

UMALUSI



COUNCIL FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GENERAL
AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

UMALUSI

**Report on the Quality Assurance
of the ABET Level 4 Examinations 2006**



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of the ABET Level 4 Examinations 2006**



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Foreword by the Chairperson of UMALUSI

Quality assurance of the ABET level 4 assessment by Umalusi started at its inception in 2001. 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.

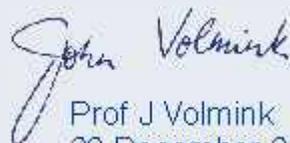
Umalusi judges the quality and standard of examinations by determining the level of adherence to policy in implementing examination related processes, the cognitive challenge of examination question papers, the appropriateness and weighting of content in question papers in relation to the syllabus, the 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 has paid particular attention to the cognitive challenge of question papers. The level of challenge of question papers for 2006 was significantly higher. The examination has become less predictable and this enhances its reliability and validity.

The Executive Committee of Umalusi Council has concluded, from the reports submitted by all personnel involved in the quality assurance of examinations, that assessments in 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 Umalusi offices in Pretoria on Wednesday, 20 December 2006 and declared that the examination was beyond reproach.



Prof J Volmink
20 December 2006

Chapter One

1

Introduction

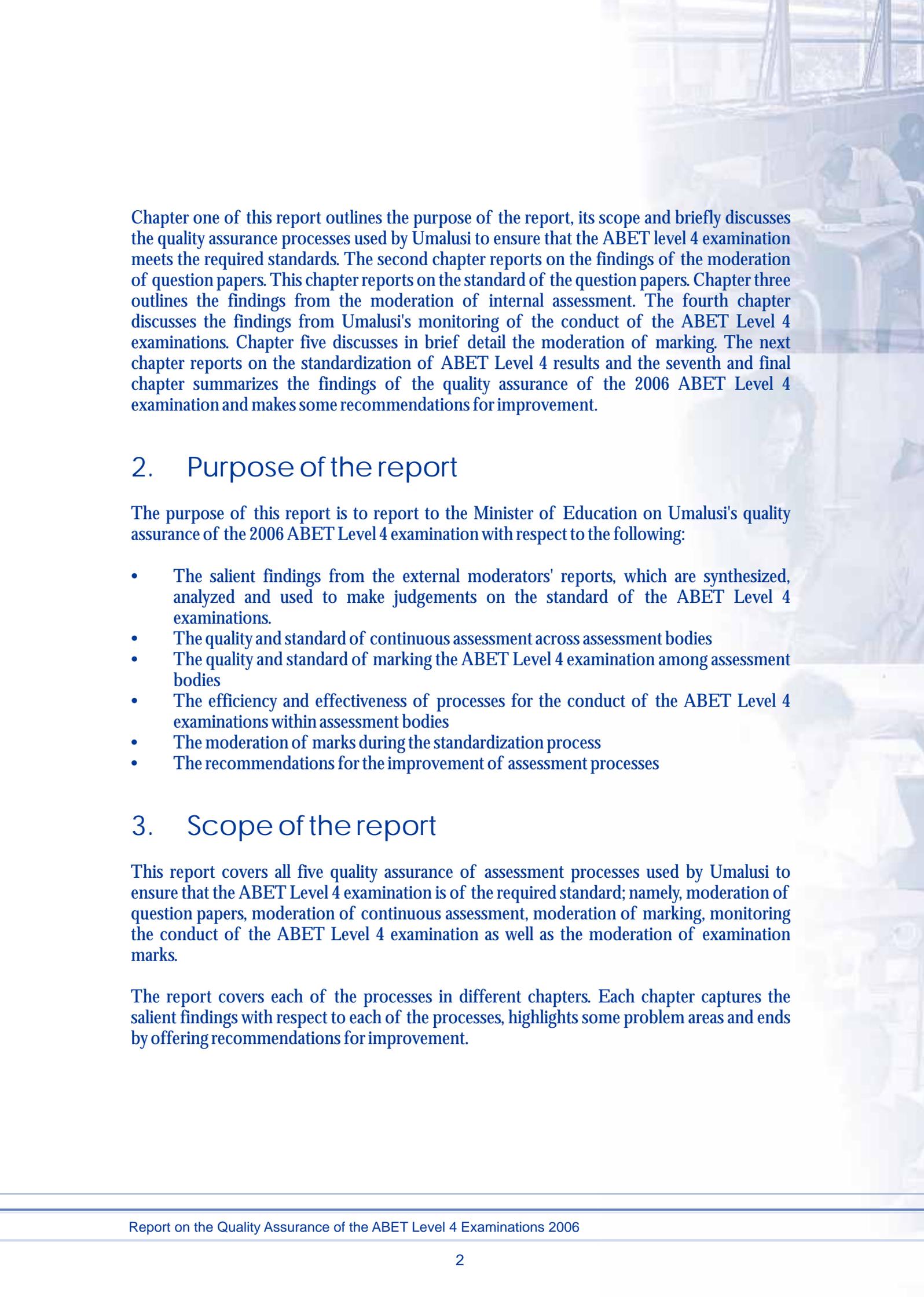
1. Background

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

This report is on the quality assurance of the ABET Level 4 examination in 2006. 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 which together ensure a credible ABET Level 4 examination. These processes ensure that all aspects of the examination are put through rigorous quality checks. This enhances 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, like 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 ABET Level 4 examination, the quality of marking as well as the quality and standard of internal quality assurance processes within the assessment body.



Chapter one of this report outlines the purpose of the report, its scope and briefly discusses the quality assurance processes used by Umalusi to ensure that the ABET level 4 examination meets the required standards. The second chapter reports on the findings of the moderation of question papers. This chapter reports on the standard of the question papers. Chapter three 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 five discusses in brief detail the moderation of marking. The next chapter reports on the standardization of ABET Level 4 results and the seventh and final chapter summarizes the findings of the quality assurance of the 2006 ABET Level 4 examination and makes some recommendations for improvement.

2. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to report to the Minister of Education on Umalusi's quality assurance of the 2006 ABET Level 4 examination with respect to the following:

- The salient findings from the external moderators' reports, which are synthesized, analyzed and used to make judgements on the standard of the ABET Level 4 examinations.
- The quality and standard of continuous assessment across assessment bodies
- The quality and standard of marking the ABET Level 4 examination among 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
- The recommendations for the improvement of assessment processes

3. Scope of the report

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

The report covers each of the processes in different chapters. Each chapter captures the salient findings with respect to each of the processes, highlights some problem areas and ends by offering recommendations for improvement.

Chapter Two

2

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 OF THIS CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to extract salient findings from the external moderators' reports, synthesise and analyse these and make judgements on the standard of the ABET Level 4 Examinations. Furthermore, the chapter highlights problems that potentially compromise the quality of the question papers set for the ABET Level 4 Examinations. The chapter finally makes recommendations for improvement of the standard of question papers.

3. THE SCOPE

The DOE ABET Level 4 examinations comprise 23 Learning Areas and two question papers are set per examination of which one is used as a back-up paper. The question papers for the June 2006 examination with the exception of LLC: English, LLC: Sesotho and Human and Social Sciences were set and moderated in 2005. Umalusi externally moderated a total of 49 question papers in 2006 at the premises of the National Department of Education to ensure the confidentiality and security of the question papers. The moderation process was

conducted between February and July 2006.

The following Learning Areas were moderated and the number of papers is indicated in brackets:

- 3.1 Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (2)
- 3.2 Arts and Culture (2)
- 3.3 Ancillary Health Care (2)
- 3.4 Economic and Management Sciences (2)
- 3.5 Human and Social Sciences (3)
- 3.6 Life Orientation (2)
- 3.7 LLC: Afrikaans (2)
- 3.8 LLC: English (3)
- 3.9 LLC: Sepedi (2)
- 3.10 LLC: Sesotho (3)
- 3.11 LLC: Setswana (2)
- 3.12 LLC: Siswati (2)
- 3.13 LLC: isiZulu (2)
- 3.14 LLC: isiNdebele (2)
- 3.15 LLC: isiXhosa (2)
- 3.16 LLC: Tshivenda (2)
- 3.17 LLC: Xitsonga (2)
- 3.18 Mathematics Literacy (2)
- 3.19 Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (2)
- 3.20 Natural Science (2)
- 3.21 Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (2)
- 3.22 Technology (2)
- 3.23 Travel and Tourism (2)

Umalusi moderated the following Independent Examinations Board (IEB) papers:

- 3.24 Economics and Management Sciences
- 3.25 Mathematical Literacy
- 3.26 Technology
- 3.27 Small Medium and Macro Enterprises
- 3.28 Life Orientation
- 3.29 LLC English
- 3.30 History and Social Sciences

Only one paper from ASECA was externally moderated:

- 3.31 LLC English

4. APPROACH

4.1 The assessment body appointed its own examiners and internal moderators. They set and moderate the question papers and memoranda internally. Umalusi then moderates these question papers externally at a central venue.

The Assessment body must submit the question papers for external moderation as follows:

- 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.

4.2 The external moderators will then moderate the question papers using the following criteria, which were also used by the examiners in setting the question papers:

- Content coverage
- Cognitive skills
- Internal moderation
- Language and bias
- Predictability
- Adherence to policy
- Marking memo
- Technical criteria
- Overall impression of the paper.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Content coverage

This criterion covers the following aspects:

- Does the paper cover all content and skills as prescribed by the syllabus?
- Are there questions set that are outside the syllabus?
- Does the paper cover questions of various types, for example multiple-choice questions, paragraph, data response, essay, etc?
- Are the examples and illustrations suitable and appropriate?

All the question papers were developed in line with the requirements listed in the Learning Area guidelines with the exception of Mathematical Literacy. Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Science (MLMMS) as a subject were divided in 2003 into two Learning Areas, namely Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Science. The division has been effected by allocating the applicable unit standards of MLMMS to Mathematical Literacy and those applicable to Mathematical Science to Mathematical Science. This division of the Learning Area MLMMS was approved by SAQA. The differentiation between Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Science has not been reviewed in the guidelines developed in 2002. In 2005 the national Department of Education employed new examiners who were not aware of the separation of unit standards and were using the old guidelines for MLMMS in setting the question papers for 2006. Including the unit standards applicable to Mathematical Science in the Mathematical Literacy paper will obviously disadvantage the candidates as these unit standards would not have been dealt with in the classroom. Including the Mathematical Literacy unit standards in the Mathematical Science paper would lower the level of difficulty

and cognitive challenge of the questions. The external moderator, therefore, developed a document to guide the examiners in the application of the unit standards for Mathematical Literacy and for Mathematical Science.

Umalusi has been requesting the national Department of Education to review the Learning Area guidelines since the beginning of 2003. The guidelines developed in 2002 have been found to be wanting in that assessment bodies were interpreting the guidelines differently.

5.2 Cognitive demand

The following questions guide this criterion:

- Is there correct distribution in terms of cognitive levels (Bloom's taxonomy or any other taxonomy that may have been used)?
- Are the questions in a section from which candidates are to choose of equal difficulty level?
- What conceptual constructs of the subject does the paper deal with? For example, reasoning ability.
- Are the questions challenging, allowing for creative responses from candidates?

5.2.1 Most of question papers moderated covered higher, middle and lower order cognitive levels very well. The weighting of the questions was balanced. The questions were intellectually challenging and the LLC: Sepedi paper had questions that showed that the examiners did some research on the current issues and used these when setting the question paper. The external moderator reports that the examiner has gone beyond the textbook to find material for the comprehension exercise and translated the comprehension text from an international magazine.

5.2.2 The LLC: Afrikaans question paper had good examples of higher order questions. Candidates were requested to give motivation for their answers. These questions, though of higher order were suitable for ABET Level 4 learners.

5.2.3 Not all the questions in the LLC: English Paper 3 were intellectually challenging. There was not a correct distribution of questions in terms of cognitive levels. Most of the questions were lower order questions (recall) and they did not require learners to apply themselves.

5.3 Internal moderation

This criterion requires:

- Evidence that the paper has been moderated internally.
- Evaluation of the quality, standard and relevance of input from internal moderator to the examiner.
- Evaluation of the quality of the report from the internal moderator.

