



2008

**Report on the Quality Assurance
of the National Senior Certificate
Assessment and Examination**

UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

2008

REPORT ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE
OF THE NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE
ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION

PUBLISHED BY:



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General and Further Education and Training

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Contents

FOREWORD.....	v
List of acronyms and abbreviations.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT.....	1
1. Background and scope of the report.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: MODERATION OF QUESTION PAPERS.....	2
1. Introduction.....	2
2. Scope.....	2
3. Approach.....	3
4. Findings.....	3
4.1 Department of Education papers.....	3
4.2 IEB Papers.....	5
4.3 OAER papers.....	7
5. Areas of good practice.....	9
6. Areas for improvement.....	9
7. Conclusion.....	10
CHAPTER THREE: MODERATION OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT.....	12
1. Introduction.....	12
2. Scope.....	12
3. Approach.....	13
3.1 Moderation of the learner and educator portfolios.....	13
3.2 Post-moderation process.....	13
4. Findings.....	14
4.1 Provincial Education Departments.....	14
4.2 IEB.....	16
4.3 OAER.....	18
5. Conclusion.....	19
CHAPTER FOUR: AUDIT AND MODERATION OF THE LIFE ORIENTATION INTERNAL ASSESSMENT.....	20
1. Introduction.....	20
2. Scope.....	20
3. Sampling of portfolios.....	20
3.1 Provincial Departments of Education.....	21
3.2 Independent assessment bodies.....	21
4. Approach to quality assurance.....	21
4.1 Audit of the implementation systems.....	21
4.2 External moderation of the learner and educator portfolios.....	22
5. Findings.....	22
5.1 Findings of the audit.....	22
5.2 Findings of the external moderation of learner and educator portfolios.....	24
6. Areas of good practice.....	26
6.1 Audit.....	26
6.2 External moderation of learner and educator portfolios.....	27
7. Areas for improvement.....	27
7.1 Audit.....	27
7.2 External moderation of LO.....	28
8. Conclusion.....	29

CHAPTER FIVE: MONITORING OF THE CONDUCT OF THE EXAMINATION	30
1. Introduction.....	30
2. Scope and approach	30
3. Findings.....	31
3.1 State of readiness	31
3.2 Monitoring of the writing of examinations.....	32
3.3 Areas of good practice	36
3.4 Areas for improvement.....	37
4. Monitoring of the marking of scripts	38
4.1 Findings.....	39
4.2 Areas of good practice	40
4.3 Areas for improvement.....	41
5. Conclusion.....	41
CHAPTER SIX: MODERATION OF MARKING	43
1. Introduction.....	43
2. Memoranda discussion.....	43
2.1 Scope.....	43
2.2 Approach.....	43
2.3 Findings.....	44
2.4 Areas of good practice.....	45
2.5 Areas for improvement.....	45
3. Centralised moderation of marking.....	47
3.1 Scope.....	47
3.2 Approach.....	47
3.3 Findings.....	48
3.4 Areas of good practice.....	50
3.5 Areas for improvement.....	50
4. On-site moderation of marking.....	51
4.1 Scope.....	51
4.2 Approach.....	52
4.3 Findings.....	52
4.4 Areas of good practice.....	54
4.5 Areas for improvement.....	55
5. Conclusion.....	55
CHAPTER SEVEN: STANDARDIZATION OF EXAMINATION RESULTS.....	56
1. Introduction.....	56
2. Purpose of standardisation.....	56
3. Scope of the standardisation.....	56
4. Umalusi's approach to standardisation of the National Senior Certificate.....	56
5. Comment on 2008 standardisation.....	58
6. 2008 Standardisation decisions.....	58
7. Areas of concern and recommendations.....	58
8. Recommendation.....	59
9. Conclusion.....	59
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION.....	61

Foreword

The class of 2008 has made history in the South African education system in that they are the first cohort to sit for the new National Senior Certificate Examination. This National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination is based on a new curriculum, the National Curriculum Statement. The general public, and all interested stakeholders, have—since its inception—been raising concerns about a number of issues: the relevance of the curriculum, interpretation and mediation of the curriculum, the quality and standard of question papers that will be set, the level of preparedness of learners, and the outcome of the learning programme as a whole, as reflected in the final results. The 2008 NSC examination will be used as an indicator of how the system has performed in relation to these concerns.

Umalusi has carried out the following, standard quality assurance processes:

- Moderation of the November 2008 and March 2009 question papers,
- Moderation of internal assessment portfolios,
- Monitoring of the conduct of the NSC examinations,
- Moderation of a sample of scripts, and
- Standardization of marks according to agreed statistical and educational principles.

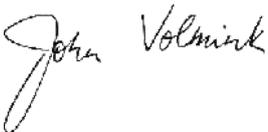
Historically, the standardization of marks is known to be a purely statistical exercise. For the 2008 NSC examination however, the standardization process was influenced by the qualitative input captured in reports from the external moderators. In addition, these reports were strengthened by substantial reports coming from the Maintaining Standards research that Umalusi commissioned. The research focused on the following components:

- A very detailed evaluation of the new curriculum (NCS) in relation to the outgoing NATED 500 curricula,
- Evaluation of the old Senior Certificate examination question papers for the past three years (2005 – 7), the 2008 Grade 12 exemplar papers and the 2008 NSC question papers.

The purpose of the research was to compare the cognitive complexity of the two curricula, and to show the level of difficulty of the 2008 NSC examination question papers in relation to the SC question papers of the past three years. The research results provided very useful information to the standardization process.

Umalusi as a quality assurance Council has done all in its power to ensure that the standards are maintained, and that the credibility of the NSC examination is not compromised. Umalusi can however not ensure the outcome of results.

Umalusi would like to thank all the relevant stakeholders who have worked tirelessly with a view to ensuring the credibility of the 2008 National Senior Certificate Examination.



Prof John Volmink, Chairperson

23 December 2008

List of acronyms and abbreviations

- ASs Assessment Standards
- DoE Department of Education
- FAL First Additional Language
- HG Higher Grade
- HL Home Language
- IEB Independent Examination Board
- OAER Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad
- LOs Learning Outcomes
- NSC National Senior Certificate
- P1, P2, P3 Paper 1, Paper 2, Paper 3
- PED Provincial Education Department
- SAL Second Additional Language
- SAG Subject Assessment Guidelines
- SC Senior Certificate
- SG Standard Grade

Chapter 1

Overview of the report

1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (No 58 of 2001) mandates Umalusi to assure the quality of all exit points assessments. In fulfilling this statutory responsibility of ensuring appropriate standards and quality in the National Senior Certificate Examination, Umalusi undertook the following:

- Moderation of the NSC November 2008 and March 2009 question papers,
- Moderation of internal assessment portfolios,
- Monitoring of the conduct of the Senior Certificate Examination,
- Moderation of a sample of learners' scripts,
- Moderation/standardization of candidates' marks in accordance with educational sound statistical principles.

The quality assurance processes were carried out in the following assessment bodies:

- The National and provincial departments of education,
- The Independent Examination board (IEB), and
- The Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad (OAER) previously called the BCVO.

This report provides findings of the above-mentioned quality assurance processes. The findings presented are as follows:

- General findings in respect of the quality assurance criteria for each of the above processes,
- Areas of good practice identified during the moderation or monitoring processes, and
- Areas for improvement, as well as the necessary accompanying recommendations.

Chapter 2

Moderation of Question Papers

1. INTRODUCTION

Moderation of question papers is a process critical in ensuring that question papers which are written at the end of the year and in the March supplementary examination of the following year are of a high standard (fair, valid and reliable) , and further that they comply with all of the prescribed Umalusi criteria.

The question paper moderation process commenced at the beginning of 2008 and continued throughout the year. The last batch of question papers was moderated in November 2008. With the advent of the NCS, the moderation of question papers has, for the large part, been centralized, a result of all NSC question papers now being national papers. The moderation exercise was undertaken at the Department of Education offices.

2. SCOPE

This chapter covers findings on the moderation of the Department of Education (DoE) November 2008 and March 2009, Independent Examination Board (IEB) November 2008 and back-up, as well as the Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad (OAER) November 2008 NSC question papers.

The table below outlines the number of November 2008 question papers moderated for each of the assessment bodies.

Table 1: Number of November 2008 – March 2009 question paper moderated

Assessment body	Number of subjects	Number of papers	Rejected at 1st moderation	Approved at 1st moderation	Approved at 2nd moderation	Approved at 3rd moderation	4th and beyond
DoE Nov 2008	38	108	6	38	41	25	4
DoE March 2009	38	108	4	46 45	45	14	-
IEB	32	77	4		23	14	1
OAE	21	45	2	15	25	5	-

The Department of Education requested that certain question papers be reviewed after they had been approved by the external moderators. The affected subjects are History, Life Sciences and English FAL P1, which went up to fifth moderation. The DoE was keen to ensure that these question papers were set at the appropriate level. A special moderation session was then scheduled for these papers at Umalusi offices.

In respect of the IEB papers, only Mathematics P2 went as far as fourth moderation as a result of the Umalusi external moderator's recommendations not being satisfactorily implemented.

3. APPROACH

Two approaches were used for the moderation of question papers, namely on-site and off-site moderation. On-site moderation was applicable to all papers set by the Department of Education. The moderation of these papers was conducted at the offices of the Department of Education. For these papers, a panel of moderators was used to moderate the papers. Two external moderators were appointed for each paper. They jointly moderated the paper and generated a detailed report on the standard of the paper.

The off-site approach was applicable to papers set by the private assessment bodies, namely the IEB and OAER, as well as Paper 2 of the languages, which were set by the Provincial Education Departments. The question papers, with all accompanying documents, were sent to individual external moderators by courier who moderated and sent them back to the assessment bodies upon the completion of moderation.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Department of Education papers

Findings are presented in terms of the criteria used by the moderators for the moderation of question papers.

(i) Technical criteria

Generally question papers complied with this criterion in most respects. In a few cases the level of compliance was reportedly limited, particularly in the initial stages of moderation. The subjects in which this difficulty was reported were: Economics, Agricultural Technology, IsiZulu HL Paper 1, Geography and Sepedi. These papers were found to be not print-ready, numbering was inconsistent, and the quality of illustrations was poor. As moderation progressed, these problems were gradually addressed, such that for March 2009 papers there was compliance in all respects with this criterion.

(ii) Internal moderation

Compliance with this criterion was a great concern in the initial stages of moderation. As a result, a number of papers had to be resubmitted, either due to the absence of internal moderators' reports or due to the poor quality of internal moderation. This shortcoming was more evident in IsiZulu HL and IsiZulu FAL Paper 1, Setswana, IsiXhosa and History.

(iii) Content coverage

The majority of question papers complied with this criterion in all respects, but inadequate coverage of content was reported in Setswana SAL P1 and in Business Studies.

Non-submission of analysis grids was, however, a major concern. The analysis grids provide an indication of weighting in terms of content covered, weighting of the cognitive skills assessed, LOs

assessed, as well as correlation between mark allocation and level of difficulty. The non-submission of analysis grids was noted in History, Dramatic Arts, Setswana, Geography, Business Studies, Sesotho HL P3, Afrikaans FAL, Music, Information Technology and Life Sciences.

(iv) Cognitive demand

Question papers displayed a varying level of compliance in respect of the cognitive demand. In the first moderation, it was found that most papers had a preponderance of lower and middle order thinking skills. This factor frequently necessitated 2nd and 3rd moderations.

The two papers where the moderators battled to align the papers with the required cognitive demand were Business Studies and Life Sciences.

On the other hand, the standard of Physical Science P2 was considered difficult for weaker (previously SG) candidates.

(v) Marking memoranda

Compliance was generally good and memos were print ready, clearly laid out and neatly typed out.

However, mark allocation in the marking guideline differed with that on the question paper in History P1, Geography P1, Maths P3, Afrikaans FAL and SAL P1 and IsiZulu FAL P1.

With regard to Maths P3 in particular, the external moderator raised the same comments and recommendations in two reports but these were not effected by the panel, and this then warranted a third moderation.

(vi) Language and bias

Compliance was noted in majority of papers. However, in Physical Science P2, the language use was not accommodative of all levels of learners. This rendered the paper difficult for the weaker learners. A similar concern was raised in IsiXhosa SAL P1.

In Life Sciences and Physical Science P1, the external moderators expressed concerns about the incorrect use of scientific concepts, and the reduction of science problems in Physical Science P1, which made the paper marginally easier than the one submitted for 1st moderation.

(vii) Adherence to assessment policies or guidelines

Non-adherence to the SAG was a serious concern in the initial stages of moderation. Exam panels had been instructed to use an "Exam Special instructions" document, which had not been provided to the external moderators before moderation began. It was problematic that this document conflicted with information in the SAGs in certain subjects and/or papers in Agricultural Technology, Physical Science P2 and Mathematics. The external moderators recommended that the SAGs be revised to accommodate these modifications.

(viii) Predictability

Predictability was not an issue as this was the first examination of its kind using the new curriculum.

(ix) Overall impression

Generally, the standard and quality of the initially submitted papers was a serious concern, resulting in many re-submissions. However, the final papers that were approved had been brought much closer to the desired standard.

Papers that were initially rejected such as History, Mathematics P1 and 2, Mathematical Literacy P1, Religion Studies and IsiXhosa SAL P1, emerged as papers of significantly better quality after final moderation.

4.2 IEB papers

These papers were moderated off-site by individual moderators. Upon completion of moderation, external moderators returned them to the IEB, with a detailed report on the standard of the papers.

Once again, findings are presented in terms of the criteria used by the moderators for the moderation of question papers.

(i) Technical criteria

Generally question papers complied with this criterion in most respects. Question papers were generally print-ready with memoranda clearly laid out and neatly typed.

