



UMALUSI



COUNCIL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GENERAL
AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING



2007

**Report on the Quality
Assurance of the ABET Level 4
Examinations**

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of the ABET Level 4 Examinations 2007**

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FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF UMALUSI

Quality assurance of the ABET Level 4 assessment by Umalusi started in 2001 when the first ABET Level 4 examination was conducted. The sector is, therefore, still very young and needs much more development and support if the quality of its assessment is to compare favourably with the quality of the Senior Certificate assessment.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of examinations by determining the level of adherence to policy in implementing examination related processes, the cognitive challenge of examination question papers, the appropriateness and weighting of content in question papers in relation to the syllabus, the quality of presentation of examination question papers, the efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes and procedures for the monitoring of the conduct of the examinations, the quality of marking as well as the quality and standard of internal quality assurance processes within the assessment body.

Umalusi has, over the past three and a half years, adopted the following quality assurance measures with regard to the ABET Level 4 assessment:

- moderation/verification of continuous assessment (CASS);
- moderation of question papers;
- monitoring of the writing of the ABET Level 4 examination;
- moderation of marking; and
- standardisation of examinations and CASS results.

In 2005, Umalusi paid particular attention to the cognitive challenge of question papers. The level of challenge of question papers for 2006 and 2007 was significantly higher. The examination has become less predictable and this enhances its reliability and validity.

The Assessment Committee of the Umalusi Council has concluded, from the reports submitted by all personnel involved in the quality assurance of examinations, that assessments on Level 4 Adult Basic Education and Training, was conducted in line with policy and regulations governing the conduct of examinations. The results were, therefore, found to be reliable, valid, fair and credible. The Committee met at the offices of Umalusi in Pretoria on Tuesday, 18 December 2007 and declared that the examination was beyond reproach.

Prof J D Volmink
19 December 2007



Chapter One

1

Introduction

1. Background

The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (No 58 of 2001) assigns responsibility for quality assurance of general and further education and training in South Africa to the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, otherwise known as Umalusi. The Council was established with the express aim of maintaining and improving norms and standards in general and further education and training, through:

- Monitoring and reporting on the adequacy and suitability of qualifications and standards;
- Quality assurance of all exit point assessments;
- Certification of learner achievements;
- Quality promotion amongst providers, and;
- Accreditation of private providers.

Umalusi reports on the standard of the ABET Level 4 examination to the Minister of Education on an annual basis. In this regard, Umalusi reports on each of the quality assurance of assessment processes and procedures that together ensure a credible ABET Level 4 examination. These processes ensure that all aspects of the examination are put through rigorous quality checks, thus enhancing confidence that the examination meets the required standards.

Umalusi consistently ensures that standards in this examination are not compromised. The tools for moderation of question papers have been reviewed and sharpened through various research processes. Other processes, such as moderation of internal assessment, moderation of marking, as well as the monitoring of the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examination have all been reviewed, strengthened and streamlined.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of the ABET Level 4 examination by determining the level of adherence to policy in implementing examination related processes, the cognitive challenge of examination question papers, the appropriateness and weighting of content in question papers in relation to the learning area guidelines, the quality of presentation of examination question papers, the efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes and procedures for the monitoring of the conduct of the examination, the quality of marking as well as the quality and standard of internal quality assurance processes within the assessment body.



Chapter 1 (this chapter) of this report outlines the purpose of the report and its scope. The second chapter reports on the findings of the moderation of question papers. This chapter reports on the standard of the question papers. Chapter 3 outlines the findings from the moderation of internal assessment. The fourth chapter discusses the findings from Umalusi's monitoring of the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examinations. Chapter 5 discusses in brief the moderation of marking. The last chapter reports on the standardization of ABET Level 4 results.

2. Purpose of the report

The purpose is to report to the Minister of Education on Umalusi's quality assurance of the June and October 2007 ABET Level 4 examinations with respect to the following:

- The salient findings from the external moderators' reports, which are used to make judgements regarding the standard of the ABET Level 4 examinations;
- The quality and standard of continuous assessment across assessment bodies;
- The quality and standard of marking of the ABET Level 4 examination across assessment bodies;
- The efficiency and effectiveness of processes for the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examinations within assessment bodies;
- The moderation of marks during the standardization process.

3. Scope of the report

This report covers all of the five quality assurance of assessment processes used by Umalusi to ensure that the ABET Level 4 examination is of the required standard, i.e.:

- moderation of question papers;
- moderation of continuous assessment;
- moderation of marking;
- monitoring the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examination, as well as the;
- moderation of examination marks.



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Chapter Two

Moderation of question papers

1. Introduction

Umalusi moderates question papers to ensure that the standard is comparable across all assessment bodies and that the question papers are sufficiently and relatively fair, valid, reliable and appropriate. In order to maintain public confidence in the examination system, the question papers must be seen to be relatively:

- fair;
- reliable;
- representative of an adequate sample of the curriculum;
- representative of relevant conceptual domains;
- representative of relevant levels of cognitive challenge.

For this reason, external moderators are required to carefully moderate the question papers on behalf of Umalusi, recommend improvements and finally approve the question papers. External moderators then report comprehensively on their findings, so that Umalusi can evaluate the quality of question papers set for the ABET Level 4 Examinations.