5.3.1 The fact that there were question papers that were rejected or had to be resubmitted for external moderation indicates that there is a problem regarding the internal moderation conducted by the assessment body. It is expected from internal moderators to ensure that the

question papers meet the criteria as set out in the criteria for moderation of question papers. Internal moderators also should provide feedback to the examiners to facilitate improvement in the standard and quality of the question papers. External moderators of Umalusi essentially verify that the internal moderator has performed their function and that the question papers meet the criteria. When the internal moderator does not perform adequately it is left to the external moderator to moderate the question paper and to provide the necessary feedback. The verification process then becomes very hazy as the external moderator is verifying his/her moderation.

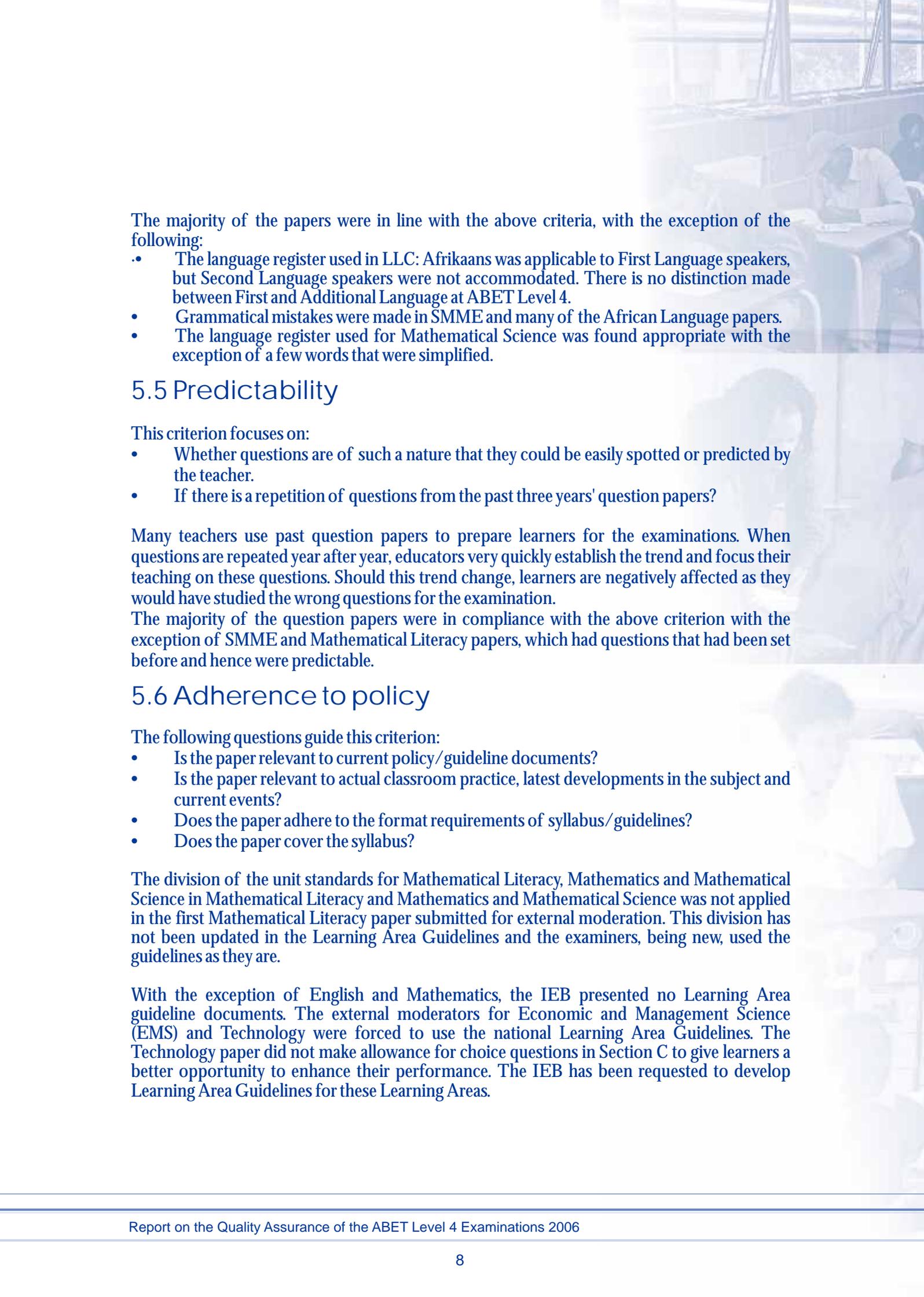
5.3.2 Most of the moderators confirmed that there was evidence that moderation took place, but the input, quality, relevance and contribution by the internal moderator was of poor standard, for example:

- In Ancillary Health Care, several errors in respect of language, content as well as technical setting of the multiple-choice questions (MCQs) had to be corrected. A question in the MCQs had answers inadvertently provided in the True or False question in the next page.
- In Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology (AAAT), the internal moderator overlooked bias in some questions and recommended replacement of other questions, but did not give guidance as to why and how they should be replaced. The external moderator recommended replacement of poorly phrased questions and ambiguous tables. The same problem was experienced in Life Orientation.
- In Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME) and Mathematical Literacy, the internal moderator did not notice that the questions were set on several occasions before and could, therefore, be predictable.
- In LLC: Sepedi, there were mistakes such as word division, punctuation, usage of capital letters and some dialectical forms, which are non-standard forms. These were left uncorrected and totally distort the meaning of the Sepedi words.
- In Economic and Management Science, obvious errors were not addressed. Incorrect numbering of questions and instructions were not detected.
- In Mathematical Literacy, the internal moderator was not aware of the differentiation between the unit standards for Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Science. The internal moderator obviously did not update him/herself with the latest developments in the Learning Area.

5.4 Language and bias

The following questions guide this criterion:

- Is the subject terminology used correctly?
- Is the language register appropriate for the level of the learner?
- Does the paper avoid gender, race, cultural, and assessment body bias?
- Are there any subtleties in the grammar that might create confusion?
- In the case of languages where learners are asked to summarise texts, are the texts of appropriate length, and is the level and complexity of the vocabulary appropriate?



The majority of the papers were in line with the above criteria, with the exception of the following:

- The language register used in LLC: Afrikaans was applicable to First Language speakers, but Second Language speakers were not accommodated. There is no distinction made between First and Additional Language at ABET Level 4.
- Grammatical mistakes were made in SMME and many of the African Language papers.
- The language register used for Mathematical Science was found appropriate with the exception of a few words that were simplified.

5.5 Predictability

This criterion focuses on:

- Whether questions are of such a nature that they could be easily spotted or predicted by the teacher.
- If there is a repetition of questions from the past three years' question papers?

Many teachers use past question papers to prepare learners for the examinations. When questions are repeated year after year, educators very quickly establish the trend and focus their teaching on these questions. Should this trend change, learners are negatively affected as they would have studied the wrong questions for the examination.

The majority of the question papers were in compliance with the above criterion with the exception of SMME and Mathematical Literacy papers, which had questions that had been set before and hence were predictable.

5.6 Adherence to policy

The following questions guide this criterion:

- Is the paper relevant to current policy/guideline documents?
- Is the paper relevant to actual classroom practice, latest developments in the subject and current events?
- Does the paper adhere to the format requirements of syllabus/guidelines?
- Does the paper cover the syllabus?

The division of the unit standards for Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Science in Mathematical Literacy and Mathematics and Mathematical Science was not applied in the first Mathematical Literacy paper submitted for external moderation. This division has not been updated in the Learning Area Guidelines and the examiners, being new, used the guidelines as they are.

With the exception of English and Mathematics, the IEB presented no Learning Area guideline documents. The external moderators for Economic and Management Science (EMS) and Technology were forced to use the national Learning Area Guidelines. The Technology paper did not make allowance for choice questions in Section C to give learners a better opportunity to enhance their performance. The IEB has been requested to develop Learning Area Guidelines for these Learning Areas.

5.7 Marking memo

This criterion focuses on:

- Comment on the correctness of the marking memo.
- Does it correspond with questions in the question paper?
- Does the memo give allowance for alternative responses?
- Does it facilitate marking?
- Is the marking memo complete with mark allocation?

The memorandum for LLC: English had incorrect answers and the numbering did not correspond with the question paper. Mistakes, which included incorrect answers, were also discovered in EMS, LLC: Xitsonga and SMME.

5.8 Technical criteria

This criterion focuses on:

- Is the question paper complete with memorandum, relevant answer sheets and formula sheets?
- Does the cover page have all relevant details such as time, subject, grade/level, and instructions to candidates?
- Are the instructions to learners clearly spelt out and unambiguous?
- Is the layout of the paper learner friendly?
- Does the paper have correct numbering?
- Is the same font used throughout the paper?
- Is mark allocation clearly indicated?
- Do the marks allocated for the whole paper correspond with time given?
- Is mark allocation on the paper the same as on the memo?
- Comment on the quality of illustrations, graphs, tables etc. Are these print ready?
- Does the difficulty level of questions correspond with the time allocated for the paper?

The question papers were in compliance with the above criterion with the following exceptions:

- The quality of some pictures in Life Orientation was poor.
- The graphic illustrations in Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology and Natural Science were of poor quality.
- In Technology (IEB), each section numbering started with 1.2.

5.9 Overall impression

External moderators are expected to give an overall impression on the question papers and are guided by the following questions:

- Is the paper fair and of appropriate standard?
- Will the paper as a whole assess the outcomes, aims and objectives of the syllabus/policy documents?

- How does the standard of the question paper compare in relation to other assessment bodies offering the same Learning Areas and previous question papers?

After the finalisation and incorporation of the external moderator recommendations to the question papers, the external moderators felt that papers were appropriate and that the papers as a whole would assess the achievement of the aims of the unit standards and Learning Area guidelines. The general consensus was that there has been an improvement in the quality of the question papers compared to previous years.

6. AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- There are signs that some of the examiners are becoming more progressive in the development of question papers. A good example of this is the LLC: Sepedi examiners who are clearly engaged in finding relevant and contextual material to use in the setting of question papers.
- The examiners are also starting to ensure that the question papers have a correct distribution in terms of cognitive levels.

7. AREAS OF CONCERN

The main area of concern is clearly the quality and standard of internal moderation. As previously stated, the fact that there are still question papers that are rejected indicates that there is a problem with regards to moderation.

- Moderation is the one method of mediating an appropriate standard in the question papers and to ensure a credible and appropriate assessment instrument. This is only possible if the moderators are knowledgeable in their specific Learning Area and constantly update themselves with the latest developments in assessment and their area of expertise. They also have to provide constant feedback on what improvements have to be implemented in the setting of question papers.
- Examiners using incorrect unit standards in the development of the Mathematical Literacy question paper indicate that they have not familiarised and updated themselves on the latest developments in this Learning Area. The internal moderator did not rectify this mistake as they obviously were not familiar with the correct unit standards. The absence of updated and correct Learning Area guidelines contributed mainly to this problem.
- The poor quality of pictures and graphical illustrations in Life Orientation, Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology and Natural Science, and incorrect answers in the memorandums, shows that examiners do not realise the importance of ensuring that candidates are able clearly to identify all aspects of any graphical presentation, as well as the importance of correct memorandums.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Umalusi recommends that the national Department of Education:

8.1 Train internal moderators on:

- criteria for moderation of question papers;
- moderation of question papers;
- writing a moderation report;
- how to guide examiners when recommending a replacement of a question(s).

8.2 Train examiners on:

- applying the criteria for moderation of question papers in setting question papers;
- how to use case studies in assessment;
- correct selection of content to use in case studies;
- correct usage of unit standards.

8.3 Review all the Learning Area guidelines

- Update the Learning Area guidelines for Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Science.
- Ensure that each mathematics educator, examiner and moderator has a copy of the update Learning Area guideline.

