



**Evaluation and Accreditation Unit**

**Report on**

**Accreditation and Monitoring of**

**Private Assessment Bodies**

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**For the Period**  
**01 April 2017 – 31 March 2018**

**UMALUSI**



Council for Quality Assurance in  
General and Further Education and Training

EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION UNIT

REPORT ON  
ACCREDITATION AND MONITORING OF  
PRIVATE ASSESSMENT BODIES

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General and Further Education and Training

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AB	Assessment Body
A&C	Accreditation and Coordination
ACC	Accreditation Committee of Council
AET	Adult Education and Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
E&A	Evaluation and Accreditation
FET	Further Education and Training
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
IMC	Internal Moderation Committee
LOI	Letter of Intent
NATED	National Education Programme (Report 190/191)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence
QAA	Quality Assurance of Assessment
QCC	Qualifications Curriculum and Certification
SIR	Statistical Information and Research
SOR	State of Readiness

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Umalusi was established as a Quality Council under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008, as amended and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act, 2001 as amended. To this end, Umalusi has established a comprehensive and integrated quality assurance regime which is delivered in different units. This process includes:

- the development and management of a sub-framework of qualifications that are registered on levels 1-4 of the NQF;
- quality assurance of provision through the accreditation process;
- quality assurance of assessment and examinations; and
- effective establishment of the system for the standardisation, resulting and certification of examination results.

Assessment bodies are custodians of educational standards in the national education system and are therefore required to demonstrate the expertise to undertake this responsibility. Any external examination is by nature determining as it separates those who satisfy the requirements from those who do not. Such decisions must be based on valid and reliable internal assessment, examinations and learner data and certification processes. To that end assessment bodies must be viable and sustainable and must conduct their business with the greatest integrity.

Private assessment bodies are required to obtain accreditation with Umalusi to assess a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF). Accreditation is granted to a private assessment body if such assessment body-

- a. has the capacity to manage or coordinate national examinations and assessment of learner achievement in respect of qualifications it offers. Private assessment bodies must demonstrate the capacity to conduct, administer and manage national examinations and assessments of learner achievement in respect of qualifications they offer as stipulated by Umalusi; and
- b. assesses a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework which includes all the processes involved in the setting and administration of external examinations and internal assessment for the full period of the qualification as required by the policies and regulations that govern such a qualification.

The accreditation process for private assessment bodies is carried out by the Evaluation and Accreditation unit of Umalusi. The coordination of the application and subsequent evaluation is overseen and co-ordinated by the manager responsible for the accreditation and monitoring of assessment bodies.

The accreditation process comprises a number of steps which culminate in the presentation of an accreditation report for consideration and recommendation by the Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC). Umalusi Council approves the accreditation decisions regarding the accreditation status of private assessment bodies.

During the 2017/18 financial year Umalusi Council extended the provisional accreditation of one private assessment body to assess the National Senior Certificate, and granted another private assessment body (which already has provisional accreditation) permission to apply for full accreditation to assess the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training Level 4. Monitoring of the state of readiness of accredited private assessment bodies to conduct examinations, as well as monitoring of the conduct, administration and management of examinations was undertaken by various units of Umalusi.

# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1 Strategic objective

The Evaluation and Accreditation unit of Umalusi falls within Programme 3: Quality Assurance and Monitoring. The strategic objective of the Evaluation and Accreditation unit is to quality assure the private provisioning and assessment of the qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (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.

Umalusi has set common standards and conducts common quality assurance processes for public and private assessment bodies namely:

- External moderation of internal assessment and examination question papers;
- Monitoring for compliance with assessment and examination regulations across the sub-systems;
- Approval of results;
- Issuing of the same certificates to successful candidates across the entire assessment system.

The Evaluation and Accreditation unit provides for the quality assurance of provisioning of qualifications registered on the GFETQSF through the evaluation and accreditation of private assessment bodies. Private assessment bodies are required to seek accreditation with Umalusi to assess a qualification registered on the GFETQSF. Public assessment bodies are deemed accredited. Umalusi monitors and reports on their performance with regard to examinations and assessment.

