing information due to non-compatibility of different software programs or questions interpreted differently than intended. Furthermore, scripts may be lost during the transportation of answer books from the examination centre to the marking centre. At times, a candidate may be absent from one component of assessment for reasons of trauma or illness, or unforeseen circumstances resulting from a natural disaster.

Assessment bodies must follow due procedure for concessions to be granted. For example, in applications for marking concessions requests for mark totals to be reduced must be requested before the commencement of marking for that subject. Other concessions must be submitted to Umalusi within 30 days of the release of the candidates' results. There are also clear stipulations on the supporting documents that must be submitted as proof. These include, among others and depending on the concession request: attendance registers; incident reports by the chief invigilator or invigilator; declaration statement by the affected candidate; proof of the candidate's examination registration form/admission letter/timetable; answer script or evidence of internal assessment; and, where marking out of a reduced total is requested, the question paper and proposed amended marking guidelines of the subject.

In exceptional cases, a candidate may be exempted from an examination: if, due

to serious illness, the candidate is unable to write an examination in not more than one subject, or one paper in that subject, a detailed medical report from the specialist physician spanning the period of incapacitation must be submitted to the assessment body. The assessment body will study the report and, if the case warrants such, submit a recommendation to Umalusi for exemption.

Candidates who fail to present themselves for any of the compulsory internal assessment components will not be resulted for that component. Those candidates' results will therefore be regarded as "incomplete".

Umalusi will not process a concession request if the request is incomplete. It may also request additional information or evidence where it seems fit to do so.

The merit of each assessment concession request is carefully considered before it is either granted or rejected, to ensure that the credibility of the examination is not compromised. Where calculations are required, for example in the case of missing scripts, the calculations are done by Umalusi statisticians in the Statistical Information and Research (SIR) Unit according to specified principles. The outcomes of all concession applications are recorded and communicated to the relevant assessment body. The results of such "concession" candidates can be released only after approval for the release of results by Umalusi.



**Andy Thulo**

*Manager, Monitoring & Evaluation*

## Combating NSC examination malpractice: The case of the DBE

**E**xaminations, as generally observed, provoke anxiety in candidates. This is a reflection of a fear of failure at the end of a course of study. Its severity depends largely on how prepared candidates are for the examination.

It is well documented that examinations administered by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) have been exposed to cases of serious examination malpractice. A case in point was the leaking of question papers for Mathematics in 2016 and Life Sciences in 2017.

In the legal arena, examination malpractice constitutes an offence under annexure M of the regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination, published as Government

Regulation Notice No. R872 in Government Regulation Gazette No. 31337 of 29 August 2008 and amended as Notice No. 371 in Government Gazette No. 37651 dated 16 May 2014.

By definition, examination malpractice is regarded as an act wherein examination rules are flouted. From this, one can deduce that malpractice in an examination involves a deliberate act of wrongdoing; and one that is contrary to official examination laws or rules. Such wrongdoing is intended to place a candidate at an unfair advantage, or disadvantage, over others.

Now, if assessment bodies accredited to conduct, administer and manage examinations, and candidates who are registered to write the examinations, contravene the provisions of the law as



outlined under annexure M, pages 153-160 of the regulation, the law should apply and sanctions must be enforced.

To reflect on the 2016/17 compromise to the credibility of examinations, one can ask: "What lessons were learned from the 2016/17 examination irregularities?" It became clear that the DBE had to consider strengthening its security of examination materials and encouraged to have strategies in place to reduce irregular examination occurrences and incidents of wrongdoing.

Indeed, there are notable strategies in place, which assessment bodies like the DBE have implemented to minimise the rate at which examination malpractices were occurring. Since 2017, a significant decrease in examination wrongdoing intended to jeopardise the credibility of the examinations was reported.

