

**EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION
UNIT**

**REPORT ON
ACCREDITATION AND MONITORING OF
PRIVATE COLLEGES**

**FOR THE
PERIOD**

01 APRIL 2019 – 31 MARCH 2020

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Assessment Body
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AAC	Accreditation Appeals Committee
ACC	Accreditation Committee of Council
AET	Adult Education and Training
CET	Continuing Education and Training
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
E&A	Evaluation and Accreditation
EXCO	Executive Committee of Council
FET	Further Education and Training
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GET	General Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
IAC	Internal Accreditation Committee
LOI	Letter of Intent
NATED	National Education Programme (Report 190/191)
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PSQ	Post School Qualifications
QP	Quality Promotion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Umalusi comprises different units with specific objectives to be able to deliver on its mandate. One such unit is the Evaluation and Accreditation Unit. The Evaluation and Accreditation unit further comprises sub-units dealing with the evaluation, accreditation and monitoring of independent schools, private Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, and private Adult Education and Training centres, offering the curriculum / programmes leading to a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF), and private assessment bodies assessing the registered qualifications.

The accreditation process for private colleges comprises a number of steps. These are the completion of the Letter of intent to apply for accreditation, attendance by the applicant of a Quality Promotion workshop, submission of a self-evaluation report and accompanying evidence by the applicant, and evaluation of the applicant's self-evaluation report by Umalusi. Once the self-evaluation is successfully completed (that is, the evidence submitted meets the minimum required standard), the college is referred to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to be considered for provisional registration if the DHET requirements are met. A site verification visit will be conducted once provisionally registered colleges have implemented the qualification, conducted a national examination, and analysed their results. After the site visit a consolidated report is prepared and submitted to the secretariat of the Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC), who further quality assure the report and assign it to the ACC. The ACC considers the application and makes a recommendation of an accreditation decision; this recommendation is then submitted to the Umalusi Chief Executive Officer on behalf of Umalusi Council for approval.

Accreditation decisions on private colleges are based on criteria approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training. The outcome of an application for accreditation can be seven years accreditation, two years provisional accreditation, or no accreditation. If an institution is found not to meet the minimum standards for accreditation, it is granted a reasonable period ("window period") to improve on its submission prior to the accreditation decision being made.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Strategic Objective

The Evaluation and Accreditation (E&A) unit falls within Programme 3: Quality Assurance and Monitoring. The strategic objective of the E&A unit is to quality assure the private provisioning of the qualifications registered on the GFETQSF.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of Programme 3 is to ensure that the providers of education and training have the capacity to deliver and assess qualifications registered on the GFETQSF and are doing so to the expected standards and quality. The specific purpose of the E&A sub-programme is to provide quality assurance of provision of qualifications registered on the GFETQSF through evaluation and accreditation of private education institutions and private assessment bodies.

1.3 The scope of the E&A Post School Qualifications (PSQ) sub-unit

The E&A Post School Qualifications (PSQ) sub-unit deals with the evaluation, accreditation and monitoring of private colleges. This includes private Further Education and Training (FET) colleges offering the NATED Report 190/191 N1 to N3 Engineering Studies programme and the National Certificate (Vocational), as well as private Adult Education and Training Centres offering the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC:ABET) at NQF Level 1.

The Manager, Post School Qualifications, reports to the Senior Manager, Evaluation and Accreditation, who oversees the work of the unit and reports directly to the Executive Manager, Quality Assurance and Monitoring.

The organogram outlining the reporting structure within the Evaluation and Accreditation Unit is indicated in Figure 1 below.

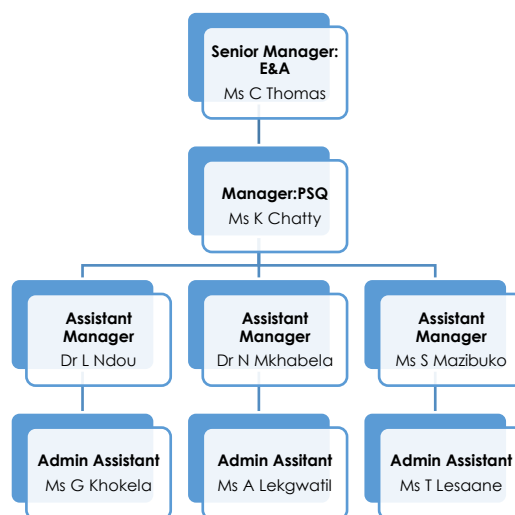


Figure 1: PSQ sub-unit organogram

1.4 Legislation underpinning the work of the E&A PSQ sub-unit.

Section 29(3) of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act No. 108 of 1996) provides for the establishment of private education institutions that-

- (a) Do not discriminate on the basis of race;
- (b) Are registered with the state; and
- (c) Maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.

The *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008* (Act No. 67 of 2008, as amended) provides for the establishment of Umalusi as a Quality Council that is responsible for the development and management of a sub-framework of qualifications at Levels 1-4 of the National Qualifications Framework and the related quality assurance processes.

- (a) The said Act determines that the Quality Council must, in respect of quality assurance within its Sub-framework -
 - (i) develop and implement policy for quality assurance;
 - (ii) ensure the integrity and credibility of quality assurance; and
 - (iii) ensure that quality assurance as is necessary for the sub-framework is undertaken.

The *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. 58 of 2001, as amended)* stipulates that the Council must in terms of sections 17A(2), and 23(1) and 24 respectively, develop policy and criteria for-

- (a) the accreditation of assessment bodies other than departments of education; and
- (b) the quality assurance of private education institutions and the accreditation to offer the curriculum/programme of a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.