9. CONCLUSION

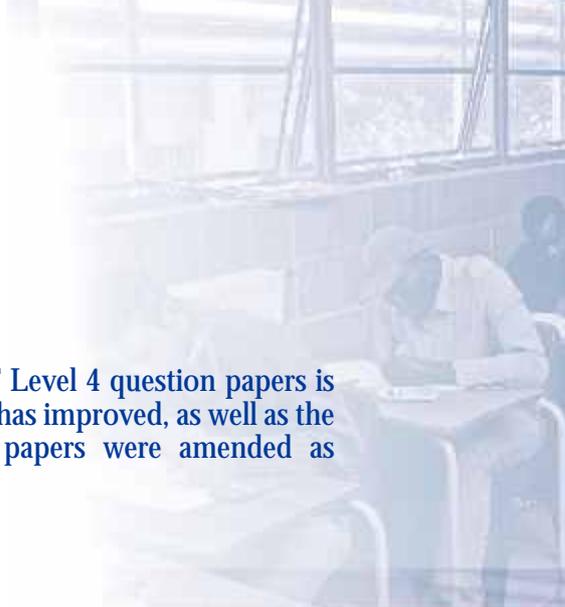
The purpose of this chapter was to ascertain the appropriateness, standard, quality, fairness, reliability and validity of the question papers. This report highlights the fact that due to poor internal moderation too many papers were either rejected or provisionally approved and had to be resubmitted for second moderation.

All recommendations made by the external moderators were incorporated into the papers and all papers were finally approved.

The main concern of Umalusi is the fact that internal moderation in the DOE is of a poor standard and the DOE will have to beef up this function in order to have the question papers approved at first external moderation.

The report shows an increase in the number of question papers approved at first external

moderation. This is a positive sign that the setting of the ABET Level 4 question papers is improving with time. For example, the standard of the questions has improved, as well as the various types of questions included. The rejected question papers were amended as recommended and no question paper was rejected twice.



Chapter Three

3

MODERATION OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Adult Basic Education and Training (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 examinations' mark and 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 that assessment of the learner's performance 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 as well as from centre to centre. To ensure that SBA is credible and fair, Umalusi therefore has to standardise the 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 suggest recommendations.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter 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 – the Independent Examinations Board (IEB).

Moderation was conducted in three selected Learning Areas for two days in each of the ten assessment bodies (public and independent). The table below indicates the Learning Areas that were moderated.

1. Gauteng	1.1	Economic and Management Sciences
	1.2	Mathematical Sciences
	1.3	Natural Science
2. North West	2.1	Life Orientation
	2.2	Mathematical Literacy
	2.3	Economic and Management Sciences
3. Free State	3.1	Life Orientation
	3.2	LLC: English
	3.3	Natural Science
4. Mpumalanga	4.1	Mathematical Literacy
	4.2	Economic and Management Sciences
	4.3	LLC : English
5. Limpopo	5.1	Life Orientation
	5.2	Mathematical Literacy
	5.3	Economic and Management Sciences
6. Northern Cape	6.1	LLC: English
	6.2	Life Orientation
	6.3	Natural Science
7. KwaZulu Natal	7.1	Economic and Management Science
	7.2	Mathematical Literacy
	7.3	LLC: English
8. Western Cape	8.1	Life Orientation
	8.2	Mathematical Literacy
	8.3	Economic and Management Sciences
9. Eastern Cape	9.1	Life Orientation
	9.2	Mathematical Sciences
	9.3	Natural Science
10. IEB	10.1	LLC :English
	10.2	Mathematical Literacy

Umalusi's selection criteria for moderation of SBA depended on the following:

- Learning Areas that had larger learner numbers
- A need for follow-up moderation of the Learning Areas moderated in October 2005 or June 2006
- Financial and logistical constraints

4. APPROACH

Umalusi deployed three 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 for the 2006 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

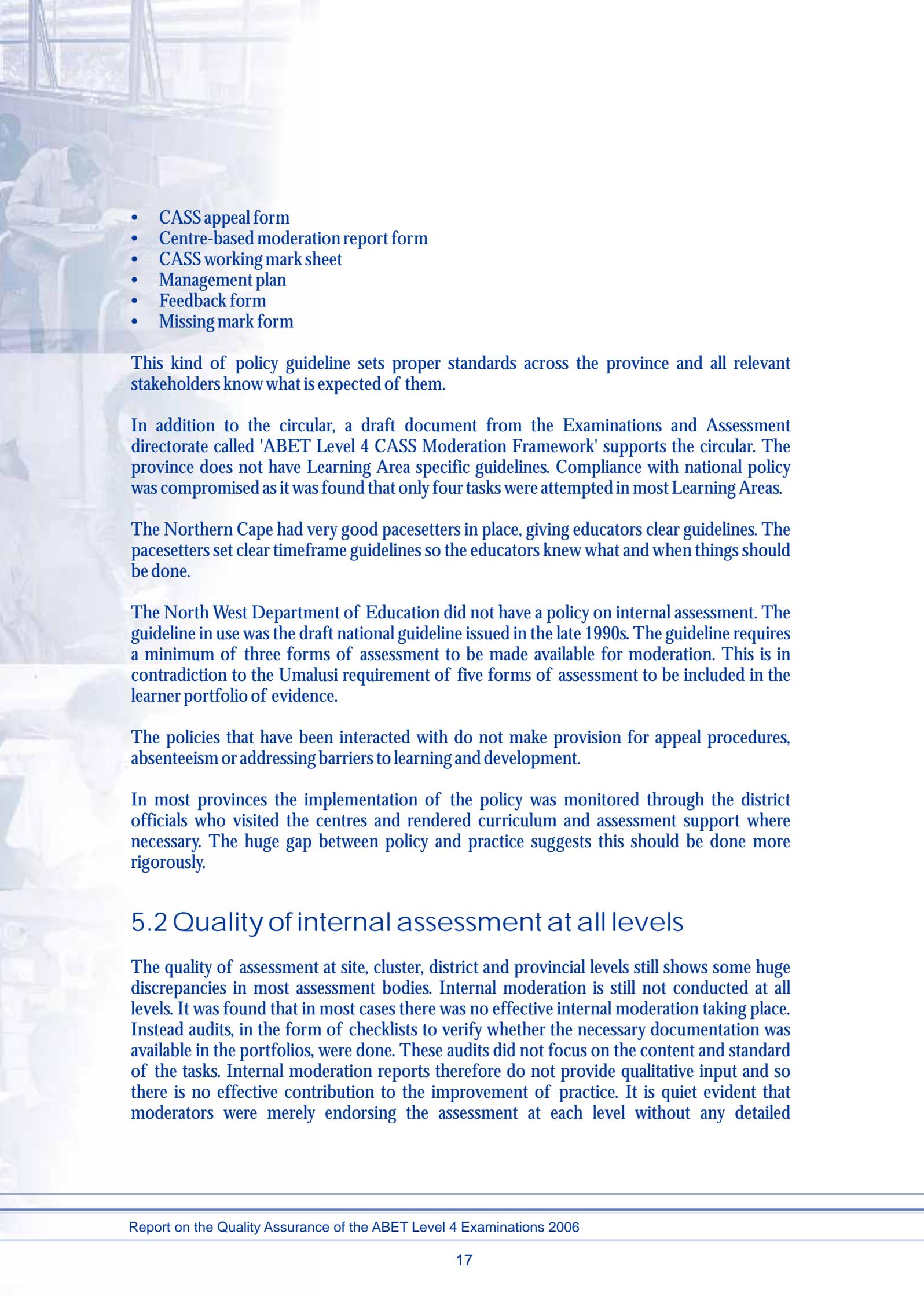
5.1 Compliance with policy

It is evident that most of the assessment bodies have provincial policy documents on internal assessment, which 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. There is still a huge gap between policy and practice. For example, the Western Cape province has Learning Area guidelines, which deal with the implementation and requirements for CASS in the province, in place. These guidelines are of great assistance to the educators as they give them a clear indication of what should happen in their portfolios. However, it appears that not all educators are complying with these guidelines.

There was no policy document with regard to internal assessment in KwaZulu Natal. The evidence that was presented as policy was a document dated 20 May 2005. This document was not signed and had no circular number attached. No evidence could be found that this document was issued/sent to all the centres and role-players in the internal assessment process in the province. The policy with regard to internal assessment was contained in circulars that were sent to all the parties involved in SBA. The North West province could also not make their policy available to the external moderators.

In Gauteng, a clear policy guideline was contained in Circular 08/2006 where all internal assessment processes were spelt out. The following addendums were attached in the circular:

- Centre heads' progress report forms
- Moderation report form
- Declaration form by the candidates

- 
- CASS appeal form
 - Centre-based moderation report form
 - CASS working mark sheet
 - Management plan
 - Feedback form
 - Missing mark form

This kind of policy guideline sets proper standards across the province and all relevant stakeholders know what is expected of them.

In addition to the circular, a draft document from the Examinations and Assessment directorate called 'ABET Level 4 CASS Moderation Framework' supports the circular. The province does not have Learning Area specific guidelines. Compliance with national policy was compromised as it was found that only four tasks were attempted in most Learning Areas.

The Northern Cape had very good pacesetters in place, giving educators clear guidelines. The pacesetters set clear timeframe guidelines so the educators knew what and when things should be done.

The North West Department of Education did not have a policy on internal assessment. The guideline in use was the draft national guideline issued in the late 1990s. The guideline requires a minimum of three forms of assessment to be made available for moderation. This is in contradiction to the Umalusi requirement of five forms of assessment to be included in the learner portfolio of evidence.

The policies that have been interacted with do not make provision for appeal procedures, absenteeism or addressing barriers to learning and development.

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 some 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 so there is no effective contribution to the improvement of practice. It is quiet evident that moderators were merely endorsing the assessment at each level without any detailed

moderation taking place.

In most provinces the provincial policies spell out 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 about 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 where senior curriculum advisors/planners/facilitators are responsible for the moderation of the portfolios brought from the districts to a central venue. This, however, was not always visible in the portfolios as there were no reports to substantiate these. 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 in this regard has been that there is no personnel to do the evaluation of Learning Areas because the ABET section does not have Learning Area specialists.

Moderators are more concerned with the marks given 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 get 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 they would 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

contents of the Learning Area were 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 give any explanation on how to use the different forms. The Gauteng province has a book called *Portfolios Made Easy*, which assists the educator with a task, suggests what form of assessment to use and how to use the most appropriate tools.

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

In general, there was not much use 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. For example, in Life Orientation an educator would give a research project on HIV and AIDS, which she/he would mark with a memorandum imposing her/his own understanding of the learner's work, while a rubric would have been a more appropriate tool to use. Rubrics also allow for objective marking of research projects.

Assessment bodies also complained that educators are trained and then leave the system, due to 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 in the learner portfolio. Moderators' reports at most levels were generated in an audit form and had 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 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. In the Northern Cape there were huge discrepancies between marks recorded by the educator and the internal moderator. 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 had 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. Despite all the above-mentioned issues, the standard of work is higher than that of the previous years, but there is much room for improvement.

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.