In this instance, our observation is limited to examination irregularities classified as serious. The following are some of the strategies put in place to curb such occurrences:

- a) An awareness campaign to teach candidates and communities about the consequences of examination irregularities.
- b) A national signing of an examination pledge by candidates and their parents. The ceremony is held annually in October by provincial departments of education. The final date is determined by the DBE.
- c) Annual provincial training of chief invigilators, with the objective being to ensure absolute implementation of their roles and responsibilities during invigilation.

d) Boosting of the efficiency and effectiveness of the nine Provincial Examination Irregularities Committees and the National Examination Irregularities Committee, established to deal with cases of serious behavioural offences and acts of dishonesty. It is part of these committees' responsibilities to ensure that, where there is adequate proof of wrongdoing, appropriate sanctions are instituted against perpetrators who are found guilty.

e) Chapter 10 and annexure M of the regulation pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of the NSC examinations have been reviewed to address inconsistencies in the application of sanctions.

Through the implementation and close monitoring of these strategies, the DBE and provincial departments of education managed to significantly reduce the rate at which examination irregularities were occurring. This effort must be used as a platform for innovations to curb future challenges arising from fast-growing developments in information technology.

Umalusi, the watchdog for quality and standards in general and further education and training, commends the DBE for putting strategies in place to expose parties involved in the conduct, administration and management of NSC examinations to the potential for examination irregularities and malpractice. These strategies should be seen as a means of safeguarding the credibility of exit-point examinations of qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF).



*Dr Nkoloyakhe Mpanza  
Manager, QAA-PSQ-AET*

## Site-based assessment in the AET sector: 'Quality implementation is critical'

### INTRODUCTION

The General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training Level 4 (GETC: ABET L4) qualification requires that adult students are assessed in two different ways. To acquire a qualification, students must complete internal assessment,

commonly known as site-based assessment (SBA) which contributes 50% towards the final mark per learning area. The other 50% comes from summative assessment (examinations). Umalusi conducts quality assurance of assessment processes for the GETC: ABET L4 qualification.



Quality assurance of assessment in the GETC: ABET L4 qualification includes evaluation and judgement of the quality and standard of the SBA conducted by providers at the private adult education and training (AET) sites as well as at public community learning centres (CLC).

## WHAT IS SBA?

SBA is defined as the assessment of the student on an ongoing basis over a period of time where cumulative judgements of the student's abilities in specific areas are made to facilitate further positive learning.

SBA is formative in nature. Some researchers believe that assessment becomes formative when the information is used to adapt teaching and learning to meet students' needs. Others see formative assessment as those activities that are used to improve learning. Although its purpose is to improve the quality of learning, SBA also provides information on what, how much and how well students are learning. Formative assessment is also defined as a range of formal, non-formal and informal ongoing assessment procedures that are used to focus teaching and learning activities to improve student attainment; or which are required for the purpose of a year mark.

## THE PURPOSE OF SBA

SBA is seen as an alternative way to assess what students know and can do, other than through an examination. SBA therefore complements the examinations.

SBA aims to test skills that cannot be assessed during examinations. SBA helps students to develop a variety of skills through multiple opportunities under different conditions

and situations. It may comprise assessment of oral and practical work (depending on learning area content), classroom-based work, class tests, assignments, projects, investigations, simulations, case studies, worksheets, demonstrations and role-plays, among others.

## DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF SBA

Assessment bodies are responsible for the setting, internal moderation and implementation of SBA tasks, in line with assessment guidelines. Umalusi quality assures all SBA tasks before they are implemented at learning sites to ensure that they are of an acceptable quality and standard.

## MODERATION OF SBA PORTFOLIOS OF EVIDENCE

Student responses to SBA tasks are filed in a portfolio of evidence (PoE) and are presented for moderation by the assessment body and Umalusi. The purpose of external moderation of SBA portfolios by Umalusi is to:

- Ensure that the SBA portfolios comply with the assessment guidelines of the assessment body as well as Umalusi directives;
- Verify the quality of internal moderation by the assessment body;
- Ensure consistency of judgements with respect to the levels of student achievement;
- Provide feedback to both students and facilitators; and
- Report on the quality of SBA portfolios within assessment bodies.



