



2008

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

UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

2008
REPORT ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE
OF THE ABET LEVEL 4 EXAMINATIONS

PUBLISHED BY:



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

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Foreword

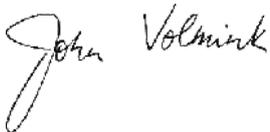
Umalusi first began quality assurance of the Adult Basic Education Training (ABET) Level 4 assessment in 2001. The sector has gone through numerous tumultuous changes over the past seven years.

The ABET quality assurance of assessment system is maturing rapidly and it is becoming more evident that the quality of ABET assessments are almost on par if not ahead of those in other sectors.

Umalusi has adopted the following quality assurance measures with regard to the ABET Level 4 assessment:

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

The Executive Committee of the Umalusi Council has concluded, from the reports submitted by all the personnel involved in the quality assurance of the examination, that the ABET level 4 assessments were conducted in line with the policies and regulations governing the conduct of examinations. The results were, therefore, found to be reliable, valid, fair and credible. The Committee met at the Umalusi offices in Pretoria on Monday, 15 December 2008 and declared that the examination was beyond reproach.



Prof J Volmink

15 December 2008

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. BACKGROUND

The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (No 58 of 2001) assigns responsibility for the quality assurance of general and further education and training in South Africa to Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training. The Council is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of the 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; and
- quality promotion amongst providers.

This report focuses on the quality assurance of the 2008 ABET Level 4 examination. In this regard, Umalusi reports on each of the quality assurance of assessment processes and procedures which together indicate the credibility of the ABET Level 4 examination. These processes ensure that all aspects of the examination are subjected to rigorous moderation and monitoring. This is to determine whether the examination meets the required standards. Umalusi consistently ensures that standards in this examination are not compromised.

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;
- cognitive challenge of the examination question papers;
- appropriateness and weighting of the content in question papers in relation to the learning area guidelines;
- quality of the presentation of the examination question papers;
- efficiency and effectiveness of the systems, processes and procedures for the monitoring of the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examination;
- quality of the marking; and
- quality and standard of the internal quality assurance processes within the assessment body.

Chapter 1 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 3 outlines the findings from the moderation of the internal assessment. The fourth chapter discusses the findings from Umalusi's monitoring of the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examination. Chapter 5 discusses the moderation of marking. Chapter 6 reports on the standardisation of ABET Level 4 results and the final chapter summarises the findings of the quality assurance of the 2008 ABET Level 4 examination and makes some recommendations for improvement.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to report on Umalusi's quality assurance of the 2008 ABET Level 4 examination with respect to the following:

- The standard of the ABET Level 4 examination question papers.
- The quality and standard of internal assessment or continuous assessment across the assessment bodies.

- The quality and standard of the marking of the ABET Level 4 examination across the assessment bodies.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of the processes for the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examination within the assessment bodies.
- The moderation of marks during the standardisation process.
- Recommendations for the improvement of assessment processes.

3. SCOPE OF THE REPORT

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

- moderation of question papers;
- moderation of internal assessment;
- moderation of marking;
- monitoring of the conduct of the ABET Level 4 examination; and
- moderation of examination marks.

These processes are covered in the following chapters. Each chapter captures the prominent findings with respect to each of the processes, highlights some problem areas and offers recommendations for improvement.

Chapter 2

Moderation of Question Papers

1. INTRODUCTION

Umalusi moderates question papers to ensure that the standard is comparable across all the assessment bodies. 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; and
- representative of relevant levels of cognitive challenge.

Umalusi-appointed external moderators are required to carefully moderate the question papers, recommend improvements and finally approve the question papers. The external moderators then report comprehensively on their findings, so that Umalusi can evaluate the quality of the question papers set for the ABET Level 4 examination. The information in the remainder of this chapter is based on these reports.

2. SCOPE

Umalusi moderates question papers for the 23 learning areas examined by the Department of Education (DoE) and the 6 learning areas examined by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). Two question papers are set per examination of which one is used as a back-up paper.

3. APPROACH

The assessment bodies appoint their own examiners and internal moderators. They set and moderate the question papers and memoranda internally. These question papers are then externally moderated by Umalusi. Umalusi uses external moderators who are learning area experts and experienced in the field of assessment to moderate the question papers.

The assessment bodies must submit their question papers for external moderation in their final state, with all the diagrams and sketches in place. Each paper must be in a file containing all the drafts from the examiners (thus providing the history of the paper), a grid indicating cognitive levels, the syllabus used to guide the setting of the paper, a marking memorandum and the internal moderator's report.

4. FINDINGS

The table below represents the findings against the criteria used to moderate the question papers.

Table 1

Criteria	Findings
Content coverage	Moderator reports indicate that all question papers were found to be compliant with the requirements of the Learning Area Guidelines. The Learning Area Guidelines need to be reviewed in line with the current unit standards.
Cognitive skills	Most of the question papers moderated covered the cognitive levels reasonably well. However, during standardisation of results it became apparent that some question papers did not differentiate adequately across the different levels of questions.
Internal moderation	Most of the moderators confirmed that there was evidence that internal moderation took place, but the qualitative input, quality, relevance and contribution by the internal moderator was sometimes not of the appropriate standard.
Language and bias	Generally, moderated question papers were found to be learner friendly, fair and pitched at the appropriate level, however there needs to be stricter scrutiny to avoid any bias.
Predictability	No question papers were found to be predictable in any way.
Adherence to policy	Generally, most question papers are compliant in most respects.
Marking memo	Most marking memoranda were user-friendly and the marks allocated per question tallied.
Technical criteria	The papers were well laid out and the instructions to candidates were clear.
Overall impression of the paper	All the papers were fair and of an appropriate standard. The general consensus was that there has been an improvement in the quality of the question papers compared to those of previous years.

The question papers set by the DoE were generally approved at second moderation, however, some were also subjected to a third moderation which indicates some flaws with the internal moderation processes. It is pleasing to note that none of the question papers submitted for moderation was rejected.

The DoE question papers generally complied with most of the criteria. There were fewer errors or mistakes on the marking memoranda than in previous years which indicates a marked improvement in the internal moderation processes employed by the DoE. The question papers in general were of a fair standard and provided satisfactory cognitive demand. The question papers showed a reasonable spread of content in terms of the unit standards, thus making predicting the question papers quite difficult.