Concerns pertaining to technical criteria were picked up in the following subjects:

- Physical Science P2: content errors and not print-ready
- Accounting P1: lay-out not candidate friendly,
- Afrikaans FAL P1: reading passages were too long
- Mathematical Literacy P2: incomplete paper submitted.

(ii) Internal moderation

Generally internal moderation was not a major concern in the IEB papers. There was evidence that the papers had been moderated.

A few cases of limited or non-compliance were, however, reported in some of the papers. In some instances, the internal moderator's report was missing; there was lack of evidence of internal moderation and/or of not effecting internal moderator's or external moderator's recommendations.

So for example, in Setswana FAL and History P2, no moderator's reports were submitted, while in Physical Science P2 the internal moderator was unwilling to effect the external moderator's recommendations, despite serious issues being raised about the standard of the paper. This paper was eventually conditionally approved, and a disclaimer added to the report to IEB, for all matters emanating from non-compliance with recommendations made. The same unwillingness to effect external moderator's recommendations was also evident with History P1. The paper was eventually

conditionally approved due to time constraints, as the paper had been sent late for external moderation.

Mathematics P2 went up to 4th moderation because the external moderator's recommendations were not satisfactorily implemented at first.

In Accounting, the concern relates to the standard, quality and relevance of internal moderator's input on certain aspects. The external moderator disagreed with some of the internal moderator's opinions on certain aspects of the paper.

(iii) Content coverage

The majority of papers complied with this criterion in all respects. However, failure to submit the analysis grid was reported in Setswana FAL, IsiZulu HL, Mathematics P3 and IsiXhosa HL, and consequently hampered the moderator's analysis of the paper.

Limited compliance regarding content coverage in terms of LOs and ASs was reported in Mathematical Literacy. The trend of not effecting external moderator's recommendations was also noted here.

Content of Life Sciences P3 was not specified and could not be located in the SAG document.

(iv) Cognitive demand

The absence of analysis grids in some subjects required that the external moderators develop these, so that they could be in a position to determine the cognitive demand of the papers.

Nonetheless, the IEB should be commended for generally ensuring that the cognitive demand of the papers is appropriate.

(v) Marking memoranda

Concerns were raised in just two papers, where the mark allocation in the memorandum and question paper did not correspond. This occurred in Information Technology P2 and Life Sciences P3.

(vi) Language and bias

Language usage was appropriate for the majority of IEB papers.

The only concern raised with regard to language occurred in Life Sciences P2, where the language was felt to be very complex. In addition, there was probably too much reading for average learners in a 2.5 hour paper.

(vii) Adherence to assessment policies or guidelines

IEB has its own SAG documents, approved in principle by Umalusi. They therefore have a leeway to deviate from the national SAG documents in assessing their candidates, on condition that they align with the NCS.

Generally there was adherence to assessment policies except in Physical Science P2 and IsiXhosa HL. In Physical Science P2, certain questions were identified as not complying with the IEB Handbook, assessment policy and consequently, with NCS policy. The IEB Handbook prescribes that a maximum of 10% of the paper can be multiple choice questions, but that ruling was not observed, even during 2nd moderation.

In IsiXhosa HL, there was no compliance with this criterion during 1st moderation, because the paper did not reflect the prescribed LOs and ASs, and was not aligned to the current policy guideline documents. Limited compliance was achieved during 2nd moderation in this regard. The paper was eventually conditionally approved.

(viii) Predictability

Most external moderator reports indicate that predictability was not a problem in the IEB papers.

(ix) Overall impression

IEB question papers were generally of a high standard. Most of the papers were approved at 1st moderation. Only two papers were rejected at 1st moderation: IsiZulu HL and Maths Literacy.

The unwillingness to effect the external moderators' recommendations for certain of the papers is a matter of concern.

4.3 OAER papers

OAER has the fewest papers, a total of 45, as indicated in Table 1 above. Moderation of OAER papers started late in July. These papers were therefore moderated under severe time constraints, which had the potential to severely jeopardize the standard and quality of papers. Everything possible was however done by Umalusi not to compromise quality and standard of the question papers.

Once again, findings are presented in terms of the criteria used by the moderators for the moderation of question papers.

(i) Technical criteria

Technical issues are one of the main reasons why the OAER papers were sent back for subsequent moderations.

Technical issues were a concern in Afrikaans FAL, Accounting, Mathematics and Physical Science P1, which led to second, and in one case, third moderations.

(ii) Internal moderation

The quality and relevance of the internal moderator's input and/or the absence of an internal moderator's report were concerns raised for the Afrikaans FAL, Mathematics P3 and Economics papers, which were initially not approved.

(iii) Content coverage

Absence of analysis-grids in some of the papers made the assessment of compliance with this criterion difficult. This was the case in Afrikaans FAL, Tourism, English FAL and Economics. Despite this being the case, no major concerns were expressed by external moderators on the coverage of content.

Inadequate coverage of content of LOs and ASs was, however, reported in Agricultural Technology. The shortcoming was immediately addressed and the paper was approved at 2nd moderation.

(iv) Cognitive demand

Generally OAER papers complied with this criterion. Papers were reported to be assessing the cognitive skills appropriately.

(v) Marking memoranda

OAER papers complied with this criterion in all respects: memoranda were accurate, made allowance for alternative responses and were laid out clearly and neatly typed.

Cases where the memorandum required attention were reported only in Afrikaans FAL and Mathematics. In Afrikaans FAL, there were still errors in the memo despite them having been noted in the 1st moderation.

(vi) Language and bias

OAER papers are generally set in Afrikaans and complied with this criterion.

(vii) Adherence to assessment policies or guidelines

There was compliance with this criterion, except in Agricultural Technology, where deviation from the SAG was raised as a concern, as questions had not been set according to the policy guidelines.

(viii) Predictability

OAER papers generally complied with the criterion as the NSC examination is being written for the first time.

The tendency to cut and paste from the exemplar papers was observed in Agricultural Management Practice and Accounting. External moderators recommended that these questions be completely replaced. There was limited compliance with this criterion during 2nd moderation, but the issue was corrected at 3rd moderation

(ix) Overall impression

Despite papers being sent late for external moderation, OAE papers generally complied in most respects with minimum standards. The standard of the papers was appropriate for the grade 12

learners. Time constraints were a challenge in the moderation of Agricultural Management Practice, Business Studies and Physical Science P1, and the external moderators for these papers would have preferred to see these papers again, but time constraints made this impossible.

5. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The following aspects can be noted for positive comment, once the final moderation had been completed:

- Question papers were **well-balanced and of a satisfactory standard**. They were well compiled according to the policy guidelines. They were intellectually challenging and making allowance for creative responses from candidates.
- Question papers were **free of gender, race, cultural and provincial bias**, and were suitable for the level of comprehension of learners. Crucially, the papers were regarded as able to cater for the weaker (previously SG) candidates as well as highly gifted (previously HG) candidates.
- In the majority of cases, **examination panels and internal moderators responded very well to requests for adjustments to question papers and memoranda**. This resulted in few questions being returned for third moderation, particularly in the moderation of March 2009 papers.
- Generally, **papers were submitted in print-ready condition with clearly laid out and neatly typed memoranda**. In the case of DoE papers, analysis-grids for the weighting and spread of LOs and ASs, together with internal moderators' reports, were included with the question papers. This was generally the case during the course of the moderation of November 2008 papers, and improved immensely as moderation proceeded to March 2009 papers.
- The IEB papers are to be commended for their **strength in the testing of cognitive abilities**. The majority of papers were of a high standard, comprising intellectually stimulating questions. This point is confirmed by the fact that a large number of IEB papers were approved at first moderation.

6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following aspects can be noted as areas requiring attention during 2009:

- **Editing and translation of question papers** in many cases changed the meaning of questions. A lack of precision in the translation of questions into Afrikaans is a problem, and so Umalusi recommends that translation of papers should be assigned to language experts with a command of the subject matter as well. Therefore, an additional member should be appointed to every panel: this person must be a subject matter expert who has a good command of both Afrikaans and English.
- **Unwillingness on part of the internal moderator and examination panel** to implement external moderators' recommendations was, at times, a challenge. Cooperation and understanding between all the people involved in setting and finalizing the exam is essential. A willingness to listen to differing opinions and to implement reasonable proposed changes would reduce the amount moderation currently being required.

- **Level of cognitive demand** is a matter of concern. In English FAL, there appeared to be too much obsession with catering for all candidates, including the previous HG and SG candidates in one question paper, and it was an uphill battle to try and ensure that the required cognitive levels were achieved. In general the papers, particularly P1, were felt to be a little below the expected cognitive levels and not challenging enough.
- **The conflict between the special examination instructions and the subject SAGs** caused problems with the moderation process. Certain special instructions, requests and modifications had been made by the Department of Education on the setting of certain question papers i.e. Agricultural Technology, Physical Science and Mathematics. These differed from the SAG documents, and this meant that at least one paper had to be resubmitted because of these differences. Umalusi recommends that such modifications be incorporated in the SAG documents to minimize confusion.
- **Discrepancy in policy regarding the percentage of marks allocated to higher order thinking skills:** According to IEB policy, 50 percent of the examination must test higher order skills. While this stance is good for ensuring creativity and insight in learners, it does mean that IEB candidates may have a relative disadvantage in comparison with DoE candidates, whose papers require a smaller proportion of higher order questions.
- **Late submission** of the OAER papers for external moderation exerted heavy pressure on the external moderators. Moderation was unduly rushed in order to have papers ready in time for the examination. Some external moderators would have preferred to see the papers for subsequent moderation but, due to time constraints, had to agree to letting the internal moderator ensure that changes were effected.

7. CONCLUSION

Despite the minor challenges that were experienced during the start of the moderation in January 2008, it is pleasing to note that, as moderation proceeded, mutual understanding between the panel of examiners, internal moderator and external moderators greatly increased. As the moderation process moved to the moderation of March 2009 papers, the number of moderations that question papers had to go through was dramatically reduced.

Since this was the first NSC examination, question papers provided a useful benchmark with regard to the strengths and unexpected problems that revealed themselves during the memorandum discussion meetings.

The majority of external moderators expressed appreciation for the work done by the examination panel and internal moderators. Effort had been made to submit question papers which were of good quality, print-ready, clearly laid out and neatly typed.

External moderators also expressed appreciation for the cooperation that existed with the DoE examination panels, particularly when papers, sent back for implementation of external moderator's recommendations, were properly amended. This cooperative spirit helped in the reduction of unnecessary moderations.

In summary, the question papers that were written in November 2008 and those that will be written in March 2009 comply in all respects with Umalusi criteria and are of the required standard.

Chapter 3

Moderation of Internal Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

Continuous assessment has become a critical component of any education reform. The new National Senior Certificate makes use of an externally set examination and an internal Continuous Assessment (CASS) component to assess learners in Grade 12. The CASS component contributes 25% of the overall subject mark.

The CASS process is intended to be much more than an examination. Continuous assessment is a powerful diagnostic tool that enables learners to understand where they are having difficulty and to help them improve or find solutions in those areas. CASS also allows teachers to monitor the impact of their lessons on learner understanding. Furthermore, by using CASS, teachers are able to assess how effectively they are implementing the curriculum in the classroom.

Umalusi moderated the CASS component across all assessment bodies during the fourth term, in order to assess whether they have implemented the curriculum in accordance with the prescribed policies and guidelines, and to establish whether assessment was conducted in a fair, reliable, and valid manner.

This chapter highlights key findings gathered during the external moderation of sampled educator and learner CASS portfolios across the nine (9) provincial assessment bodies and the two private assessment bodies.

2. SCOPE

A random sampling was done in such a way that Umalusi would be able to moderate portfolios representing a good spread of subjects. The sampled subjects were classified as follows:

- Group 1: Popular subjects having a high learner enrolment,
- Group 2: Subjects with both theory and practical component,
- Group 3: Language subjects at any of the following levels: Home, First Additional, and Second Additional

Table 2: Subject allocation per assessment body

Assessment Bodies	Group 1 Subjects	Group 2 Subjects	Language Levels
Eastern Cape	Life Science	Mechanical Technology	IsiXhosa Home Language
Free State	History	Hospitality studies	Sesotho Home Language
Gauteng	Accounting	Computer Assisted Technology and Maths Literacy	Afrikaans First Additional Language
KwaZulu Natal	Physical Science	Civil technology	
Limpopo	Economics	Consumer studies	Sepedi Home Language
Mpumalanga	Business Economics	Electrical technology	
North-West	Geography	Engineering, Graphics and design and Maths Literacy	Setswana Home Language
Northern Cape	Maths literacy		Afrikaans Home Language
Western Cape	Agricultural science, and Agricultural technology	Dramatic Arts	English First Additional Language
IEB	Accounting and Mathematics, Life Science	Computer Assisted Technology	English First Additional Language
OAE	Life Science	Hospitality studies	Afrikaans Home

3. APPROACH

The moderation focused on the verification of learner portfolios against the relevant educator portfolios. Each assessment body presented the sampled learner and educator portfolios at a central venue. These portfolios were moderated by panels which consisted of two Umalusi moderators. The approach used was as follows:

3.1 Moderation of the learner and educator portfolios

The moderation focused on verification of learner portfolios against the relevant educator portfolios. The portfolios were moderated using specified CASS moderation criteria.

3.2 Post-moderation process

The post-moderation meeting marks a critical phase of the entire activity, and was held on the last day of the moderation. During the post-moderation meeting, the external moderators presented a preliminary verbal report on the findings gathered during the moderation sessions. The report, presented to the assessment body officials, highlighted both the strengths and areas for improvement.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Provincial Education Departments

The report presents findings of the public assessment bodies and the two independent assessment bodies separately.