This process also ensures that the results can be declared fair, reliable and valid.

## CHALLENGES

Common challenges with SBA are inconsistencies in the conduct, monitoring and moderation of SBA across nine differently constituted provincial education departments and two private assessment bodies. A lack, or insufficient, training of lecturers and facilitators in the quality implementation of SBA at site level is another challenge. Other challenges observed include a lack of, or insufficient, monitoring of the conduct of SBA by assessment bodies, non-submission of facilitator portfolios of assessment, and the prevalence of different kinds of irregularities.

## CONCLUSION

Since the SBA and examinations in the GETC: ABET L4 qualification carry equal weight, it is of utmost importance that the two components are implemented with extreme care to ensure the credibility of the marks.

The quality implementation of SBA is critical. Improper implementation of SBA impacts negatively on the credibility of SBA marks and the final mark per student per learning area. It is the responsibility of all assessment bodies to ensure that the implementation process is continuously monitored.

There is a need for the training of lecturers and facilitators in the following areas:

- Provision of guidance to students prior to assessment (e.g. assessment criteria, rubrics, etc.);
- Incorporation of assessment plans into work schedules for teaching and learning;
- Documents to be included in portfolios of evidence;
- Provision of constructive feedback to students; and
- Accuracy and consistency in marking (adherence to marking guidelines).

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*Umalusi conducts quality assurance of assessment processes for the GETC: ABET L4 qualification.*

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## 2019 QAA-Schools workshop: Assessments for the 4th industrial revolution

**Nomaswazi Shabalala**  
QAA-SQ

The Quality Assurance of Assessment: Schools (QAA-SQ) sub-unit holds annual workshops to train external moderators and verifiers, to reflect on the previous year's processes and to plan for the current year.

The 2019 workshop was held from 28 February to 2 March 2019 at Southern Sun Hotel (OR Tambo Airport) in Gauteng. Although the training session did not achieve 100% attendance, the Schools sub-unit was proud of the 90% attendance it attracted.

The following were the objectives of the workshop, all of which were attained and translated into plans:

- To reflect on the 2018 quality assurance processes;
- To enhance the efficiency of the quality

assurance of assessment of the National Senior Certificate (NSC);

- To consider how language hampers the attainment of competencies in preparing moderators for the 4th industrial revolution;
- To use post-exam analysis as a tool for validating examinations and equating standards.

The first day was split into two sessions, with the morning session dedicated to newly appointed external moderators and verifiers. New participants were introduced to the Umalusi mandate, the regulatory framework and quality assurance processes.

The afternoon session allowed seasoned external moderators and verifiers to induct the new into the trade. A very good mix



of old and new members were grouped into five commissions, each of which was allocated a topic to discuss and report on. The purpose was to have the members reflect on their practices and identify, preserve and enhance best practices. The QAA Unit thus had an opportunity to strengthen its most remarkable assets, the external moderators and verifiers.

The following topics were allotted to each group:

**Commission 1:** Current and future competencies

**Commission 2:** Moderation of internal assessments (SBA, PAT and Orals)

**Commission 3:** Moderation of subjects with a practical component

**Commission 4:** Verification of marking

The afternoon session witnessed a litany of thoughts and ideas, a mutation of novelties breeding new impressions, all woven together in search of improved smart operating processes that are in concert with the demands of the 4th industrial revolution. A number of proposals, as follows, were tabled for Umalusi to interrogate:

- Umalusi can champion the drive towards 21st century competencies – compliance, as stated in the moderation tool, must reflect the aspirations of the 21st century in the means of assessment.
  - A shift is necessary and Umalusi must 'BITE' – take charge, be more assertive and be the disruptive force.
  - Umalusi must share identified good practices with those provinces where lack of compliance is evident.
- Considering the high number of Afrikaans schools, recruitment should include bilingual moderators to moderate in Afrikaans-medium schools.
  - Umalusi must start preparing external moderators and verifiers for online moderation systems.
  - For external moderator and verifier safety, Umalusi should arrange with provincial officials to have moderators accompanied to centre/s when verifying practical examinations.