Other legislation pertaining to the work of the E&A Post School Qualifications sub-unit includes:

- (a) *Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006 as amended)*, hereafter referred to as the *CET Act*;
- (b) Policy for the quality assurance of Private Colleges for Continuing Education and Training, offering Qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and the Accreditation of Private Assessment Bodies, published in Government Gazette No. 41887 of 7 September 2018.

1.5 Accreditation Criteria

Accreditation decisions are made on the basis of private education institutions meeting minimum standards in terms of the accreditation criteria. The approved criteria for a private college (i.e. private further education and training college and private adult education and training centre) to offer a qualification registered on the GFETQSF are as follows:

- Mission directed leadership and management
- Teaching, learning and training
- Assessment and results
- Learner support

2. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

2.1 Letter of intent (LOI) to apply for accreditation

The “Letter of intent” (LOI) to apply for accreditation is the private institution’s indication of its intent to apply for accreditation. It is an online process, which indicates whether the institution falls within Umalusi’s mandate for accreditation. Applications from private education institutions offering the following qualifications are accepted:

- The General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC:ABET)
- The National Certificate (Vocational)
- NATED Report 190/191 N1 – N3 Engineering Studies

Institutions which do not fall within Umalusi’s scope for accreditation are not able to continue with the accreditation process beyond this step.

Table 1: LOI received

	Private FET Colleges		Private Adult Education Centres	
	2019/2020	2018/19	2019/2020	2018/19
No. of Letters of intent to apply for accreditation received	Q1: 37 Q2: 30 Q3: 27 Q4: 07 101	Q1: 27 Q2: 32 Q3: 22 Q4: 57 138	Q1: 4 Q2: 8 Q3: 18 Q4: 0 30	Q1: 07 Q2: 10 Q3: 13 Q4: 15 45
Percentage screened within 7 days of receipt of payment for LOI	100%	100%	100%	100%

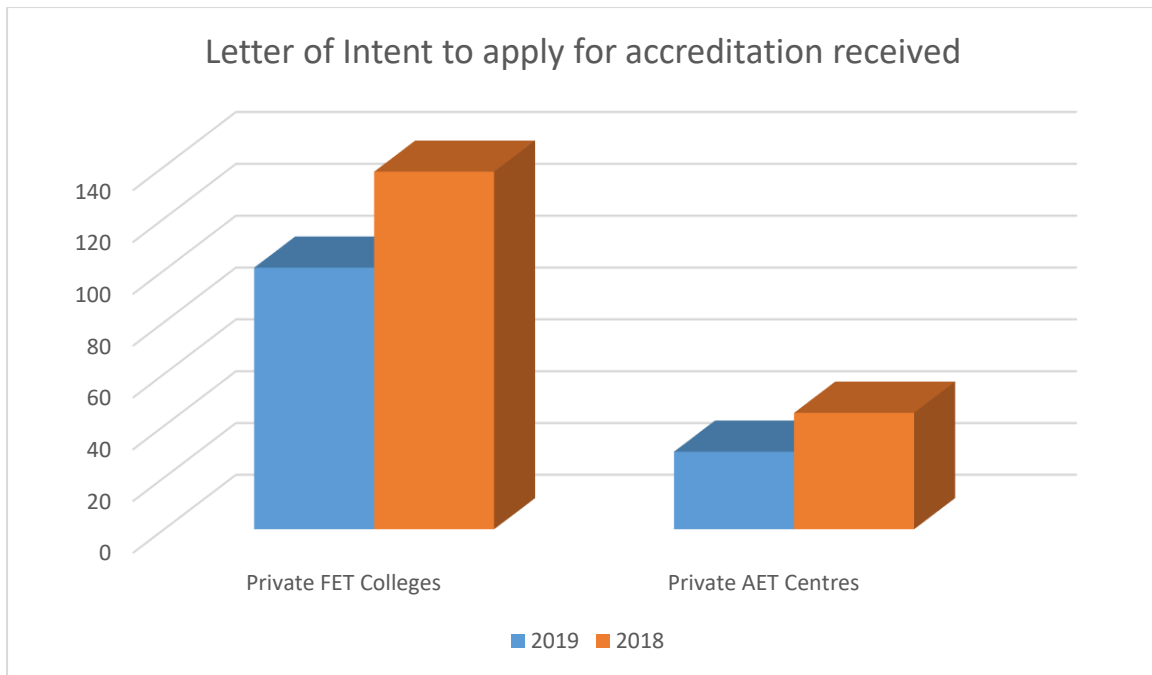


Figure 2: Letter of intent to apply for accreditation received

2.1.2 Areas of strength

- i. The process is online, therefore can be accessed from anywhere at any time.
- ii. Since it is an online process; documentation is stored electronically, which reduces the amount of paper-based evidence, which must be kept.

2.1.3 Areas of concern

- i. Some private education institutions have no understanding of the purpose of the qualification that they intend to offer.
- ii. Incorrect contact details provided by the private education institutions result in Umalusi being unable to communicate with them.
- iii. Since private education institutions are only invited to a Quality Promotion workshop after completing the Letter of Intent (LOI) to apply for accreditation, those that do not understand the Letter of Intent process and requirements have difficulty at that initial stage, especially on how to select subjects.
- iv. Some private colleges repeatedly change their company name which causes additional administrative challenges and delays in the process.