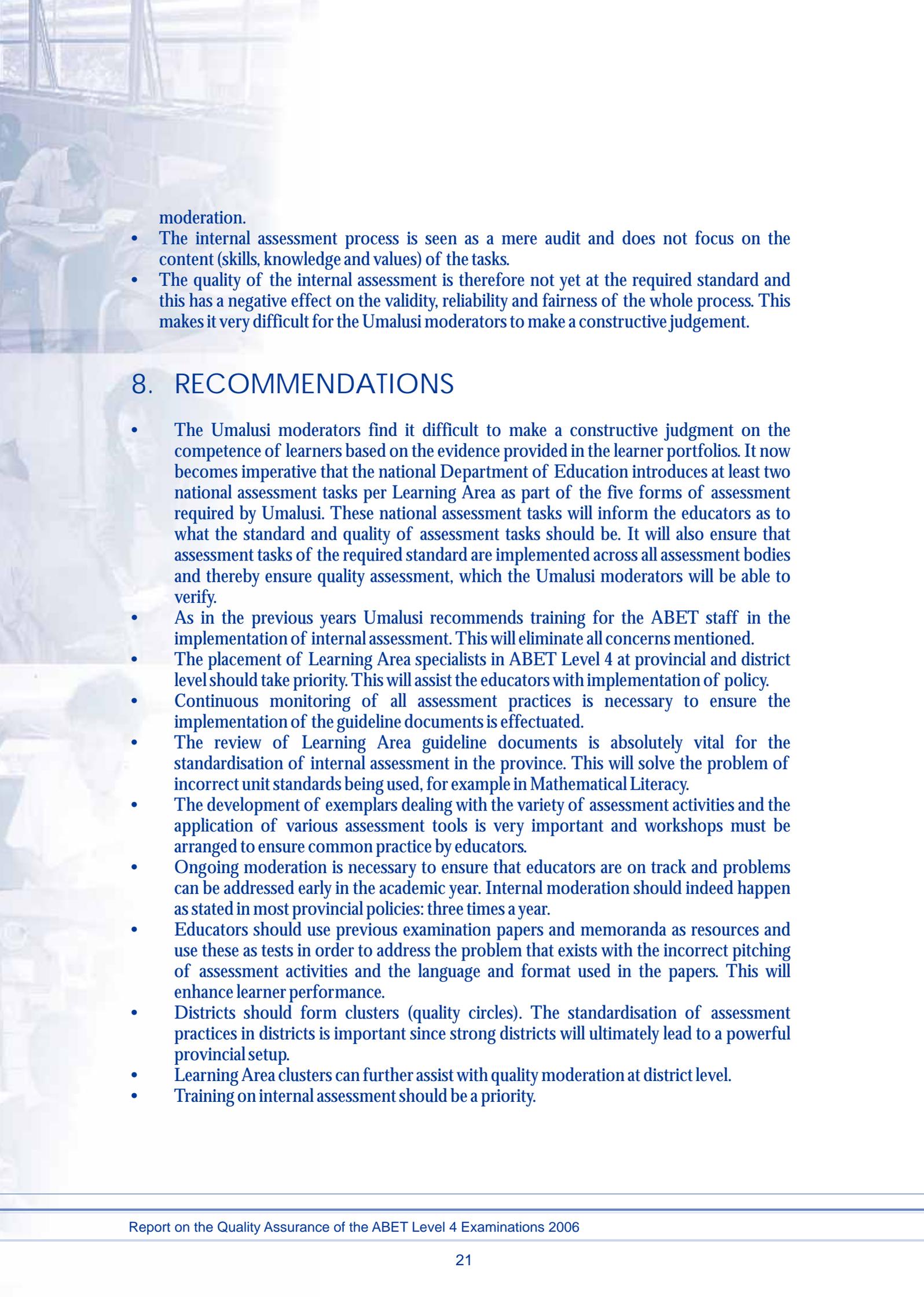
Provincial policy: There are provincial policies designed according to national guidelines.

Functional centres: 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 and who will have the expertise to deal with Learning Area specific information.
- Forms of assessment: There is a very 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

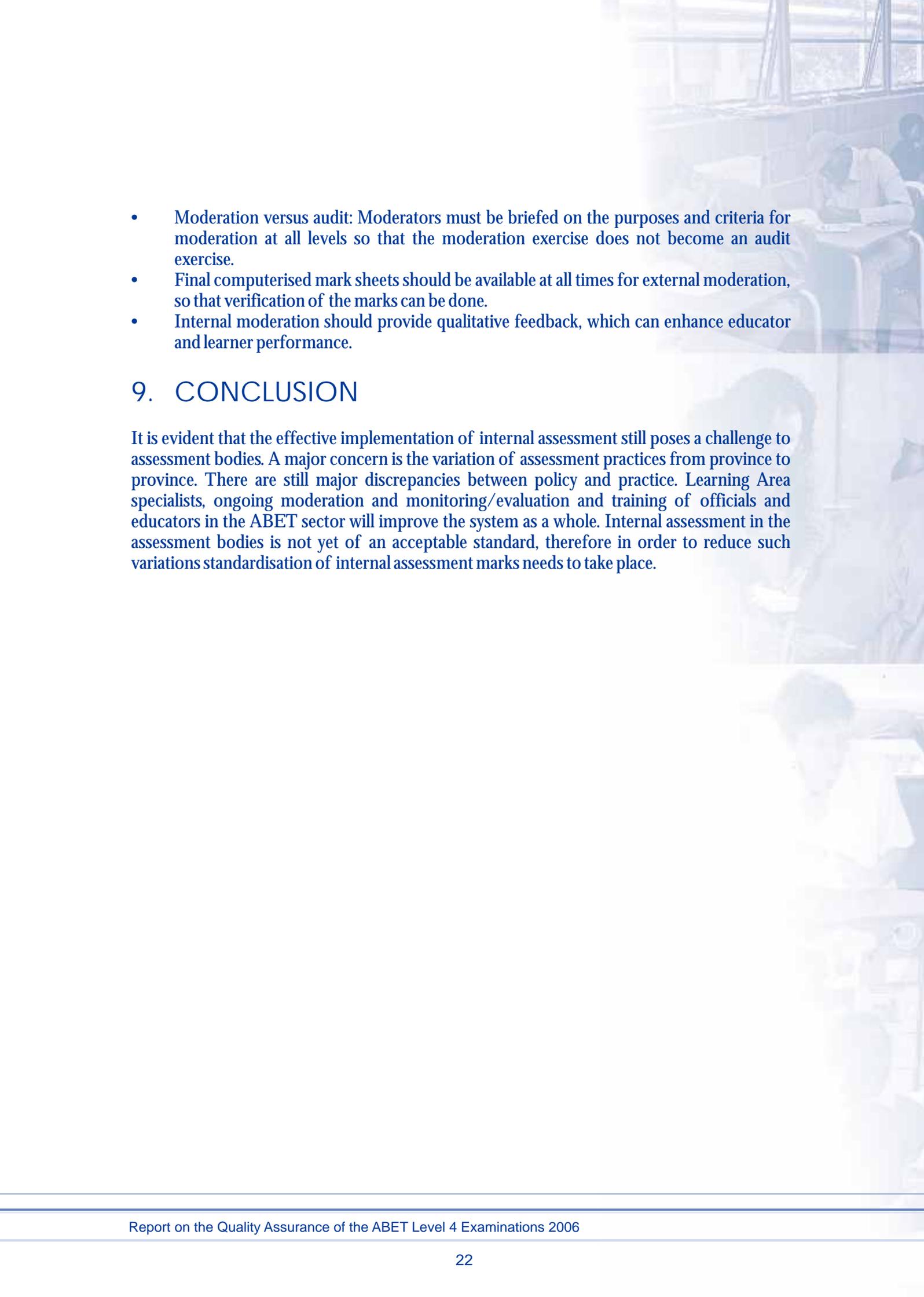


moderation.

- 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. It now becomes imperative that the national Department of Education introduces at least two national assessment tasks per Learning Area as part of 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 the previous years Umalusi recommends training for the 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 the educators with implementation of policy.
- Continuous monitoring of all assessment practices is necessary to ensure the implementation of the guideline documents is effectuated.
- The review of Learning Area guideline documents is absolutely vital for the standardisation of internal assessment in the province. This will solve the problem of incorrect unit standards being used, for example in Mathematical Literacy.
- The development of exemplars dealing with the variety of assessment activities and the application of various assessment tools is very important and workshops must be arranged to ensure common practice by educators.
- Ongoing moderation is necessary to ensure that educators are on track and problems can be addressed early in the academic year. Internal moderation should indeed happen as stated in most provincial policies: three times a year.
- Educators should use previous examination papers and memoranda as resources and use these as tests in order to address the problem that exists with the incorrect pitching of assessment activities and the language and format used in the papers. This will enhance learner performance.
- Districts should form clusters (quality circles). The standardisation of assessment practices in districts is important since strong districts will ultimately lead to a powerful provincial setup.
- Learning Area clusters can further assist with quality moderation at district level.
- Training on internal assessment should be a priority.

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- 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, which 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 in order to reduce such variations standardisation of internal assessment marks needs to take place.

Chapter Four

MONITORING OF THE WRITING OF THE ABET LEVEL 4 EXAMINATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Umalusi plays a verifying role in the writing of the examinations to ensure that the outcomes of the system are valid, reliable and fair.

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

- The design phase which focuses on the state of readiness of the examinations in the assessment bodies.
- The conduct 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 Independent Examinations Board (IEB).

Province	Number of centres visited	Number of monitors
Gauteng	4	2
Mpumalanga	6	3
North West	4	2
Free State	4	2
Western Cape	4	2
Eastern Cape	6	3
Northern Cape	4	2
Limpopo	6	3
KwaZulu Natal	6	3
IEB	3	1

4. APPROACH

Umalusi, as part of its mandate to ensure the required standards in the ABET Level 4 Examination are met, monitors the conduct of this examination by monitoring the extent to which assessment bodies handle examination irregularities in accordance with national policy and regulations.

Umalusi has reviewed its monitoring systems and approach to improve their effectiveness and to provide detailed and reliable information about the conduct of the examination. Umalusi deploys 23 monitors to ensure effective policing of the examination process by the assessment bodies. Of the 23 monitors who work fulltime monitoring the conduct of the examination, nine are convening monitors; one in each province. The convening monitor is responsible for the coordination of the monitoring process in the province. Three monitors have been allocated to the bigger provinces and to those that have had the highest number of irregularities in the past exams, while the smaller provinces have been allocated two monitors. 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.
- The state of readiness report is followed up by a verification inspection visit by the convening monitor to establish whether the report by the assessment body was in fact valid.
- Daily subject specific reports to Umalusi by assessment bodies.
- Daily reports to Umalusi on all kinds of 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.

- Regular teleconferences with heads of examinations in the assessment bodies.

So, information on the conduct of the examination does not only come from one but a variety of sources and it is appropriately triangulated to verify its validity.

Furthermore, Umalusi published the Directives for Reporting of Irregularities in 2005 to ensure that all irregularities are reported to Umalusi and dealt with accordingly.

In addition, Umalusi is involved as an observer in the National Examinations Irregularities Committee (NEIC), a high profile ministerial committee charged with the handling of examination irregularities. Convening monitors also represent Umalusi at the Provincial Examinations Irregularities Committee.

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 compromised 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

This phase seeks to determine whether a given assessment body is ready to deliver the ABET Level 4 Examination. The readiness is evaluated using specified criteria. The findings are presented below using the key criteria.

5.1.1 Registration of candidates

Registration forms were prepared by the national Department of Education and distributed to the ABET centres via the provincial and district offices. Most of the ABET centres had to return the completed forms to the provincial office by 15 March 2006. The ABET centre managers were expected to allow candidates to check the schedules under controlled guidance and supervision. These are checked, corrected and signed by the learners; they then had to send them back to the assessment body for any corrections. Most assessment bodies finalised their registration between 1 August and 15 September 2006. No problems with registration have been reported. The process went fairly well.

5.1.2 Internal assessment

At the time of monitoring the state of readiness for the examination, all provinces except for Mpumalanga were ready with their plans for internal assessment.

5.1.3 Appointment of examination personnel

The examination personnel consist of the following people:

- Examiners
- Invigilators
- Chief markers
- Internal moderators
- Markers.

This process of appointing examiners is undertaken by the national Department of Education for the public examinations. Examiners are appointed over a period of three years. The IEB appoints a pool of examiners whom they use as examiners and/or internal moderators. This was done in accordance with national policies.

The provinces only appoint chief markers, markers and internal moderators. The criteria for these appointments are:

- Post-matric qualifications in the subject
- Experience of teaching of the subject in AET.

Posts are advertised via a circular distributed to centres. A panel on which the provincial officials and in some cases the teacher unions serve as observers does the selection of examination personnel. Appointments are confirmed in writing. Officials from the AET section at the district offices are mainly used because they have experience of memorandum discussions at national level, can make a contribution there and convey their knowledge to the markers working with them.

The duration of the contract of appointment of chief markers is normally three years and markers are appointed on a yearly basis. The appointment of markers is distributed throughout the province. In the appointment of markers the criteria was adhered to.