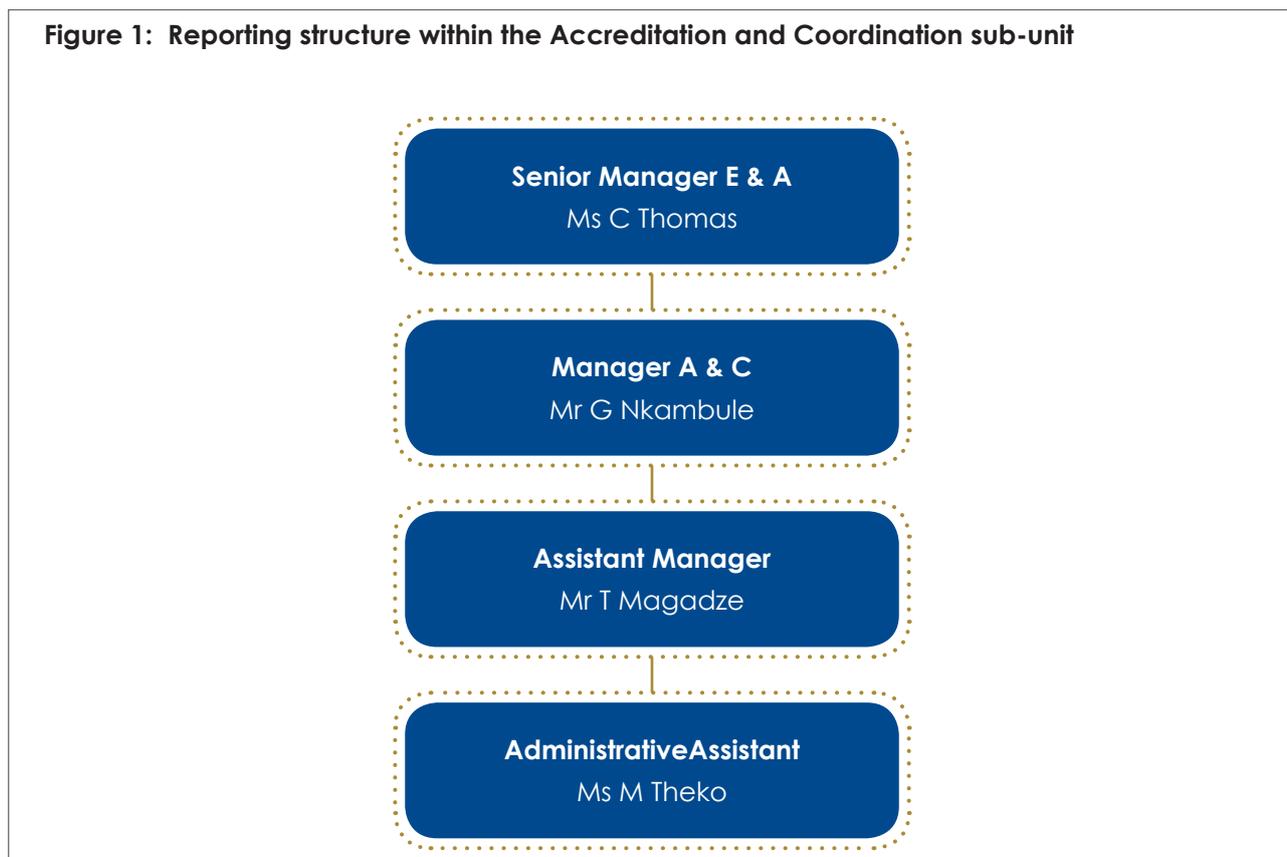
## 1.3 The Evaluation and Accreditation (E&A) unit

The Evaluation and Accreditation unit comprises sub-units dealing with the evaluation, accreditation and monitoring of:

- **Independent schools** offering the National Curriculum Statement leading to the National Senior Certificate;
- **Private Colleges.** This includes private Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges offering the NATED N1 to N3 Engineering Studies, and the National Certificate (Vocational), and private Adult Education and Training Centres offering the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training Level 4 (GETC:ABET Level 4); and
- **Private Assessment Bodies** assessing the above mentioned qualifications

The Senior Manager: Evaluation and Accreditation, oversees the work of the unit, and reports directly to the Executive Manager: Quality Assurance and Monitoring. The accreditation of private assessment bodies falls within the Accreditation and Co-ordination (A&C) sub-unit, led by a Manager who reports to the Senior Manager.