2.2 Quality Promotion workshops

As part of the accreditation process, private education institutions are required to attend a compulsory quality promotion workshop. At this workshop private education institutions are taken through the relevant legislation, the accreditation process, the documents needed as evidence and all that is required for the self-evaluation report, as well as what will take place during the verification site visit. This is to better equip applicants for the accreditation process and gives them an opportunity to ask questions on what they may not be familiar with. After the workshop, some colleges decide to cancel their applications if they feel that they will not meet the accreditation requirements. This is particularly prevalent amongst Adult Education and Training providers who do not wish to register as companies.

Table 2: Quality Promotion workshops conducted

Quality Promotion workshops conducted			
2019/20		2018/19	
21 May 2019	1	17 May 2018	1
04 July 2019	1	26 July 2018	1
07 August 2019	1	03 August 2018	1
19 September 2019	1	26 September 2018	1
20 September 2019	1	31 October 2018	1
14 November 2019	1	29 November 2018	1
13 February 2020	1	28 February 2019	1
March 2020	Cancelled due to COVID-19 situation	11 March 2019	1
Total	7	Total	8

2.2.1 Areas of strength

- i. The information provided to institutions during the Quality Promotion workshops clearly explains the processes and minimum requirements for accreditation.
- ii. Feedback from delegates at these meetings has been, in the main, very positive, thanking Umalusi for the information provided.

Some of the feedback received:

<i>Conduct more workshops as they help providers network with other providers and understand the sector. Gain a better understanding of what is expected.</i>
<i>Allows providers to interact with Umalusi staff and gain a better understanding of the qualification and its teaching, learning, and assessment requirements.</i>
<i>These workshops assist in sharing with other providers and provide an opportunity for best practice.</i>
<i>Conduct workshops more frequently.</i>
<i>Send monthly updates to colleges on latest changes and new developments in the educational landscape.</i>
<i>Friendly and courteous staff that responded and answered all questions clearly.</i>

2.2.2 Areas of concern

- i. It is difficult to plan dates and venues for Quality Promotion workshops in advance for the financial year since invitation to a Quality Promotion workshop is preceded by submission of a LOI to apply for accreditation or enquiry about the accreditation process. Plans are therefore dependent on the number of applications from private education institutions. Currently the subunit endeavours to hold a workshop every alternate month.

2.2.3 Recommendations for improvement

- i. The director/owner/campus manager or key people involved in submitting the evidence for the self-evaluation report for a college must attend the Quality Promotion workshops prior to starting the accreditation process, so that they are aware of the process and requirements for accreditation.

2.3 Self-evaluation report

Following acceptance of the letter of intent to apply for accreditation and attendance at a Quality Promotion workshop, private education institutions are required to complete an online self-evaluation report and upload an accompanying portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their compliance with the minimum criteria for accreditation. The self-evaluation instrument is only available to a private education institution once a representative of the institution has attended a Quality Promotion workshop, during which the entire process and requirements are explained. The Self-

evaluation report may only be submitted once the required Self-evaluation fee has been paid and verified.

Once the self-evaluation report has been submitted to Umalusi, trained evaluators and subject specialists are allocated specific criteria to evaluate the evidence online. If the submission by the institution is found not to meet the minimum requirements, the submission is returned to the institution to give them an opportunity to submit further relevant evidence, at the fee approved by Umalusi Council. The submission may be returned to the institution a maximum of two times. If the evidence still does not meet the minimum requirements for accreditation after the two additional submissions, the application will be rejected. If the private education institution still seeks accreditation with Umalusi, they will be required to make a new application and pay all the relevant fees.

Table 3 below indicates the number of self-evaluation reports evaluated in each sector during the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Table 3: Number of self-evaluation reports evaluated

	Private FET Colleges			Private Adult Education Centres		
	2019/2020	2018/19	2017/18	2019/2020	2018/19	2017/18
No. of self-evaluation reports evaluated	Q1: 13	Q1: 21	Q1: 6	Q1: 0	Q1: 0	Q1: 2
	Q2: 14	Q2: 14	Q2: 31	Q2: 1	Q2: 0	Q2: 1
	Q3: 19	Q3: 15	Q3: 20	Q3: 0	Q3: 0	Q3: 1
	<u>Q4: 17</u>	<u>Q4: 20</u>	<u>Q4: 21</u>	<u>Q4: 0</u>	<u>Q4: 0</u>	<u>Q4: 0</u>
	63	70	78	1	0	4