5.1.4 Training of examination personnel

The Examination and Assessment Directorate is responsible for the training of chief markers and internal moderators. This process is informed by the experience of previous examinations, together with the fact that there may be new examiners/moderators. Chief markers and moderators are trained once a year before the marking session. The success of training is evidenced in the quality of the question papers and the success of the marking

session.

The chief markers in turn train the invigilators and markers. The training takes place prior to the writing of the examination. The training of markers takes place immediately before the commencement of marking. Most assessment bodies do not have documented training programmes for the training of markers. The training takes the form of a memorandum discussion and sample marking under the supervision of chief markers and/or internal moderators. Most of the training programmes for markers are informed by:

- Performance of markers during previous examinations
- Previous chief markers' reports
- General marking procedures and techniques to be implemented
- Policy pertaining to handling of irregularities
- Code of conduct for marking
- Actual marking of scripts
- Memorandum discussions.

The assessment body trained the internal moderators. The foci of this training were the actual marking process, administration of the learning area, management of the markers, logistics regarding the memorandum discussion, the moderation process and reporting to different stake holders. Ongoing interaction with them happened on a daily basis. The internal moderators were available at the marking centre from 08h00 to 20h00 every day. The role of the internal moderators was to teach senior markers and markers how to mark, to discuss the memorandums, moderate scripts, have meetings with chief markers and senior markers to iron out problems that might be experienced, and generally to ensure that marking was being done accurately and conscientiously. If errors were found the internal moderators went directly to the marker concerned to correct mistakes.

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. Some assessment bodies do not have any training materials for reference.

Assessment bodies should compile training documents and not only have general discussion with the markers, these documents can be used for referral purposes.

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 to 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. Accesses to these strong rooms were strictly allowed to designated officials, who signed the confidentiality agreement. In Gauteng all staff dealing with question papers were vetted for secret clearance from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA).

The use of private companies to transport the question papers from the head offices to the district/regional offices is on the increase. Problems can occur when the papers are delivered to the centres. Some centres do not have access to the strong rooms or any locked facility. In one instance the invigilators kept the papers locked in the boot of their cars.

5.1.7 Planning for monitoring

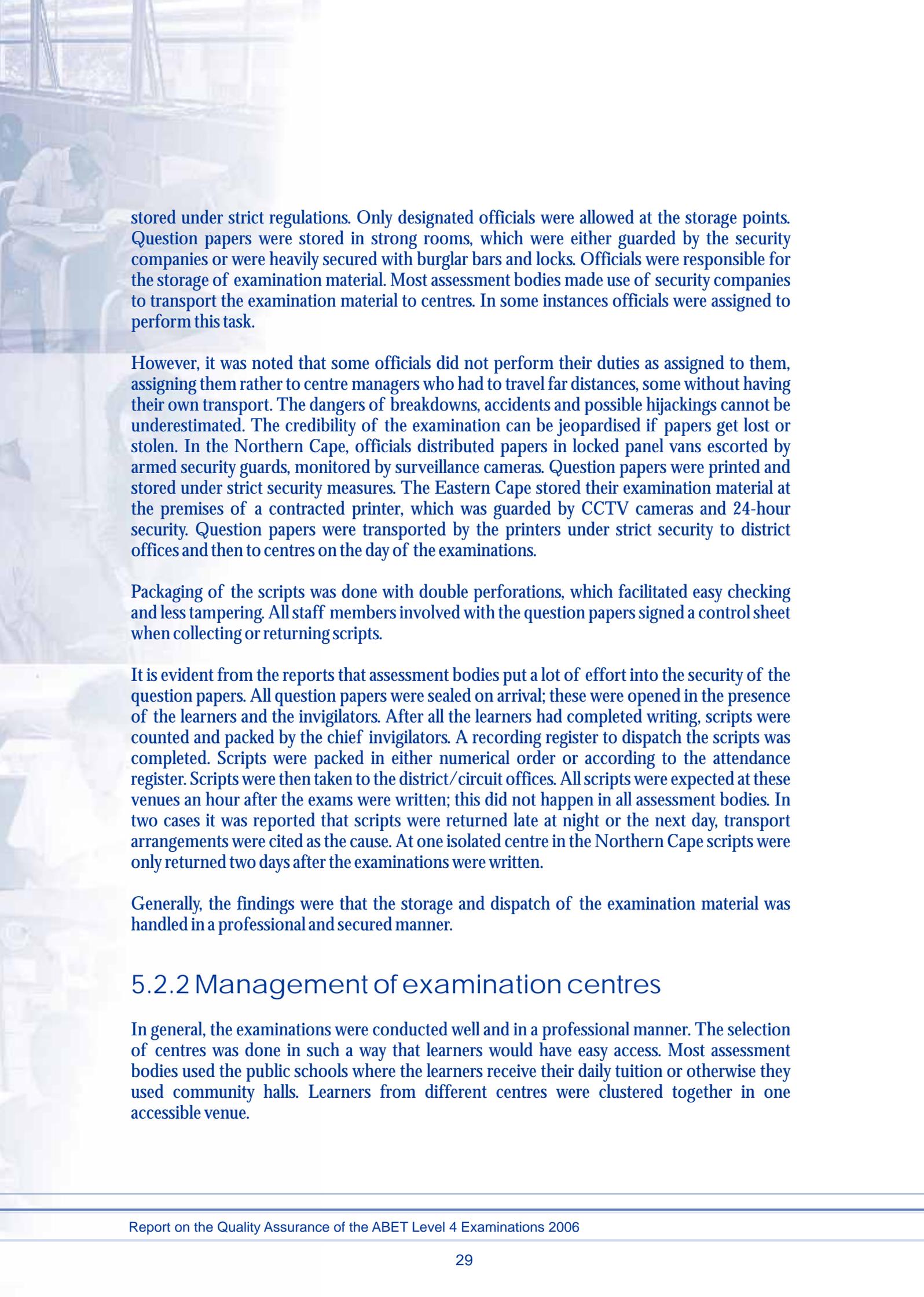
The assessment bodies all had monitoring plans in place. Districts were requested to complete their plans and to forward them to their provincial offices, where a composite plan was drawn. These plans were forwarded to Umalusi for verification. The plans were useful in deciding which sites to verify because they gave a clear indication of where and when the assessment body would monitor. Unfortunately not all these plans were adhered to. This can lead to no monitoring of the centres that have previously experienced barriers. Education officials (both provincial and district) from various directorates form part of the plan to monitor the examinations. The Northern Cape included members of different unions who would be part of the monitoring process. It should, however, be noted that in some instances Umalusi monitors were the first to monitor at some centres.

5.2 Writing of the examination

This phase mainly covers the period when candidates actually sit for the examinations. It covers those aspects during the writing of the examination that render the examination credible. The report will now evaluate those aspects.

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 under 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 were 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.

However, it was noted that some officials did not perform their duties as assigned to them, assigning them rather to centre managers who had to travel far distances, some without having their own transport. The dangers of breakdowns, accidents and possible hijackings cannot be underestimated. The credibility of the examination can be jeopardised if papers get lost or stolen. In the Northern Cape, officials distributed papers in locked panel vans escorted by armed security guards, monitored by surveillance cameras. Question papers were printed and stored under strict security measures. The Eastern Cape stored their examination material at the premises of a contracted printer, which was guarded by CCTV cameras and 24-hour security. Question papers were transported by the printers under strict security to district offices and then to centres on the day of the examinations.

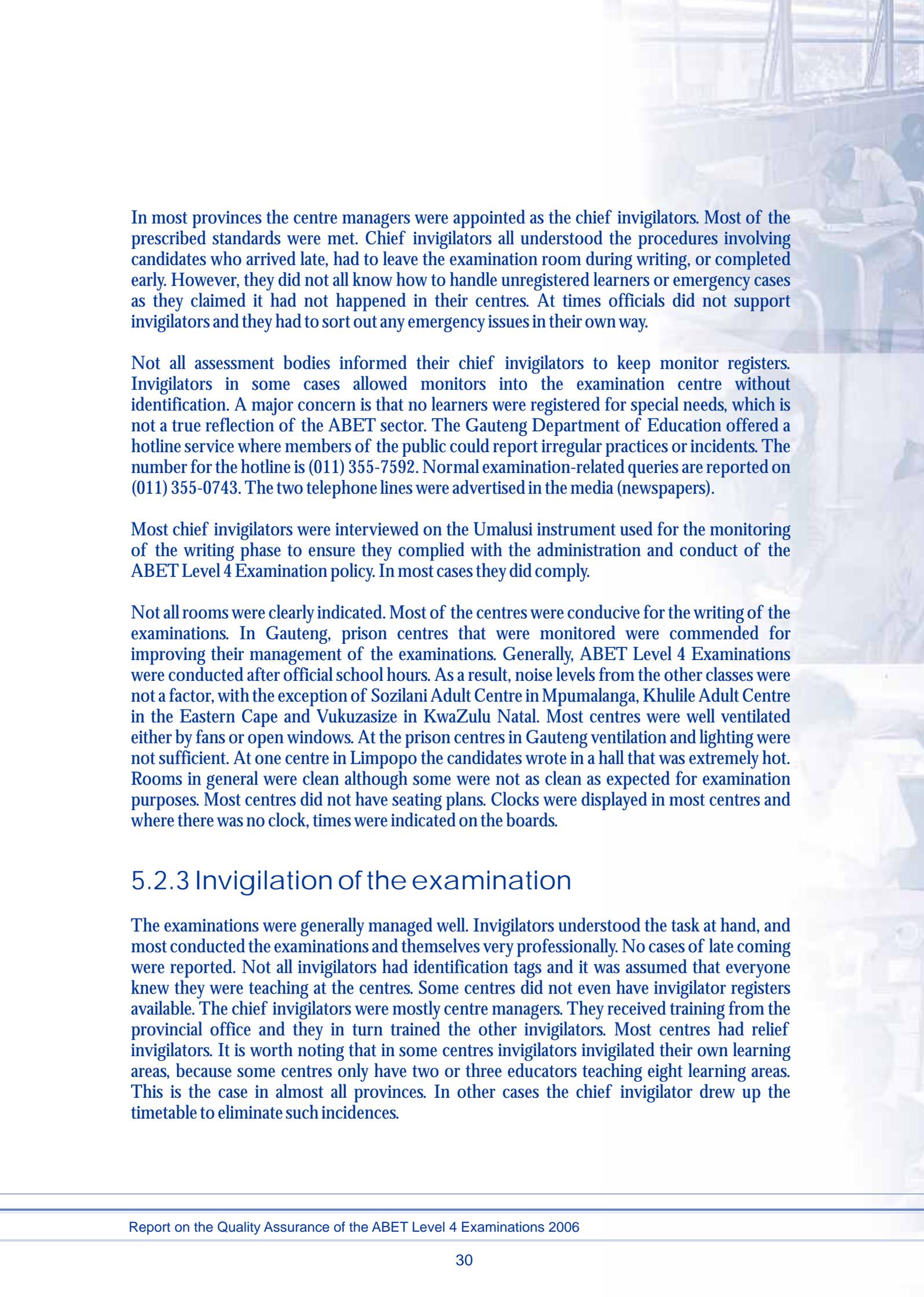
Packaging of the scripts was done with double perforations, which facilitated easy checking and less tampering. All staff members involved with the question papers signed a control sheet when collecting or returning scripts.

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 and the invigilators. After all 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. All scripts were expected at these venues an hour after the exams were written; this did not happen in all assessment bodies. In two cases it was reported that scripts were returned late at night or the next day, transport arrangements were cited as the cause. At one isolated centre in the Northern Cape scripts were only returned two days after the examinations were written.

Generally, the findings were that the storage and dispatch of the examination material was handled in a professional and secured manner.

5.2.2 Management of examination centres

In general, the examinations were conducted well and 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 or otherwise they used community halls. Learners from different centres were clustered together in one accessible venue.



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 early. However, they did not all know how to handle unregistered learners or emergency cases as they claimed it had not happened in their centres. At times officials did not support invigilators and they had to sort out any emergency issues in their own way.