The question papers set by the IEB were generally approved at first moderation, however, some were also conditionally approved to be resubmitted. This indicates the IEB internal moderation processes also have gaps that need to be addressed. None of the IEB papers were rejected.

Most of the question papers complied with most of the criteria. There were still a number of mistakes on the question papers indicating internal moderation processes issues. In general the question papers were of a fair standard and provided acceptable cognitive demand. The question papers showed a fair spread of content in terms of the unit standards.

5. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

All externally-moderated question papers were of a high standard and quality. Good security and control measures are in place to prevent any actions that might threaten the integrity and credibility of the examination. There are signs that most of the examiners are becoming more comfortable in the development of question papers. The examiners are also starting to ensure that the question papers have a correct distribution in terms of cognitive levels. Internal moderation processes have vastly improved although there is still room for further improvement. The assessment bodies' security measures are appropriate. The management and administration of the question papers are commendable.

6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Grammatical and technical errors on some question papers and marking memoranda are still a common occurrence. All question papers and memoranda must be checked for content and typing errors before being sent to external moderators. All question papers that are print-ready should be signed off by external moderators to ensure that the correct question papers are printed. The assessment bodies must put systems in place to improve their internal moderation processes to ensure compliance with all criteria. The late submission of question papers by the IEB to the external moderators had a negative impact on the time frames to moderate and sign-off question papers and the quality of moderation. Time frames should be adhered to to prevent unnecessary mistakes and possible actions that can compromise the integrity of the examination.

7. CONCLUSION

There is a marked improvement in the setting and internal moderation of question papers although there is still a need to improve internal moderation processes to ensure that all question papers are approved at first moderation.

Chapter 3

Moderation of Internal Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

The ABET examination consists of two components: internal and external assessment. Internal assessment or Site Based Assessment (SBA) constitutes 50% of the final examination mark.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the moderation of SBAs is to:

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

3. SCOPE

The moderation of internal assessment was conducted in two selected learning areas – LLC: English and Mathematical Literacy – in each of the nine provincial departments of education including the IEB.

Umalusi's decision to moderate the internal assessment of these learning areas was motivated by the decline in the results obtained by learners in these learning areas. These learning areas are also fundamental to the teaching and learning process and it is, therefore, necessary to focus on these two learning areas to improve overall standards and pass rates. Other reasons for selecting only two learning areas were high enrolments and budgetary constraints.

4. APPROACH

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

- a pre-moderation session;
- the moderation of portfolios; and
- a post-moderation session.

4.1 PRE-MODERATION

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

Issues discussed included the:

- sampling of portfolios;

- compliance to policy;
- educator training;
- quality of site-based assessment;
- internal moderation; and
- monitoring and evaluation.

4.2 MODERATION OF EDUCATOR AND LEARNER PORTFOLIOS

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 the moderated learning areas. They looked at the following criteria:

- policies (provincial policy, learning area guidelines);
- quality of internal moderation at all levels;
- quality and standard of assessment tasks; and
- recording and reporting.

4.3 POST-MODERATION

In most cases at the end of the moderation, the assessment body officials, as well as the moderators, had an opportunity to interact with the external moderators during a post-moderation meeting. The external moderators tried, where possible, to give verbal feedback on the strengths and weaknesses identified during the moderation and also made recommendations.

Umalusi gave formal feedback to the assessment bodies to allow them to develop intervention strategies to ensure that all recommendations made during the moderation of internal assessment are implemented.

5. FINDINGS

The standard of the SBAs varied from province to province, from district to district and from centre to centre. There were also certain serious challenges regarding the nationally-set SBA tasks. These included the:

- late delivery of SBA tasks to provinces which compromised the amount of time that learners had to complete the tasks;
- lack of Umalusi's external moderation of these tasks, resulting in tasks containing numerous mistakes;
- inconsistent and sometimes erratic implementation of SBAs by provinces, districts and centres; and
- lack of training or orientation of educators in implementing SBA tasks which resulted in educators not having enough time to adequately prepare learners to write the October 2008 examination.

An overview of the findings for the 2008 SBA moderation process in relation to the criteria is presented in the table below.

Table 2

Criteria	Findings
Compliance with national guidelines and national policy on the implementation of SBA in ABET.	Most of the assessment bodies have provincial policy documents on internal assessment that outline the minimum requirements for internal assessment and moderation processes. However, there is still a huge gap between policy and practice. The monitoring and evaluation by provincial and district officials in most cases are not effective and do not give appropriate support to new educators. Most centre managers, internal moderators and departmental officials did not always have these policy documents or guidelines at hand when the documents were requested by the external moderators.
Quality of internal moderation at all levels.	The quality of assessment still shows certain contradictions 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 quality and standard of the tasks. Most of the assessment bodies still do not use feedback as a vehicle for development and improvement. Internal moderation reports do not provide qualitative input and thus there is no effective contribution to the improvement of teaching and learning. Assessment bodies are still finding it difficult to remark tasks due to the nature of their moderation processes. There are major inconsistencies between marks at the three different levels. Internal moderation in most assessment bodies was not applied consistently. Most assessment bodies do not apply their sampling for moderation at the various levels consistently. This results in a distorted representation of information with regards to the number of portfolios that needs to be moderated at various levels.
Quality and standard of the assessment tasks.	Most of the assessment bodies used the nationally-set SBA tasks which were not externally moderated by Umalusi. Although different forms of assessments were used, in most cases they had numerous mistakes. As far as the assessment tools are concerned, a wide variety was used. Limited or no training was given in terms of the purpose of these tools. This resulted in the inconsistent application of these tools by various educators. The nationally-set tasks were an improvement, in a small way, on the quality of some of the tasks in some learning areas, but some had to be totally reworked before they were given to educators for implementation in other