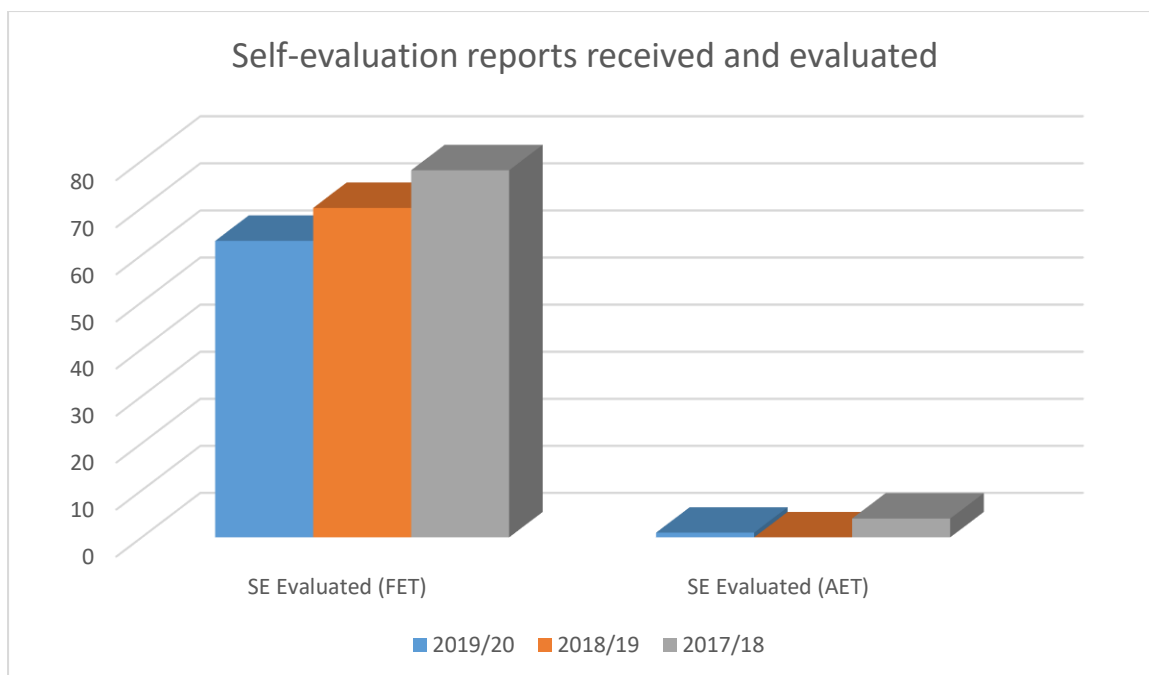


Figure 3: Self-evaluation reports received and evaluated

2.3.1 Areas of strength

- I. The online system is secure; unauthorised persons cannot access confidential information.
- ii. The self-evaluation process enables private education institutions to reflect on the processes, procedures and policies in place and can lead to improvement within the institutions.
- iii. Being given an opportunity to correct and submit outstanding information at the self-evaluation stage enables institutions to develop.
- iii. The use of contracted, trained officials to evaluate self-evaluation reports provides the required capacity to deal with the number of applications.
- iv. Evidence is easily accessible afterwards in case of appeals and queries.
- v. No wastage of volumes of paper and printing by providers that need to submit evidence.

2.3.2 Areas of concern

- i. The evidence required in the self-evaluation process is cumbersome for private education institutions to upload and they take a long time to submit.
- ii. If the self-evaluation report is completed by different people to those who attended the Quality Promotion workshops, they do not have the background

information provided at the workshop, which often leads to submissions not meeting the requirements.

- iii. Some private consultants (not endorsed by Umalusi) charge colleges exorbitant fees and submit unsatisfactory self-evaluation reports.
- iv. There has been a decline in the number of applications for accreditation from AET providers.
- v. Most of the applications for accreditation to offer the NATED N1 – N3 Engineering Studies programme that has a very old curriculum.

2.3.3 Recommendations for improvement

- i. Private college management and the people who attend the Quality Promotion workshop on behalf of the college must personally manage and oversee the self-evaluation process in their college, to ensure that relevant information is provided.

2.4 Site visits

The reports written during the desktop evaluation process are used as the basis for the site verification process. Trained evaluators and subject specialists conduct site visits. They verify the information provided by the institution during the self-evaluation process pertaining to policies and procedures, curriculum content and delivery, assessment practices, structures, facilities, and equipment in place at the institution. The implementation of the qualification at the required standard is also verified by observing teaching and conducting interviews with learners, teachers and management.

With the promulgation of the policy for the quality assurance of Private Colleges for Continuing Education and Training, offering Qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and the Accreditation of Private Assessment Bodies (Gazette 41887 of 7 September 2018), registration (or provisional registration) is now a pre-requisite for accreditation. Implementation of this policy means that private colleges, which are not registered or

provisionally registered by the DHET, will not be able to continue with the accreditation process post the self-evaluation stage of their application.

Table 4: Site visits conducted

	Private FET Colleges			Private Adult Education Centres		
	2019/2020	2018/19	2017/18	2019/2020	2018/19	2017/18
No. of verification site visits conducted	Q1: 6	Q1: 9	Q1: 11	Q1: 0	Q1: 1	Q1: 5
	Q2: 8	Q2: 0	Q2: 07	Q2: 0	Q2: 0	Q2: 0
	Q3: 6	Q3: 3	Q3: 19	Q3: 0	Q3: 0	Q3: 0
	Q4: 9	Q4: 13	Q4: 15	Q4: 0	Q4: 0	Q4: 2
	29	25	52	0	1	7