Not all assessment bodies informed their chief invigilators to keep monitor registers. Invigilators in some cases allowed monitors into the examination centre without identification. A major concern is that no learners were registered for special needs, which is not a true reflection of the ABET sector. The Gauteng Department of Education offered a hotline service where members of the public could report irregular practices or incidents. The number for the hotline is (011) 355-7592. Normal examination-related queries are reported on (011) 355-0743. The two telephone lines were advertised in the media (newspapers).

Most chief invigilators were interviewed on the Umalusi instrument used for the monitoring of the writing phase to ensure they complied with the administration and conduct of the ABET Level 4 Examination policy. In most cases they did comply.

Not all rooms were clearly indicated. Most of the centres were conducive for the writing of the examinations. In Gauteng, prison centres that were monitored were commended for improving their management of the examinations. Generally, ABET Level 4 Examinations were conducted after official school hours. As a result, noise levels from the other classes were not a factor, with the exception of Sozilani Adult Centre in Mpumalanga, Khulile Adult Centre in the Eastern Cape and Vukuzasize in KwaZulu Natal. Most centres were well ventilated either by fans or open windows. At the prison centres in Gauteng ventilation and lighting were not sufficient. At one centre in Limpopo the candidates wrote in a hall that was extremely hot. Rooms in general were clean although some were not as clean as expected for examination purposes. 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 very 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 even have invigilator registers available. The chief invigilators were mostly centre managers. They received training from the provincial office and they in turn trained the other invigilators. Most centres had relief invigilators. It is worth noting that in some centres invigilators invigilated their own learning areas, because some centres only have two or three educators teaching eight learning areas. This is the case in almost all provinces. In other cases the chief invigilator drew up the timetable to eliminate such incidences.

No cases were reported where invigilators were not mobile, attentive and aware of their functions. In the Eastern Cape it was reported that two invigilators were suspended with immediate effect, after they allowed a learner's sister to write for her. A police case was opened for fraud. It is also worth noting that some invigilators did not even understand the word errata, this is a concern. In KwaZulu Natal it was reported that the invigilator at Zenzeleni Centre left the examination room unattended while learners were writing.

5.2.4 Management of irregularities

In general, assessment bodies deal effectively, efficiently and quickly with irregularities that are defined as “technical” in the regulations. Part of the reason for this is that there are very clear procedures outlined in the regulations that assessment bodies must follow in handling this type of irregularity. Irregularities in this category are fairly easy to deal with. Furthermore, the establishment in 2005 of the NEIC has helped both to expedite the process of dealing with irregularities and create a structured manner of dealing uniformly with irregularities. It has also put pressure on assessment bodies to settle irregularities speedily.

The nature of the 2006 irregularities follows an established trend reported to Umalusi on a yearly basis and include the following:

- Late delivery of question papers
- Candidates writing without positive identification as defined in the regulations
- Candidates reporting late for examinations
- Candidates leaving the examination room before the stipulated time
- Candidates missing sessions due to taxi strikes in the Western Cape and Gauteng
- Incorrect question papers
- Errors in question papers
- Negligence by invigilators, like confusing exam starting times
- Opening the wrong question paper
- Candidates answering the wrong paper
- Use of crib notes
- Ghost candidates (a phenomenon mainly of adult centres).

There were also irregularities of a more serious nature, which the assessment bodies could not finalise quickly because they required more investigation time or were, for one reason or another, out of the hands of the assessment body concerned. Nonetheless, all irregularities must be resolved before the approval of results.

These irregularities include:

a) Eastern Cape: Two invigilators were suspended with immediate effect after allowing a learner's sister to write for her in a separate room. When the monitor arrived they threw the paper and script in the dustbin, this was luckily seen by the Umalusi monitor. A police case was opened to investigate fraud chargers.

b) KwaZulu Natal: At centre E542316 scripts were only delivered at 21h00 and at Wisdom Centre at 08h00 the following morning. At Ndlanguba Public Adult Learning Centre the deputy chief invigilator could not access the answer script, because it was locked in the chief invigilator office. Candidates started the exams on foolscap paper and then continued in the answer books at 15h45. The foolscaps were stapled onto the original scripts.

c) Northern Cape: At Kimberly Correctional Services it was reported that the Travel and Tourism paper was delivered instead of the Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology paper. The correct paper was collected and learners started late.

At Illembe district learners at Manne Dipico Centre did not write Mathematical Literacy, African Languages, Natural Science or English. It was reported that the question papers did not arrive at all. At Carel van Zyl PALC learners did not write the examinations and this was only picked up on 26 October 2006. The reason given was that the chief invigilator, who is the centre manager, delegated his duties to the deputy chief invigilator, who was not aware that the learners were supposed to write at the Carel van Zyl PALC.

Daily irregularity reports were submitted to inform Umalusi on the conduct of the examinations. Invigilators were instructed to report any irregularities immediately to the District Examination CES, 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.

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:

1. Umalusi monitors, as well as external moderators, were deployed to monitor the process.

Monitors visited the marking venue to look at:

- The general management of the marking venue
- Security.

2. The external moderators looked at:

- Memorandum discussions
- The actual marking procedures of the scripts
- Quality and standard of marking

- Internal moderation.

Umalusi externally moderated the following learning areas:

- Life Orientation
- Economic and Management Sciences
- Mathematical Literacy and Mathematical Sciences
- Natural Science
- LLC English.

The general management of the marking venues across the assessment bodies was of acceptable standard. Some marking venues did not have a control room. 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 at their disposal. The Western Cape made use of two-way radios, while in Gauteng officials were given cell phones to manage this process. Venues opened doors between 08h00 and 20h00 in most cases. Either the centre manager or administrative assistants handled the control and movement in venues very professionally. No complaints were reported. The venues were well managed by an appointed centre manager and deputy centre manager. In Limpopo the assessment body did not allow the appointment of examination assistants. This is a serious shortcoming.

Security was extremely tight in Mpumalanga and the Western Cape, where a lot of effort went into the planning. The security company in the Western Cape was issued with samples of question papers; scripts and memorandums to identify anything that was not supposed to leave the premises. In some cases, like in the Northern Cape and North West, security could be beefed up. In some cases only access at the gates was controlled, no bags were checked, venues were not locked or checked during breaks and unauthorised movements were allowed. It is worth noting that all markers were identifiable with identification tags. Monitors as well as external moderators did not report any extreme cases of neglect.

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 double or triple capturing to eliminate any errors. The purpose of monitoring this was to ensure that learners were neither advantaged nor disadvantaged during this process.

A few monitors were deployed to verify this process. Strict security measures were put in place while this was done. Capturers signed a confidentiality statement. No problems with regard to capturing were reported.

5.4 Strengths

- Learner registrations went fairly well.
- 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.
- The general management of the examinations has improved, processes before, during and after the examinations were strengthened.
- Punctuality of invigilators is commendable.
- Reporting of daily irregularities to Umalusi was done meticulously.
- Technical irregularities were promptly followed up by the Provincial Irregularity Committee.
- Security systems in the Western Cape and Mpumalanga need to be seen as good practice.
- The appointment of internal moderators and examination assistants is of great assistance to the process.

These strengths do contribute to qualitative, credible examinations.

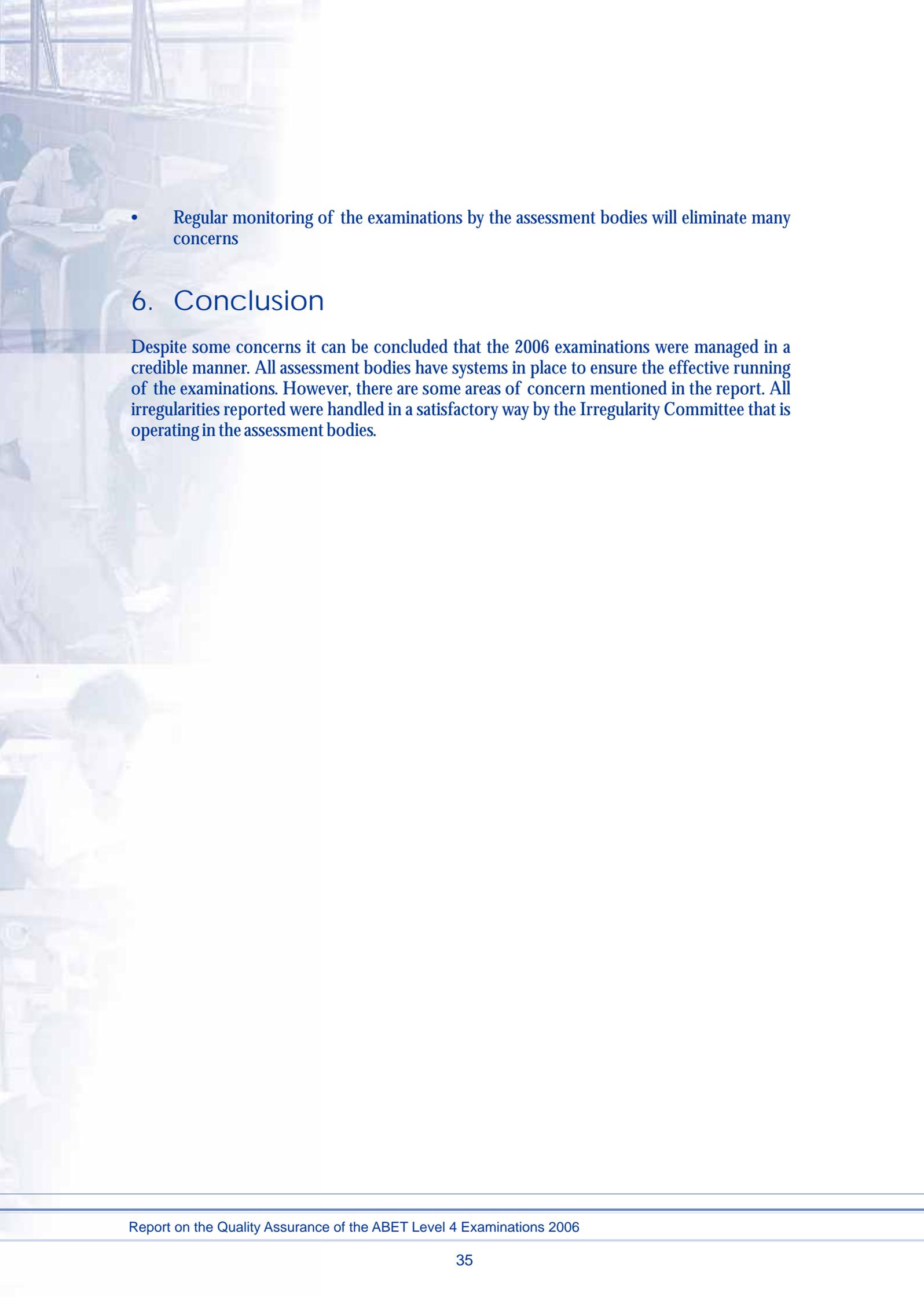
5.5 Weaknesses

- National question papers were transported by chief invigilators who did not have their own transport.
- All centre managers were automatically appointed as chief invigilators.
- Training of chief invigilators and chief markers was done without manuals.
- There were still reports on noise levels being too high at some centres during the writing of the examinations.
- Learners in one centre were left unattended.
- Monitoring of the examinations was not done regularly by the assessment bodies.

These areas of concern contribute to poor quality and less credible examinations.

5.6 Recommendations

- Appoint suitably qualified chief invigilators. Not all centre managers should automatically be appointed as chief invigilators, some are newly appointed centre managers and are not well versed with the rules and regulations of examinations and so feel incapable of doing a good job.
- Training of chief invigilators and chief markers should be comprehensive and focus on all issues of the respective processes.
- Management of the examination centre should look at the following aspects: noise, seating plans, registers (invigilators, monitors, irregularities) and identification tags for all officials entering the examination room.