2. Purpose

The DOE ABET Level 4 examinations comprise 23 learning areas. Two question papers are set per examination, one of which is used as a back-up paper. Back-up papers from the 2006 examinations were used for the June 2007 examination, with the exception of Life Orientation and Economic and Management Science. Two sets of question papers were set for the October 2007 examination. The second set was to be used as a back-up paper. In the case of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB), question papers were set and moderated for the following learning areas: Communication in English, Mathematical Literacy, Economic and Management Science, Natural Science, Human and Social Science, and Life Orientation.



The following tables show the extent of compliance against the above criteria.

Table 2.1 IEB (Set 1 = June and Set 2 = November)

	Learning Area	Approved at first moderation	Conditionally Approved - no resubmission	Conditionally Approved – resubmitted
1	Economic and Management Science		Set 1 and 2	
2	Human and Social Science		Set 2	Set 1
3	Life Orientation		Set 1 and 2	
4	Mathematical Literacy	Set 1 and 2		
5	Natural Science	Set 1	Set 2	
6	LC-English	Set 1 and 2		

Table 2.2 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

	Learning Area	Approved at first moderation	Conditionally Approved – no resubmission	Conditionally Approved – resubmitted
1	Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Science	Set 1	Set 2	
2	Ancillary Health Care	Set 1 and 2		
3	Arts and Culture	Set 1 and 2		
4	Economic and Management Science	Set 1	Set 2	
5	Human and Social Science	Set 1 and 2		
6	Life Orientation	Set 1 and 2		
7	Mathematical Literacy		Set 1	
8	Mathematics and Mathematical Science	Set 1	Set 2	
9	Natural Science		Set 1 and 2	
10	Small Medium and Micro Enterprises	Set 1	Set 2	
11	Technology	Set 1 and 2		
12	Travel and Tourism	Set 1 and 2		
13	LC-Afrikaans	Set 1	Set	
14	LC-English	Set 1	Set 2	
15	LC-Ndebele	Set 1	Set 2	
16	LC-Sesotho	Set 1 and 2		
17	LC-Sepedi	Set 1 and 2		
18	LC-Setswana	Set 1 and 2		
19	LC-Siswati	Set 1 and 2		
20	LC-Venda	Set 1 and 2		
21	LC-Xhosa	Set 1 and 2		
22	LC-Xitsonga	Set 1 and 2		
23	LC-Zulu	Set 1 and 2		



3. Approach

- 3.1 The assessment body appointed its own examiners and internal moderators. They set and moderate the question papers and memoranda internally. These question papers are then externally moderated by Umalusi at a central venue.

Furthermore, question papers must be submitted to the External Moderator in their final state and, having been edited, with all the diagrams and sketches in place.

The question papers must be submitted in a file containing all the drafts from the examiners providing the history of the paper, a grid indicating ability levels drafted by the examiners, the syllabus used to guide the setting, a marking memorandum and the Internal Moderator's report.

- 3.2 The external moderators then moderate the question papers using the following criteria, which are also used by the examiners in setting the question papers.

Table 2.3

CRITERIA	
Content Coverage	<input type="checkbox"/> Questions covered the syllabus <input type="checkbox"/> Various types of questions were used
Cognitive Demand	<input type="checkbox"/> Weighting of questions are balanced <input type="checkbox"/> Correct distribution in terms of cognitive levels
Internal Moderation	<input type="checkbox"/> Papers are internally moderated
Language and Bias	<input type="checkbox"/> Papers are set at the required language level <input type="checkbox"/> Questions are not biased in any way
Predictability	<input type="checkbox"/> Questions cannot be easily spotted or predicted
Adherence to Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Papers are relevant to current policy documents <input type="checkbox"/> Papers adhere to the format requirements of guidelines
Marking Memorandum	<input type="checkbox"/> Memorandums are complete, correct and show mark allocations
Technical Criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> Papers comply with the Umalusi criteria
Overall impression	<input type="checkbox"/> Moderator judgement on standard of paper

4. Findings

No question papers were rejected and the reason for conditional approval was mostly because of technical mistakes and/or mistakes on the memoranda.



5. Areas of concern

- Mistakes on the memoranda;
- Some IEB learning areas still do not have guidelines.

6. Recommendations

- Internal moderation must also ensure that mistakes on the memoranda are corrected;
- All IEB papers must be presented with their learning area guidelines.

7. Conclusion

There is a definite improvement in the setting of question papers although there is a need to improve internal moderation to ensure that all papers are approved at first moderation and that no corrections need to be made by external moderators.



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Chapter Three

Moderation of internal assessment

1. Introduction

The ABET examinations consist of two components: internal and external assessment. Internal assessment or Site Based Assessment (SBA), commonly known as continuous assessment (CASS), constitutes 50% of the final examination mark. The national external examinations make up the other 50%. Umalusi's quality assurance processes are used to quality assure both components of the examinations.

The definition of internal assessment that Umalusi subscribes to is the assessment of the learner's performance that is carried out on an on-going basis at the learning site by the educator, using various assessment techniques. This may comprise assessment of oral and practical work, classroom based work, class tests, controlled tests, assignments, projects and examinations.