A well-pitched and insightful presentation on post-exam analysis set the tone for the year ahead. The quality of the presentation was enhanced by its being data driven; and the robust, rigorous and open debate of all participants was appreciated. Respect for the audience was evident in the prepared presentations and thoughtful responses.

External moderators emphasised that there was a great need for achieving common understanding of the concepts 'cognitive demand' and 'level of difficulty'; and how, in practical terms, to effectively apply the framework.

## CONCLUSION

The workshop was seen as a success proportionate to the demands of the tasks it addressed and all objectives were achieved. The seasoned and inexperienced external moderators and verifiers blended well and produced a wealth of knowledge through perceptive debate and discussion. Concerns and recommendations were clearly stated for Umalusi to interrogate.





## Ongoing reviews of the NC(V) ISAT maintain curriculum relevance

**Sello Molekwa**  
Assistant Manager, QAA-PSQ

### BACKGROUND

The integrated summative assessment task (ISAT) is a compulsory practical component of the external summative assessment for the vocational subjects in the National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)) qualifications. The ISAT is set nationally by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and administered at sites of learning. The ISAT mark constitutes 15% towards the final examination mark of each vocational subject.

The ISAT plays a central role in expressing the vocational nature of the NC(V) qualification as it requires the demonstration of the practical application of theoretical knowledge through the performance of assessment tasks that replicate, or simulate, a workplace or real-life process and/or product. Performance in these practical assessments is therefore used by industry as a measure to determine the readiness of NC(V) graduates to enter the workplace.



Each candidate enrolled for the NC(V) offers seven subjects: three fundamental subjects and four vocational subjects. The NC(V) programmes were introduced with a programme ISAT for the three core vocational subjects; and one ISAT for each of the optional vocational subjects (electives) per programme.

### JUSTIFICATION FOR REVIEW

The review of ISAT is necessary to ensure that it remains current. Other reasons for the review of ISAT include, among others:

- Curriculum content is reviewed;
- Amendments to legislation and regulations in the subject field are taken into account;
- Cost of materials and equipment required to implement tasks are considered;
- An outdated ISAT would constitute a lack of validity and/or relevance; and
- Shortcomings in ISAT tools and instruments that lead to inconsistent scoring across different centres are reviewed.

The DHET in 2018 reviewed 11 Level 3 and 10 Level 4 ISAT for implementation in 2019. Umalusi moderated ISAT for 20 of the 21 subjects reviewed for implementation in 2019.

### 2019 ISAT REVIEW

The DHET is to review the ISAT for NC(V) Level 2 during 2019, for implementation in 2020. In addition, the DHET has begun a review of the ISAT of the subjects affected by curriculum/content change in the following programmes:

- Safety in Society and;
- Information Technology and Computer Science.

### UMALUSI MODERATION

Umalusi verifies the standard and quality of the reviewed ISAT through moderation. The purpose of moderation of the reviewed ISAT is to:

- Confirm the appropriateness and standard of the ISAT;
- Highlight areas of good practice; and
- Give directives for improvement and compliance.

### SYSTEMIC IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

The DHET has in the past experienced systemic and policy challenges in the implementation of programme ISAT for learners who progressed to the next level after having passed only five or six subjects. The promotion requirements are that the learner may enrol only for the next level in subjects passed and is allowed to carry some subjects from the previous level. The implementation of ISAT became problematic, especially when a learner was found to have enrolled for a core vocational subject at different NC(V) levels. The situation created challenges for both lecturers and learners, who were required to perform the whole programme ISAT (three core vocational subjects ISAT) even though the learners had enrolled for only one or two core vocational subjects at a specific level.