- 
- Regular monitoring of the examinations by the assessment bodies will eliminate many concerns

6. Conclusion

Despite some concerns it can be concluded that the 2006 examinations were managed in a credible manner. All assessment bodies have systems in place to ensure the effective running of the examinations. However, there are some areas of concern mentioned in the report. All irregularities reported were handled in a satisfactory way by the Irregularity Committee that is operating in the assessment bodies.

Chapter Five

MODERATION OF MARKING

1. INTRODUCTION

Moderation of marking is one of the processes utilised by Umalusi to ensure that marking is conducted in accordance with agreed practices and standards in order to ensure validity, reliability and practicability of processes, as well as to ensure that national standards are applied uniformly.

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 Independent Examinations Body (IEB). Umalusi deployed external moderators for this process. Only five Learning Areas offered by the national Department of Education were moderated. Learning Areas with high learner enrolment were moderated.

Table 1

Assessment Body	Learning Areas
Gauteng	Natural Sciences Economic and Management Sciences Mathematical Literacy
Western Cape	Economic and Management Sciences Mathematical Literacy
Northern Cape	Life Orientation Natural Science LLC: English
Eastern Cape	Natural Sciences
KwaZulu Natal	Economic and Management Sciences Mathematical Literacy LLC: English
Limpopo	Life Orientation Mathematical Literacy LLC: English
North West	Life Orientation Mathematical Literacy Economic and Management Sciences
Mpumalanga	Mathematical Literacy Life Orientation Economic and Management Sciences
Free State	Life Orientation Mathematical Literacy
IEB	Mathematical Literacy LLC: English

4. APPROACH

Moderation of marking is divided into two phases, namely:

- Memorandum discussion
- On-site moderation of marking

These processes will ensure that marking is standardised across the board.

4.1 Memorandum discussions

All assessment bodies had to send their chief markers for national memorandum discussions. This was done at a central venue organised by the national Department of Education.

4.2 On-site moderation of marking

External moderators in the five Learning Areas listed in Table 1 were deployed to all nine provinces and the IEB. Each moderator moderated 10% of the scripts that were marked. Moderation was done on-site and moderators could choose their own sample. In each assessment body three Learning Areas were moderated.

This process carried on while marking was in progress, continuous feedback was given to the chief marker and the internal moderator at the marking centre to enhance the marker's performance. No significant problems were experienced during this process.

As the moderation of marking was done on-site the external moderator, chief marker, internal moderator and markers could interact directly when an issue occurred and when recommendations were made. These could in turn be implemented with immediate effect.

Umalusi also deployed staff members in addition to external moderators to monitor the process. All respective groups submitted their reports to Umalusi.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Memorandum discussions

The memorandum discussions were held at the national Department of Education in October 2006 prior to the commencement of marking. Chief markers represented different assessment bodies. The examiners, internal and external moderators attended.

All chief markers were requested to mark a sample of 20 scripts prior to the meeting. Certain provinces did not make scripts available for this process. The findings from the scripts informed the discussions of how the candidates responded to the questions.

The discussions were based on the correctness of the memorandum, the changes/additions that needed to be affected, motivations provided for those, what impact the changes would have on the cognitive level of the learners and what impact the changes/additions would have on the credibility and fairness of the examination paper.

The discussions were held in a professional manner and none of changes/additions had a negative impact on the cognitive levels of the learners or the credibility and fairness of the question paper. Most memorandums had additions to ensure that no learners were unfairly advantaged.

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

5.1.1 Provinces who did not mark scripts

Limpopo: Small Medium and Micro Enterprises
Mpumalanga: Life Orientation
Mpumalanga: Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences
Gauteng: Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology
Mpumalanga: LLC: English
Free State: Travel and Tourism

5.1.2 Provinces that were absent

Mpumalanga: Arts and Culture
Northern Cape: Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences
Northern Cape: LLC: English

This had a negative impact on the discussion, as chief markers, who either did not mark scripts or absented themselves from these discussions, were unable to give valuable input.

5.2 The standard of the question papers

The following aspects informed the standard of the question paper:

- Coverage of the unit standards/adherence to policy
- Cognitive levels
- Presentation of the paper.

The external moderators in most of the Learning Areas felt that the standard of the papers are improving. They also felt that the papers were fair and of acceptable standard and that most learners could answer the questions and finished in the required time frames. The papers were on ABET Level 4 standard, as most of the unit standards were covered. The papers were relevant and it seems that there has been consistency in the standard of the papers over the last few years. Most learners could finish in the allocated time.

All of the above is with the exception of the History and Social Studies paper and memorandum, which were of an unacceptable standard as too many mistakes were not picked up. Terminology and language still pose a problem to ABET Level 4 learners. Educators should be encouraged to use the language in the unit standard when teaching learners as this will enhance their language proficiency and results. There were also many language and spelling mistakes in some of the language papers.

5.3 The standard of the marking

This is informed by the following aspects:

- The appointment and training of markers
- The memorandum discussions
- Marking procedure (followed in these instances: when a candidate duplicated a question or answered optional questions, correctness of allocation and transfer of marks, supervision in marking, mechanisms to ensure that all questions were marked)
- Adherence to the memorandum
- Evidence that the comments of the internal moderator were applied.

Generally many of the markers were competent. They had the necessary and sufficient knowledge with regard to the subject content and hence were able to interpret and apply the memorandum uniformly and consistently.

Markers applied method marking uniformly and also recognised alternative answers as correct and awarded the marks appropriately and correctly. The markers had the pre-requisite content knowledge and were proficient in the language, which invariably contributed to a very good quality of marking.

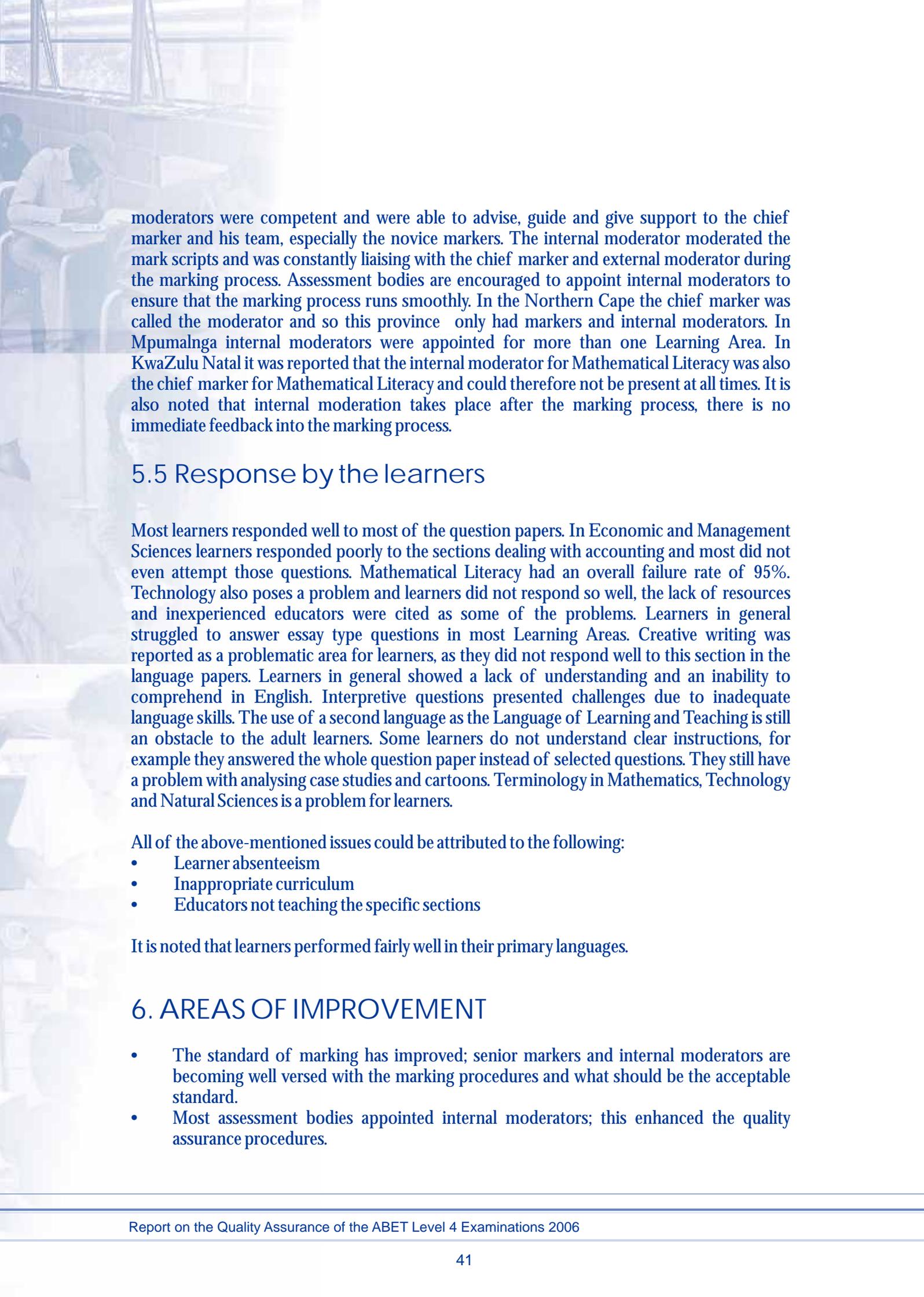
There were no significant inconsistencies in interpretation of content or of allocation of marks by the marker. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the comments of the internal moderator were applied to the marking process. Furthermore, there were a number of checking procedures, and marks were correctly entered from scripts to the mark sheet. In KwaZulu Natal the standard of marking Mathematical Literacy could have been jeopardised as the final copy of the memorandum for the Learning Area was only used on the second day of marking.

5.4 The standard of internal moderation

The standard of internal moderation is informed by the following aspects:

- Period spent by the internal moderator at the marking centre
- The role of the internal moderator during marking
- Percentage of scripts moderated
- Sampling of scripts moderated
- Signing of the final memorandum and informing the external moderator of any changes.

Internal moderation was carried out effectively and efficiently. The internal moderator ensured that the marking was conducted in line with the agreed marking memorandum and practices, so that the results were fair, valid and reliable. The internal moderator was present and actively involved for the entire duration of the marking session. Most of the internal



moderators were competent and were able to advise, guide and give support to the chief marker and his team, especially the novice markers. The internal moderator moderated the mark scripts and was constantly liaising with the chief marker and external moderator during the marking process. Assessment bodies are encouraged to appoint internal moderators to ensure that the marking process runs smoothly. In the Northern Cape the chief marker was called the moderator and so this province only had markers and internal moderators. In Mpumalanga internal moderators were appointed for more than one Learning Area. In KwaZulu Natal it was reported that the internal moderator for Mathematical Literacy was also the chief marker for Mathematical Literacy and could therefore not be present at all times. It is also noted that internal moderation takes place after the marking process, there is no immediate feedback into the marking process.

5.5 Response by the learners

Most learners responded well to most of the question papers. In Economic and Management Sciences learners responded poorly to the sections dealing with accounting and most did not even attempt those questions. Mathematical Literacy had an overall failure rate of 95%. Technology also poses a problem and learners did not respond so well, the lack of resources and inexperienced educators were cited as some of the problems. Learners in general struggled to answer essay type questions in most Learning Areas. Creative writing was reported as a problematic area for learners, as they did not respond well to this section in the language papers. Learners in general showed a lack of understanding and an inability to comprehend in English. Interpretive questions presented challenges due to inadequate language skills. The use of a second language as the Language of Learning and Teaching is still an obstacle to the adult learners. Some learners do not understand clear instructions, for example they answered the whole question paper instead of selected questions. They still have a problem with analysing case studies and cartoons. Terminology in Mathematics, Technology and Natural Sciences is a problem for learners.

All of the above-mentioned issues could be attributed to the following:

- Learner absenteeism
- Inappropriate curriculum
- Educators not teaching the specific sections

It is noted that learners performed fairly well in their primary languages.

6. AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- The standard of marking has improved; senior markers and internal moderators are becoming well versed with the marking procedures and what should be the acceptable standard.
- Most assessment bodies appointed internal moderators; this enhanced the quality assurance procedures.