The reporting structure within the A&C sub-unit of the Evaluation and Accreditation unit is as indicated in Figure 1 below:



#### 1.4 Legislation underpinning the work of the E&A unit.

The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (Act no. 108 of 1996) provides for the establishment of independent education institutions that-

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

The *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008* (Act No. 67 of 2008) 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 to 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) stipulates in terms of sections 17A (2),

- a. "The Council must develop policy for the accreditation of assessment bodies other than departments of education and must submit it to the Minister for approval.
- b. The Minister must make regulations in which the policy for accreditation is set out.
- c. The Council must accredit an assessment body in accordance with the regulations contemplated in paragraph (b); and 23(1),

### **Other legislation pertaining to the work of the Evaluation and Accreditation unit includes:**

- a. *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996);*
- b. *Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006), (hereafter referred to as the CET Act) as amended;*
- c. *Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act, 2013 (Act No. 1 of 2013);*
- d. *Policy and criteria for the quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of independent schools and private assessment bodies, Government Gazette No. 35830 of 29 October 2012, as amended;*
- e. *Regulations regarding the criteria for the quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of independent schools and private assessment bodies, Government Gazette No. 41206 of 27 October 2017;*
- f. *Policy for the quality assurance of private adult learning centres, private further education and training colleges and the accreditation of private assessment bodies, Government Gazette 33237 of 28 May 2010;*
- g. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12, which includes:
  - The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement Grades R-12;
  - The National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (January 2012); and
  - The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (January 2012).
- h. Regulations pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate Examination (*Government Gazette No. 31337 of 29 August 2008 as amended*)
- i. Regulations pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (*Government Gazette No. 36041 of 28 December 2012 as amended*)

## **1.5 Structures involved in the accreditation of private assessment bodies**

The structures that play a role in the accreditation process of assessment bodies are:

- An Umalusi panel, the Internal Moderation Committee (IMC), which evaluates the initial application, conducts the verification site visits and makes recommendations to the Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC). The IMC is constituted of the Executive Manager: Quality Assurance and Monitoring and the Executive Manager: Qualifications and Research; Senior Managers of the Evaluation and Accreditation, Quality Assurance of Assessment, Qualifications, Curriculum and Certification, Statistical Information and Research, Finance and Supply Chain Management, and Information Communication and Technology units; and the Managers of the Evaluation and Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Assessment units on request.
- Assessment experts that may work individually or in teams to evaluate the self-evaluation undertaken by the applicant assessment body, conduct the site visits, moderate the standard of the examination products, monitor the examinations and report on the findings.
- The Manager: Accreditation and Coordination coordinates all the evaluation activities and the secretariat of the Accreditation Committee of Council (the Evaluation and Accreditation Unit) submits the recommendations on the application for accreditation to the ACC, based on the reports received from the assessment experts and the recommendations made by the Internal Moderation Committee (IMC).
- The Accreditation Committee of Council reviews and moderates the recommendations made by the IMC and, if satisfied, confirms the recommendations and refers the recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer of Umalusi for submission to Umalusi Council for approval.

The line of reporting of the structures involved in the accreditation of assessment bodies is indicated in Figure 2 below:



## 2. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

In accordance with the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (GENFETQA), 2001, private assessment bodies are required to apply for accreditation to assess and examine qualifications that are registered on the GFETQSF.

Umalusi evaluates the performance of applying private assessment bodies against the accreditation criteria that were approved by the Minister of Basic Education in Government Gazette No. 35830 of October 2012 as amended, and Government Gazette No. 41206 of 27 October 2017. The evaluation is conducted through various stages of the national assessment and examination processes.