The standards of SBA vary from province to province, from district to district and from centre to centre. To ensure that SBA is credible and fair, Umalusi standardises this process through its policy directives. This chapter will highlight the purpose and scope of Umalusi's moderation of SBA. It will also look at the approach to moderation and then table all the findings, strengths, areas of concern and suggested recommendations.

2. Purpose

The purpose of moderation of SBA is to:

- ensure that SBA complies with the national guidelines;
- establish the scope and the extent of the reliability of the SBA;
- verify internal moderation of SBA as conducted by the assessment bodies;
- report on the quality of SBA within assessment bodies;
- identify problem areas in the implementation of SBA;
- recommend solutions to the problems identified.



3. Scope

Umalusi moderates SBA across the nine Provincial Departments of Education and one independent assessment body, viz. the IEB.

Moderation was conducted in two selected learning areas namely LLC: English and Mathematical Literacy for two days in each of the ten assessment bodies (public and independent).

Umalusi's decision to moderate the internal assessment of these learning areas was motivated by the decline in the results obtained by learners in these learning areas. These learning areas are also fundamental to the teaching and learning process and it is, therefore, necessary to focus on these two learning areas to improve the standard and pass rates in all the learning areas. The other reason for only selecting two learning areas was due to budgetary constraints.

4. Approach

Umalusi deployed two moderators for two days to moderate internal assessment. Moderation was undertaken in three stages at each assessment body, namely:

- Pre-moderation session
- The actual moderation of portfolios
- Post moderation session

4.1 Pre-moderation

These sessions were held with assessment body officials who were involved with the overseeing of the implementation of internal assessment.

The following issues were discussed:

- The sample presented
- Compliance to policy
- Educator training
- Quality of internal assessment
- Internal moderation
- Monitoring and evaluation



4.2 Actual moderation of portfolios (educator and learner)

A rigorous process was followed to look at both educator and learner portfolios. The moderators evaluated, moderated (re-marked) and reported on the standard of assessment within their fields of expertise. They looked at the following aspects:

- Policies (school policy, learning area guidelines)
- Content
- Assessment task
- Internal moderation
- Recording and reporting

4.3 Post moderation

At the end of the moderation, the assessment body officials, as well as the educators, had an opportunity to interact with the external moderators during a post moderation meeting. At this meeting the moderators highlighted the strengths and weaknesses identified during the moderation and also made recommendations.

5. Findings

An overview of the findings in respect of the 2007 SBA moderation process are presented in accordance with the aspects that are reflective of a quality SBA system as defined by Umalusi earlier in the report, namely:

- Compliance with national guidelines and national policy on the implementation of SBA in ABET;
- Quality of internal moderation at all levels;
- Quality and standard of the assessment tasks;
- Recording and reporting.

5.1 Compliance with policy

It is evident that most of the assessment bodies have provincial policy documents on internal assessment that outline the minimum requirements for internal assessment and moderation processes. However, there are many deviations at implementation level where educators do not comply with the policies at hand e.g. some centres were not even aware of the difference between Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Science. There is still a huge gap between



policy and practice. Centre managers and departmental officials did not always have these policy documents or guidelines at hand when the documents were requested by the external moderators.

In most provinces, the implementation of the policy was monitored through the district officials who visited the centres and rendered curriculum and assessment support where necessary. The huge gap between policy and practice suggests this should be done more rigorously.

5.2 Quality of internal assessment at all levels

The quality of assessment at site, cluster, district and provincial levels still shows certain huge discrepancies in most assessment bodies. Internal moderation is still not conducted at all levels. It was found that in most cases there was no effective internal moderation taking place. Instead, audits, in the form of checklists to verify whether the necessary documentation was available in the portfolios, were done. These audits did not focus on the content and standard of the tasks. Internal moderation reports, therefore, do not provide qualitative input and thus there is no effective contribution to the improvement of practice. It is quite evident that moderators were merely endorsing the assessment at each level without any detailed moderation taking place.

In most provinces, the provincial policies indicate the following processes with regard to internal moderation:

The first level in the moderation process is an audit that is conducted at centre level by the centre manager, who is not an expert in the learning fields, but who can at least verify the compilation or structure of the portfolio.

The second level of moderation is at the district level. These sessions are coordinated by the district officials and meetings are called at least once per quarter. Educators are requested to bring approximately 10% of the learners' portfolios, per learning area, per centre, to the district for moderation. At district level, the moderation consists of at least three sessions, standardisation, monitoring and a final moderation session. Feedback to educators is given via moderators' reports.

The third level of moderation is at provincial level with senior curriculum advisors/planners/facilitators responsible for the moderation of the portfolios brought from the districts to a central venue. However, this was not always visible in the portfolios as there were no substantiating reports.

Assessment bodies are still struggling with marking the tasks. For example, in the Northern



Cape, there are huge discrepancies between marks at the three different levels. The internal moderation in most assessment bodies was not consistent.

One of the issues raised previously in this regard is the limited number of personnel to do the evaluation of learning areas because the ABET section does not have enough learning area specialists. There has been some progress by some provinces to improve this situation.