To facilitate unhindered progression between NC(V) levels, from 2016 vocational subject ISAT were implemented progressively (in place of programme ISAT).

# PICTURE POWER



**Umalusi staff at the SAAEA conference in Botswana.**

**L-R:** Mr Mapaleng Lekgeu, Ms Sithembile Mngoma, Dr Gugulethu Nkambule, Dr Mafu Rakometsi (Umalusi CEO), Ms Stella Mosimege, Dr Nkoloyakhe Mpanza, Ms Mary-Louise Madalane, Ms Agnes Mohale, Ms Pauline Masemola and Ms Nihabeleng Lepota.



Ms Lydia Den Heyer sharing info with a stakeholder at the Youth Career Development Expo in Nasrec, Soweto



**Umalusi staff at the SAAEA conference in Botswana attending cultural evening...**

**L-R:** Ms Agnes Mohale, Ms Sithembile Mngoma, Dr Stephan Mchunu and Ms Stella Mosimege.



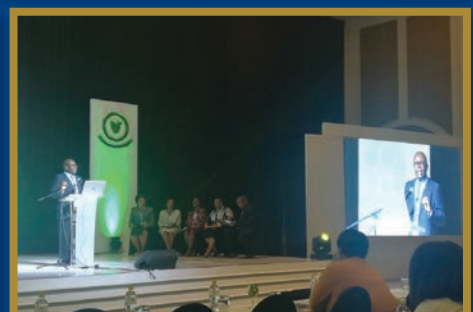
**L-R:** Umalusi CFO Ms Jacomien Rousseau, Ms Josephine Moloj, representative from Sanlam and Umalusi CEO Dr Mafu Rakometsi handing over a prize to wellness day competition winner Ms Moloj



Mr Andy Thulo conducting a workshop with Umalusi stakeholders



Umalusi wellness day on 29 March 2019



Umalusi staff delivering papers at the SAAEA conference in Botswana, Gaborone



## 2019 training for AET, TVET external moderators: 'Robust engagement' focused on cognitive demand and levels of difficulty



The Post-School Qualifications Unit is comprised of two sub-units, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector and the Adult Education and Training (AET) sector. The sub-units hold regular training sessions for their cohorts of external moderators. This training, which is compulsory, aims to build capacity and enhance the quality and standard of quality assurance of assessment processes for the two sectors.

In 2019, annual training for the AET sub-unit's external moderators was held from 20

to 22 February at the Garden Court Hotel in Johannesburg. This was facilitated by the sub-unit manager, together with his assistant manager and an administration assistant. The focus was on issues that pertain to cognitive demand and levels of difficulty of examination questions. This was facilitated by Mr Biki Lepota of the Statistical Information and Research (SIR) Unit of Umalusi.

Training for the TVET sector was decentralised as this was seen as the most cost-effective model: on 16 February training took place in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal; on



**AET 2019 training taking place at the Garden Court Hotel, Johannesburg**



**TVET 2019 training under way at the Department of Basic Education Conference Centre, Pretoria**

17 February in Pretoria, Gauteng; and on 23 February in Cape Town, Western Cape. The sub-unit's manager, assisted by three assistant managers and an administration assistant, facilitated the various sessions. The training emphasised the links between moderators' work and the processes involved in standardisation and approval for release of results.

Additionally, all the training sessions provided opportunities to:

- Share best practices in quality assurance activities and to discuss matters of common interest;
- Discuss and resolve problems/challenges encountered during any past quality assurance processes;
- Discuss new trends and any policy changes;
- Improve templates and instruments for reporting processes; and
- Build camaraderie between external moderators and Umalusi staff.

Such annual training sessions are held in addition to the initial, intensive, three-day training sessions that are compulsory for all newly appointed external moderators.