The findings are presented according to criteria used in the evaluation of the CASS portfolios, as indicated below.

(I) Compliance with policy and guidelines

Most assessment bodies were found to comply with the National Curriculum Statement, the Subject Assessment Guidelines, Learning Program Guidelines and national protocol on assessment. In some cases, however, the application of the policy is not consistent across districts in a provincial department, or within different schools in the same district. So, for example, some schools in one district were found to be implementing the NCS but were using 2007 documents, and not the latest revised documents.

(ii) Quality and standard of assessment tasks

In terms of the **quality of set tasks**, it was generally found that the programme of assessment was adhered to as laid out in the subject assessment guidelines. In some instances, however, especially where monitoring is lacking, content extension (i.e. inclusion of subject matter outside the prescribed scope) is a problem. In addition, the use of outdated SAGs sometimes compromised the standard and quality of the tasks developed.

In terms of the **validity of set task/items**, the tasks assigned to learners were generally valid as they were keeping with the requirements of the national curriculum statement. In some instances, however, the Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Assessment Standards (ASs) were not indicated for the formulated tasks, and the format used more in keeping with the NATED 550 approach.

Some of the tasks assigned to learners varied from school to school, especially in terms of content. This was evident in Maths literacy where some of the content was not prescribed.

Certain CASS tasks were found not to be valid: this was most evident in the languages moderated, where the tasks used to assess the oral component in languages were often incorrectly or not clearly structured.

The cognitive demand of tasks reflected the full range of cognitive levels. Some of the assigned tasks focused on lower order cognitive skills, with little focus on high order problem solving and evaluation. It was found that, in cases where low order level questions were used, learners performed exceptionally well, while they scored between low and average in high order tasks. It was found also that the quality of the tasks themselves varied from poor to fairly good.

In terms of content coverage and difficulty level, the tasks showed good coverage of relevant content and tasks were set at different difficulty levels. There were instances also where exemplars were used, and in such instances, the relevant content and acceptable difficulty level of tasks was

already determined.

It was found that the schools that opted to use the exemplars were the ones that best maintained an acceptable and well spread distribution of the cognitive levels. It would be interesting to see how educators formulate their own set of items that would be representative of a balanced spread of cognitive levels.

Marking reliability, mark allocation and consistency in marking: In general, marking was done well, and mark allocation was fairly accurate.

The allocation of marks for practical assignments/projects was not consistent, and it was found that marking rubrics were poorly developed or did not measure what was intended. For mechanical technology, the rubrics for assessing the practical assessment task (PAT) and simulation were not applied consistently. Inconsistency in marking was also evident in Agricultural Technology and Computer Application Technology.

Quality of internal moderation: Evidence existed in the educator's and learner portfolios that proves that an audit approach was preferred to moderate CASS related activities.

In some instances, cluster and provincial moderation had been carried out. It was not clear from the data available how frequently such moderations took place. In some cases, there is no evidence of cluster- or any other moderation that was conducted beyond the school/site.

Although plans indicating timelines for the undertaking of internal moderation and monitoring were drawn up and displayed in the educators' and CASS coordinators' portfolios or files, it seems that it is only in a few cases were these plans adhered to. Internal moderation was somehow neglected and/or not undertaken at all levels of the implementation (i.e. at school, cluster, district, and assessment body level)

4.1.1 Areas of good practice

After the external moderation of the educator and learner portfolios, the following can be identified as areas of good practice:

- Strong compliance to policy implementation across assessment bodies is reflected in the fact that assessment bodies managed to develop internal guidelines to simplify and support the implementation of the new curriculum.
- All the assessment bodies developed good management plans that indicate how CASS implementation would be monitored, as well as how moderation would be conducted.

4.1.2 Areas for improvement

The aspects of internal moderation of CASS which require attention in 2009 are the following:

- While there are good moderation management plans in place, the **actual internal moderation did not take place continuously and effectively at all levels**. Umalusi therefore suggests that internal moderation at all levels should receive more attention, and should be accompanied by

sufficient evidence in the form of moderation reports. It is further recommended that assessment bodies, especially those that are responsible for a large number of rural schools, need to come up with plans that indicate how these schools will be supported, monitored and moderated.

- **CASS needs to be integrated with the normal teaching-and-learning cycle.** To achieve this goal, a detailed assessment plan needs to be put in place and adhered to as far as possible. At school level, the subject Head / Deputy/Principal must play a more active role in ensuring that the internal assessment programme is followed to the letter, in order to make sure that curriculum delivery is not compromised.
- **Standard and quality of the tasks:** It was found that developing good reliable items is still a challenge to most of the teachers. The use of exemplars to maintain good standard is not a long-term solution to the problem. Teachers must be trained and encouraged to develop their own items that suit their learners' context, and, where teachers use exemplars, these need to be adapted. The recycling of exemplars is to be discouraged.
- **Insufficient variety of assessment tools evident.** The use of appropriate assessment tools starts with the planning of a task designed to assess the desired construct. Training on how to plan and design assessment is strongly recommended.
- **Feedback is lacking** at all levels of implementation, whether to learners or to the curriculum specialists. Umalusi recommends that the internal moderation process be monitored, and reflected in reports that would help to track progress—and challenges.
- **Lack of intense training and support for teachers** is proving to be a significant drawback. Since the curriculum is new, it is critical that teachers be thoroughly trained in both the content of the subject as well as in the design of appropriate assessment tasks. In addition, and as a part of this process, teachers should be trained in the area of item development. All this training would be a significant step towards understanding the demands of the new NCS.

4.2 IEB

This section of the report presents the findings observed for the IEB, one of the two independent assessment bodies participating in the NCS.

The findings are presented according to criteria used in the evaluation of the CASS portfolios, as indicated below.

(i) Compliance with policy and guidelines

The IEB has its own Subject Assessment Guidelines. The SAGs are found to be in line with the National Curriculum Statement. The internally developed SAGs documents were detailed and comprehensive, and all schools adhere to those guidelines.

(ii) Quality and standard of assessment tasks

Quality of set tasks: Generally, across the subjects moderated by Umalusi, it was found that the programme of assessment was adhered to as per subject assessment guidelines. The set tasks were

of acceptable quality and standard as they were based on relevant learning outcomes and assessment standards. Furthermore, they conformed to the expected cognitive demand as stated in SAGs for the sampled subjects. However, there were occasional cases where schools developed low-order level tasks. For instance, at one school, the English Additional Language panel found that some of the tasks compromised quality and acceptable standard: evidence was found in the poetry section where the questions were cognitively easy.

In terms of the **validity of set task/items**, the tasks assigned to learners were generally valid as they were in keeping with the requirements of the National Curriculum Statement. In some subjects, like English First Additional language, it was found that most of the creative writing tasks were common assessment tasks, therefore identical throughout the schools. As such, the tasks were fairly marked and reliable indicators of the learners' ability.

In terms of the **cognitive demand of tasks**, a full range of cognitive skills was reflected. Very few learners performed well in the questions assessing the high-order cognitive skills.

Content coverage and difficulty level: The content coverage was appropriate, and, in general, the level of difficulty was appropriate and accommodative to all learners.

Marking reliability, mark allocation and consistency in marking: In general, the marking was reliable and mark-allocation accurate. The marking guidelines and rubrics were well designed and were used appropriately. The allocation of marks was in line with the prescribed weighting in the SAGs. Significantly, marking was consistent from school to school, learners were fairly marked and marks were accurately recorded.

(iii) Quality of internal moderation

There was evidence of intensive, constant internal moderation at school level, while the cluster moderation is done once in October. The quality of the cluster moderation is reported as excellent.

4.2.1 Areas of good practice

The following aspects of the IEB's internal moderation processes may be commended:

- The assessment body fully complied with the NCS and with the IEB policy, and guideline documents. The assessment body has developed very comprehensive and detailed subject assessment guidelines on the implementation of CASS. The assessment tools used for Practical Assessment Tasks have been published on the IEB website.
- The implementation of common assessment tasks works well. The quality and standard of assigned tasks was uniform throughout the schools.

4.2.2 Areas for improvement

The following is an area where improvement is possible:

- Internal moderation conducted at cluster level was conducted at a late stage. It is

recommended that the assessment body needs to plan more than one cluster moderation in order to strengthen its moderation systems.

4.3 OAER

This section of the report presents the findings observed for the Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad, one of the two independent assessment bodies participating in the NCS.

The findings are presented according to criteria used in the evaluation of the CASS portfolios, as indicated below.

(i) Compliance with policy and guidelines

The OAER developed no internal policies and guidelines from the national policies. It made use of the 2007 Subject Assessment Guideline instead of the 2008 reviewed version. There was consequently notable deviation from the targeted content coverage.

(ii) Quality and standard of assessment tasks

In terms of the **validity of set task/items, it should be noted that the use of the 2007 subject assessment guideline constitutes an irregularity**. Consequently, the tasks assigned to learners were generally set and the weighted according to the 2007 SAG.

In Mathematical Literacy, Hospitality, and Afrikaans home language, for example, some of the content covered was not necessarily relevant to grade 12, a result of the use of an outdated SAG document. It was found that the validity of tasks was therefore highly questionable.

Cognitive demand of tasks: The majority of the tasks assessed low and middle order cognitive skills.

Content coverage, and difficulty level: The tasks assigned were of acceptable standard.

Marking reliability, mark allocation and consistency in marking: In general, the marking was reliable and mark allocation accurate.

(iii) Quality of internal moderation

The system lacked intensive moderation. It was difficult to establish whether moderation was conducted at cluster and regional level.

4.3.1. Areas for improvement

The following areas are noted for improvement:

- Lack of compliance with the National policy and guidelines. The OAER has implemented the 2007 Subject Assessment Guideline and not the reviewed version of 2008, which has compromised the standard and quality of the CASS. The OAER must consult the Department of Education, or visit the education website in order to access the relevant documentation.

- Assessment of the oral component in languages needs to be carried-out. It was found that this component was only partially assessed, and no moderation was conducted. The assessment tools to assess orals were not submitted for external moderation. It is recommended that the assessment plan need to indicate how orals will be implemented and give a clear guideline on how moderation of this component will be carried-out.

5. CONCLUSION

It is clear from the findings that this component of the final examination assessment is still faced with enormous challenges. Some of these challenges can be eliminated through strengthening of systems that are already in place. Umalusi strongly recommends that teacher-training be implemented to deal with formative assessment, the design of assessment tools and item development.

It is also apparent from the findings that internal moderation and monitoring require urgent improvement. Assessment bodies are encouraged to enforce the implementation of the strategic and management plans designed for moderation and monitoring at all the levels, as a measure of restoring accountability and credibility.

The assessment of Practical Assessment Tasks (PAT) and the oral component in languages remains two critical components in assessment that all assessment bodies need to implement in the future.

Chapter 4

Audit and moderation of the Life Orientation internal assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

Life Orientation (LO) is a new subject in the National Senior Certificate (NSC). Unlike other NSC subjects that comprise both internal assessment and an external examination component, LO is 100% internally assessed. The implementation of this subject poses a number of challenges in terms of the teaching and assessment thereof thus, the subject was to a larger extent neglected and marginalized in some assessment bodies.

For 2008 Umalusi adopted a two-pronged approach to the quality assurance of LO: audit of the implementation systems, and moderation of a sample of learner and educator portfolios. The purpose of the audit was to determine the health of the system across the eleven (11) assessment bodies.

External moderation of portfolios was aimed at:

- Establishing the fairness, validity and reliability of assessment tasks;
- Establishing whether effective internal moderation of tasks had been conducted at school, cluster, district, provincial and national level;
- Identifying areas of good practice, areas of concern and strengths, and
- Providing recommendations for improvement.

2. SCOPE

The audit of the LO systems, and external moderation of portfolios, were conducted in all nine Provincial Departments of Education and with the two independent assessment bodies (IEB and OAER). The audit was conducted in August and September 2008, and the external moderation was conducted from October to December 2008.

3. SAMPLING OF PORTFOLIOS

Portfolios were randomly sampled from the eleven assessment bodies based on the categories outlined below, namely:

- Rural, deep rural, peri-urban and urban schools,
- Poorly resourced, semi-resourced or well-resourced schools, and
- Poorly performing, moderately performing and well performing schools.

Furthermore, Umalusi requested assessment bodies to ensure that learner portfolios selected should fall within the following levels:

- 80-100%;
- 70-79%;
- 40-69% and
- 0-39%.

3.1 Provincial Departments of Education

Umalusi selected four districts from each province from which a selection of portfolios was to be made. A sample of portfolios was selected as follows for per province:

- four districts per province;
- four schools per district in each province; and
- twenty learner portfolios accompanied by the educator portfolio per school.

The total number of portfolios requested per province was 320. In total, 2880 portfolios were requested for nine provinces.

3.2 Independent assessment bodies

The two independent assessment bodies (IEB and OAER) were requested to present their portfolios according to these criteria:

- 10 schools per independent assessment body; and
- 10 learner portfolios accompanied by the educator portfolio for each of the 10 schools.

In total, 200 learner portfolios were requested from each of the two independent assessment bodies.

4. APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1 Audit of the implementation systems

Interviews were held with the LO Continuous Assessment (CASS) coordinators in each of the eleven assessment bodies. Interviews were conducted in line with an interview schedule that focussed on the following:

- availability of LO policy and assessment guidelines;
- level and quality of internal moderation;
- training conducted at all levels of implementation; and
- monitoring and evaluation of implementation processes.

4.2 External moderation of the learner and educator portfolios

Learner and educator portfolios were brought to a central place at each of the assessment bodies. External moderation was conducted after the national internal moderation was undertaken by the Department of Education (DoE) at the nine Provincial Departments of Education, and after each of the two independent assessment bodies had completed internal moderation.