Internal moderators are more concerned with the marks awarded and not with the content in the tasks. Some moderators just sign off portfolio activities without looking at the relevancy of the task to the unit standard. They do not query any marks given but simply endorse what is given by the educator. No proper feedback is given to the educators and learners to improve their standards. Moderation reports lack qualitative feedback. Learners do not receive proper feedback with regard to their tasks. Feedback is only given in terms of marks, which have no meaningful value to the learners. This can impact negatively on learner performance, as learners will not know if they are on the right track or not.

5.3 Quality and standard of the assessment task

Although different forms of assessments were used, in most cases they were not used appropriately. As far as the assessment tools are concerned, marking memoranda were used too often. Even though most educators used rubrics to assess assignments and research topics, the parameters of the criteria in the rubrics were not descriptive enough. Educators should focus on the outcomes of the unit standards when developing assessment activities, as the content of the learning areas was not assessed. Educators did not know where to find the content because they did not fully understand the use of the unit standard, which clearly outlines content in the assessment criteria of the learning area specific unit standard.

Some assessment bodies did not have the latest unit standards pertaining to MLIT/MMSC. In many cases there were no comprehensive lesson plans. There were no departmental exemplars of the various forms of assessments. Even though some assessment bodies had learning area guidelines, these did not show examples of assessment forms and did not provide an explanation on how to use the different forms.

Learner tasks were not compatible to the unit standards and the language thereof. This makes it very difficult for the learners to answer examination questions successfully as these are set according to the language used in the unit standard.

In general, not much use was made of rubrics, grids and checklists as assessment tools. Furthermore, the various forms of assessment were not strictly adhered to in terms of their intended purpose and the levels of questioning compromised the intended quality.



Assessment bodies also complain that educators are trained and then leave the system due to poor service conditions. This poses a real concern to consistency and general development.

5.4 Recording and reporting

In general, marks were recorded using the weighted grid system. In some cases the record of marks in the educator portfolio did not correspond with the learner portfolio. Moderators' reports at most levels were generated in an audit form and contained no qualitative arguments and suggestions that could enhance the development of the learner.

The learners' achievements were recorded. However, the converted marks were difficult to verify or it took a long time to verify these due to the method of converting marks. The method of recording and conversion of marks needs to be streamlined across the assessment bodies.

Recording and reporting relies on clear provincial guidelines, which are not evident. The absence of provincial mark sheets makes it difficult to verify marks allocated to the learners. Reporting relies heavily on the marks of the learner and not on qualitative feedback.

5.5 General findings

In general, most learners' portfolios were neat and presentable; learners took a great deal of pride in compiling their portfolios, showing that they were au fait with the requirements of internal assessment. In contrast, there were some that were poorly kept, incomplete, disorganised and revealed missing assessment tasks. These differences were found in all provinces across districts and centres. In most cases, tasks were filed in an orderly manner and the records of achievement were included. Different forms of assessment were enclosed, despite the poor understanding of the nature of the given task. Some files did have different forms of assessment, for example projects, assignments, essays, but qualitative feedback was not given. Learners did not know beforehand what would be assessed as this was not shown on the task given. Transparency in this regard is important and will eliminate most problematic issues

6. Areas of improvement

The educators are aware of the need to keep a record of the assessment that has been conducted and are informed about the forms of assessment that are prescribed for ABET Level 4. The assessment bodies are aware of the need to conduct internal moderation and that educators need to be trained in internal assessment.



Good practice: There is evidence of pockets of excellence across the assessment bodies, districts, clusters and centres and these could be used to improve the system by using these as exemplars. It is evident that educators are attempting to achieve the best they can within the given constraints.

In some instances it is evident that recommendations made by Umalusi are taken seriously. There is improvement in both educators' and learners' portfolios in general.

7. Areas of concern

- The high turnover of educators makes internal assessment inconsistent.
- There is a need for officials to focus on curriculum matters in ABET in the provinces - these officials should have the expertise to deal with learning area specific information.
- Forms of assessment: There is superficial coverage of the different forms of assessment; the tasks do not promote usage for the variety of assessment strategies.
- Learners are not challenged as the higher cognitive levels are not assessed in the assessment tasks.
- Not all mark sheets are available to verify the recording of results during external moderation.
- The internal assessment process is seen as a mere audit and does not focus on the content (skills, knowledge and values) of the tasks.
- The quality of the internal assessment is, therefore, not yet at the required standard and this has a negative effect on the validity, reliability and fairness of the whole process. This makes it very difficult for the Umalusi moderators to make a constructive judgement.

8. Recommendations

- The Umalusi moderators find it difficult to make a constructive judgment on the competence of learners based on the evidence provided in the learner portfolios. As was recommended in 2006, it now becomes imperative that the national Department of Education consider introducing national assessment tasks per learning area for the five forms of assessment required by Umalusi. These national assessment tasks will inform the educators as to what the standard and quality of assessment tasks should be. It will also ensure that assessment tasks of the required standard are implemented across all assessment bodies and thereby ensure quality assessment, which the Umalusi moderators will be able to verify.
- As in previous years, Umalusi recommends the training of ABET staff in the implementation of internal assessment. This will eliminate all concerns mentioned.
- The placement of learning area specialists in ABET Level 4 at provincial and district level



should take priority. This will assist educators with implementation of policy.