Training sessions for new appointees are usually conducted at Umalusi premises, since the role of Umalusi as a quality council and the role of external moderators in the fulfilling

of Umalusi's mandate is contextualised. Umalusi staff and the trainees discuss, step-by-step, all quality assurance processes they will be involved with, to equip them for the tasks at hand. The processes for which training are provided include:

- Moderation of question papers;
- Moderation of the integrated summative assessment tasks (ISAT) and the practical assessment tasks (PAT) (TVET sector);
- Moderation of site-based assessment portfolios and common assessment tasks (AET sector);
- Monitoring and moderation of the conduct of internal assessment (TVET colleges);
- Participating in the standardisation of the marking guideline discussions; and
- Verification of marking.

During training the "what" of each quality assurance of assessment process is highlighted; reasons "why" a particular process is undertaken by the quality council are provided; and matters around the "when, where, who", in terms of the different quality assurance of assessment processes, also receive attention.

Moderators said they enjoyed the positive experience of the 2019 AET and TVET training, especially given the robustness of discussions and levels of engagement.



## Credibility of ICASS: 'Mandatory responsibility' of TVET site management

**Nyaku Phasha**  
*Manager, QAA-PSQ-TVET*

**Internal assessments** are important as they not only prepare students for external examinations through formal assessment tasks and activities that support teaching and learning, but also build up internal continuous assessment (ICASS) marks that count towards the calculation of final marks.

It is on the basis of this assertion that the administration and management of ICASS at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sites of teaching and learning cannot be left to chance. College or campus management teams have a mandatory responsibility to ensure that the implementation of the ICASS is in accordance with prescribed requirements and does not compromise the integrity

of the qualifications and programmes offered at colleges. This is in line with policies and ICASS instructions, which state that ICASS marks should be subject to quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that uniformity of standards is maintained, thereby strengthening the credibility of the assessment in particular and the qualification in general.

So, it is the responsibility of the management at colleges to ensure that ICASS is implemented in such a manner that the mark derived thereof is acceptable and fair.

Continuous **moderation** and **monitoring** of assessment implementation help inhibit non-



compliance and sheer mediocrity. An area of concern with the implementation of ICASS is the lack of effective internal moderation. This process entails both pre- and post-assessment moderation and it is intended to determine the standards applied in setting tasks and in assessing students. Monitoring, which ensures that assessment is planned, administered and conducted according to the college internal assessment policy and plans, must of necessity be conducted by the management teams. During monitoring, the management teams must also ensure that internal moderation is carried out as per the ICASS instructions, and not mere “**shadow**” moderation.

**The credibility of the examination results** is also dependent on how well ICASS has been administered. ICASS, as one of the compulsory components of assessment in the resulting process, requires proper administration, management, conduct, recording and reporting of student performance in the tasks making up the ICASS component. The quality assurance mechanisms, i.e. moderation, monitoring and verification, which are inherent in the ICASS process, must therefore not be compromised. They should serve what they are intended to serve, i.e. to strengthen the credibility of internal assessment and, therefore, the qualifications and programmes. The college management teams must therefore ensure that the moderation processes are credible and fair; and ensure that monitoring of ICASS implementation and verification of marks are executed with utmost care. Only then would the examination results be credible and fair.

### **Consequence management for non-compliance**

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), as the assessment body, has displayed signs of improvement in terms of ICASS implementation over the years. Pockets of non-compliance are being dealt with through collaborative efforts between the assessment body and Umalusi. In the recent past, a three-day workshop was held by the assessment body with the college and campus management teams of perpetual perpetrators of ICASS implementation, in a bid to improve their implementation status. Selected sites were also visited jointly by the assessment body and Umalusi to monitor their ICASS implementation and give support where needed.