External moderation was conducted in line with the criteria set by Umalusi. These criteria are used to structure the findings below.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Findings of the audit

(I) Availability of policy and assessment guidelines

The **Provincial Departments of Education** were found to be using the January 2008 Subject Assessment Guideline. All policy guidelines had been disseminated to schools, and evidence of receipt by the school was provided. Policy documents were handed out during cluster meetings, road shows, school visitations and during workshops.

Some provinces have well-developed CASS implementation plans, whilst others are using generic CASS implementation guidelines that are not specific to LO.

Not all provinces have policies that speak specifically to issues regarding non-submission of portfolios and absenteeism. Provinces rely instead on national policies which are generic for subjects, all with an external examination component.

In terms of the **independent assessment bodies**, the Independent Examination Board (IEB) has developed its own assessment guidelines based on the national guidelines provided by the Department of Education. These documents have been posted on the IEB website for easy access by schools and have been distributed to all IEB schools during their annual National Interest Group Conferences.

Learning Programme Guideline (LPGs) have not been provided for the IEB schools.

The Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad (OAER) was found to be using the 2007 policy documents, Umalusi external moderators provided the OAER with the latest SAG document during the audit.

Policies were communicated to OAER schools by means of training and circulars and during the annual meeting.

(ii) Levels and quality of internal moderation

In the **provincial departments of education**, moderation varies from a mere audit of the contents of

the portfolios to complete remarking.

Generally internal moderation was conducted at school, cluster and district levels and is coordinated by the school HODs, cluster leaders and subject advisors.

Internal moderation is conducted differently in all provinces. In Mpumalanga, for example, school principals only check and sign portfolios as they are not conversant with the LO content. In the Free State, on the other hand, internal moderation is done once per term by the school Heads of Department (HODs).

In the Western Cape, assessment teams were roped in to conduct school visits to monitor the moderation, while in KwaZulu Natal verification of tasks was conducted at school, cluster, district and provincial levels by means of shadow marking.

Sampling of portfolios is done according to the provincial moderation plans in all provinces.

For the **independent assessment bodies**, evidence of moderation plans for the IEB schools was made available. Moderation is conducted at school, cluster, and regional level. A minimum of two moderation meetings are held at cluster level. The IEB Common Assessment task was moderated at regional level.

In the IEB, a Portfolio Moderation Committee was appointed to deal with moderation issues.

The OAER has detailed moderation plans; moderation is conducted at least once per term. At school level the moderation is simply an audit, and the final moderation is conducted by the subject advisor. Findings of the moderation are communicated to all schools at the annual conference of the OAER.

(iii) Training and mediation of policy at school, cluster, district and regional level

Provincial departments of education: Generally road shows, workshops or cluster meetings are conducted in all provinces, which focus on the improvement of assessment tasks and on preparing teachers for the implementation of LO.

Training was held for curriculum advisors, lead teachers, teachers, and school management teams in all provinces. In the Western Cape, training is provided by service providers, non governmental organisations, hospitals and universities. This training is conducted at school, cluster and district level.

In Limpopo all grade 12 teachers were trained in the implementation of the Physical Education Task (PET).

Human resource constraints pose a challenge for the smooth running of the moderation process e.g. in KwaZulu Natal.

Independent assessment bodies: Private assessment bodies provide training during their annual user group conferences and review meetings. Evaluation of the training is conducted by the subject coordinators.

(iv) Monitoring and evaluation of implementation processes

Provincial departments of education: Monitoring and evaluation is carried out at least once per term in provinces where schools are remote e.g. Northern Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal. The on-site visits to schools in the Eastern Cape are the responsibility of the subject advisors. Teachers' management of CASS is monitored at school level by HODs, and at cluster level by subject advisors.

The frequency of monitoring varies from province to province based on the remoteness of schools and the availability of qualified head of departments and subject advisors.

Reports are generated after monitoring and are communicated to schools, and follow-up meetings are held with principals to ensure the implementation of recommendations.

Independent assessment bodies: Monitoring takes place continuously; IEB schools also conduct self-evaluation and provide reports to the subject advisors.

School managers are tasked to ensuring compliance to policy through constant monitoring.

5.2 Findings of the External moderation of learner and educator portfolios

(i) Compliance with policy and guidelines

Provincial departments of education: Generally there was compliance with the national standards in terms of the prescribed number of assessment tasks.

The implementation of PET for Learning Outcome (LO) 3 was found to be implemented differently in all assessment bodies. For example, in Limpopo, no evidence was found to indicate that PET was taught or assessed. A reasonable attempt was made to assess PET in the Eastern Cape. In the Free State, the implementation of PET was conducted and evidence of the three movement sections was presented.

In Gauteng PET was assessed theoretically with little evidence of actual practical implementation.

Findings also revealed that formal programmes of assessment, outlining detailed assessment plans, were not included in most teacher portfolios in Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and Free State.

Independent assessment bodies: The IEB developed its own assessment programme guidelines in line with the national policy documents. The OAER was found to be using the 2007 Subject Assessment Guideline (SAG).

(ii) Quality of assessment tasks

Provincial departments of education: The challenge facing some assessment bodies is that not all LOs and Assessment Standards (AS) were covered, for example in one province learners were asked to design a T-Shirt with a slogan for 75 marks with no specific relation to the LO and AS.

The assessment of LO 3, which is specific to physical education and the exploration of how learners

engage in recreation and physical activities to promote well being , posed a challenge as there was no evidence of Practical Assessment Task (PAT) in both learner and educator portfolios in most assessment bodies.

The development of marking rubrics still poses great challenges for many teachers as most assessment tools were not task specific, relevant and appropriate to the task instructions.

Independent assessment bodies: The quality of assessment tasks varies from good to poor. In the OAER, the standard of the assessment tasks was low with instances of 70% of the questions based on questions that required recall.

The tasks were poorly constructed and the same content was assessed over and over in tests and exams. As a result of poorly developed and inappropriate rubrics, it was difficult to assess OAER's tasks qualitatively.

IEB schools wrote common assessment tasks, although the task was good it, not all LOs and ASs were assessed.

PET was theoretically assessed in both independent assessment bodies. There was also no evidence of how PAT was assessed in the educator portfolio files.

(iii) Cognitive demand of the assessment tasks

Provincial departments of education: Out of the five prescribed tasks, the SAG provides weighting of the cognitive demand for the two exam components only. As a result of this, the cognitive demand of the other three tasks was found to be very low, as teachers did not have guidance on the cognitive weighting of these tasks.

The prescribed weighting of the cognitive demand for each of the two exam components is as follows:

Lower order	30%
Middle order	40%
Higher order	30%

Findings indicate that most of the exam questions in five provinces were of lower order, were substandard for Grade 12, and one-dimensional. For example, in one province, learners were requested to write a job application letter or to fill in a CV template and job application forms.

In some provinces the mark allocation for lower order questions exceeded the stipulated amount.

Independent assessment bodies: For the OAER, the LO tasks were poorly developed, and the cognitive demand was limited.

In the IEB, where tests or exams were written, the question papers did not have the required spread of cognitive weighting.

(I) Quality of internal moderation

Provincial departments of education: Generally some form of Internal moderation was conducted in most provinces, at school, cluster, and district level.

In the Northern Cape, Gauteng and Limpopo, verification and actual marking during moderation was conducted.

In some schools, detailed moderation reports were presented e.g. in Limpopo and KwaZulu Natal.

Independent assessment bodies: No evidence of internal moderation was identified in the IEB, only the verification of a number of assessment tasks was conducted.

(ii) Recording and reporting

Provincial departments of education: Generally, records of learner performance were included in learner portfolios. 70% of provinces had discrepancies in mark allocation, calculation, and in the capturing and transfer of marks. Some of these changes were not corrected during moderation.

The validity of PET marks is not easy to ascertain in most instances, as most schools had no separate PET mark sheet. The PET mark was added to the marks of the other four tasks.

Independent assessment bodies: Only one school out of the 10 schools selected in the IEB had a composite mark sheet, thus it was difficult to cross-check the capturing and recording of marks.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 Audit

The following have been identified as areas of good practice in one or more of the 11 assessment bodies:

- meetings, curriculum days and workshops were conducted for LO teachers as a way of providing support to schools;
- reports and feedback on training, moderation, monitoring have been provided in most provinces;
- teacher training is provided in partnership with NGOs, companies, hospitals and universities and master teachers are tasked to cascade training at school level e.g. Western Cape;
- in Limpopo, training has been provided to all LO educators on the PET (LO3) and on the moderation of portfolios;
- the incorporation of a variety of tasks, such as community work or participation in sports, have been encouraged in some assessment bodies such as the Northern Cape and the OAER to enhance the learning potential of learners;
- most schools have been provided with the revised (January 2008) subject assessment guidelines and learning programme guidelines;
- the IEB and Northern Cape have been able to develop common assessment tasks,
- development of a question paper bank was noted in KwaZulu Natal; and
- development of subject specific policy guidelines for LO by some assessment bodies is commendable.

6.2 External moderation of learner and educator portfolios

The following have been identified as areas of good practice in one or more of the 11 assessment bodies:

- There is compliance with national requirements in terms of the number of assessment tasks required;
- internal moderation is conducted at all levels in most assessment bodies (school, cluster, and district levels);
- in Gauteng, assessment tasks exposed learners to a variety of forms of assessment, covering current affairs, age-appropriate and learner-friendly issues such as xenophobia and youth risk behaviors;
- common mid-year examinations were conducted in KwaZulu Natal, Northern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga as a way of standard setting. The standard of these examinations were good compared to individual tasks set for the other three components;
- some schools stood out with exceptional examples of assessment tasks. Examples noted are North West: Kgoke Lesiba, Swartruggens, Ventersdorp and Batleng, Limpopo: Seiphi Secondary school, Western Cape: Silver Steam and the IEB: Maris Stella College did exceptional work;
- generally good presentation of well-organized portfolios was evident in most assessment bodies;
- thorough moderation at provincial level is evident; and
- honest and constructive feedback is provided where moderation is conducted in the OAER.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The following have been identified as areas requiring improvement in one or more of the 11 assessment bodies:

7.1 Audit

The lack of teacher and Head of Departments expertise is a serious concern for most assessment bodies as LO is regarded as a filler subject for teachers with fewer periods. This impacts on the lack of continuity in the subject. It is therefore recommended that LO teachers be properly trained since LO is a subject that requires skilled teachers due to its multidisciplinary nature.

The dissemination of information and policy documents to remote schools remains a challenge as was noted in the Northern Cape, it is recommended that such schools be given priority by the relevant provincial departments;

The poor quality and lack of validity of some assessment tasks was noted in most assessment bodies. Teachers require training in the planning and design of suitable assessment activities.

Constant monitoring and moderation by school heads of departments and subject advisors is strongly recommended.

A lack of compliance with subject assessment guidelines and policy documents by private assessment bodies is a concern. Private assessment bodies must develop assessment policies in line with the national policies;

Lack of LO specific policies on non-submission of portfolios and absenteeism has been noted in almost all assessment bodies. LO-specific policies on irregularities need to be developed.

Poor implementation of LO 3 has been noted as a result of the lack of training and poor provision of resources for teachers. Sufficient time allocation, as stated in policy documents, and the correct resources are both crucial for the successful implementation of LO 3.

7.2 External moderation of LO

Provincial departments of education

The quality of assessment tasks needs to be improved and be grade specific. This could be achieved by setting common assessment tasks at cluster, district and even assessment body level and by clustering good performing schools with poor performing ones;

PET instructions, marking rubrics and allocation of marks should be corrected and improved.

Assessment should cover all three movement sections and marks should be allocated for participation (15) + performance (10) = 25. Care should be taken not to theorize PET. The approach to PET as outlined in the SAG need to be revised as most schools are finding it a challenge to assess LO3.

The quality of internal moderation, though conducted, needs to be improved. This can be done through the intensification of the quality of moderation and continuous monitoring;

Formal programmes of assessment are included in very few educator portfolios. Facilitators and subject heads need to continuously monitor and support educators in the development of assessment programmes.

It is recommended that **educator portfolios be moderated rigorously at school and cluster level to avoid inconsistencies.** Learners' portfolios seemed to be more organized than educator portfolios. In some schools, however, the contents of portfolios did not correspond to the index.

Marks allocated should accord with the amount of work entailed in tasks. Educator training on the development of rubrics is critical to avoid compromising the quality of marking which could lead to learners being disadvantaged.

No explanation has been provided regarding how certain issues will be dealt with. Zero marks, allocation of marks for absent learners and those who did not submit certain tasks. There is an urgent need to develop and mediate policy that will address these issues to ensure consistency across assessment bodies.

Independent assessment bodies

There seem to be no clear demarcation between LO and Religion Studies in the OAER. The OAER needs to find a balance between Life Orientation (as a subject) and how the subject is approached. It would be more beneficial to separate the Religion Studies component from Life Orientation in order to give both subjects the required attention.

Generally, the portfolios at OAER had been completed, although not according to the 2008 SAG or LPG requirements. The OAER's current assessment programme consequently needs serious attention as it does not comply with the January 2008 SAG in terms of the structuring of assessment, the number of tasks, mark allocation and the structure of exam question papers. The need to align Life Orientation with the LOs, ASs, Developmental Outcomes (DOs) and Critical Outcomes (COs) as outlined in the policy documents must be emphasized.

Teacher training is crucial if the OAER wishes to provide qualitative teaching in Life Orientation.

Finally, PET has to be practical and done within the LO period/contact time in both the IEB and OAER.