- Continuous monitoring of all assessment practices is necessary to ensure that implementation of guideline documents is effected.
- Ongoing moderation is necessary to ensure that educators are on track and that problems can be addressed early in the academic year. Internal moderation should indeed happen three times a year - as stated in most provincial policies.
- Educators should use previous examination papers and memoranda as resources and use these as tests in order to address the problem that exists with incorrect pitching of assessment activities and the language and format used in the papers. This will enhance learner performance.
- Learning area clusters can further assist with quality moderation at district level.
- Moderation versus audit: Moderators must be briefed on the purposes and criteria for moderation at all levels so that the moderation exercise does not become an audit exercise.
- Final computerised mark sheets should be available at all times for external moderation so that verification of the marks can be done.
- Internal moderation should provide qualitative feedback that can enhance educator and learner performance.

9. Conclusion

It is evident that the effective implementation of internal assessment still poses a challenge to assessment bodies. A major concern is the variation of assessment practices from province to province. There are still major discrepancies between policy and practice. Learning area specialists, ongoing moderation and monitoring/evaluation and training of officials and educators in the ABET sector will improve the system as a whole.

Internal assessment in the assessment bodies is not yet of an acceptable standard, therefore standardisation of internal assessment marks needs to take place in order to reduce such variations. .





4

Chapter Four

Monitoring of the writing of the ABET level 4 examination

1. Introduction

The following phases of the ABET Level 4 Examinations were monitored:

- The design phase, which focuses on the state of readiness of the assessment bodies to conduct the examinations;
- The conducting of examination phase, which looks at the writing of the examinations;
- The marking, capturing, processing and release of results phase, which includes capturing of the marks, standardisation and release of results.

2. Purpose

Umalusi monitors the ABET Level 4 Examinations to ensure the examination conforms to established standards that define a quality examination. To this end, Umalusi verifies all the preparatory arrangements for the examination. It also uses a variety of approaches to monitor the writing of the examination. Finally, Umalusi ensures that all procedures for aggregating scores, moderating, computing and capturing of final results are strictly adhered to. Collectively, all the monitoring approaches, methods and procedures ensure a credible examination.

3. Scope

The monitoring exercise extended across the ten assessment bodies, namely the nine provincial bodies and the IEB.

Table 4.1: Extent of the monitoring exercise

Province	Number of monitors		Provincial office visits		Number of centres visited		Marking centres visited		Capturing visits	
	Jun	Nov	Jun	Nov	Jun	Nov	Jun	Nov	Jun	Nov
Gauteng	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
North West	1	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
Free State	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
Western Cape	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
Eastern Cape	3	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
Northern Cape	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
Limpopo	3	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
KwaZulu-Natal	3	2	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1
IEB	2	1	1	1	3	4	1	1	1	1



4. Approach

Umalusi's approach to monitoring the ABET Level 4 Examination entails the following:

- Completion of a state of readiness questionnaire and submission of a report by the assessment body, followed by a verification inspection visit by the convening monitor to establish whether the report by the assessment body was in fact valid.
- Daily reports to Umalusi on all irregularities by the assessment body.
- Daily reports to Umalusi by monitors deployed to examination centres.
- Random, unannounced visits to the examination centres by Umalusi monitors.
- Umalusi staff shadow monitors and make random, unannounced visits to examination centres.

5. Findings

Umalusi's evaluative report on monitoring the ABET Level 4 Examination seeks to determine the relative credibility of the examination and establish whether there were any factors that could compromise the credibility of the examination.

The findings are presented in line with the phases of monitoring. They highlight only the key aspects underpinning the credibility of the examination.

5.1 State of readiness for the examination

5.1.1 Registration of candidates

No problems with registration have been reported.

5.1.2 Internal assessment

Plans for internal assessment were completed by the assessment ?

5.1.3 Appointment of examination personnel

All relevant examination personnel were appointed by the Assessment Bodies.

5.1.4 Training of examination personnel



Not all invigilators in the system were trained properly. In some cases it was reported that invigilators did not know how to deal with errata or unregistered learners.

5.1.5 Setting, moderation and translation of question papers

This process was undertaken by the national Department of Education. Papers were set by the national examiners and moderated by national internal moderators and then externally moderated by Umalusi external moderators. The quality of the process was monitored and there was compliance with national policies. The process unfolded as planned.

5.1.6 Security of examination material

The assessment bodies have strong security measures in place. Most used 24-hour CCTV coverage and had security companies on the premises for 24 hours. The assessment bodies that did not make use of the surveillance cameras used strong rooms with burglar bars and security locks; these rooms were also guarded for 24 hours. Access to these strong rooms was restricted to designated officials.

Not all centres have accessible strong rooms or a locked facility. In these cases materials were to be delivered to these centres on a daily basis.

5.1.7 Planning for monitoring

The assessment bodies all had monitoring plans in place. Districts were requested to complete their plans and to forward these to their provincial offices, where a composite plan was drawn. These plans were forwarded to Umalusi for verification. The plans were useful in deciding which sites to verify because they gave a clear indication of where and when the assessment body would monitor. Unfortunately not all these plans were adhered to due to the national strike action that took place during the June examination. In many instances, centre managers, district officials and monitors were intimidated by strikers. Many centres in different provinces did not manage to proceed with the exams or could not complete the examination because of the industrial strike action. Examinations in KwaZulu-Natal were suspended in certain areas due to the strike. Fortunately there were no disruptions during the October examination.