Criteria	Findings
	learning areas. No definite directive was given to the provinces in terms of the implementation of the tasks and the provinces were at liberty to implement the tasks as they were or subject them to pre-moderation processes. This left the majority of learners at the mercy of the provinces, districts and centres. Some provinces checked the tasks and made the necessary changes but others didn't. Many learners were therefore exposed to these tasks including the original mistakes, this had an adverse effect on the learners' abilities to conduct the examination.
Recording and reporting.	In general, marks were recorded using the weighted grid system. In some cases the record of marks in the educator portfolio did not correspond with the learner portfolio. Most assessment bodies used the five nationally-set SBA tasks for compiling the final SBA mark. Most moderators' reports at most levels were generated in an audit form and contained no qualitative comments and suggestions that could enhance the development of the learners. In some provinces it was evident that there is no standardised working mark sheet as some centres presented hand drawn mark sheets. Some assessment bodies failed to include computerised mark sheets and this made it difficult to verify marks allocated to the learners.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Generally portfolios were neat and presentable. It is commendable that in some provinces there was evidence of re-marking at various levels of the moderation process. Some provinces do make a considerable effort to ensure that portfolios meet the minimum requirements.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The educators are aware of the need to keep records of the assessments that have been conducted and are informed about the forms of assessments 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. There is evidence of pockets of excellence across the assessment bodies; these could be used to improve the system. It is evident that educators are attempting to achieve the best they can within the given constraints.

There is a general improvement in both educators' and learners' portfolios. However, the administration and management of these portfolios are not adequately addressed by provincial departments of education.

The lack of uniformity in terms of task implementation within provinces needs to be addressed. This has a negative impact on the allocated time to complete the assessment tasks for learners. Not all working and computerised mark sheets were available to verify the recording of results during external moderation. Standardised working mark sheets should be developed to ensure uniform capturing of marks by educators. The conversion of marks should be streamlined for all provincial

departments of education. Final computerised mark sheets should be available at all times for external moderation so that verification of the marks can be done.

The internal assessment process is seen merely as auditing 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.

The Umalusi moderators found it difficult to make a constructive judgment on the competence of learners based on the evidence provided in the learner portfolios. Umalusi recommends the training of ABET educators in the implementation of internal assessment. Continuous monitoring of all assessment practices is necessary to ensure that implementation of guideline documents is effected. 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. Ongoing moderation is necessary to ensure that educators are on track and that problems can be addressed early in the academic year.

Internal moderation should provide qualitative developmental feedback that can enhance educator and learner performance. Educators should use previous question papers and memoranda as resources; past papers can be used as tests in order to address the problem that exists with incorrect pitching of assessment activities and inappropriate language and format. This will enhance learner performance.

Assessment bodies should endeavour to develop intervention programmes and examination support guidelines to help their learners in preparation for examinations. These intervention programmes should also focus on preparing those learners that are writing the examination a second or third time. Establishing communities of practice can further assist with quality moderation at district level.

8. CONCLUSION

It is evident that the effective implementation of internal assessment still poses a challenge to the assessment bodies. A major concern is the variation of assessment practices from province to province. There are still major discrepancies between policy and practice. 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 4

Monitoring of the Examination

1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

2. PURPOSE

Umalusi monitors the ABET Level 4 examination to ensure that it conforms to the established standards that define quality examinations. 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 and the moderating, computing and capturing of final results are strictly adhered to. Collectively, all the monitoring approaches, methods and procedures ensure a credible examination.

3. SCOPE

The monitoring exercise extended across the ten assessment bodies, namely the nine provincial bodies and the IEB. The scope of the monitoring exercise was very limited due to budgetary constraints.

4. APPROACH

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

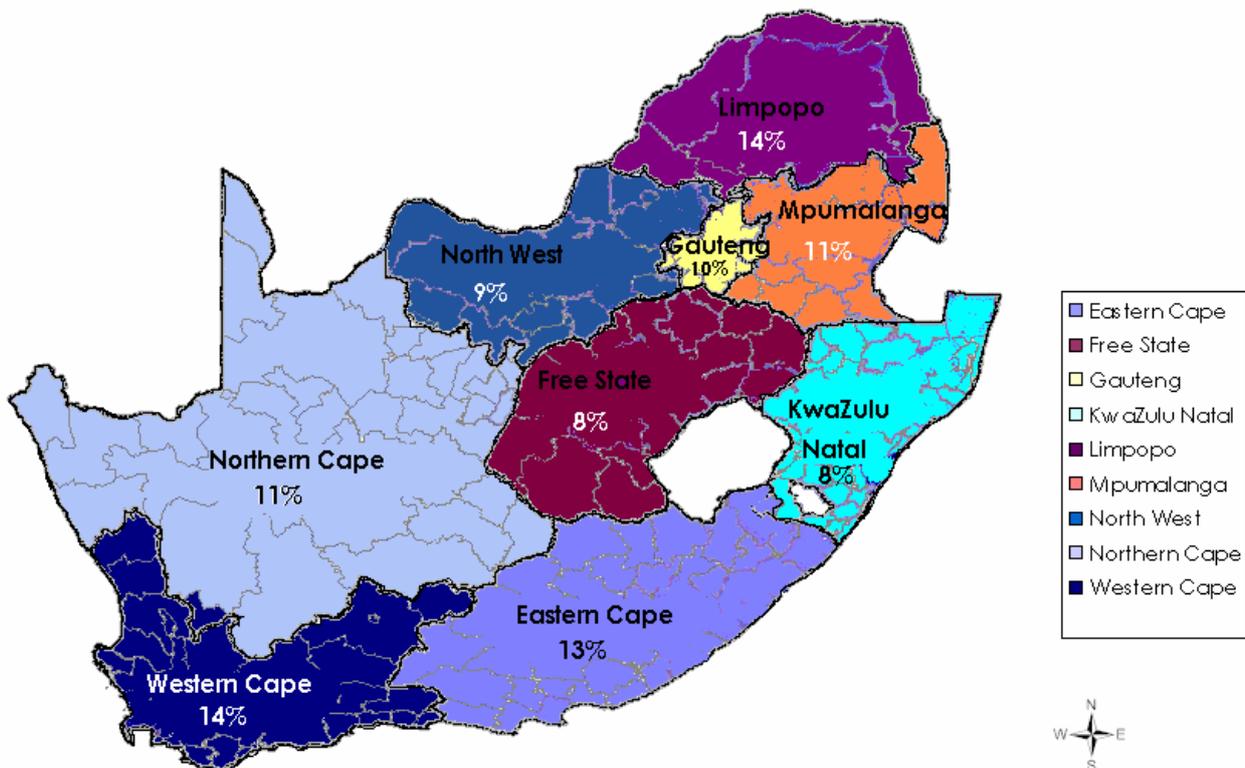
- the completion of a **state of readiness** questionnaire and the submission of a report by the assessment body, followed up by a **verification inspection** visit by the convening monitor to establish whether the report by the assessment body was in fact valid;
- daily reports to Umalusi on all kinds of irregularities by the assessment bodies;
- daily reports to Umalusi by the monitors deployed to the examination centres;
- random, unannounced visits to the examination centres by the Umalusi monitors; and, in addition, the
- Umalusi staff shadow monitors and make random, unannounced visits to examination centres.