8. CONCLUSION

The findings emanating from both the audit and external moderation of Life Orientation across all 11 assessment bodies provide a very clear indication that the teaching and assessment of Life Orientation require urgent attention. It became evident that the following systemic and policy issues are prevalent:

- the use of unqualified and inexperienced educators
- policy gaps in the SAG and LPG which require immediate attention
- a lack of clear guidance for the assessment of LO ; and
- a lack of clear guidance on the teaching and assessment of PET.

The non-examinable status of LO is a serious concern and all assessment bodies indicated that this has created a lot of instability in the teaching and assessment of this subject. It would be in the interest of the entire education system to have common tasks set at provincial level as a way of setting standards.

Chapter 5

Monitoring of the conduct of the examination

1. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring of the conduct of the National Senior Certificate Examinations is essential because it gives Umalusi a national picture of how well the examinations were conducted in a particular year. The monitoring of the conduct of examination was carried out in three phases of the examination, namely state of readiness to administer examinations, the writing of the examinations and the marking of scripts.

Monitoring of the state of readiness began with the completion of self-evaluation instruments by all the assessment bodies. This was followed by the deployment of convener monitors to assessment body head offices to verify the information provided by the assessment bodies.

The next two phases, writing and marking, were monitored by Umalusi monitors and Umalusi full-time staff. This year examinations started almost a month later than in the previous years. The two private assessment bodies, the Independent Examination Board (IEB) and Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad's(OAER)examinations commenced before those of the Department of Education.

Another striking phenomenon is the fact that marking commenced before the completion of the examination in Mpumalanga, Eastern Cape and Free State. A delay in starting the marking in these provinces arose because the standardized memoranda had not yet arrived from Pretoria.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

This chapter presents findings on the monitoring of the three phases: state of readiness, the writing of examinations and the marking of scripts. The monitoring of the conduct of examination was conducted in the eleven assessment bodies, namely the nine provincial education departments, the Independent Examination Board (IEB) and the Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad (OAER).

The monitoring of the state of readiness was conducted in October 2008. This was preceded by the self-evaluation reports which were completed by assessment bodies, which provided a detailed indication of their state of readiness to conduct the 2008 examination. Convener monitors were then deployed to the examination head offices of the assessment bodies to verify the information given in the assessment body reports, to ensure that all the necessary systems were in place and that they were indeed ready to administer the examination.

The scope of the monitoring is reflected in the table below:

Table 3: Extent of the monitoring of writing

Assessment body	Number of examination centres	Number of candidates enrolled	Number of examination centers visited by Umalusi monitors	Number of Umalusi monitors per assessment body	Number of centres visited by Umalusi staff
Eastern Cape	908	64 500	24	3	3
Free State	320	31 778	16	3	1
Gauteng	722	106 109	21	2	-
KwaZulu-Natal	1 762	152 472	27	4	-
Limpopo	1 402	90 609	38	4	4
Mpumalanga	528	56 647	30	3	2
Northern Cape	133	10 336		2	2
North West	404	34 217	21	3	1
Western Cape	409	45 467	24	3	3
TOTAL	6 588	592 135	201	27	16
IEB	159	8 119	5	1	2
OAER	60	585	2	1	-

There has been an increase in the number of examination centres visited by Umalusi monitors in 2008. This increase is attributed to the increase in the number of Umalusi monitors appointed in certain assessment bodies i.e. one extra monitor in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Free State, North West and Western Cape. Another factor contributing to the increase in the number of centres visited by Umalusi monitors is the increase in the number of afternoon sessions in the 2008 NSC examination time-table. This allowed for monitors to visit different centres in the afternoon sessions. The highest increase in this regard was recorded in Western Cape, where the number of centres visited increased from 9 in 2007 to 24 in 2008.

The next two phases are commonly and jointly referred to as the conduct of the examination. For the sake of this report, they will be treated as two separate phases: writing and marking. Monitors were deployed to a sample of examination centers to ensure that the examination was conducted according to the Regulations on the conduct of the National Senior Certificate Examinations as well as Umalusi policies, directives, guidelines and requirements. Lastly, monitors were also deployed to various marking centres to ensure that marking was taking place in conducive environments that would help to ensure that marking was fair, reliable and accurate.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 State of readiness

The self-evaluation instruments completed by assessment bodies looked at the level of compliance with each of the criteria listed below.

Assessment bodies reported compliance in many respects with all the criteria listed below. Where limited compliance was recorded, it was due to the fact that monitoring of the state of readiness took place before the dates for which these projects had been planned. For instance, when the monitoring of the state of readiness was conducted, aspects such as capturing of internal assessment, appointment and training of markers, appointment and training of centre managers, and editing and printing of question papers had not taken place as per assessment bodies' management plans. For these aspects assessment bodies indicated the dates on which the above had been planned for or were going to be executed.

Findings in respect of the set criteria are:

(i) Internal assessment

All the assessment bodies had not yet captured internal assessment marks at the time of monitoring of the state of readiness. All assessment bodies indicated that capturing would take place during the fourth term.

(ii) Appointment and training of markers

All the assessment bodies had appointed markers except KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Cape. Training of markers in all assessment bodies would take place when markers reported at the marking centers for marking.

(iii) Appointment and training of centre managers

At the time of the self-evaluation report, only Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, the IEB and OAER had appointed centre managers. Among these, only the OAER had trained its centre manager.

(iv) Editing and printing of question papers set internally

All assessment bodies had edited their question papers. Free State, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape had all their Language Paper 2 question papers signed off as print-ready.

Only Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and North West had received all national question papers. Only North West had had all question papers printed at the time of the report.

3.2 Monitoring of the writing of examinations

3.2.1 General management of the examination

Generally the management of the examinations was carried out well at all the centres visited by Umalusi monitors. Examination time-tables, invigilation time-tables and seating plans were available.

The issue of the storage and delivery of question papers is by no means uniform, but none of the practices appeared unreliable. For some assessment bodies, question papers were either collected

by chief invigilators on the day of writing, or delivered by departmental officials to the examination centres. In yet others, the chief invigilators collected question papers from district/ circuit offices or nodal points, while in the Eastern Cape and Free State, certain schools were used for the storage of question papers. Other assessment bodies made use of district offices, circuit offices, nodal points or Area Project Offices (APOs). Throughout, district officials were the only ones with access to these question papers. The rationale behind this was to minimize distances travelled by chief invigilators to collect question papers.

A good practice, observed in Eastern Cape, was **the use of red stickers as a warning to check if it was the correct paper before opening the clear plastic bag**. This was done to prevent invigilators from mistaking afternoon papers for a morning session.

The absence of records or control registers for examination stationery such as surplus answer books was a concern in Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, while in Mpumalanga only the circuit offices kept records. Records were however meticulously kept at some of the centres in Western Cape and Free State.

In the case of learners with special needs, **schools need to apply to Provincial Examination Section in case special arrangements would be required**. At one centre in Mpumalanga, an application had been made for an extended time for a candidate with special needs to which no response had been received from the department at the time of writing. Nevertheless, it was impressive to observe how candidates with special needs were given proper attention at the centres visited in Western Cape. At one centre, four rooms set aside for candidates with scribes; those allowed extra time were seated in a special row and one candidate was using a computer because he could not write by hand.

In the majority of cases, **principals are appointed as chief invigilators** except in the Western Cape, Gauteng and IEB. In the Western Cape, chief invigilators are appointed from the community on the recommendation of the principal, while Gauteng and IEB used experienced members of staff as chief invigilators.

3.2.2 The examination room

Examination rooms were generally conducive for the writing of examinations. There was enough ventilation and light, and the temperature inside the rooms was acceptable. The rooms were also clean and noise level was managed. Concerns regarding suitability of the writing venues were, however, raised at some of the examination centres in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Western Cape and North West: writing examinations in dilapidated buildings was a major concern in Gauteng and Eastern Cape.

Examination centres endowed with halls were able to manage their exams very well. The environment in the halls is often very tranquil as the halls are generally situated far from the mainstream. This year, it was striking to observe that **a number of schools that do not have halls, requested the use of community- or church halls** for the writing of the examination. This practice was observed in the IEB at a centre in Braamfontein, and in the Western Cape, at a centre in Ashton. The use of a church hall was also reported in Northern Cape.

An examination centre in a disadvantaged area in Gauteng was reported to have a state-of-the-

art school hall, and was also commended for the manner in which it ran the examination.

Seating of candidates was generally well organized. Candidates were seated in numerical order in desks without side flaps or having to share. Incidents of non-compliance with the seating requirements were reported towards the end of the examination at a few centres in Kgalagadi District in Northern Cape. There were cases in Limpopo in which centres only had a generic seating plan: in other words, the same seating plan was used whether all candidates or fewer candidates were writing. In the latter case, a separate seating plan for that sitting should have been provided.

3.2.3 Proceedings before the commencement of the examination

Generally educators, and particularly Grade 12 educators, were used for invigilation, except in the Western Cape and the IEB. Western Cape made use of community members while the IEB also made use of non-teaching staff as invigilators.

The practice of reading regulations on the conduct of exams is gaining momentum, and so is the reading of instructions to candidates. Invigilators are increasingly ensuring that candidates check that they are writing the correct paper, and that the number of pages in the question paper is correct. Evidence of limited or non-compliance with this aspect of the examination was reported at a few centres in Mpumalanga, Free State and North West. However, the management of reading the regulations on the conduct of examinations differed from one assessment body to another, and from one examination centre to another. At a number of centres, invigilators read them to candidates before the commencement of examinations, but only on the last day! A few invigilators read them before the commencement of each examination session while others seem to do so intermittently.

Reading time given to candidates varied from 10 to 15 minutes. The Regulations for the conduct, administration and management for the NSC stipulates 10 minutes for this exercise. There were reports that an extra 10 minutes reading time had been allowed by the National Department of Education for Agricultural Technology, presumably because of the length of the paper.

Invigilator expertise in determining whether calculators were programmable or non-programmable was not a major concern this year. Some examination centres in Gauteng undertook to provide candidates with calculators to reduce the risk of the abuse of calculators. Uncertainty with regard to clearing the memory in the programmable calculators was nevertheless expressed at few centers in the Eastern Cape and Gauteng.

Policy in respect of cellular phones differed from one examination centre to another. In the majority of cases cellular phones were not allowed into the examination room. In some cases, candidates were required to switch them off and surrender them to invigilators for safekeeping.

3.2.4 Proceedings during the writing of the examination

Invigilators were generally aware of their duties, were punctual, mobile and attentive. They were also aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of an irregularity. It was however reported that, at one centre in the Free State, invigilators were not sure about the procedure to be followed should an irregularity be detected.

Policy regarding the procedure to be followed when candidates completed the writing before time differed from one assessment body to another and one examination centre to another.

Candidates were not allowed to leave the examination room before the end of the examination session in the majority of the IEB centres. Scripts were thus collected by the invigilator while the candidates were still seated. At centres for other assessment bodies, candidates were allowed to leave the room an hour after start of the session until 30 minutes before the end of the session. A few instances were observed in Limpopo and Mpumalanga where candidates were released during the last 15 minutes. This was rectified with the chief invigilators concerned.

The use of bar-coded stickers with the candidates' examination numbers and centre number on the answer scripts has been adopted by all provincial education departments.

3.2.5 Packaging and transmission of scripts

Packaging was done by the chief invigilator after he/she had counted and arranged the scripts with the invigilators. Packaging was done according to the mark sheets. In some assessment bodies, scripts were also packaged with the copies of seating plans as evidence that candidates had written the examination.

Transmission differed from one assessment body to another. In some assessment bodies, the chief invigilators delivered scripts to the nodal points or circuit offices; in others, district officials collected scripts. The Northern Cape, the IEB and the OAER used courier services to transmit scripts.

3.2.6 Irregularities

Quite a number of technical and serious irregularities were reported to Umalusi. Most of the irregularities were investigated and addressed timeously. This section of the report highlights just a few of the common irregularities. As in the past years, the irregularities that occurred were largely technical in nature. There were however irregularities that were considered in a serious light. Such irregularities are outlined below:

- Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Gauteng had a number of registration-related irregularities which were picked up during the writing of the examination as well as during marking.
- At certain centres in Mpumalanga, some candidates did not appear on the mark sheets, while some were without admission letters. Yet others had two admission numbers.
- Another registration-related irregularity was the shortage of question papers. This was experienced in Accounting, Mathematical Literacy, Life Sciences and History in Mpumalanga.
- In Gauteng, an incidence of unregistered candidates was reported at one of the examination centres.
- In KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, irregularities resulting from bad weather such as flooding were reported. A candidate was washed away and drowned by a river in flood in the Western Cape.
- Several cases relating to power failure and technical problems, especially during the writing of Computer Applications Technology, were reported in almost all the assessment bodies.
- There were also cases of incorrect packaging of question papers reported in Mpumalanga where different subjects had been packaged together.

Many of these are issues which come up regularly in the final reports, and, where matters are under the control of the assessment body or the national department, every effort should be made to minimize these technical irregularities even further.