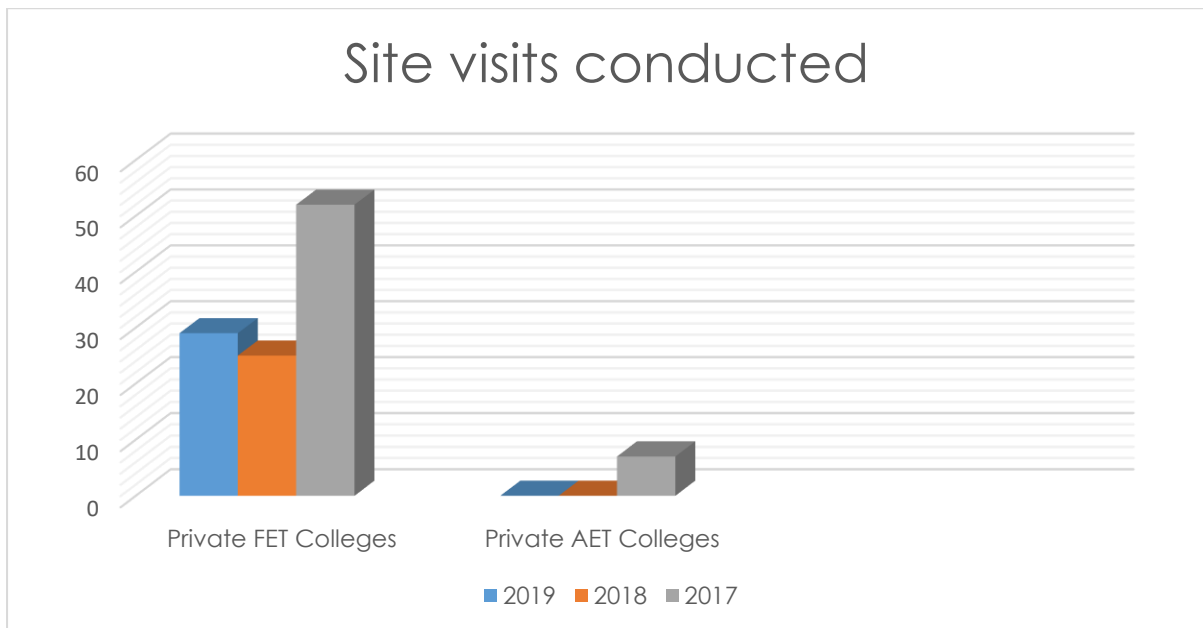


Figure 4: Site visits conducted

2.4.1 Areas of strength

- i. Evaluation teams conduct the site visits in a professional manner.
- ii. The majority of institutions provide positive feedback about the site visit after undergoing a site visit.
- iii. Umalusi staff have started joining the teams to sites to monitor the process.

Some of the feedback provided:

<i>Clear communication was received explaining the purpose of site visits.</i>
<i>The team communicated and acted in a very professional manner.</i>
<i>Evidence was verified and implementation was checked.</i>
<i>Opportunity was given for the college to highlight recent developments and challenges.</i>
<i>The site inspection, which was carried out, assisted the college in further understanding what was needed to ensure quality provision.</i>
<i>A valuable exercise, the nature of the questions in the interviews assisted both management and staff to familiarise themselves on the quality assurance process and gave learners the opportunity to provide feedback on changes that may be required.</i>

2.4.2 Areas of concern

- i. Site visits can only be conducted once:
 - a. A private college has been registered or provisionally registered by the DHET and has conducted a national examination;
 - b. The applicant has paid the required fee.These factors make advance planning very difficult, as it is dependent on the actions and compliance of the applicant.
- ii. Although the registration and accreditation processes are related, Umalusi can only communicate to applicants with regard to Umalusi's processes. However, many applicants expect Umalusi to provide feedback on the DHET's processes.
- iii. Sometimes colleges enrol students for the first two trimesters and have no enrolments for the last term.
- iv. Providers do not inform Umalusi that they do not have registered learners and accept site visits. On the day of the site visit, therefore, teaching and learning cannot be verified.
- v. The site visit captures the situation at an institution at one given point in time. There is great potential for "window dressing" in the model used; however, this is addressed in the "follow-up" site visits, which are conducted "unannounced".
- vi. In terms of private colleges, there are limited dates available for site visits to be conducted, especially for the NATED programme because of the nature of the

trimester calendar. With site visits taking place “back-to-back” during the available times for site visits to take place, the reporting process can be delayed.

- vii. The safety of team members travelling around the country is of great concern.

2.4.3 Recommendations for improvement

- i. Improve communication to providers once the desktop evaluation has been completed, indicating that they have been referred to the DHET and the process to be followed thereafter.
- ii. Ensure that students have been enrolled for face-to-face study and are attending classes when site visits take place.

2.5 “Improvement” Reports

When an institution has been through the accreditation process and found to not meet the minimum requirements for accreditation, it is given a period within which to meet specific conditions. This is either a “window period” to improve, or a period of provisional accreditation. Once the institution submits evidence in compliance with the specific conditions and pays the required fee within the specified period, evaluators appointed by Umalusi evaluate the evidence. These submissions are referred to as “improvement reports”. “Follow up” site visits are conducted by Umalusi staff to verify the information provided by the institution in the “improvement report” pertaining to policies and procedures, curriculum content and delivery, assessment practices, structures, facilities, resources and equipment in place at the institution. A classroom observation is also done to verify implementation of teaching and learning.

A follow-up site visit is also conducted in cases where accredited private education institutions move premises and submit an application for a “change of site”. The premises are visited to verify whether the new facilities and resources still meet the minimum requirements for quality provision of the qualification.

The table below indicates the number of follow-up site visits conducted following evaluation of an improvement report, per sector over the period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Table 5: Number of "follow up" site visits conducted

	Private FET Colleges			Private Adult Education Centres		
	2019/2020	2018/19	2017/18	2019/2020	2018/19	2017/18
No. of "follow up" or "change of site" verification site visits conducted	Q1: 13	Q1: 16	Q1: 2	Q1: 1	Q1: 2	Q1: 2
	Q2: 15	Q2: 23	Q2: 0	Q2: 1	Q2: 0	Q2: 0
	Q3: 4	Q3: 1	Q3: 1	Q3: 0	Q3: 1	Q3: 1
	Q4: 5	Q4: 10	Q4: 7	Q4: 0	Q4: 0	Q4: 7
	37	50	10	02	03	10

Figure 5: Improvement Report "follow up" site visits conducted

The number of private colleges granted a "window period" to improve or two years provisional accreditation outweighs those receiving seven years accreditation, because the colleges either do not meet the minimum requirements for accreditation, or because they have not yet been able to demonstrate the implementation of teaching, learning and assessment at the required standard as they are not yet operating. This leads to an increase in the number of improvement reports that are submitted for evaluation.