The table below represents the number of visits conducted by Umalusi monitors for the 2008 examination period.

Table 3

Province	Design Phase	Writing Phase	Marking and Capturing Phase	Total
Eastern Cape	2	9	4	15
Free State	2	4	4	10
Gauteng	2	6	4	12
KwaZulu Natal	2	4	4	10
Limpopo	2	11	4	17
Mpumalanga	2	7	4	13
North West	2	5	4	11
Northern Cape	2	7	4	13
Western Cape	2	11	4	17
IEB	0	0	1	1
Total	18	64	37	119

The monitoring of the ABET Level 4 examination for 2008 was relatively proportionate to the enrolment for each assessment body and the availability of funds. The map below shows the percentages of the total number of sites visited during the 2008 examination period for each assessment body.



Western Cape	Northern Cape	North West	Mpumalanga	Limpopo	KwaZulu Natal	Gauteng	Free State	Eastern Cape
14%	11%	9%	11%	14%	8%	10%	8%	13%

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.

Table 4

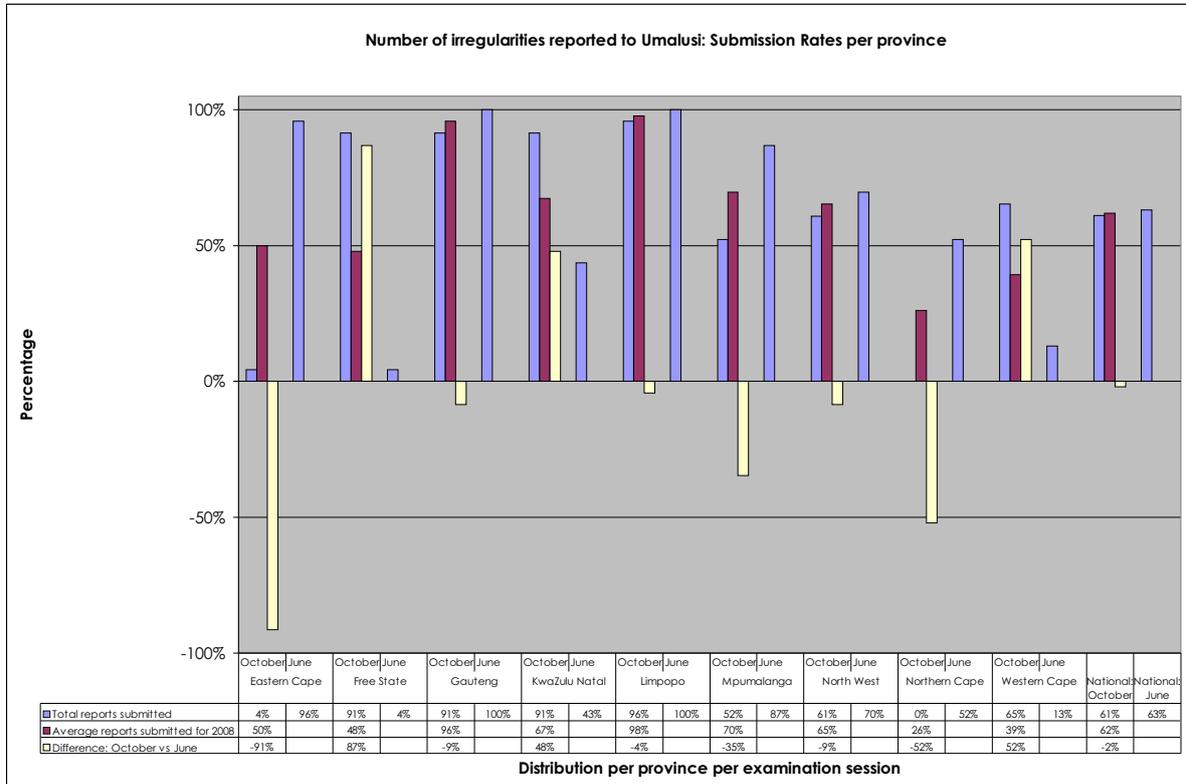
Criteria	Findings
State of readiness for the examination	Some assessment bodies failed to submit their state of readiness instruments which delayed Umalusi's planning and verification processes. Most assessment bodies were generally prepared to administer the examinations.
Registration of candidates	No problems with registration have been reported.
Internal assessment	The moderation of internal assessment was completed by all the assessment bodies
Appointment of examination personnel	All relevant examination personnel were appointed by the assessment bodies.
Training of examination personnel	Not all invigilators in the system were trained properly, in some cases it was reported that invigilators did not know how to deal with errata or unregistered learners.
Setting, moderation and translation of question papers	These processes are the remit of the DoE.
Security of examination material	Most of the assessment bodies have strong security measures in place. Most used 24-hour CCTV coverage and had security companies on the premises 24 hours a day. Strong rooms with burglar bars and security locks were also used, these rooms were guarded 24 hours a day. Access to these strong rooms was strictly controlled.
Planning for monitoring	Most of the assessment bodies had monitoring plans in place. Most of these plans were forwarded to Umalusi. 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 the examination. However, in some provinces monitors struggled to get accurate information during their design phase verification visits.
Writing of the examination	
Security of storage and dispatch of examination material	The assessment bodies expended great effort to ensure the security of the examination material. Most of these functions were outsourced to credible security companies. Papers were secured under strict regulations. Only designated officials were allowed access to 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

