

**For immediate release:**

**13 October 2023**

## **Umalusi approves the writing of the 2023 end of year examinations**

Umalusi has concluded the audit of the state of readiness of the public (Department of Basic Education and Department of Higher Education and Training) and private assessment bodies (Independent Examinations Board and South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute) to conduct, administer and manage the 2023 end of year national examinations in respect of the:

- National Senior Certificate (NSC)
- National Certificate Vocational (NCV: L2 - L4)
- NATED Report 190/191 (N2 - N3)
- General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET)

The framework that Umalusi uses to audit the system consists of ten areas of focus. The ten areas can be summarised as registration of candidates and examination centres, moderation of assessment instruments, audit of marking centres and the systems used to capture marks, management and conduct of examinations, and suitability and adequacy of personnel. The framework provides a foundation on which Umalusi's pronouncement on the readiness of the system for the examination rests. Umalusi uses the audit findings to issue assessment body-specific directives on what areas to improve on so that the credibility and integrity of the exams is not compromised.

### **The state of public assessment bodies**

The findings of the audit of the systems used by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) revealed that both these public assessment bodies are ready to conduct, administer and manage the exams. The DBE administers the NSC exams whereas the DHET is responsible for exams associated with NC(V) Levels 2-4, N2-N3 and GETC.

While the audit process flagged some weaknesses, they are not of such a magnitude that they can put the overall credibility of the exam at risk. The risks identified have been brought to the attention of the relevant Heads of Provincial Education Department and the Directors-General of the DBE and DHET so that corrective steps can be taken to remedy the situation before the start of exams.

### **The readiness of private assessment bodies**

Based on the findings of the evaluation of the readiness of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) and South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI), Umalusi is satisfied that the two private assessment bodies are ready to conduct, administer and manage the 2023 NSC and GETC end of year exams. Where risks were identified, they have been brought to the attention of the CEOs of these organisations. Umalusi commends the IEB and SACAI for their efforts in safeguarding the credibility of the national exams.

Umalusi will monitor the running of the exams in both the public and private assessment systems to ensure that their conduct, administration and management is in full compliance with the relevant regulations.

On 15 January 2024 Umalusi will hold a media briefing to pronounce on the results of the 2023 end of year national exam.

### **Factors that can disrupt the smooth running of the exams**

Loadshedding, cheating and community protests are some of the factors that can negatively affect the smooth running of the exams. Concerning loadshedding, Umalusi advises all assessment bodies to make alternative arrangements for the supply of power during the writing of exams to mitigate the possibility of load-shedding.

Umalusi would like to issue a stern warning to all learners and teachers to refrain from all forms of cheating, including group copying where teachers are sometimes implicated. At the same time, Umalusi discourages communities from using the national exams as leverage for their protest actions.

### **Unaccredited institutions and the selling of fake certificates**

Umalusi is satisfied with the work done to curb unaccredited institutions from registering candidates for the national exams. The meeting that Umalusi convened on 18 August 2023 with the senior officials from the national and provincial education departments, the IEB and SACAI agreed on measures to be taken to prevent the operation of illegal independent schools and ensure that examinations are only administered at independent schools accredited by Umalusi and registered as examination centres by the PEDs, SACAI or the IEB. It was agreed in the same meeting that if any independent school offered Umalusi's qualifications and did not seek to be accredited, such a school should face the full might of the law. Members of the public are urged to visit Umalusi's website to verify if an independent school or a private college is accredited before making a decision to enrol with it.

Regarding the sale of fake or fraudulent certificates, Umalusi staff, particularly those that work with certificates, have been interviewed by the SAPS. The investigations conducted so far show that no Umalusi employees are implicated in this criminal act. Umalusi will continue to work closely with the SAPS in whatever way possible to ensure that the external investigations are finalised speedily so that the scammers or fraudsters can be made to face the full might of the law. The law makes it crystal clear that it is a criminal offence to either sell or buy fake certificate. This is considered crime against the state and it carries harsh penalties. Umalusi would like to reassure the public that its certificate have robust safeguards to ensure the certificates' authenticity and credibility.

Umalusi wishes the class of 2023 well in the coming examinations.

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