3.3 Areas of good practice

The following are instances of good practice that need to be commended and reinforced:

- The adoption of the bar-coded stickers bearing the candidates' examination numbers and centre numbers by all the provincial education departments definitely facilitated and expedited the capturing process.
- The red stickers used by Eastern Cape on the plastic bags containing question papers as a warning to check if it is the correct paper before opening is an excellent idea. This will minimize the incidents of opening question papers incorrectly.
- The deployment of external invigilators to the private schools in the Eastern Cape to assist in the running of the examination can go a long way in ensuring that examinations are run according to policy and regulations in private schools.
- Some schools in Free State were found to have detailed contingency plans in the event of a crisis during the examination, even to the extent of making candles available in case of power outage.
- To keep track of candidates leaving the examination room for the toilet during the writing of examination, Gauteng designed a special form on which invigilators had to record the time each candidate went out of the room and the time the candidate came back.
- Gauteng is applauded for the extent to which monitoring was conducted. All the centres visited had been monitored and most of the visits were follow-up visits.
- Some examination centres in Gauteng undertook to provide calculators for their candidates to help reduce the risk of the abuse of programmable calculators.
- Compassion shown by some principals towards their candidates in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and North West is commendable. In the Western Cape, principals went out of their way to ensure that candidates wrote the examination especially after the floods which left the roads impassible and rivers overflowing. A principal at one of the schools in KwaZulu-Natal is reported to have driven his vehicle to fetch a candidate who could not come to write due to intimidation by local boys. In North West, the principal at one centre kept a list of contact numbers for all the parents and guardians whose children were writing the examination.
- Seating plans were very neatly drawn up at some of the centres in Mpumalanga.
- The manner in which candidates with special needs are dealt with at some of the examination centres in the Western Cape and at IEB centres is commendable.
- The use of community halls and church halls for the writing of examination ensured that the

environment was tranquil and relaxed, as these venues were situated away from the mainstream school.

- At one centre in the Eastern Cape, certificates of award and trophies were displayed in the room in which candidates were writing. The rationale behind this practice was to encourage the candidates to do well in the examination like their predecessors.
- The deployment of special invigilators by the district office to the examination centres when computer related subjects were written in KwaZulu-Natal helped alleviate difficulties associated with the conduct of examinations in these subjects.

It is heartening to see that many examination centres are doing admirable work that makes the writing of examinations more efficient and less nerve-wracking. Instances of good practice should be shared nationally to improve the system overall.

3.4 Areas for improvement

The following are areas that are noted for improvement in 2009:

- At some centres in the Eastern and Western Cape, principals were not ready to start the examination session when the monitors arrived. At one centre in the Eastern Cape, candidates were allowed to come in till about 15 minutes into writing time. Such practices should not be condoned.
- In the Western Cape, problems relating to the conduct of exams were rife in township schools. The noise level from other classrooms was very high, while at some centres there were no invigilation time-tables and no invigilator-attendance register. Training of principals, chief invigilators and invigilators needs to be followed up in the township schools with rigorous monitoring by the assessment body to ensure that the procedures are followed up meticulously and seriously.
- The reading of instructions on the question paper, and ensuring that candidates check the number of pages was not done at some of the centers in different assessment bodies. Nor were candidates instructed to verify that they were writing the correct paper. This matter of situation was a great concern in Mpumalanga. Training of invigilators should thus give special attention on how to start an examination.
- Some question papers like Accounting have answer books packed with question papers in sealed plastic bags. Chief invigilators must not distribute normal answer books in such instances, since it creates a disruption when the answer books have to be collected once more. This process would be helped if the sachet containing a question paper with special answer books is clearly marked with this information.
- Satchels containing question papers should be thoroughly checked before dispatching them to schools to avoid shortage of question papers and/or the inclusion of the wrong papers.
- Registration of candidates at the beginning of the year was problematic. This resulted in a number of candidates being omitted from the mark sheets, while others had no admission

letters or had double numbers and/or were incorrectly registered for certain subjects, largely in the languages, as well as Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy. Principals and assessment bodies should ensure that entries in the preliminary schedules are correct.

- There was very little evidence of monitoring by the departmental officials in the Western Cape. At one centre it was reported that one monitor that came stayed for only five minutes. While the schools had been visited by the IEB officials, there was no evidence to prove their visits as a log book for visitors is not kept at the IEB schools.
- The use of external invigilators by Western Cape and the IEB without proper identification is still a concern notwithstanding the usual argument that people appointed as invigilators are from the community and known to the candidates.

4. MONITORING OF THE MARKING OF SCRIPTS

Umalusi visited all the marking centres except in KwaZulu-Natal which had an exceptionally high number of marking centres, a total of 39.

The table below illustrates the extent of the monitoring of marking for all the assessment bodies.

Table 4: Extent of the monitoring of marking

Assessment body	Number of marking centres	Number of marking centres visited by Umalusi monitors	Number of centres visited by Umalusi staff
Eastern Cape	11	11	2
Free State	15	14	2
Gauteng	04	04	-
KwaZulu-Natal	39	17	3
Limpopo	18	18	2
Mpumalanga	16	16	1
Northern Cape	02	02	-
North West	16	10	1
Western Cape	01	01	1
TOTAL	122	84	12
IEB	01	01	-
OAER	02	01	-

Findings in this section will concentrate on the critical aspects of the marking process, namely general conditions of the venue, security, appointment of markers, training of markers, marking procedure, internal moderation and handling of irregularities.

4.1 Findings

(i) General conditions of the marking centre

The conditions of the marking centres were generally good. They had communication facilities such as fax, telephone and photocopiers. Ablution facilities were sufficient and clean. Food was also of an acceptable standard and catered for different dietary requirements.

(ii) Security issues

Security was very tight and guards were posted at strategic points. People entering and leaving the premises were searched and identification was required for all officials. There were measures in place to control the flow of scripts from the control room to the marking rooms and back. This was meticulously outlined at one of the marking centres in the Eastern Cape. Transportation of scripts to and from the marking centre was always in closed vehicles accompanied by security guards.

(iii) Appointment of markers and examination assistants

Markers were generally appointed according to the prescribed criteria. In the majority of cases, the recommendation of chief marker was solicited before appointments were made. In other cases, for example, in the Free State, preference was given to educators who obtained a 60% pass rate in their respective subjects. However, it was reported that the appointment of examination assistants was not in compliance with the criteria in Mpumalanga. It was alleged that examination assistants that were interviewed revealed that they had been told by their parents who work for the department that they should apply. Some chief markers in Mpumalanga alleged that some markers who were appointed did not appear on their lists. If there is veracity in these allegations, the Mpumalanga Department of Education needs to look into the method used for the appointment of markers and examination assistants.

A complaint was raised in KwaZulu-Natal that notification to markers on their appointments was only done towards the end of November.

(iv) Training of markers

It was striking to note that the perception that the training of markers merely entails going through the memorandum with the markers is less and less current. Copies of scripts were made which were marked and moderated by chief markers. Memoranda discussions were held until there was a common understanding. This approach was cascaded by senior markers to the markers when markers reported at the marking centres.

At a number of marking centres, the training of markers was hampered by the late arrival of standardized memoranda from Pretoria. This affected the papers that were written towards the end of the examination.

(v) Marking procedure

The approach to marking differed from subject to subject. In Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal, in the language papers, whole-script marking was adopted, while a question-by-question approach was used in content subjects.

If a candidate answered more than one of the optional questions, only the first one would be marked. In the Western Cape, however, both answers were marked and the one with a better mark was used. The regulations in this regard stipulate that only the first questions fulfilling the requirement will be marked, so the Western Cape practice should be stopped in future.

(vi) Internal moderation of marking

Internal moderation took place at different levels, ranging from senior markers to internal moderators. According to the reports from some monitors, the services of analytical moderators were used in some assessment bodies i.e. the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The task of the analytical moderator was to scrutinize the performance of candidates in all the questions in the question papers.

(vii) Handling of irregularities

Markers were generally aware of what constitutes an irregularity. In some assessment bodies, irregularities committees were put in place at marking centres to specifically deal with all irregularities.

A number of technical irregularities emanating from incorrect entries during registration were recorded in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Gauteng. These included omission of candidates, candidates incorrectly registered for Home Language and First Additional Language as well as Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy.

4.2 Areas of good practice

The following were identified as instances of good practice which could be shared amongst assessment bodies for consideration and use in 2009:

- The choice of marking centres was well done. All the marking centres used complied in all respects with the criteria for the selection of marking centres.
- To further enhance the security of scripts, the Western Cape had a system of scanning each script leaving the marking room. This was an effort to ensure that no scripts go missing between marking, checking, capturing and Head Office where they were eventually stored.
- The deployment of analytical moderators at marking centres in some assessment bodies is a progressive step. If their findings are utilized appropriately, that can go a long way in assisting teachers in the classrooms as well as improving the quality of teaching.

4.3 Areas for improvement

The following are noted as areas for improvement in 2009:

- In Mpumalanga, it was reported that the appointment of examination assistants was not in compliance with the criteria. Proper procedures should be followed in the recruitment of examination assistants.
- Some chief markers in Mpumalanga indicated that some markers who were appointed did not appear on their lists. If there is veracity in these allegations the Mpumalanga Department of Education needs to look into the method used for the appointment of markers and examination assistants.
- There was a concern that the venue used for marking in Western Cape is becoming too small as the number of markers and support staff increases. If that is the case, the Western Cape Education Department should consider finding an additional venue for marking or opt for decentralizing the marking.
- Problems with registration of subject entries manifested themselves at the marking centres where there were stacks of manually generated mark sheets. This problem was reported in Mpumalanga, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. Schools should guide learners on subject choices before they embark on registration, and at the same time preliminary entries or schedules should be sent to schools in time to make provision for corrections.
- A problem that seemed to have been common to all the assessment bodies this year is the late arrival of standardized memoranda at the marking centre. This caused a delay in starting marking at some marking centres, which left the markers idle for some days. As alluded to before, the short period between writing and marking is the main reason behind this, as well as the fact that marking in certain assessment bodies started before the completion of the examination.
- In some cases, one internal moderator or chief marker was responsible for several papers in one subject e.g. English First Additional Language Papers 1 and 3. It becomes an inconvenience if the two papers are marked at different marking centres. Appointment of internal moderators in languages and subjects with more than one paper should be looked into or efforts should be made that all the papers in each subject are marked at one marking center. This is essential as internal moderators are required to be at marking centres for the full duration of marking. A case in point is the one witnessed in KwaZulu-Natal where the chief marker for English was required to be in no less than three centres.

5. CONCLUSION

From the reports received from assessment bodies and Umalusi monitors, no gross violation of the regulations for the conduct of examinations was reported. The monitoring of the state of readiness of assessment bodies to administer examinations gave an indication that assessment bodies were ready to administer examinations. However certain

registration- related problems manifested themselves during writing and marking. Some of the candidates' names did not appear on the mark sheets, while there were incorrect subject entries for others. More vigilance should in future be exercised during the registration of candidates.

The writing of examinations proceeded well. While there were too many afternoon sessions in the NSC examination time-table this year, there were no incidents reported of afternoon papers being opened for the morning sessions.

Chapter 6

Moderation of marking

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses the three moderation of marking processes, namely approval of memoranda-discussion decisions, centralized moderation of marking, and on-site moderation of marking. The chapter details the sections as follows:

- Section 6.2 addresses the findings for memoranda discussions held for all 29 National Senior Certificate (NSC) subjects;
- Section 6.3 outlines the findings gathered from the centralized moderation of marking conducted on sampled marked scripts across the nine provincial assessment bodies; and
- Section 6.4 discusses findings gathered from the on-site moderation of marking. It confirms the findings for memoranda discussions and centralized moderation of marking.

Each of the above mentioned sections reports strictly on three key sub-sections as follows:

- The findings: The findings for each section follow a specific set of criteria used for such a process;
- Areas of good practice; and
- Areas for improvement.

2. MEMORANDA DISCUSSION

2.1 Scope

Memoranda discussions were conducted for 29 nationally-approved NSC subjects, including papers 1, 2 and 3 where applicable. Discussions for languages were conducted for Home, First Additional and Second Additional Level. In total, 66 Umalusi external moderators were deployed to attend the memoranda discussions with the national panels for each subject, and representatives from the Department of Education. The national core discussion panels are composed of the internal moderators, the chief examiner, curriculum specialists, and representatives from all 9 provincial education departments.

2.2 Approach

For 2008, the DoE adopted the approach of ensuring that the discussions carried out between chief markers, internal moderators, curriculum specialists and Umalusi external moderators were in accordance with the NSC and subject assessment guidelines. Learning outcomes and assessment standards were used as a point of departure for the discussions in order to obtain reasonable assurance that marking would be free of bias, inflation of marks and unethical practices.

The marking memoranda were addressed on a question by question basis, followed with discussion being led by the internal moderators, conveners of examination panel, and members of the exam panel. An open debate approach was adopted to give all stakeholders present an opportunity to raise issues around the approval of memoranda. Umalusi external moderators formed the integral part of the discussion. An attempt was made not to advocate any provincial preferences during

the discussions and that final amendments should be used to assist and influence the teaching in future.

Care was taken to consider the translation of the Afrikaans versions into English during the discussions

The role of Umalusi's external moderators was clearly outlined. The external moderator provided guidance as the discussions unfolded, and had to make final decisions where disagreements regarding any particular answers were experienced.

2.3 Findings

(i) Approval of changes/ additions to the memoranda

The national examination panel together with the provincial representatives and Umalusi external moderators made quite a number of changes and additions to the memoranda, and there was general consensus on the changes that were effected.

(ii) Number of sample scripts marked

The number of scripts marked varied from subject to subject between 0 and 20 scripts. In some subjects no scripts were marked: examples are Consumer Studies, Xitsonga HL P1, FAL P1 SAL P1, IsiNdebele all levels, Life Sciences, Computer Applications Technology (CAT) and Music. In English HL P3, for example, not all provinces marked sampled scripts, as only the North West and the Eastern Cape had brought dummy scripts. In English HL P1, only Mpumalanga submitted dummy scripts. In Agricultural Technology, Gauteng did not submit any dummy scripts.

Marked scripts were used as a basis for discussions in most subjects e.g. Mathematical Literacy P1, Sepedi HL, SAL and FAL P1 and P3, History P2, Mechanical Technology, Geography P 1 and 2, Design, and Accounting.