	<p>assessment bodies made use of security companies to transport the examination material to their examination centres. In some instances officials were assigned to perform this task. Question papers were printed and stored under strict security measures. Question papers were transported by the printers under strict security to district offices and then to centres on the day of the examinations. It was however reported that there were some difficulties in some provinces with the dispatching of papers to some centres due to a lack of staff. 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.</p> <p>It is evident from the reports that the assessment bodies put a lot of effort into securing the question papers. All the question papers were still sealed on arrival; these were opened in the presence of the learners and the invigilators. After the learners had completed writing, the 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. The scripts were then taken to the district or circuit offices of the assessment bodies.</p>
Management of examination centres	<p>In general, the examinations were conducted well and in a professional manner. Most of the assessment bodies used the public schools where the learners receive their daily tuition. In most provinces the centre managers were appointed as the chief invigilators. Most of the prescribed standards were met. The 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, learners with special needs or emergency cases; this was due to instances of this kind not having happened before in their centres. Not all the rooms were clearly indicated but most of the centres were conducive to the writing of the examinations. In general the rooms were clean, although some were not as clean as expected for examination purposes.</p>
Invigilation of the examination	<p>The examinations were generally managed well. Invigilators understood the task at hand, and most conducted the examinations and themselves very professionally. A few cases of late arrival were reported. Not all the invigilators had identification tags – it was assumed that everyone knew they were teaching at the centres. Some centres did not even have invigilator registers available. Chief invigilators received training from the provincial office and they in turn trained the other invigilators. Most centres had relief invigilators.</p>

Management of irregularities

The graph below provides a summary of the rate of irregularity reports received by Umalusi from the assessment bodies. The information is based on a 23 learning area provision per province.

Graph 1



Nationally there has been a 2% decline in the submission of daily reports from provinces (June – 63% and October – 61%).

Resulting

Monitoring of marking

Umalusi monitors, as well as external moderators, were deployed to monitor the process. The external moderators attended memorandum discussions and looked at the standards of the question papers, the standards of the marking, the standards of the internal moderation and the candidates' responses. The provincial marking centres were well organised and the necessary systems and processes to ensure effective control over scripts and marking were in place. The training of markers entailed the discussion of the memorandum as well as administration and logistical issues concerning the marking. In most cases examination assistants were appointed to assist the markers by checking their additions and the transfer of marks, which was monitored by the internal moderator. Internal moderators were present at the marking centres during the entire marking period. There were no irregularities reported.

Computing, capturing and processing of scores	The capturing and processing of data was done at the provincial examination offices after the marking process. The assessment bodies used different approaches to ensure that the capturing was done correctly. Most of the assessment bodies used the “double capture” method. Monitors were deployed to verify this process. Strict security measures were in place during the capturing period and capturers signed a confidentiality statement. No problems with regard to capturing were reported.
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6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The examination is generally well managed within all the assessment bodies.

The appointment of markers was done in accordance with regulations. Provinces such as Limpopo (98%) and Gauteng (96%) should be applauded for maintaining an acceptable irregularity submission rate of above 95% for the 2008 examination period. The reporting of daily irregularities to Umalusi was at an acceptable rate although there is room for improvement. Provinces such as Free State (87%), Western Cape (52%) and KwaZulu Natal (48%) must also be commended for the improvement in terms of their submission rates.

The appointment of internal moderators and examination assistants is greatly beneficial to the process. At the majority of sites monitored, the chief invigilators and invigilators were appointed in writing and trained. There were good security measures in place, for example, access control, the use of identity and visitors' cards, burglar alarms and security gates, CCTV cameras, etc. It is commendable that most ABET centres have seating plans in place. Clocks were displayed in most centres and where there was no clock, times were indicated on the boards.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The translation of question papers from English to Afrikaans is still problematic as these translated question papers are not checked for correctness prior to printing. The assessment bodies are encouraged to look at possible ways to ensure that these papers are correct. The assessment bodies are furthermore encouraged to timeously submit requested information to aid Umalusi's verification processes. The monitoring of the examinations was not done regularly by the assessment bodies and this need to be improved to strengthen confidence in the system. There is still no common emergency or disaster management plan in most provinces. It is a concern that some of the sites monitored had no irregularities and monitoring registers. Some of the centres visited are still not conducive to writing examinations. All centres should be checked prior to examinations to establish their conditions and/or state of appropriateness to host examinations for adults.

There was only one serious irregularity reported during the June examination. The problem arose in the Eastern Cape Department of Education but was promptly resolved and did not have any negative bearing on the credibility of the examination.

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

officials, who then forwarded the details and reports to the Provincial Irregularity Committees for further investigation. Provinces such as Eastern Cape (-91%), Northern Cape (-52%) and Mpumalanga (-35%) must put measures in place to ensure that all daily reports are submitted to Umalusi. Although there has been a slight decrease in the rate of reporting nationally (-2%), there has been a better understanding in terms of the rationale for these daily reports.

The importance of these reports can never be overstated.

8. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the 2008 examination was managed in a credible manner. All the assessment bodies have systems in place to ensure the effective running of the examinations. All irregularities reported were handled in a satisfactory way by the Irregularity Committees operating in the assessment bodies.

Chapter 5

Moderation of Marking

1. INTRODUCTION

The moderation of marking is of critical importance as it largely determines the standard and quality of marking and ensures that marking happens according to established practices and standards.