In conclusion, it is evident that the monitoring of ICASS implementation by college management teams would promote accountability, fairness and diligence, as well as provide an opportunity for the necessary support to be given to lecturers whose implementation of internal continuous assessment, including internal moderation, is being compromised. It should also be borne in mind that the quality of all assessment tasks and activities administered internally at sites of teaching and learning impact directly on the final examination marks and must therefore be credible, fair, valid, reliable and relevant. The ICASS is accepted when the mean of the ICASS is between 5% and 10% above that of the examination after standardisation. The onus, therefore, lies with the management teams, as the custodians of the curriculum, to ensure that ICASS implementation is not compromised so that the integrity of internal assessment, programmes and qualifications is sustained.

# STANDARDISATION OF NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS RESULTS



## What is standardisation?

A process used to eliminate the effect of factors other than the learners' knowledge, abilities and aptitude on their performance.

## Why standardise results?



- To ensure that learners are not advantaged or disadvantaged by factors other than their knowledge of the subject, abilities and aptitude.
- To achieve comparability and consistency of the results from one year to the next.



## Which assessment bodies' qualification results are standardised?

### Department of Higher Education and Training

- National Certificate (Vocational)
- General Education and Training Certificate
- N1-N3

### Department of Basic Education

- National Senior Certificate
- Senior Certificate (amended)

### Independent Examinations Board

- National Senior Certificate
- General Education and Training Certificate

### South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute

- National Senior Certificate

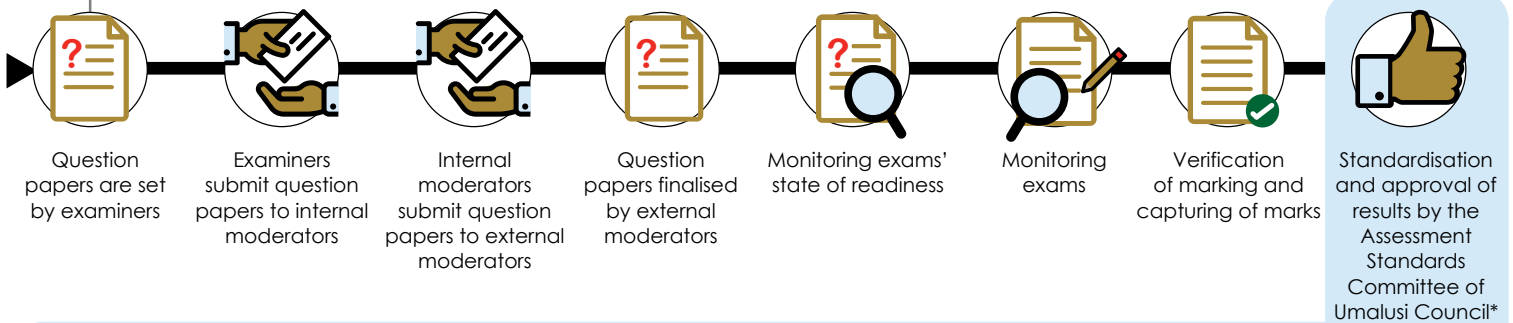
### Benchmark Assessment Agency

- General Education and Training Certificate

Raw marks are ideal

## STANDARDISATION IS A PROCESS

18 MONTHS PROCESS



1

Review of learner performance against historical performance of candidates in each subject

2

Historical average constructed using past 5 years' data

3

Pairs analysis provides further comparisons of raw marks

4

Standardisation of exam results and site-based assessment

\*The Assessment Standards Committee of Umalusi Council consists of independent academics with diverse expertise in assessment, statistics, mathematics and education

## STANDARDISATION PRINCIPLES



No adjustment should exceed 10% of the historical average in either direction (upward or downward)

If the distribution of the raw marks is below or above the historical average, the marks may be adjusted either way subject to limitations

In the case of an individual candidate, the adjustment effected should not exceed half of the raw mark obtained by the candidate

After considering qualitative and quantitative reports, Umalusi formulates positions on each subject: 'accept raw marks', 'upward adjustment' or 'downward adjustment'

