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Umalusi's media statement in respect of learners who intend to further their studies at private Further Education and Training (FET) colleges.

Having received their 2012 matric results, learners are in the process of considering and acting on various study options that their results permit them to explore. One of the options learners should consider, and which is frequently referred to by the Minister of Higher Education and Training in his speeches, is to take up further studies at Further Education and Training colleges.

Regrettably, now is the perfect timing for unscrupulous private colleges to illegally enrich themselves at the expense of unsuspecting and uninformed parents and learners.

This media statement is therefore intended to guide learners in making appropriate decisions with regard to private colleges they intend furthering their studies at, and the status of the courses they intend enrolling for. The media statement is a summary of Umalusi's *Open Letter to Learners*. The letter, which is an annexure to this statement, explains what to "look out for" when selecting a college to study at and which qualifications to enrol for.

In short, once learners have decided the direction they wish to study in they will need to select a private or public college to pursue their studies at. In selecting a college especially a private college there are a number of important issues to consider, as follows:

In order to ensure the credibility of qualifications private colleges are required to be *registered* with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and *accredited* by Umalusi or The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), to offer such qualifications.

In terms of the Further Education and Training Colleges Act of 2006, as amended, all private colleges that offer qualifications certified by Umalusi are required to register with the DHET before they start operating.

Umalusi certifies the following qualifications:

- the National Certificate Vocational (NCV),
- the National Technical Certificate (N3) Engineering
- the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult (GETC),

Registration provides private FET Colleges with a license to operate in South Africa and all registered colleges are required by law to publicly display their registration certificate.

Private FET Colleges offering qualifications or part qualifications certified by QCTO need not be registered with DHET but must be accredited.

The accreditation of private colleges by Umalusi constitutes an integral part of their registration process. In order for the registration process to be completed a private College must have been accredited by Umalusi. Accreditation attests to the quality of the provision offered at the college.

Learners and parents can verify the registration status of colleges by phoning The Department of Higher Education and Training at 012 312 5878 or by visiting the DHET website (i.e. www.education.gov.za) or by visiting the department at their physical address at 123 Francis Baard Street, Pretoria. The list of registered FET colleges includes, among other things, the name of the registered private college, its contact details, including physical address, and all the qualifications the college is registered to offer.

To check whether a college has been accredited go to Umalusi's website at www.umalusi.org.za or call 0123491510 ext 226 or email info@umalusi.org.za

Private FET Colleges are accredited and registered to offer qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Qualification not registered on the NQF, are not formally recognised in South Africa. In this regard, learners and parents must establish if the qualifications they are interested in are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In order to establish this, learners and parents may call the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) at 086 011 1672 or visit the SAQA website at www.saqa.org.za or visit SAQA at their physical address (i.e. 1067 Arcadia Street, Hatfield, Pretoria).

Private FET Colleges are registered and accredited to provide tuition for specific qualifications registered on the NQF. Any qualifications or programmes that do not appear on their registration certificate are not formally recognised in South Africa. This is the area that is mostly exploited by unscrupulous private colleges as part of their marketing strategy. While the private college may be registered per the FET Act, not all the qualifications they offer may be part of their registration.

To summarise, parents and learners must ask the following questions:

If the private FET College is offering qualifications certified by Umalusi, is it registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training?

Is the college accredited with Umalusi and/or the QCTO?

Are the qualifications offered registered on the NQF?

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