2. SCOPE

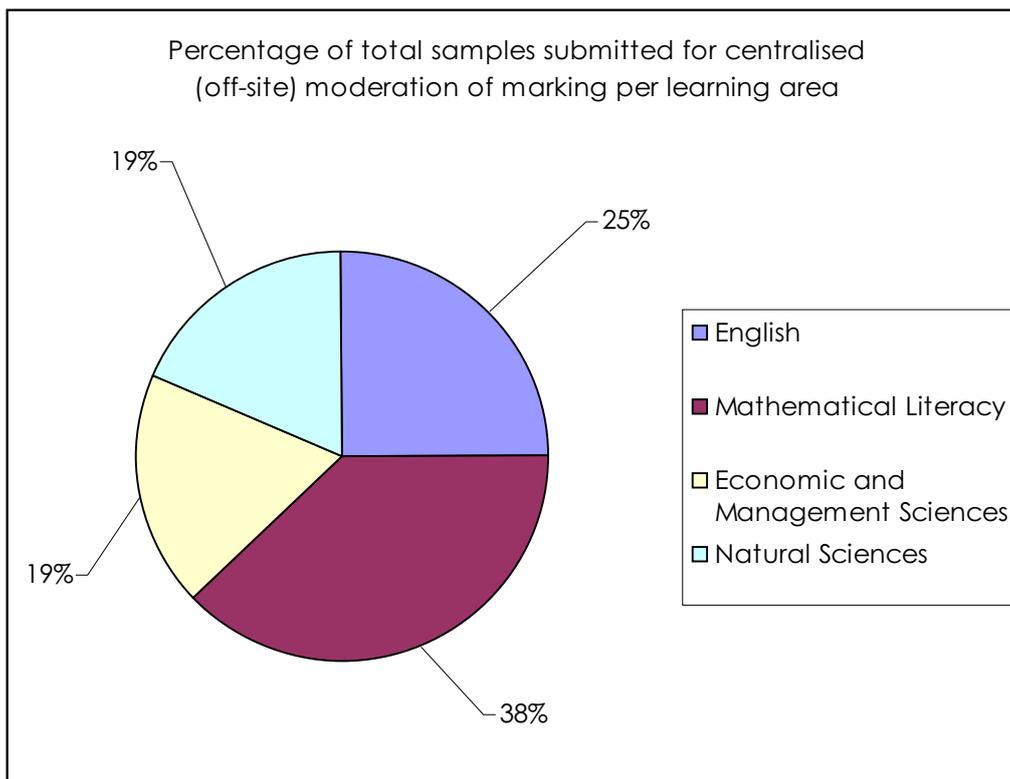
The moderation of marking extended across ten assessment bodies, namely the nine provincial bodies and the IEB. In total, only four learning areas with high learner enrolments were moderated. Table 5 below provides details of centralised (off-site) moderation that was conducted after the two 2008 examination sessions.

Table 5

Assessment Body	June Examination		October Examination				Total samples submitted per province	Submission rates per province
	English	Mathematical Literacy	English	Mathematical Literacy	Economic and Management Sciences	Natural Sciences		
Eastern Cape	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	3	50%
Free State	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	3	50%
Gauteng	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	2	33%
KwaZulu Natal	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	3	50%
Limpopo	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4	67%
Mpumalanga	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	5	83%
North West	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	3	50%
Northern Cape	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	3	50%
Western Cape	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	4	67%
IEB	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	2	33%
Total samples per learning area	6	5	2	7	6	6	32	
Percentage of total samples per learning area	19%	16%	6%	22%	19%	19%	100%	

20 scripts (on average) make up sample.

Y	did submit sample scripts for external moderation of marking
N	did not submit sample scripts for external moderation of marking or submitted very late



Graph 2 – Percentage of total samples submitted for centralised (off-site) moderation of marking per learning area.

In graph 2 above, only 25% for English and 38% for Mathematical Literacy of the samples requested per learning area was submitted by the assessment bodies whilst the submission rate for both Economic and Management Sciences and Natural Sciences was 19%.

Assessment bodies like Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo and North West did not submit any samples for the June examination. These provinces, however, improved in terms of their submission rates for the October examination.

In some cases for the October examination, assessment bodies like Gauteng, Free State, Northern Cape and the IEB either did not submit their samples or submitted them so late that they could not be moderated.

On average the submission rate per assessment body was 53%. Assessment bodies are therefore urged to comply with requests made by Umalusi as non compliance might negatively affect quality assurance processes.

3. APPROACH

The moderation of marking is divided into two phases, namely:

- memorandum discussion; and
- centralised (off-site) moderation of marking.

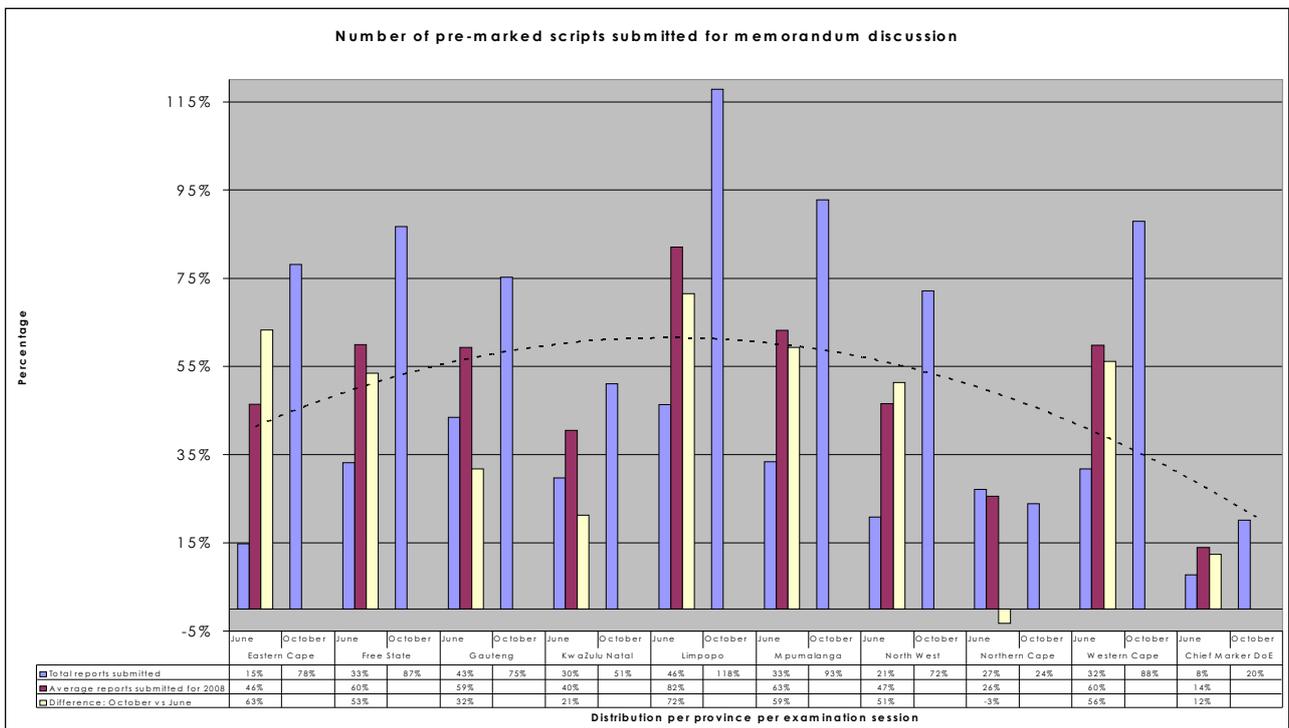
These processes will ensure that marking is standardised across the assessment bodies.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Memorandum discussions

The memorandum discussion meetings were held at the national DoE prior to the commencement of provincial marking.