5.2 Writing of the examination

5.2.1 Security of storage and dispatch of examination material

Assessment bodies took great effort to deal with the security of the examination material. As reported, most of these duties were outsourced to credible security companies. Papers were stored according to strict regulations. Only designated officials were allowed at the storage



points. Question papers were stored in strong rooms, which were either guarded by the security companies or heavily secured with burglar bars and locks. Officials were responsible for the storage of examination material. Most assessment bodies made use of security companies to transport the examination material to centres. In some instances officials were assigned to perform this task.

Question papers were printed and stored according to strict security measures. Question papers were transported by the printers under strict security to district offices and then to centres on the day of the examinations. It was reported, however, that there were certain difficulties in dispatching the papers to centres during the June examination: officials were intimidated in some cases due to the national strike action. In Gauteng it was reported that officials could not make use of government cars and in some districts candidates wrote at the district offices.

Packaging of the scripts was done with double perforations, which facilitated easy checking and less tampering. All staff members involved with the question papers signed a control sheet when collecting or returning scripts.

It is evident from the reports that assessment bodies put a lot of effort into the security of the question papers. All question papers were sealed on arrival; these were opened in the presence of the learners. After the learners had completed writing, scripts were counted and packed by the chief invigilators. A recording register to dispatch the scripts was completed. Scripts were packed in either numerical order or according to the attendance register. Scripts were then taken to the district/circuit offices.

5.2.2 Management of examination centres

In general, the examinations were conducted in a professional manner. The selection of centres was done in such a way that learners would have easy access. Most assessment bodies used the public schools where the learners receive their daily tuition. This posed a problem in some provinces as no one could enter the school premises due to the strike. Learners and invigilators were intimidated and some did not return to complete their examinations.

In most provinces the centre managers were appointed as the chief invigilators. Most of the prescribed standards were met. Chief invigilators all understood the procedures involving candidates who arrived late, had to leave the examination room during writing, or completed the examination early. However, they did not all know how to handle unregistered learners, learners with special needs or emergency cases as they claimed this had not happened in their centres. At times officials did not support invigilators who had to sort out any emergency issues in their own way. None of the centres had contingency plans in place in case of fire or bomb-scares. It was reported that invigilators at the IEB still need a lot of training to run their examinations successfully.



5.3 Resulting

The resulting period refers to that period from marking, moderation of marking, computing and capturing of scores, moderation of scores and the review and capturing of adjusted scores. The findings below serve to establish the credibility of this final phase of the examination.

5.3.1 Monitoring of marking

Two processes unfolded during the monitoring of marking:

Umalusi monitors, as well as external moderators, were deployed to monitor the process. Monitors visited the marking venue to observe:

- The general management of the marking venue;
- Security.

The general management of the marking venues across the assessment bodies was of an acceptable standard. In June, some marking venues did not have a control room but this was rectified in October. Most assessment bodies put a lot of effort into ensuring that markers were comfortable and that they could complete their tasks effectively. Most venues were suitable for the task, furniture was suitable for marking purposes, and most had sufficient space and good ablution facilities. Most assessment bodies made use of halls, while others used classrooms per learning area. Venues had communication facilities such as faxes, telephones and computers available. The venues were well managed by an appointed centre manager and deputy centre manager.

5.3.2 Computing, capturing and processing of scores

Capturing and processing of data was done at the provincial examination offices after the marking process. Assessment bodies used different approaches to ensure that the capturing was done correctly. Most assessment bodies used the double capturing method.

A few monitors were deployed to verify this process. Strict security measures were in place during the capturing period and capturers signed a confidentiality statement. No problems with regard to capturing were reported.



Not all rooms were clearly marked but most of the centres were conducive for the writing of the examinations. Most centres did not have seating plans. Clocks were displayed in most centres and where there was no clock times were indicated on the boards.

5.2.3 Invigilation of the examination

The examinations were generally managed well. Invigilators understood the task at hand and most conducted the examinations and themselves most professionally. No cases of late coming were reported. Not all invigilators had identification tags and it was assumed that everyone knew they were teaching at the centres. Some centres did not have invigilator registers available. The chief invigilators were generally centre managers. They received training from the provincial office and they in turn trained the other invigilators. Most centres had relief invigilators.

5.2.4 Management of irregularities

The nature of the 2007 irregularities follows an established trend reported to Umalusi on a yearly basis and includes the following:

- Late or non-delivery of question papers.
- Candidates writing without positive identification as defined in the regulations.
- Candidates reporting late for examinations/absenteeism.
- Candidates leaving the examination room before the stipulated time.
- Negligence by invigilators, e.g. confusing examination starting times.
- Use of crib notes.
- Ghost candidates (a phenomenon mainly of adult centres).
- Intimidation of officials, invigilators and learners during the strike action.

Other irregularities include:

- Some centres did not give their learners the prescribed answer book for Economic and Management Sciences as they had not been received.

Daily irregularity reports were submitted to inform Umalusi of the examinations conducted. Invigilators were instructed to report any irregularities immediately to the District Examination officials, who then forwarded the details and reports to the Provincial Irregularity Committee for further investigation.

A composite report per assessment body will be forwarded to Umalusi.