2.6 Consolidated Accreditation Reports

The reports written during the desktop evaluation and site verification visit are consolidated into one accreditation report. It is at this stage when all the reports have been consolidated, that a recommendation can be made as to the outcome of the institution's application for accreditation. The level of compliance by the institution is measured against specific indicators to determine whether the institution meets the minimum criteria for accreditation.

The consolidated accreditation reports are moderated and approved within the sub-unit prior to being submitted to the Accreditation and Coordination sub-unit. They undergo another moderation process at the Accreditation and Coordination sub-unit. Once accepted, reports are allocated to Accreditation Committee of Council

(ACC) members to ensure that the accreditation process is fair and that the decisions are consistent with the evidence found.

ACC members have access to the evidence provided by the independent education institution, as well as the source reports together with the consolidated accreditation report. Each ACC member is required to write a report on the institutions allocated to him/her, with recommendations as to whether to accept or amend the accreditation recommendation by the secretariat, along with supporting reasons for their recommendation.

The ACC meets a minimum of four (4) times a year to discuss applications for accreditation. Each member presents his/her findings on the reports allocated to him/her, and the committee makes a decision as to the final recommendation of the outcome of the institution's application for accreditation. Five (5) meetings of the Accreditation Committee of Council were held in the financial year under consideration.

The table below indicates the number of reports submitted to the ACC per financial year between 1 April 2017 and the end of March 2020.

Table 6: Reports submitted to the ACC

	Private FET Colleges			Private Adult Education Centres		
	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No. of consolidated accreditation reports submitted to the ACC	Q1: 7 Q2: 12 Q3: 6 Q4: 8 33	Q1: 7 Q2: 17 Q3: 0 Q4: 3 27	Q1: 14 Q2: 11 Q3: 5 Q4: 22 52	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 0	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 0 Q4: 0 0	Q1: 2 Q2: 1 Q3: 4 Q4: 2 9
No. of "improvement reports" submitted to the ACC	Q1: 12 Q2: 22 Q3: 14 Q4: 04 52	Q1: 8 Q2: 35 Q3: 31 Q4: 4 78	Q1: 21 Q2: 16 Q3: 9 Q4: 8 54	Q1: 1 Q2: 1 Q3: 1 Q4: 3 06	Q1: 5 Q2: 9 Q3: 7 Q4: 4 27	Q1: 9 Q2: 5 Q3: 3 Q4: 0 17

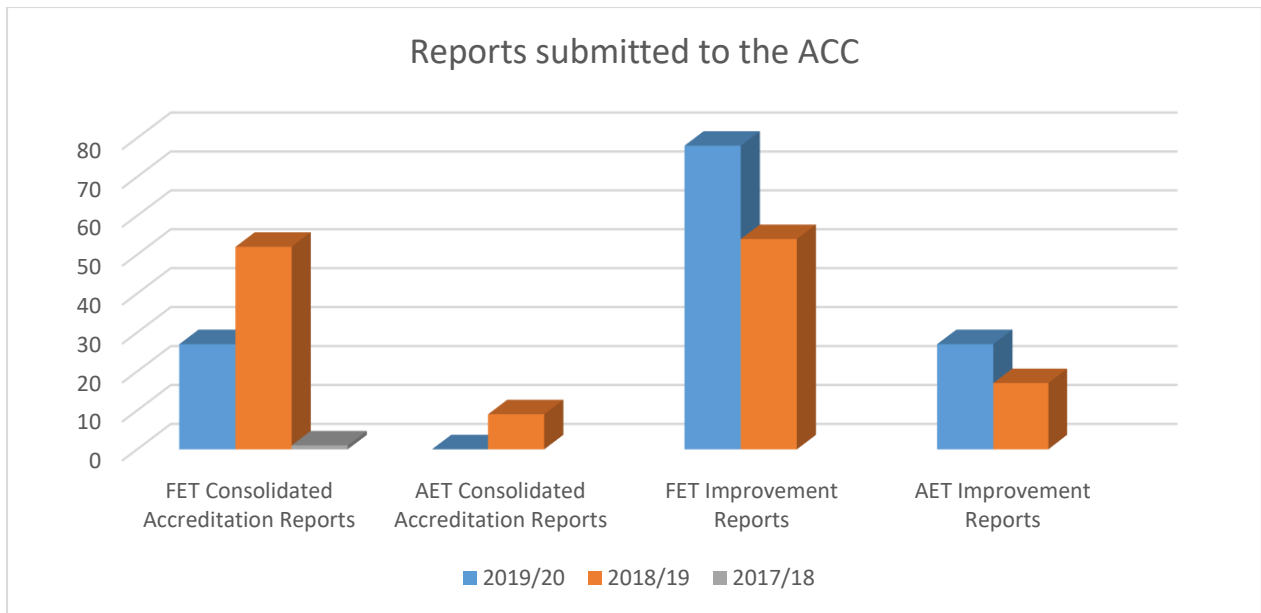


Figure 6: Reports submitted to the ACC

The number of consolidated reports submitted to the Accreditation Committee of Council is linked to the number of site visits conducted. A decrease in the applications and site visits conducted results in fewer reports submitted to the ACC.

2.6.1 Areas of strength

- i. The current format of the consolidated reports directs reporting, ensuring that key information is provided for making a recommendation on the accreditation decision.

2.6.2 Areas of concern

- i. The consolidated accreditation report involves an intensive process of collating information from the desktop evaluation reports and the site visit reports on a particular institution. This demands specialised report writing skills and is a time intensive process.
- ii. The number of improvement reports submitted are increasing. This leads to increased costs for the unit and the provider.
- iii. Reliance is placed on the data collected and sometimes the information written is not clearly written and takes time to moderate all these reports.