Graph 3 below provides an overview of the pre-marking done per province for the two 2008 examination sessions.



Graph 3 – Number of pre-marked scripts submitted for memorandum discussion

The table below represents the findings against the criteria used for the memorandum discussion.

Table 6

Criteria	Findings
Do the examination question paper and memorandum represent the final version of the paper moderated?	All the question papers and memoranda represented the final versions moderated by the external moderators. However the Venda question paper from Limpopo was provincially edited which compromised the security of the examination for that paper. This irregularity was addressed with the provincial assessment body. Most translated question papers and memoranda were not checked by external moderators after sign-off which poses a serious threat to the quality assurance process with regards to the printing and editing of question papers. This needs to be addressed by the assessment bodies as a matter of urgency.
Were the changes recommended by the external moderator, chief markers, internal moderators, etc. appropriately amended in the marking memorandum?	The changes recommended by external moderators were mostly accepted. Possible learners' responses were also accepted provided that sufficient evidence was available to motivate inclusion into the marking memoranda. Where no consensus could be reached the Umalusi decision was seen as final. Discussions were conducted in a very professional and participatory manner.
Was the chief marker's report of the previous examination discussed at the memorandum discussion?	During most of the discussions these reports were made available for perusal and referral but due to time constraints were not interrogated to the extent expected. These reports need to be made available to all stakeholders prior to the actual memorandum discussion meetings to facilitate the process.
Did all chief markers/examiners and internal moderators attend the memorandum discussion?	Most of the assessment bodies were well represented for most of the learning area memoranda discussions. It is a cause for concern that the Northern Cape had an average absenteeism rate of 74% for the duration of the meetings. All examiners and internal moderators attended the memorandum discussion meetings, which is commendable. External moderators for HSSC, SMME and LIFO were unable to attend the memorandum discussion meetings for their respective learning areas and the internal moderators were tasked to facilitate these meetings. Umalusi was represented in all these meetings by a monitor.
Did all chief markers/examiners and internal moderators come prepared to the memorandum discussion, with each having worked out/prepared possible answers?	Most chief markers came prepared to the meetings with worked out answers. Most chief markers gave verbal feedback on the performance and responses of learners. There needs to be a uniform instrument to capture such findings and a thorough analysis of learner performance needs to be done. Many chief markers did not bring their pre-marked scripts for verification; this concern needs to be addressed by the assessment bodies to ensure compliance.

Criteria	Findings
Did all the chief markers/examiners/internal moderators receive a sample of scripts to mark?	In most cases it was only the chief markers who received scripts for pre-marking. In some cases examiners and internal moderators were not exposed at all to this process of pre-marking. All chief markers, examiners and internal moderators should be encouraged to mark and develop their own marking memorandum to check the appropriateness and correctness of the final marking guidelines.
Were there any changes and/or additions made to the marking memoranda during the memorandum discussion?	Many changes were recommended and included in the final marking guidelines. Many mistakes were discovered on the memoranda and these point to some gaps in the internal moderation of these tools. Translation errors were also notably common in some learning areas. The changes further included alternative responses by candidates.
What impact did the changes/additions have on the cognitive level of the answer/response required?	In all cases the changes had no impact on the cognitive levels of the answers. The changes made room for the inclusion of alternative answers that neither advantaged nor disadvantaged candidates.
Where a learning area is marked at more than one marking centre, what measures are in place to ensure that changes to the memorandum are communicated effectively and the same adjustments are implemented by all centres involved?	All learning areas were marked at centralised provincial locations. The national DoE was responsible for liaison between provincial assessment bodies and Umalusi external moderators in the event of any request. No official requests for any changes were received from the DoE.
Were minutes of the memorandum discussions submitted to all the delegates at the memorandum discussion meetings?	All delegates present were supplied with the minutes of the memorandum discussion meetings.
Approval of final marking memoranda.	All final marking guideline documents were signed off by external moderators, examiners and internal moderators as evidence of their approval. Provincial chief markers were given copies of these approved marking guidelines for implementation at their marking centres.

4.2 Centralised (off-site) moderation of marking

The scripts of some assessment bodies were not received by our external moderators (refer to table 5 on page 18). In another cases the incorrect scripts were sent to external moderators and this caused a serious compromise in terms of the moderation of marking and the reporting of the external moderators' findings.

The sample scripts did not reflect a fair spread of scripts from different centres and areas. The table below represents the findings against the criteria used for the moderation of marking.

Table 7

Criteria	Findings
Adherence to marking memoranda and consistency of marking.	Most provinces adhered to the marking memorandum. Economic and Management Sciences in the Western Cape (question 4) was incorrectly marked. The memorandum stated that both question should be marked and the highest mark must be taken and recorded. However the marks were divided by 2 which negatively affected the learners. In some cases the marks were not totalled accurately. Some inconsistencies were detected in most scripts moderated.
Changes to marking memorandum and evidence of internal moderation.	No changes were done to the marking memorandum. There is reasonable evidence of internal moderation in the sample moderated. However, the quality of moderation was sometimes questionable; it seemed to just be a matching of ticks. There are some cases where comments are made after moderation which is encouraging.
Quality and standard of marking.	Generally, the quality of marking ranged between good and average. There is evidence of some inconsistencies in internal moderation of marking. The marking standard is acceptable but much more can be done in terms of the training of markers and internal moderators.
Candidates performance	Performance was generally fair for English and Natural Sciences. For Mathematical Literacy and Economic and Management Sciences the performances of most candidates ranged between fair and some found the papers difficult.
Adjustment of marks	No adjustments were proposed in most learning areas. Raw marks should be accepted was proposed in all cases as it gives a true reflection of candidates' performance.

5. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

There is a marked improvement in terms of the pre-marking that was done prior to the memorandum discussion meetings. This has drastically contributed to the overall improvement in the quality of discussions, marking and internal moderation of marking. During the 2008 examination session a total of 4575 answer scripts were pre-marked prior to the memorandum discussion meetings.

In the June memorandum discussion 1328 (29%) scripts were pre-marked whilst for the October examination 3247 (71%) were pre-marked. There has been a general 42% increase from June to October. It is commendable that all the learning areas used a common instrument to capture the minutes of these meetings. All final marking guidelines were approved and signed off for distribution and implementation.

It is also commendable that most of the assessment bodies adhered to the final marking guidelines. No changes were effected although there were some inconsistencies and inaccuracies discovered with the totalling of marks and internal moderation of scripts. The quality of marking has also improved although these good standards should be maintained through constant training and development so that these good practices are transferred to the educators in the classroom.

6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The assessment bodies should be commended for their efforts in ensuring that the samples of scripts to be re-marked by the chief markers were distributed to them timeously. However, some chief markers did not receive their sample scripts at all. The assessment bodies should put processes in place to ensure that all chief markers receive their sample of scripts to be pre-marked as per Umalusi directives and circulars timeously as non compliance will be not be tolerated.

Marking needs to be continuously improved and assessment bodies should strive for improvement in terms of the type of training that is given to markers.

The late or non submission of scripts for external centralised (off-site) moderation needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency as it has a negative effect on the quality assurance processes of Umalusi.

7. 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. However, we need to ensure that the areas suggested for improvement are addressed effectively in order to keep the standard of marking at a credible level.

Chapter 6

Standardisation of Results

1. INTRODUCTION

The moderation of marks is conducted to address the variations in the standard of the question papers, internal assessment and the standard of marking that may occur from examination to examination and between sites of learning.

The pre-standardisation and standardisation meetings took place on 24 July 2008 and 12 December 2008 respectively. More than 80% of the marks of all the learning areas were captured and could all thus be standardised.

2. SCOPE

Umalusi standardised all 23 learning areas examined by the DoE and the six learning areas examined by the IEB.

3. APPROACH

The statistical moderation of the examination marks for the 2008 ABET Level 4 examinations remained unchanged and consisted of comparisons between the current mark distributions and the mark distribution of the previous years since 2001. Comparisons between the current mark distribution and the mark distribution of the norm were made in both the examination sessions. Pairs analyses was also used in these processes. The Pairs analysis compares the mean marks in two learning areas 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 learning areas (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 2008 examination results were:

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

4. FINDINGS

Pre-standardisation meetings were held by Umalusi and the national DoE separately before the standardisation meeting. These meetings were used to interrogate the statistics supplied by the DoE. The DoE drafted their proposals for adjustments whilst Umalusi familiarised themselves with the statistics and drafted provisional responses to probable requests for adjustments.

5. DECISIONS

The table below provides statistics in terms of the standardisation decisions taken during the two standardisation meetings that were conducted during 2008 (for the DoE).

Table 8

Description	Number for June	Number for October
Number of learning areas presented for standardisation	23	23
Number of learning areas where no decisions were taken due to insufficient data	0	0
Number of learning areas that could not be standardised because less than 80% of the results were available	0	0
Number of learning areas where all the candidates that wrote the learning area failed	0	0
Number of learning areas where Umalusi requested a revision of the proposed decision of the DoE	8	7
Number of learning areas where raw marks were accepted	16	9
Number of learning areas for which marks were adjusted	7	14
Number of learning areas standardised	23	23

6. AREAS OF CONCERN

The following issues were raised as areas of concern by the national DoE:

- Mathematics, Mathematical Sciences and Mathematical Literacy have the same median.
- The curriculum that is currently in place for Mathematical Literacy is inappropriate.
- There is no distinction between first and additional languages.
- The standard of teaching and learning is poor.
- The curriculum reform progress is slow.

The DoE has pledged their commitment to ensure that these concerns are addressed accordingly.

The following issues were raised as areas of concern by Umalusi:

- The continued poor performance of candidates in learning areas such as Applied Agriculture and Agricultural Technology, Economic and Management Sciences and Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences was raised as a serious concern.
- The problem of English being the language of teaching and instruction was once more highlighted in the reports from the chief markers and moderators. Most of the candidates entering for this examination are either second or third language English speakers.
- There has been a steady increase in the number of candidates entering the ABET Level 4 examinations, however no real national or provincial intervention strategies or programmes are currently in place to support learners who are entering for the second or third time to write the

examinations. This is also true for these learners if they want to improve their internal assessment mark.

- The problems with the quality of teaching, learning and assessment need to be addressed as a matter of urgency if we want to see a drastic increase in the numbers of candidates that will be certificated.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There needs to be an urgent reform of the current curriculum to ensure its appropriateness and relevance. The right to basic education is a basic human right enshrined in the constitution. Adult learners deserve quality teaching and learning and therefore the DoE is under a constitutional obligation to ensure that all systems and resources are duly put in place.

8. CONCLUSION

The standardisation process for ABET Level 4 is stabilising. In comparing the June and the October standardisation decisions, it is worth noting that there has been a decrease in the number of learning areas where raw marks were accepted and an increase in the number of learning areas for which marks were adjusted.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The current positive changes within the ABET sector form an ideal springboard that can catapult ABET in the right direction.

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

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

The reliability of the internal assessment component of the examination is still a matter of serious concern even though there are signs of improvement in respect of the quality of the tasks, structure and presentation of portfolios. The implementation and management of the SBA tasks remains at an unacceptable level.

Building and expanding the capacity of the current corps of educators must be seen as one of the key priorities to ensure effective growth and stability in the sector. The professional development and conditions of service of these 'foot soldiers' should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Umalusi looks forward in anticipation to the successful implementation of all the recommendations made.

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Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training