Conclusion

The following aspects were well conducted:

- Learner registrations;
- Appointment of markers was done in accordance with regulations;
- Security systems at the venues have improved; more responsibility has been outsourced to private companies, for example transporting of scripts;
- Reporting of daily irregularities to Umalusi was done timeously;
- Technical irregularities were promptly followed up by the Provincial Irregularity Committee;
- The appointment of internal moderators and examination assistants is of great assistance to the process.

The following concerns, however, need to be noted:

- Training of chief invigilators and chief markers was done without manuals;
- There were still reports of noise levels being too high at some centres during the writing of the examinations;
- There are still centres with furniture shortages;
- Unregistered satellites registering their learners at registered centres to write examinations;
- Monitoring of the examinations was not done regularly by the assessment bodies;
- The national strike action interfered with the management of the examinations in June.

Despite these concerns, it can be concluded that the 2007 examinations were managed in a credible manner. All assessment bodies have systems in place to ensure the effective running of the examinations. All irregularities reported were handled in a satisfactory way by the Irregularity Committee that is operating in the assessment bodies. ?



5

Chapter Five

Moderation of marking

1. Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings of the moderation of scripts in respect of the following:

- Memorandum discussions;
- The standard of the question paper;
- The standard of marking;
- The standard of internal moderation;
- Response by candidates.

2. Purpose

Moderation of marking scripts is done to determine the standard and quality of marking and to ensure that marking is conducted in accordance with agreed practices. Umalusi verifies that the methods, procedures and approaches to moderation of marking ensure a credible marking process.

3. Scope

The moderation of marking extended across ten assessment bodies, namely the nine provincial bodies and the IEB. Only five learning areas with high learner enrolments, as well as the two fundamentals, were moderated.

Table 5.1

Learning Areas	June	October
1. Natural Sciences	√	√
2. Economic and Management Sciences	√	√
3. Life Orientation	√	√
4. LLC: English	√	√
5. Mathematical Literacy	√	√
6. Human and Social Science		√



4. Approach

Moderation of marking is divided into two phases, namely:

- Memorandum discussion
- Centralised moderation of marking.

These processes ensure that marking is standardised across Assessment Bodies.

4.1 Memorandum discussions

All chief markers must mark a representative sample of 20 scripts prior to the meeting. The findings from this exercise inform the final memorandum to be implemented for each learning area.

4.2 Centralised moderation of marking

External moderators in the five learning areas listed above were deployed to Umalusi to conduct this process. Each moderator moderated five scripts from each batch of scripts received from the assessment bodies.

5. Findings

5.1 Memorandum discussions

The memorandum discussions were held at the national Department of Education prior to the commencement of marking. Chief markers from each province in each learning area that a particular province writes attend the memorandum discussion meetings. These markers are required to mark 20 scripts before the commencement of the meetings.

In June 2007 three provinces did not mark scripts in various learning areas and four provinces were absent in certain learning areas.

Most of the absenteeism was due to the strike action. KwaZulu-Natal was most affected by the strike and their exams were cancelled. This had a negative impact on the discussion, as chief markers, who did not mark scripts or absented themselves from these discussions, were unable to give valuable input.

In October there was only one learning area in which some provinces did not mark the required 20 scripts. The role of the Umalusi external moderator was to ensure that the quality of the question paper was not compromised by the inclusion of alternate answers that were



not of the required standard and hence that the quality of marking was not compromised. They also ensured that there was consensus with regard to changes and amendments with appropriate reasons or substitution. They also verified whether all changes were correctly captured and ensured that all provinces received a copy of the final memorandum and the minutes of the discussions.

The discussions were held in a professional manner and none of the changes/additions had a negative impact on the cognitive levels of the learners or the credibility and fairness of the question paper.

Final memorandums were approved and signed-off through these discussions.

5.2 The standard of marking

The external moderators found that most of the markers were competent. Markers applied marking uniformly and also recognised alternative answers as correct and awarded marks appropriately and correctly. The markers had the prerequisite content knowledge and were proficient in the language, which invariably contributed to very good quality of marking.

In the Economic and Management Sciences (June 2007) it was found that the interpretation of the memorandum with regard to the Accounting aspects in the question paper was problematic for the markers in some provinces and learners were credited with too many marks. There were some inconsistencies in the allocation of marks by the markers. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the internal moderators and examination assistants did not address all the mistakes. Although there were a number of checking procedures, marks from some scripts were still incorrectly entered onto the mark sheet. This problem was resolved as the external moderator did not report on this aspect again in October.

5.3 Response by the learners

Most of the external moderators reported that learners performed poorly due to their inability to understand the questions. This indicates a serious problem regarding the language levels of our learners. They responded well to questions requiring single word answers but performed poorly in the essay type questions.

6. Areas of improvement

- The standard of marking in general has improved; senior markers and internal moderators are becoming well versed with the marking procedures.
- Most assessment bodies appointed internal moderators and examination assistants. This enhanced the quality assurance procedures.