The rigorous evaluation process stretches over a minimum of three years for new applicants. The accreditation process involves submission of the letter of intent (LOI) to apply for accreditation and sworn declaration; presentation before the Internal Moderation Committee (IMC) on: justifiable needs, sustainability (stable financial position), requisite resources, including infrastructure, financial surety, and professional expertise; the applicant's evaluation of its own assessment system (against Umalusi's accreditation criteria); Umalusi's desktop evaluation of the applicant's self-evaluation report and site verification visit by Umalusi; conduct of a pilot examination by the assessment body; provisional accreditation; state of readiness to conduct a full scale examination; conduct of a full scale examination; accreditation reports presented to the IMC, ACC and Council; full accreditation; and annual post-accreditation monitoring. The reports that are generated through Umalusi's evaluation process form the basis of an accreditation decision by Council through its Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC).

The following expectations must be met by a private assessment body seeking accreditation by Umalusi:

- The qualification the private assessment body seeks to assess must be registered on the GFETQSF. The private assessment body must develop its own subject/learning area assessment guidelines for the qualification it intends assessing to provide direction on how the assessment and examination instruments will be developed, while taking into account the common minimum standard set by the Minister.
- The private assessment body is required to meet Umalusi's quality assurance requirements. This means meeting the standards and time-lines that Umalusi sets for the submission of examination question papers for external moderation; the schedule for the moderation of internal assessment; the schedule for the moderation of marking and the schedule for the submission of examination marks for standardization and approval of results, as well as the specifications set for the submission of certification data and related systems.
- An assessment body ensures the administration of internal assessment and examinations through registered examination centres. To that end, the private assessment body is required to register as examination centres educational institutions that are accredited by Umalusi.

### 2.1 Accreditation criteria

Accreditation decisions are made on the basis of private assessment bodies meeting minimum standards in terms of the accreditation criteria. The approved criteria for a private assessment body to assess the National Senior Certificate are:

- Leadership, planning and management
- Assessment standards
- Research and development
- The conduct and administration of examinations
- Resulting systems and processes

## 2.2 Steps in the accreditation process

The accreditation process for private assessment bodies takes place in two (2) stages:

- **Stage 1**, which involves the private assessment body being permitted to conduct a pilot examination, and if successful, results in provisional accreditation.
- **Stage 2**, which can result in full accreditation for the private assessment body.

STAGE 1		
1.1	<b>Application</b>	The Assessment Body submits a letter of intent and sworn declaration to apply for accreditation.
		The Assessment Body makes a presentation before the Internal Moderation Committee (IMC) on justifiable need, sustainability (stable financial position), requisite resources, including infrastructure, financial surety, and professional expertise.
1.2	<b>Self-evaluation report</b>	The Assessment Body completes a self-evaluation report and portfolio of evidence against the accreditation criteria.
		The appointed evaluator evaluates the self-evaluation report and portfolio of evidence submitted by the Assessment Body.
1.3	<b>Site verification process</b>	A site verification visit is conducted by the Internal Moderation Committee (IMC) and independent experts invited on the basis of their expertise in assessment, quality assurance, accreditation, and/or monitoring.
		A site verification report is presented to the IMC, ACC and Council.
1.4	<b>Accreditation Decision</b>	If the application meets the minimum requirements, the Assessment Body is granted permission by Umalusi Council to conduct a pilot examination.
		Conditions for the pilot, including payment details, are outlined in a letter to the applicant.
		Monitoring of the pilot is conducted by the E&A, QAA and QCC units.
		The reports from the pilot project are consolidated.
		The consolidated pilot project report is presented, to the IMC and ACC for recommendations.
		The recommendations are presented to Umalusi Council for a decision, which may be: Provisional accreditation for 3 years, or No accreditation
1.5	<b>Feedback and Response</b>	The A&C sub-unit communicates the accreditation decision of Council to the Assessment Body.
1.6	<b>Conduct of a full scale examination</b>	Assessment Bodies granted provisional accreditation are monitored during the conduct of a full scale examination. A report on the conduct of the examination is presented to Umalusi Council. If the examination has been successfully conducted, the Council may grant the Assessment Body permission to apply for full accreditation.