All members of the panel, in some subjects were required to mark copies of the same scripts; in some instances members of the examining panel had no opportunity to mark any scripts. A standardized approach should ensure that the marking of a small number of scripts forms a critical part of the memo discussion.

(iii) Record of changes/additions and motivation to the memoranda

Detailed evidence of all the changes/additions for most subjects were submitted and are available for future reference.

Motivations for the changes/additions ranged from standardized mark allocation, provision for alternative responses, and interpretation of the question by learners, provision of substantive facts captured, provision of guidance on possible incorrect answers to providing more detailed guidelines for marking.

In some subjects, clear motivations were not articulated to provide evidence for changes/additions made to the memoranda.

(iv) The impact of changes/additions on the cognitive demand of questions

The changes/additions had no effect on the cognitive demand of the questions since they were only additions/alternative answers and relevant responses to the same questions. In most subjects, the impact of the new marking grids were closely monitored by the panel to ensure that the question paper and the memoranda still maintained the requirements in terms of the Subject Assessment Guideline. The changes/additions only improved the memoranda and did not in any way lower the standards of assessment.

(v) Communication of changes /adjustments to marking centres

The DoE ensured that all adjustments and changes were communicated timeously to marking centres. Measures were put in place by the DoE for deputy examiners, chief markers and senior markers to communicate changes/additions to marking centres in consultation with Umalusi external moderators.

(vi) Authenticity and originality of the question paper and marking guidelines

In most subjects, it was found that the question paper and the marking guideline corresponded exactly with the versions that were finally approved by the external moderators: examples are Business Economics, Life Sciences P1 and P2, CAT, Sesotho HL, FAL SAL, IsiZulu HL, SAL FAL, Music, and History. A few exceptions were identified where the question paper and the memoranda did not represent the final version. In Economics, for example, the external moderators did not have the opportunity to proofread the question paper against the final version signed off after moderation, and subsequent language editing by the DoE.

In Geography, however, the paper was the partly-approved version of February 2008. The external moderator had not been invited to moderate the final version. In Agricultural Science, the original copies of the question paper and the marking guideline that bear the signature of the external moderator were not available during the discussion. In Design, the addendum to the sub-heading in question 6 was not timeously communicated to one province, but this did not pose a problem as indicated by the sample scripts, and the issue was addressed in the revised memorandum. In summary, while many of the papers did contain the necessary corrections suggested in consultation with the external moderator, this was not true of all the papers, a situation that requires rectification.

(vii) Approval of changes/addition by Umalusi external moderators

The changes/additions to the memoranda for all subjects were signed-off by Umalusi external moderators. In instances where there were no changes/additions to the marking memorandum, the marking memoranda were nevertheless approved as is by the external moderators.

2.4 Areas of good practice

The following are instances of good practice which can be built on in 2009:

- All 29 nationally-approved NSC subjects were represented at the memoranda discussions, and wherever possible, representatives from all 9 provincial education departments were present.
- In most subjects, sample scripts or copies of sample scripts had been marked by the chief

markers. This indicates that chief markers, examiners and internal moderators were well prepared for the discussions.

- Internal moderators are commended for the training that was conducted for the provincial internal moderators, chief markers and markers prior to the commencement of memoranda discussions and marking process. This training was observed in English FAL, and Design.
- In Setswana HL and FAL, all areas that pertained to the processes and procedures of the memorandum discussion and expectations for marking were clearly and lucidly explained.
- The amendments suggested in the discussions were debated and adopted or discarded through general consensus, and the discussions were conducted in a fully collaborative manner by all stakeholders.

2.5 Areas for improvement

The following areas were noted for improvement in 2009:

- In some subjects such as Tourism, the layout of the paper should indicate the breakdown of the content as expected in the Assessment Guidelines. Concerns were raised on the over-emphasis on certain types of questions and underemphasis on content as a result of poorly designed SAG. It is recommended that this concern be dealt with by the DoE.
- In some subjects, the distribution of marks over the various criteria on the rubric does not correspond with the percentages on the seven point scale. Provision of training on the development of marking rubrics is suggested.
- Feedback on question papers were presented in different formats by various provincial representatives, therefore it is strongly recommended that DoE should provide internal moderators with a format to report on question papers.
- Shortcomings of various textbooks in terms of depth of content are evident in subjects like Business Studies and Religion Studies. The provision of approved textbook resources in line with the SAG for the subjects in question should be made available by the DoE.
- In subjects set in two languages, Afrikaans and English, it was noted that that the wrong interpretations of subject terminology cropped up in the translated Afrikaans versions. This was found to be evident in Life Sciences, History, Tourism, and Religion Studies. The Afrikaans versions of marking guidelines should also be given attention during memoranda discussions, and be signed-off by the external moderator.
- The pre-marking of scripts is of utmost importance for all the representatives involved, including external moderators as this would provide valuable information leading to the modification of the memorandum from a broader and more informed knowledge base. The sampling criteria of scripts was not clear as most assessment bodies' selection focussed on low achievers, thus it is not clear if the sampled scripts reflected a realistic balance ranging from high to low achievers.
- The timing of the examination put enormous pressure on the memoranda discussions, as well as on making the copies of the finalised memoranda available to all marking centres. It is recommended that memoranda discussion sessions should end three to five days prior to the commencement of the marking process.
- The national core panels need to reflect a sense of academic maturity when dealing with different views from provincial representatives and external moderators. This matter was revealed while dealing with Business Economics and IsiXhosa.
- For Setswana, Xitsonga, Civil Technology and Consumer Studies, chief markers did not attend the memoranda discussions, thus affecting the integrity of the NSC examinations and the seriousness with which they are nationally viewed. The DoE should make it compulsory for all provincial assessment bodies to send representatives to memoranda discussions.

- During marking sessions, the marking memoranda should be continuously consulted for subjects with high volumes, those with a practical assessment component and for P 3 in languages. Norm times for marking should be increased to ensure better quality of marking.

3. CENTRALISED MODERATION OF MARKING

3.1 Scope

The centralised moderation of marking was conducted on an average of 40 sample scripts received from each of 9 provincial examining bodies. Sample scripts for the following subjects were externally moderated:

Content subjects	Languages
Accounting	English First Additional Language P1 and P3
Agricultural Science	Afrikaans First Additional Language P1 and P3
Business Studies	Setswana Home and First Additional Language P1 and P3
Geography P1 and P2	IsiZulu Home Language P1 and P3
History P1 and P2	SePedi Home Language P1 and P3
Life Sciences P1 and P2	
Physical Science P1 and P2	
Mathematics P3	
Mathematics P1 and P2	
Mathematical literacy P1 and P2	

In total, 25 external moderators were engaged in this exercise for a period of 4 days and moderated samples drawn from a total of 5760 scripts.

All provincial assessment bodies complied by sending samples of marked scripts as requested by Umalusi.

3.2 Approach

For 2008 NSC examinations, Umalusi's centralized moderation of scripts was conducted on 40 sample scripts per subject, as a result of the absence of HG and SG in this new qualification. External moderators sampled between 6 and 13 scripts depending on the number of papers in one subject.

The moderation was based on the representative samples as submitted by assessment bodies. Reporting on discrepancies as and when they are identified was given high priority. Assessment bodies and marking centres where discrepancies were found were informed with immediate effect.

On the last day of the moderation, external moderators were expected to submit composite reports per subject and provincial assessment body, identifying areas of concern, good practices and recommendations.

3.3 Findings

(i) Adherence to the marking memoranda

The general findings indicate that the marking guidelines were adhered to. Most provinces did not submit their revised marking guidelines with the sample scripts. Marking guidelines were not submitted for English FAL P3, IsiZulu, Business Studies, and Geography.

In some subjects markers needed to be particularly attentive to the learner's responses as the memoranda was regarded as a 'marking guide'.

A few, isolated cases were identified where markers failed to adhere to the memo exactly, e.g. in History, Setswana FAL P3, Mathematics P1 and P2, Mathematical Literacy P1 and P2.

(ii) Provision of alternate answers

Alternate answers agreed upon at the memoranda discussions were considered during marking in most subjects. For some subjects, notes of alternative answers were simply scribbled on the finalised memoranda: this practice was found to be unacceptable as all changes/ additions must be signed off by the internal moderator after consultation with the external moderator. A few exceptions were identified where markers failed to identify innovative and relevant responses from learners, thus disadvantaging learners.

On rare instances, alternate answers were identified and corrected by the chief marker. This proactive strategy was noticed in Geography. Instances where alternate answers were seemingly not communicated in all marking centres have been identified in some provinces such as Mpumalanga.

(iii) Markers' Performance

Markers generally met the requirements for fair to good marking as indicated by the correct allocation of marks, interpretation of answers, and the application of marking rubrics. In Mathematical Literacy, Economics and IsiZulu HL, the standard of marking was found to be good and markers were found to be consistent.

In Setswana HL P1, however, instances were found where learners were marked wrong when they were correct, where markers skipped answers without marking and some where responses for the précis were not marked.

In History, the marking in some provinces was found to be below par in their marking.

In Mathematics, KwaZulu Natal and Limpopo were found not to adhere to the rule of marking incorrect answers wrong and correct answers right.

Inconsistencies were evident in the marking of the theory and comment type of questions as these types of questions are relatively new in some subjects. It was apparent that markers were generally not comfortable marking these types of questions. This practice was evident in Accounting, as many markers lacked the capacity to think laterally or lacked subject knowledge.

In English FAL P1 markers in the Free State, North West and Gauteng were found to be fairly accurate.

For Business Economics the performance of markers was found to be below average as there was evidence that they still to master the subject, differences between the markers and senior markers were evident in History, and in Geography markers struggled with P1.

Generally, marking has improved significantly this year as markers were careful in awarding, calculating and recording considering that this was the new curriculum and new content: this was noticeably evident in Afrikaans FAL P1 and P3.

(iv) Internal moderation

Generally internal moderation was conducted meticulously, fairly and according to acceptable standards. Internal moderation differed from province to province, although generally the scripts were extensively moderated from a minimum of two questions to all questions moderated.

The following observations regarding various subjects and provinces are of interest:

- In Accounting it was noted that effective internal moderation was conducted.
- In Sepedi HL P1 and P3, internal moderation was conducted fairly. However, differences between the internal moderators and the markers are still evident. It was also noted that both markers and moderators lack sound marking and moderating skills.
- Economics, in the Western Cape scripts was either moderated by the internal moderator or the chief marker.
- In English it was noted that the majority of scripts that were externally moderated had been moderated internally.
- In Life Sciences, little evidence was found that there was moderation at all levels: this was evident in scripts from Mpumalanga, the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Northern Cape.

(v) Consistency and accuracy of mark allocation

Deviations in mark allocation were generally within acceptable parameters. Isolated incidents of inaccurate mark allocation were occasionally picked up in Sepedi HL P1 and in content subjects such Geography and Life Sciences.

In the Free State in Agricultural P1 and P2, there were problems with the transfer of marks to the cover page, and the province was alerted to this.

The variance between provincially awarded and externally awarded marks was under 3 marks (1%). In rare instances a variance greater than 3% was identified, where markers had failed to give credit to correct answers.

(vi) Candidates' performance

Candidates' performance differed from subject to subject across all provinces. It was not easy to determine candidates' performance given the number of sample scripts that were externally moderated. This indicated by the following examples:

- In Mathematics, all provinces tended to send scripts with marks less than 30 out of 150;
- In Economics, the Northern Cape did not send scripts in the 60-100% range;

- In Sepedi, learners performed from excellent to poor; and
- In Agricultural Science learners performed between 8-120 marks out of 150.

For some subjects, the distribution of marks as per samples received, indicated that learners found the paper to be fair, easy, or difficult e.g. Geography and Afrikaans FAL.

Findings indicate that many of the weaker candidates received very few marks. These candidates also generally did not do well on the questions where they had to comment, requiring a certain amount of insight.

3.4 Areas of good practice

The following observations are instances of improvements and good practice:

- It was very pleasing to note that many of the learners attempted all questions, but it was obvious that many of the weaker learners had not come to grips with new concepts. The range of difficulty and cognitive skills over the papers nevertheless catered for this contingency.
- Marking was generally of a very good standard and the use of group versus individual marking enhanced the standard of marking.
- There was a high degree of consistency in the marking in most subjects.
- On the sample presented to Umalusi, it seems that the papers did meet the requirements in terms of a range of ability and cognitive skills with appropriate applied competency assessed.
- Time was obviously not an issue as learners managed to complete the papers within the set duration of e.g. accounting.
- The interpretation of memoranda according to candidate's contexts by markers has improved.
- Additional alternate responses were catered for in the marking memoranda; and
- Markers showed an improved understanding of the application of assessment tools, and this was particularly evident in Afrikaans.