7. Areas of concern

- During the June examination chief markers still absented themselves from the memorandum discussions and some did not mark the required scripts before memorandum discussions. This still poses a problem as they will not be able to give proper feedback to their specific provinces. There was, however, a vast improvement during the October examination.
- Language and terminology in ABET Level 4 is still a major problem for both learners and educators.
- Some memoranda still have incorrect answers.
- The yearly appointment of markers in the ABET sector creates inconsistencies.
- Internal moderation is not consistent in all cases. Some of the persistent problems include errors in addition and mark allocation. Internal moderators do not adhere to the memoranda and merely “rubber stamp” the markers' work.
- There are still discrepancies between mark allocation from the marker, internal moderator and external moderator.
- Many learners are struggling with the following aspects in question papers:
 - Interpretive questions;
 - Case studies;
 - Cartoon interpretations;
 - Essay type questions;
 - Poetry;
 - General instructions.

8. Conclusion

It can be concluded that the marking process as a whole was reported to be of an acceptable standard. The standard of the ABET Level 4 Examinations was not compromised, despite the areas of concern mentioned above.



6

Chapter Six

Standardisation of examination results

1. Introduction

The process is the same as that used in the standardisation of the Senior Certificate results. The internal assessment mark of candidates is also standardised to the examination marks they obtained.

2. Purpose of standardisation

The purpose of standardisation is to adjust marks where it is found that learners have been unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in the examinations.

3. Scope of the standardisation

For the June 2007 and the October 2007 examination 21 and 23 learning areas at ABET Level 4 were subjected to the standardisation process respectively.

4. Umalusi's approach to standardisation in 2007

Statistical moderation of examination marks for the June 2007 ABET Level 4 examination remained unchanged and consisted of comparisons between the current mark distributions and the mark distribution of previous years since 2002. Pairs analyses were also used in the process. Pairs analysis compares the mean marks in two subjects taken by the same group of candidates. These analyses are based on the principle that, as a group, the performances of the same candidates in two related subjects (taken at the same level) should show close correspondence. On the basis of all these comparisons, together with qualitative reports from chief markers, internal and external moderators, marks are either not adjusted or they are adjusted upwards or downwards by specific amounts over defined mark ranges.

The major rules that were employed in the standardisation of the 2007 examination results were:

- No adjustments in excess of 10%, either upwards or downwards, would be applied, except in exceptional cases.
- In the case of the individual candidate, the adjustment effected should not exceed 50% of the mark obtained by the candidate.



5. Findings

- 5.1 Pre-standardisation meetings were held by both Umalusi and the national and Provincial Departments of Education separately before the standardisation meeting. These meetings were used to interrogate the statistics supplied by SITA. The Department of Education drafted their proposals for adjustments, whilst Umalusi familiarised themselves with the statistics and drafted provisional responses to probable requests for adjustments.
- 5.2 The June 2007 ABET Level 4 standardisation meeting was held at Umalusi on 24 July 2007 and the October 2007 ABET Level 4 standardisation meeting was held at Umalusi on 7 December 2007.
- 5.3 It was interesting to note that virtually all the requests for adjustment were similar to the pre-standardisation decisions of Umalusi and in line with the approach of Umalusi.

6. Decisions

At the standardisation meeting held on 24 July 2007, raw marks were accepted for the 12 learning areas and minor upward adjustments were approved for the other nine learning areas. No downward adjustments were effected.

At the standardisation meeting held on 7 December 2007, raw marks were approved for 10 learning areas, minor upward adjustments were approved for 11 learning areas and minor downward adjustments were approved for two learning areas.

7. Areas of concern

- 7.1 The poor performance of candidates in the areas of Applied Agriculture and Technology, Economic and Management Sciences and especially Mathematical Literacy was again raised as a concern. Discussion around this matter and statistics show that candidates found Mathematical Literacy to be more difficult than Mathematical Science. The Department has acknowledged this and is starting to investigate ways to address this problem.
- 7.2 The problem of English being the language of teaching and instruction was once more highlighted from reports of chief markers and moderators. Most of the candidates entering for this examination are either second or third language English speakers.



8. Recommendations

It was recommended that the concerns listed above be forwarded to the relevant directorates within the Department of Education.

9. Conclusion

A great deal has been achieved during the past five years in establishing a standardisation process for ABET Level 4. The assessment process is starting to stabilize: there are signs that some learning areas are beginning to settle down with examiners starting to establish common standards in these learning areas. The increase in the number of candidates in the June examination is heartening, although it does cause some instability in the results. The concerns raised must, however, be addressed without delay.



Chapter Seven

7

Conclusion

The implementation of ABET Level 4 examinations is in its seventh year and there are definite indications that the assessment in most of the learning areas is stabilising.

The written examination, which forms the core of the whole examination at the moment because of its relatively reliable nature, though well conducted, still does not receive the rigorous attention it deserves.

The CASS/SBA component of the examination is still a matter of concern even though there are signs of improvement in respect of the structure and presentation of portfolios. The standard of assessment tasks remains at an unacceptable level.

Educators have shown great difficulty in developing a common understanding of the unit standards. Training of educators has become a nightmare for some provinces due to the high educator turnover rate. The development of a national curriculum and the review of the current qualification will be a great step to creating stability in the sector. The appointment of full-time educators in this sector is, however, the most important factor to ensure stability in this sector as it will lay the platform for the development of quality in the ABET sector.

The DOE is urged to seriously investigate the concerns raised in this report and to consider the recommendations made.