STAGE 2		
2.1	<b>Application for full accreditation in the second year of provisional accreditation</b>	The Assessment Body submits a letter of intent to apply for accreditation and sworn declaration.
		The Assessment Body makes a presentation before the Internal Moderation Committee (IMC) on justifiable need, sustainability (stable financial position), requisite resources, including infrastructure, financial surety, and professional expertise.
2.2	<b>Self-evaluation report</b>	The Assessment Body completes a self-evaluation report and portfolio of evidence against the accreditation criteria.
		The appointed evaluator evaluates the self-evaluation report and portfolio of evidence submitted by the Assessment Body.
2.3	<b>Site verification process</b>	A site verification visit is conducted by the Internal Moderation Committee (IMC) and independent experts invited on the basis of their expertise in assessment, quality assurance, accreditation, and/or monitoring.
		A site verification report is presented to the IMC, ACC and Council.
2.4	<b>Monitoring</b>	The QAA, E&A, SIR and QCC units evaluate the private Assessment Body's State of Readiness (SOR) to conduct an examination.
2.5	<b>Full Scale Examination</b>	The Assessment Body conducts a full scale examination, whilst being monitored by the QAA, E&A, SIR and QCC units.
2.6	<b>Accreditation report</b>	The stage 2 Self-evaluation report, State of Readiness report, Site Verification Report and QAA Report on the State of Readiness and the Conduct of Exams are consolidated into one report, which is presented to the IMC and ACC prior to the report and a recommendation on the outcome being submitted to Umalusi Council.
2.7	<b>Accreditation decision</b>	Umalusi Council deliberates on the report and recommendation. Once the Council is satisfied of the Assessment Body's capacity to conduct national examination, the accreditation of the Assessment Body to assess a qualification on the GFETQSF is approved.
2.8	<b>Feedback</b>	The A&C sub-unit communicates the Council's decision on the accreditation status to the Assessment Body.
2.9	<b>Post Accreditation Monitoring</b>	The accredited Assessment Body is subjected to annual post-accreditation monitoring.
		Monitoring requirements include all the processes in the preparation for and conduct of the national examinations.
		An accredited Assessment Body is required to continually satisfy all accreditation requirements in the post-accreditation monitoring.

## 2.3 Private assessment body applications considered in the 2017/18 financial year

- 2.3.1 During the 2017/18 financial year, Umalusi Council processed the applications for Assessment Bodies as follows:
- Provisional accreditation for one assessment body to assess the National Senior Certificate was extended to 31 December 2019. Specific conditions which the assessment body must meet during the period of provisional accreditation have been prescribed;
  - One assessment body which currently holds provisional accreditation to assess the GETC: ABET Level 4 was granted permission to apply for full accreditation. The assessment body subsequently submitted a LOI to apply for full accreditation.

- 2.3.2 One Letter of intent to apply for accreditation to assess the National Certificate (Vocational) was received during the 2017/18 financial year.
- 2.3.3 The A&C sub-unit together with the QAA unit monitored the writing and marking of the June/July 2017 examinations for one (1) private assessment body.
- 2.3.4 The A&C sub-unit together with the QAA unit participated in monitoring the state of readiness of three (3) private assessment bodies in September 2017.
- 2.3.5 Monitoring of the conduct, administration and management of examinations is done by Umalusi's QAA unit. The following quality assurance of assessment processes are evaluated and reported on by the QAA unit:
- Moderation of question papers
  - Moderation of site-based assessment portfolios
  - Monitoring the state of readiness to conduct the examinations
  - Monitoring of writing
  - Standardisation of the marking guidelines
  - Monitoring of marking
  - Verification of marking
  - Standardisation and resulting
  - Certification

### 3. PRIVATE ASSESSMENT BODIES ACCREDITED BY UMALUSI

Figure 3 indicates the current status of private assessment bodies accredited to assess qualifications registered on the GFETQSF.