2.6.3 Recommendations for improvement

- i. The online reporting system must be adapted to be able to consolidate the information from the separate reports into one consolidated accreditation report. This will reduce the time in which reports can be finalised, and reduce costs in terms of paying a report writer to consolidate all the reports.
- ii. Additional training on report writing.

2.7 “Window Period” to improve

Chapter 3 clause 25(2) of the GENFETQA Act States:

“If a private education institution fails to comply with the policy, the Council must

- (a) Notify the private education institution in writing and set out the nature and extent of the failure; and
- (b) Determine a reasonable period within which the private education institution must comply with the policy.

25(3) further states “At expiry of the period contemplated in subsection 25(2)(b), the Council –

- (a) “must evaluate the steps taken by the private education institution to comply with the policy and take into account any submissions made by the private education institution; and
- (b) “May affirm the accreditation of the private education institution or withdraw the accreditation as from a date specified by Council”.

In terms of this legislation, if an institution is found not to meet the minimum standards for accreditation at the first presentation of the report to the ACC, it is granted a reasonable period (“window period”) to improve on its submission and meet the requirements prior to the accreditation decision being made. Institutions are issued with a letter indicating that they have not met the minimum standards for accreditation, and the conditions to be met within a specified period in order to meet the minimum requirements for accreditation. The period granted to improve is informed by any risks, which may become evident during the evaluation process. The greater the risk, the less time is given to an institution to improve, in order that the students and staff at the institution are not unduly placed at risk.

The conditions direct the institutions towards areas, which were not met at the first presentation of the report to the Accreditation Committee of Council. However, when the new evidence is presented to the ACC, all aspects of the accreditation criteria are considered when making a decision. Therefore, if standards in some areas have dropped at the private college since the original site visit, that will be taken into account in deciding on the outcome of the application – not only the items which were listed as “conditions to be met”. All the accreditation criteria must be met at the point of review.

The table below indicates the number of “window period” letters issued to private colleges in the current and previous financial years.

Table 7: "Window period" letters issued

	Private FET Colleges			Private Adult Education Centres		
	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
No. of “window period” letters issued	22	33	26	0	6	6

2.7.1 Areas of strength

- i. The “window period” fulfils the legislative requirement of informing the institutions of the areas where they have not met the minimum requirements and giving them a reasonable period to improve in those areas.

2.7.2 Areas of concern

- i. Including this extra step which involves evaluation and verification of evidence, increases the human resources needed to conduct the evaluation, verification and reporting processes.
- ii. Some institutions change their contact details during the accreditation process without informing Umalusi. The letters notifying the institution of the areas to be improved and the due date for submission of evidence supporting the improvement are in some cases then not delivered timeously to the institutions.

- iii. Due to the nature of AET provision, the site of delivery is likely to change between the initial site visit and the follow up site visit, therefore it is not possible to verify the items which were initially not in place at the follow up site visit.

2.7.3 Recommendations for improvement

- i. Institutions must update their details on the Umalusi website as soon as there is a change.

2.8 Accreditation letters issued

Accreditation letters, signed by the Chief Executive Officer of Umalusi, are issued to institutions once a decision regarding their status has been made. Private colleges are awarded one of the following statuses:

- 7 years accreditation
- 2 years provisional accreditation
- No accreditation (following a “window period” to improve or provisional accreditation)

Table 8: Accreditation letters issued

	Private FET Colleges				Private Adult Education Centres		
	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18		2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Total Number of accreditation letters issued	62	93	75		8	16	13
7 years accreditation	18	37	24		2	3	5
2 years provisional accreditation	25	52	44		3	8	2
No accreditation	19	04	7		3	5	6

2.9 Monitoring

Compliant private education institutions are accredited to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and the related curriculum/programme. Accredited private institutions are subject to monitoring to ensure maintenance and improvement of standards. Monitoring takes

place at least every two years after accreditation, but accredited institutions can be monitored more often if Umalusi feels there is a need to monitor the private college more closely.

If a private college is found to no longer meet the minimum requirements for accreditation, the accreditation status may be withdrawn after following due process.

Table 9: Number of accredited private colleges monitored

	Private FET Colleges		Private Adult Education Centres	
	2019/20	2018/19	2019/2020	2018/19
Total no. of institutions due to be monitored	26	12	13	4
Total no. of institutions monitored	Q1: 1 Q2: 2 Q3: 4 <u>Q4: 9</u> 16	Q1: 3 Q2: 7 Q3: 2 <u>Q4: 0</u> 12	Q1: 0 Q2: 0 Q3: 3 <u>Q4: 3</u> 6	Q1: 0 Q2: 2 Q3: 0 <u>Q4: 2</u> 4
No. of monitored institutions meeting the minimum requirements	12	12	5	4

2.9.1 Areas of strength

Monitoring highlights changes in staff and college performance. Results submitted indicate the performance of the college.

2.9.2 Areas of concern

- i. Monitoring at regular intervals may lead to “window dressing” in order for an institution to be seen to meet the minimum requirements to maintain their accreditation status.
- li monitoring does not include a site visit to every site and reliance is based on a paper based submission.