7. AREAS OF CONCERN

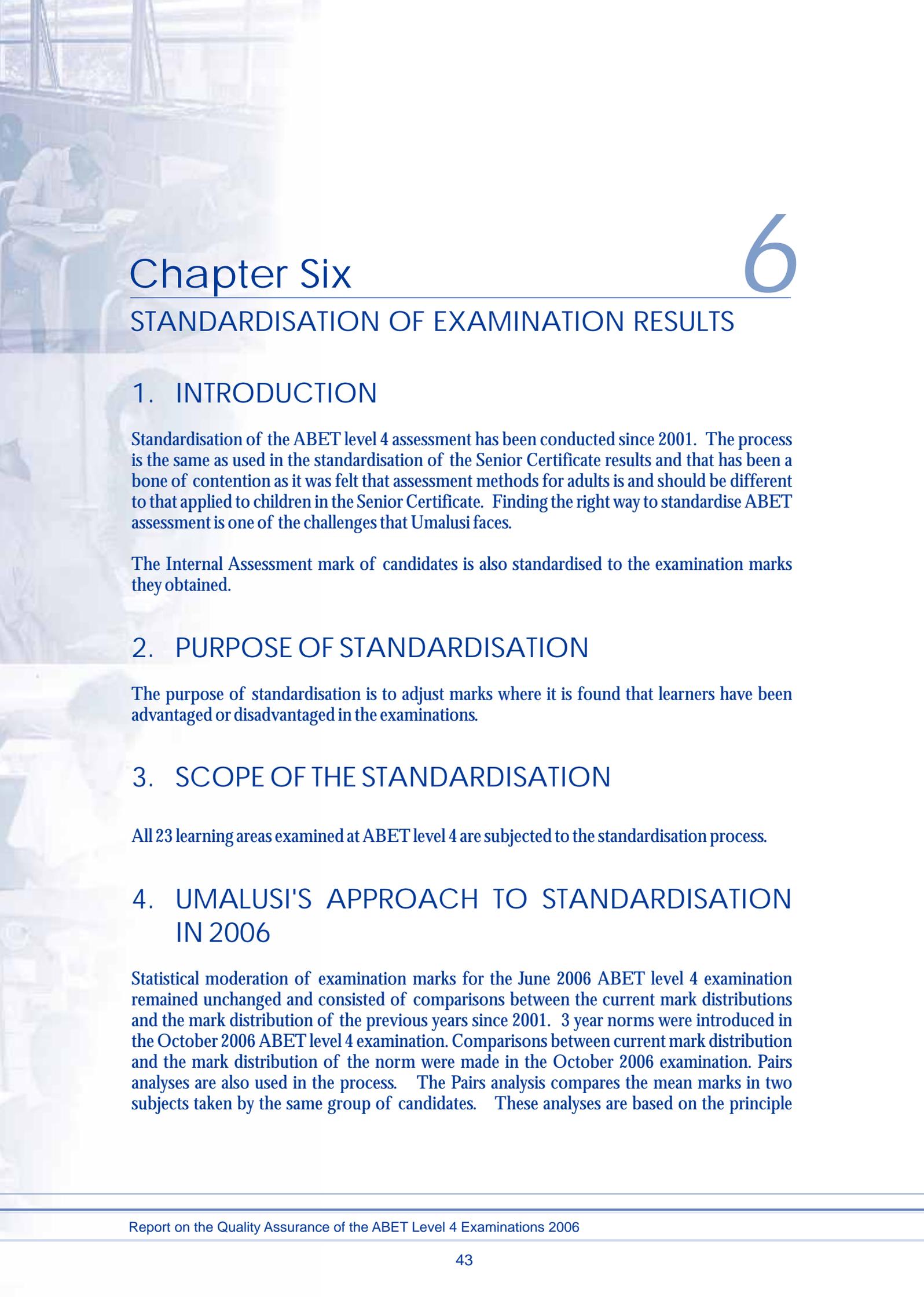
- Chief markers still absent themselves from the memorandum discussions and some do not mark the required scripts before memorandum discussions. They will not be able to give proper feedback to their specific province.
- Language in ABET Level 4 is still a major problem for both learners and educators.
- There are still poor quality question papers slipping through the system. If this is allowed it can hamper the quality of the examinations and learners' performance.
- Markers in KwaZulu Natal only marked with the final memorandum on the second day of marking. Learner results could be affected and this would question the validity and the reliability of the marking.
- The interpretation of the unit standards by the educators is a problem as this can mislead learners and jeopardise their results.
- Many learners are struggling with the following aspects in question papers:
 - Interpretive questions
 - Case studies
 - Cartoon interpretations
 - Essay type questions
 - General instructions.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assessment bodies must ensure that chief markers attend the memorandum discussions and that they mark the required amount of scripts before these discussions so as to give valuable input to the changes and additions of the final memorandum.
- Learners should be taught in English as the medium of instruction and educators should use the language of the unit standard to familiarise learners with the correct language and terminology.
- Question papers should be thoroughly checked before final submission.
- The final memorandum should be given to markers prior to the marking exercise.
- The use of old question papers should be encouraged in centres to assist learners with case studies, cartoons, essay type questions and general instructions.
- The curriculum for adult learners should be reviewed.

9. 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 in no way compromised by the few areas of concern mentioned in the report (that is, absenteeism of chief markers at the memorandum discussions, the language of instruction, mistakes on the question papers and the use of the final memorandum). However, we need to ensure that these areas of concern are minimised in order to keep the standard of marking at a credible level.



Chapter Six

6

STANDARDISATION OF EXAMINATION RESULTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Standardisation of the ABET level 4 assessment has been conducted since 2001. The process is the same as used in the standardisation of the Senior Certificate results and that has been a bone of contention as it was felt that assessment methods for adults is and should be different to that applied to children in the Senior Certificate. Finding the right way to standardise ABET assessment is one of the challenges that Umalusi faces.

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 advantaged or disadvantaged in the examinations.

3. SCOPE OF THE STANDARDISATION

All 23 learning areas examined at ABET level 4 are subjected to the standardisation process.

4. UMALUSI'S APPROACH TO STANDARDISATION IN 2006

Statistical moderation of examination marks for the June 2006 ABET level 4 examination remained unchanged and consisted of comparisons between the current mark distributions and the mark distribution of the previous years since 2001. 3 year norms were introduced in the October 2006 ABET level 4 examination. Comparisons between current mark distribution and the mark distribution of the norm were made in the October 2006 examination. Pairs analyses are also used in the process. The 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 2006 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

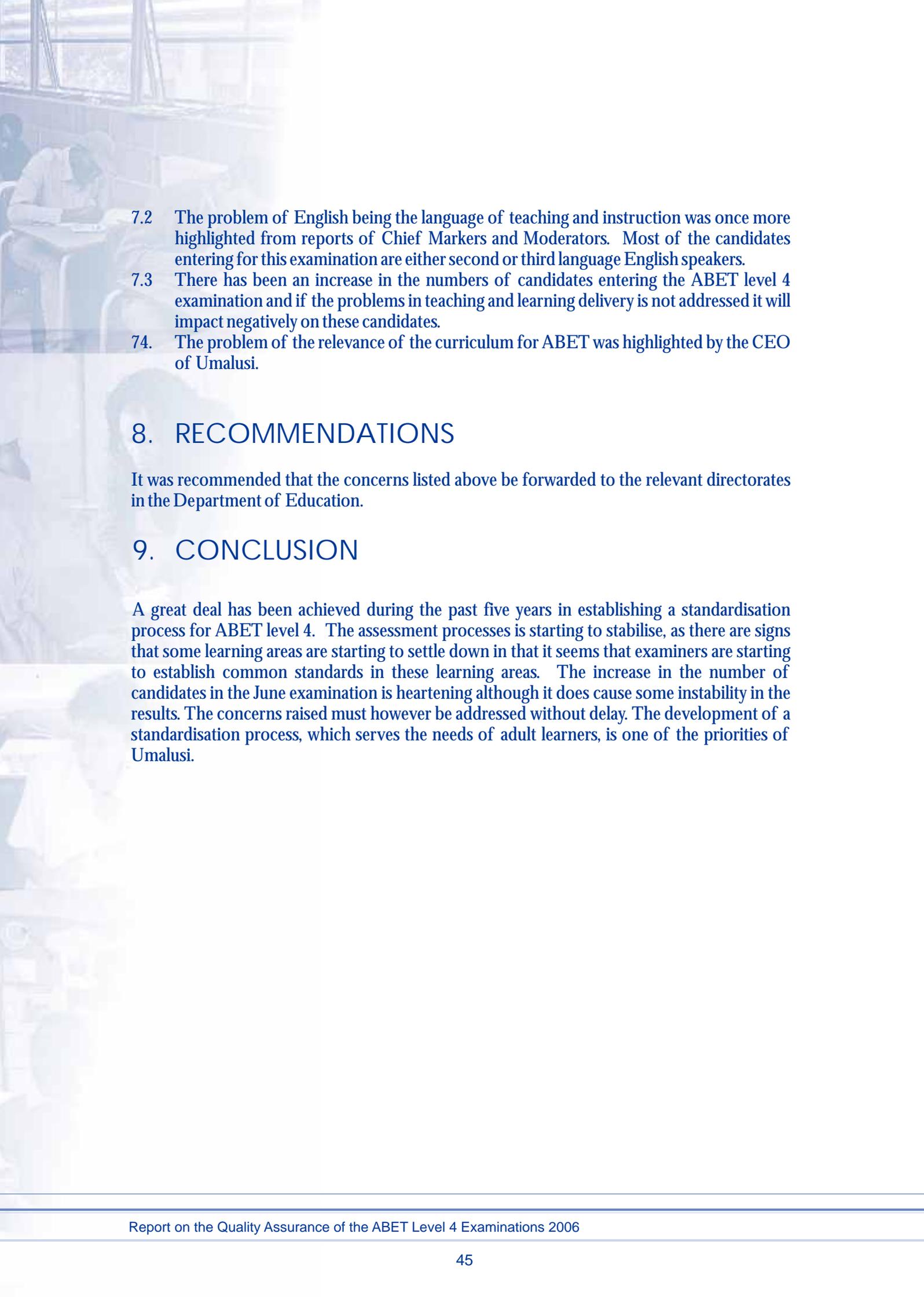
- 5.1 Pre-Standardisation meetings were held by both Umalusi and the National Department/Provincial Departments of education separately before the Standardisation meeting. These meetings were used to interrogate the statistics supplied by SITA. The Department of Education drafted their proposals for adjustments whilst Umalusi familiarized themselves with the statistics and drafted provisional responses to probable requests for adjustments.
- 5.2 The June 2006 ABET level 4 standardisation meeting was held at Umalusi on the 26th July 2006 and the October 2006 standardisation meeting was held on the 8th December 2006.
- 5.3 It was interesting to note that virtually all of the requests for adjustments were anticipated by Umalusi and was in line with the approach of Umalusi.

6. DECISIONS

At the standardisation meeting held on 8 December 2006 raw marks were accepted for the majority of the learning areas and minor adjustments were made either upwards or downwards for the rest of the 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 raised as a concern. 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.
- 7.3 There has been an increase in the numbers of candidates entering the ABET level 4 examination and if the problems in teaching and learning delivery is not addressed it will impact negatively on these candidates.
- 7.4 The problem of the relevance of the curriculum for ABET was highlighted by the CEO of Umalusi.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It was recommended that the concerns listed above be forwarded to the relevant directorates in 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 processes is starting to stabilise, as there are signs that some learning areas are starting to settle down in that it seems that examiners are 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. The development of a standardisation process, which serves the needs of adult learners, is one of the priorities of Umalusi.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

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

The written examination, which at the moment forms the core of the whole examination because of its relative reliable nature, though well conducted still does not receive the rigorous attention it deserves. As reported, internal moderation of some of the question papers is still questionable. This impact negatively on the standard of the question papers and the development of the examiners.

The CASS component of the examination is still a matter of grave concern even though there are sign 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 have 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.

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