**Figure 3: Current status of private assessment bodies accredited to assess qualifications registered on the GFETQSF.**

Assessment Body	Qualification	Accreditation Status
Independent Examinations Board (IEB)	National Senior Certificate (NSC)	Full accreditation
	General Education and Training Certificate (GETC): Adult Basic Education and Training Level 4	Full accreditation
South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI)	National Senior Certificate (NSC)	Provisional accreditation
Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA)	General Education and Training Certificate (GETC): Adult Basic Education and Training Level 4	Provisional accreditation Given permission to apply for full accreditation

## 4. OTHER ACTIVITIES

### 4.1 Policy and regulations

- The *Policy and criteria for the quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of independent schools and private assessment bodies* was reviewed during the period under consideration. The amended policy was approved and gazetted by the Minister of Basic Education in Government Gazette No. 41206 of 27 October 2017
- Section 17A (2) (b) of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)* requires the Minister to make regulations in which the policy for accreditation is set out, and in accordance with these regulations the Council must accredit a private assessment body. In line with that requirement, regulations regarding the criteria for the quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of independent schools and private assessment bodies were developed and gazetted by the Minister in Government Gazette No. 41206 of 27 October 2017.
- The *Policy for the quality assurance of private adult learning centres, private further education and training colleges and the accreditation of private assessment bodies*, Government Gazette 33237 of 28 May 2010, has been reviewed, and gazetted for public comment on 5 January 2018 under the title: *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*. (Government Gazette No. 41370 of 5 January 2018). The comments have been considered and relevant amendments included in the policy and presented to Umalusi Council in February 2018. Umalusi Council has approved the policy, which has been submitted to the Minister of Higher Education and Training for approval and gazetting.
- 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 are being developed alongside the development of the reviewed policy. Umalusi Council has approved the submission of the Regulations to the Minister of Higher Education and Training for approval for gazetting for public comment.

### 4.2 Bilateral meetings

- Every year, Umalusi holds two (2) bilateral meetings with each assessment body.
- The purpose of the first bilateral meeting of the year is to reflect on the previous year's processes and to plan for the activities of the current year.
- The purpose of the second bilateral meeting is to discuss progress made, and state of readiness and preparations for the upcoming national examinations.

## 5. AREAS OF STRENGTH

- 5.1 The bilateral meetings between Umalusi and assessment bodies help to keep Umalusi abreast of the state of readiness of the assessment bodies to conduct credible examinations in the country.
- 5.2 The different units in Umalusi (E&A, QAA, SIR, QCC, Finance and Information, Communications and Technology) work together during the accreditation process of private assessment bodies, leading to a comprehensive evaluation of all aspects relating to quality assurance of the private assessment bodies.
- 5.3 The various structures involved in the accreditation process of private assessment bodies, namely, the E&A unit, IMC, ACC and Council, ensure that only credible assessment bodies are accredited.
- 5.4 The directives for compliance from Umalusi reports on Quality Assurance of Assessment of the NSC/GETC examinations ensures that assessment bodies improve their practice.

## 6. GENERAL CHALLENGES

- 6.1 Accrediting assessment bodies that assess the unregulated sector, such as distance education, and rewrite centres, poses a challenge. A task team has been established to explore regulation of these unregulated sectors.
- 6.2 Some unregistered independent schools, posing as "support centres" register their learners as "home schoolers" with private assessment bodies in order to bypass requirements for Registration and Accreditation of Independent Schools. The regulation of distance education aims to address this challenge.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of accreditation is to ensure quality provision of a qualification registered on the GFETQSF. Umalusi executes its mandate to quality assure private assessment bodies through the rigorous processes of accreditation and monitoring. The E&A unit is continuously reviewing and updating its procedures to ensure more efficient quality assurance processes. Great effort is made to ensure that the quality assurance of private assessment bodies is fair, efficient and reliable so that quality education and assessment is provided to learners.

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