2.9.3 Recommendations for improvement

- Colleges must adhere to timelines to submit monitoring reports
- Colleges must establish a culture of ongoing monitoring of teaching and learning and keep records of:
 - internal monitoring of teaching and learning;
 - tracking of learner performance; and
 - analysis of results per subject per level

2.10 Review and appeal of accreditation decisions

The review and appeal processes are internal processes of validating an accreditation decision, which are addressed as follows:

- i. A query or appeal is received from the private college.
- ii. The query or appeal is recorded in the appeals register.
- iii. The letter containing the query or appeal is brought to the attention of the manager dealing with accreditation of private colleges to investigate the matter.
- iv. The query or appeal and findings are presented to the Internal Accreditation Committee (IAC).
- v. The query or appeal and findings together with the recommendation of the IAC are presented to the Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC).
- vi. The ACC considers the findings and the recommendations of the IAC and then either:
 - a. reviews the original recommendation, or
 - b. stands by their original decision, and advises that the matter be referred to the Accreditation Appeals Committee (AAC) should the private college still wish to pursue the appeal.
- vi. The private college is advised of the decision of the ACC and invited to lodge a formal appeal to be handled by the AAC. An invoice is raised for the private college to pay an appeal fee, which is determined on an annual basis by Umalusi Council.
- vii. If payment is made within the stipulated time period, the appeal is presented to the Accreditation Appeals Committee.
- viii. The Chair of the AAC presents recommendations of the Accreditation Appeals Committee to the Umalusi EXCO for a decision.

- ix. The outcome is communicated to the private college.

3. STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

- 3.1 The sub-unit engages with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Private Colleges Directorate, and Examinations Management and Monitoring Directorate with regard to accredited colleges. Meetings are held to discuss latest developments, legislative issues and to overcome challenges.
- 3.2 An accreditation forum and Accreditation certificate award ceremony was conducted in three provinces in February / March 2020. The forums were well attended. Topics discussed included Indicators of efficacy that support continuous development of quality provision in private education institutions", "The NQF, Umalusi and me", "Current Processes, changes and challenges in the Schooling/Post Schooling sectors", and "Registration requirements of the South African Council of Educators".

4 OTHER ACTIVITIES

4.1 Policy Review

- 4.1.1 A request was submitted to the Minister of Higher Education and Training for development of regulations for the quality assurance of private colleges for continuing education and training, offering qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, and the accreditation of private assessment bodies. Feedback was received from the DHET legal services directorate, which is being attended to in the process of development of the regulations.

4.2 Review of accreditation instruments and key indicators

The sub-unit has engaged in the review of instruments.

4.3 Reporting accreditation status of private colleges

In line with the GENFETQA Act No. 58 of 2001, as amended, Umalusi reports accreditation decisions to the Registrar in the Department of Higher Education. All accredited private colleges and those that have made significant progress (those that have submitted a completed self-evaluation and paid the required accreditation fees) are indicated on the “green list” provided to the DHET prior to each examination cycle. Only private colleges included on that “green list” **and** which have been granted registration by the DHET as a private college and as an examination centre may enrol learners for the qualifications certified by Umalusi at the beginning of a tuition cycle.

In addition, individual letters indicating colleges that meet the desktop requirements of the accreditation process are sent to the DHET Registrar of private colleges.

The cut-off dates to be compliant with Umalusi’s processes to be included on the “green list” are as follows:

NATED N2-N3 Engineering Studies

- 31 March for the August examination of the same year
- 15 August for the November examinations of the same year
- 15 November for the April examinations of the following year

NC(V)

- 15 November for the November examination of the following year.

4.4 Public Awareness Campaign on bogus colleges

Umalusi participated in the public awareness campaign against illegal private colleges organised by the Department of Higher Education and Training from 7 January 2020 to 2 February 2020 in various provinces. Information was provided on the accreditation process, as well as which colleges were accredited. Colleges, which were not accredited, were visited and informed of the requirement to be accredited.

4.5 Review of approach to quality assurance of Adult Education and Training centres

Umalusi is concerned about the decrease in applications for accreditation from private Adult Education and Training centres. The sub-unit has identified a number of factors that make it difficult for Adult Education and Training centres to fulfil the requirements for accreditation as they currently stand. The indicators for accreditation pertaining to this sector are being reviewed to ensure that they are applicable to this sector, and at the same time ensure the quality of the provision of the qualification and ensure that all legislative requirements are met.

5. GENERAL CHALLENGES

- 5.1 Many colleges are owned by people with a "business", rather than an "educational" background. This becomes evident in the lack of understanding of the requirements for accreditation, especially the criteria related to teaching, learning, and assessment. As a result, many colleges do not meet the requirements for accreditation at the first presentation of the report to the Accreditation Committee of Council. It is only in their second attempt that they manage to meet most of the minimum requirements for accreditation.
- 5.2 Despite quality promotion workshops being conducted and being compulsory for all applicants to attend, there are many applications that do not meet the minimum requirements. This is due to private colleges sending people to attend the workshops who thereafter are not involved in compiling the self-evaluation report for submission to Umalusi.
- 5.3 Some colleges use the brand of Umalusi as a marketing tool to attract learners to register for qualifications and programmes that are not accredited by Umalusi. This is against the law, since private colleges may only offer programmes and qualifications, which they are registered and accredited to offer. Members of the public are urged to check the accreditation letters and certificates issued to private colleges to ensure that the private college is accredited to offer a specific qualification and subjects within that qualification.

CONCLUSION

The subunit is continuously reviewing and updating its procedures to ensure a faster turnaround time and more efficient quality assurance processes. Great effort is made to ensure that the quality assurance of private education institutions and private assessment bodies is fair, efficient and reliable so that quality education and assessment is provided to learners. Closer collaboration with the DHET, quality councils and units within the organisation to ensure improved provision of learning.