3.5 Areas for improvement

The following areas are noted for future improvement in 2009:

- Markers need to be reminded to always return to the marking memoranda and not to rely on recall. The chief marker needs to constantly engage with the markers, particularly novice markers, to avoid marking discrepancies between the chief marker, senior marker and markers. This issue applies particularly to English FAL.
- The method of Consistency Accuracy Marking, where applicable, needs to be adhered to carefully, and training in this method should be given to markers prior to the commencement of marking.
- The ability of markers to mark consistently is a concern in some subjects as some markers did not have the ability to handle higher cognitive demand questions. Assessment bodies need to ensure that the selected markers are conversant with the new and upgraded content of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS).
- Markers in some provinces did not indicate the numbers of ticks on the marked scripts, only mark allocations were shown, and the control of scripts by examination assistants needs to be rigorous by not accepting scripts that are not fully marked, as was noted in Sepedi HL and Business economics.
- Training provided at national level where sample scripts were marked should be extended to

- provincial level this was strongly recommended in Accounting, Agricultural science and English
- Sample scripts for external moderation were not accompanied by question papers, addendum, marking guidelines and mark lists signed off by the internal moderator and chief marker concerned, therefore provinces should be compelled to submit the approved marking guidelines;
 - Variance bigger than + 10 marks per question were noticeable in Business Economics. Differences between senior markers, chief markers and markers should not be bigger than 5 marks. Thus, corrective measures need to be put in place so that learners whose scripts were not moderated are not disadvantaged; and
 - Discrepancies were noticed in the following subjects and immediately communicated to the assessment body concerned:
 - Mathematics Paper 3, **Western Cape**, the diagram sheet used was different from centre to centre;
 - Physical Science P1, **North West**, an added answer to question 3.1 was not acceptable. Immediate feedback from the North West was received indicating that remarking would be done;
 - Economics, **Mpumalanga**, too many calculation errors were identified, and inadequate checking of scripts by examination assistants;
 - Accounting, **Mpumalanga**, learners were being unfairly marked in many theory questions; markers do not fully read the learners responses, and do not pick up that the wording in learners responses is different, but correct;
 - History P2, **Free State**, senior markers as well as the moderator used the incorrect matrix to assess a number of questions;
 - Geography P1 and P2, **KwaZulu-Natal**, markers do not read the whole paragraph , and are inconsistent in the allocation of marks; the marking of wrong answers as correct also occurred;
 - Mathematics P3, **Limpopo**, one marker did not seem to be applying the memorandum correctly in many instances, and the mark allocated by the markers differs from that of the moderator by as much as 15 marks. The external moderator strongly recommended that the scripts should be remarked; and
 - Mathematics P1 **KwaZulu-Natal**, one marker for question 8 and 10 was to be checked carefully since some scripts were not marked correctly. The mark allocation was also incorrect; the marker gave 5/5 to a question that was worth 2/5.

4. ON-SITE MODERATION OF MARKING

4.1 Scope

On-site moderation of marking focused on subjects with large enrolments, subjects with a practical assessment component and certain Home Language subjects.

In total, nine subjects were moderated on-site as follows:

Subject	Assessment Body
Accounting	IEB
History P1 and P2	KwaZulu-Natal
Agricultural Technology	Mpumalanga
Hospitality Studies	KwaZulu-Natal
Agricultural Science	North West
Religion Studies	Western Cape
Electrical Technology	Eastern Cape
Afrikaans Home Language P1,2 and 3	Northern Cape
Tshivenda Home Language P1,2 & 3	Limpopo

4.2 Approach

Moderation was conducted for a minimum of 40 sampled scripts that had gone through all stages of internal moderation, and 40 marked scripts that had not been moderated internally.

External moderators were expected to carry out on-site moderation with a view to:

- allowing external moderators to select their own samples as compared to centralized moderation of marking, where assessment bodies submitted a selected sample of scripts according to Umalusi set criteria;
- ascertaining the quality and standard of marking in the sampled subjects across assessment bodies;
- determining adherence to the marking memoranda during the marking process;
- determining consistency in the allocation, totaling and transferring of marks by markers, senior markers, chief markers and internal moderators;
- determining if internal moderation was conducted; and
- providing immediate feedback and guidance to the chief markers where discrepancies and deviations to the marking memoranda were identified.

A record of the mark allocations and adjustments by the marker, internal moderator and external moderator would be kept for processes that would follow on-site moderation.

4.3 Findings

(i) Adherence to marking memorandum

Generally markers strictly adhered to the final subject marking guideline/memoranda that was approved during memoranda discussions.

For Agricultural Technology, the chief marker had not received the updated memorandum 6 days after the commencement of marking. Rigorous moderation was thus conducted as no alternate answers were accepted.

For some subjects such as Electrical Technology, Tshivenda HL and Accounting, the marking panel made additions to the marking memorandum. However this did not affect the marks allocated to

candidates, whereas in subjects like Hospitality studies, and Afrikaans HL, only answers that appeared in the marking memorandum were accepted as final.

Senior markers, chief markers and internal moderators ensured that markers adhered to the final marking guideline by frequently moderating marked scripts.

The IEB the memo was refined during discussions with senior markers and during early stages of the marking process. Thereafter consistency in marking ensued.

(ii) Provision of alternate answers

Approved marking memoranda made provision for possible alternate answers. Alternate answers did not in any way compromise the cognitive demand of the set questions.

In languages there was no need for alternate answers in sections like the friendly letter and the formal letter.

For the IEB, alternate answers were added to the memoranda when learners offered valid responses. Alternate answers were discussed between the marking teams before being added to the memoranda.

In Accounting at the IEB, the following alternative refinements were made to the marking memorandum, answer to question 1.3, 2.4., 2.5, 3.1.3, 3.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.3, 3.2.3, markers were advised of the amendments and the changes that needed to be effected.

It is not evident if these alternative amendments were communicated with the external moderator prior to being effected.

(iii) Consistency and accuracy in the allocation of marks

Findings indicate that markers were consistent in the allocation of marks; totals per sub-sections were accurately captured, and the marks entered on the cover page were legible and correct. Variations in marks awarded by the external moderators and markers were evident. The table below indicates a few examples of subjects where variations were identified

Marker	Internal Moderator	External Moderator	Subject
26	42	42	Afrikaans HL
74	64	-	Electrical Technology
73	73	79	History
59	64	64	History
38	38	47	History
40	40	36	Accounting

The mark allocation for IEB was consistent, no significant variations in mark allocation was identified .

(iv) Quality of markers' performance

Generally the quality of marking was rated from good to excellent in all the selected subjects.

Constant monitoring by the chief marker and senior markers contributed to the good marking practices. The quality of marking was enhanced by the whole question and double marking approach that was adopted in most subjects, as shown in Agricultural Science, for example.

The training offered to markers, chief markers and internal moderators and the use of dummy scripts contributed to the improved quality of marking, as was noted in Agricultural Sciences and Agricultural Technology.

(v) Evidence of internal moderation

Moderation varied from subject to subject: sometimes the whole script was moderated; sometimes just a part was moderated. Findings indicate that at least 10% of the scripts were moderated internally by the chief markers, deputy chief markers and internal moderators. Internal moderation contributed to the improved standard and quality of marking.

For the IEB, 10% of every batch of scripts was moderated by the chief marker, senior marker and internal moderator.

(vi) Candidates' performance

Candidates found the papers to be fair and some found it difficult.

External moderators findings indicate that the papers were fair and some difficult. As a result of the following reasons, the:

- Shift from recall questions to an emphasis on comprehension, application of knowledge and extended writing was a noted; e.g. in Hospitality Studies and History;
- Inadequate command of language on the part of learners resulted in difficulties in reading and synthesizing questions, a finding in all the content subjects;
- The possibility that some sections of the papers were not taught was evident; and
- In History, questions were complex and difficult but fair to candidates.

The IEB Accounting question paper was fair to candidates and most candidates appeared to be able to answer all questions. It was noted that the IEB Accounting paper was not sufficiently challenging and lacked evidence of higher order skills. There were no significant discrepancies in the performance of the IEB centres.

4.4 Areas of good practice

The following instances of good practice are worth noting:

- Good quality marking and moderation by internal moderators and chief markers has been a feature of much marking;
- The papers gave learners a variety of choices thus enabling them to answer most questions;
- The questions and marking memoranda were within the scope of work defined by the NSC;
- The training of markers and chief markers during the marking guideline discussion meeting is commendable; and
- Markers adhered strictly to the marking memoranda; no deviations were identified.

4.5 Areas for improvement

The following areas are noted for improvement in 2009:

- Findings revealed that some alternate responses were not accepted since strict adherence to the memorandum was advocated in some subjects, thus impacting heavily on the candidates, it is recommended that dummy scripts should be marked during memoranda discussions in order to make provision for alternate answers. In addition, alternate answers that are picked during the marking session should be discussed with the external moderators before implementation.
- A correlation in the language used in the marking memoranda and the question paper was not evident in subjects such as history, therefore the examiner and the external moderator should ensure, during the moderation of question papers and memoranda discussions, that consensus is reached on the terminology and language regarded as suitable.
- The appointment of markers who are not currently teaching grade 12 in some subjects resulted in difficulties in the interpretation of the memorandum: provision should be made for the verification of the appointed markers to determine if they are familiar with the content and assessment protocol.
- Average candidates experienced difficulties with higher order questions, hence the shift from lower order to higher order questions should be gradually phased in and Subject Assessment Guidelines need to be consulted on the spread of questions according to the cognitive demand of the learners during the setting and moderation of question papers.
- Most markers tended to award marks in the 30% - 59% range, it was also noted that many candidates fail or receive more than 70% in most subjects. Proper and intensive training on the use of marking rubrics need to be provided for teachers; and
- Instances where the chief marker is the only marker were identified in small subjects and this created greater possibilities that the chief marker might mark scripts from his/her centre, it is recommended that the internal moderator need to mark in such instances or a cross provincial approach to marking be introduced.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings gathered from the three moderation of marking processes clearly indicate that the marking for the first cohort of the NCS was thorough, and that markers managed to adhere to the final approved marking guidelines, and, as a result, all marking was carried out successfully.

Despite the few challenges highlighted in the findings above, the memo discussions were successful, bearing in mind that this was the first time such a huge number of subjects was handled.

It was found that the standard of marking has greatly improved and this was as a result of an effort made by assessment bodies to ensure that markers are trained specifically on the agreed and approved memoranda. We commend the assessment bodies for training markers through the use of a model that was based on the marking of dummy scripts.

However, the overarching challenge was the shift from NATED 550 marking approach to NCS based approach which encourages creative responses.

Internal moderators, chief markers, senior markers and markers need to be commended for consistently applying the marking memoranda and ensuring that internal moderation is conducted.

Chapter 7

Standardization of examination results

1. INTRODUCTION

Standardization of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) was conducted for the very first time in December 2008, as this was the first time that candidates sat for examination of this new qualification. The standardization of a new qualification brings about various challenges especially in terms of finding benchmarks against which the results can be standardized. Umalusi addressed these challenges in a variety of ways as outlined in Section 4 below.

2. PURPOSE OF STANDARDIZATION

The purpose of standardization is to adjust marks per subject where it is found that learners have been unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in the examination of that subject.

3. SCOPE OF THE STANDARDIZATION

A total of 68 subjects was examined and subjected to the standardization process.

4. UMALUSI'S APPROACH TO STANDARDIZATION OF THE NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE

Umalusi adopts an evidence-based approach to standardization. Decisions are based on thorough consideration of historical and situational factors, and careful and systematic reasoning. Umalusi introduced the following measures to facilitate these processes, and to ensure that standardization decisions were systematic, appropriate, and fair:

- i) Historical averages were presented to the Umalusi Assessment/ Statistics Committee in booklet form, for each achievement level for each subject to be standardized. These averages were determined by using five-year averages across the nine provinces, as well as combining Higher Grade (HG) and Standard Grade (SG) averages where applicable. Where subjects were new, hybrid norms were constructed from the average performance of learners across provinces and levels (HG and SG) in the five-year period, in similar subjects. In some cases, up to 10 norms were incorporated in these hybrid norms. The information booklets included other details such as figures for current and normal numbers of candidates, and pairs analyses showing correlations between the average performance of learners in the subject being standardized, and that in other subjects.
- ii) A year-long research project was conducted to determine the relative levels of cognitive difficulty of the 2008 exam papers. This research included comparative evaluation of the old and new curricula for selected subjects, and analysis and comparison of the 2005—2007 HG and SG exam papers for these subjects, and their 2008 NSC equivalents. Findings of the research were able to describe the type and level of difficulty of the 2008 exams, and were presented at the Pre-Standardization Meetings held by Umalusi.

- iii) The Department of Education was asked to present reports describing the strategic interventions carried out nationally and provincially by the various departments of education. These reports were distributed and presented at the Pre-Standardization Meetings held by Umalusi.
- iv) Detailed reports were compiled by the Umalusi moderators, and presented at the Pre-Standardization Meetings held by Umalusi. These reports included in-depth comment on the question papers and how candidates responded to these papers, and other process-related comments.

Taken together, these measures provided a sound base from which to make judgments. The processes followed for statistical moderation of examination marks for the NSC examinations in 2008 in many ways remained unchanged from those used in previous years. They consisted, as previously, of comparisons between current mark distributions and the historical average mark distributions in equivalent subjects (or hybrids constructed from clusters of similar subjects) in previous years (2003 to 2007). Raw marks were also considered in relation to mean marks in the pairs analyses, and to pass rates for equivalent subjects in 2006/7.

Pairs analysis compares the mean marks in two subjects at a time, taken by the same candidates: it is possible, for example, to see how a group of learners performed in Physical Science, in relation to how that same group achieved in Mathematics, Life Sciences, and other subjects, respectively. These analyses are based on the principle that, as a group, the performances of the same candidates in two similar subjects (taken at the same level) are likely to show close correspondence if the examination papers are comparable. The analyses facilitate a range of other comparisons—it is possible for example, to compare the performance of learners writing different language papers at different levels.

As previously, comments from the reports of chief markers, and internal and external moderators were taken into account, especially those relating to specific levels of cognitive difficulty and problematic questions. In addition, this year's standardization processes included drawing on the findings of the research conducted in order to assist the standardization process.

Importantly, the use of historical averages and norms, pairs analysis, marker and moderator reports, and research findings was in terms of guidance only: all 2008 standardization decisions have been informed by a combination of the raw marks themselves, consideration of all related evidence, and careful reasoning.

The following major principles were applied in the standardization of the 2008 examination results:

- No adjustments either upwards or downwards, will exceed 10% or the historical average, except in extreme cases;
- In the case of individual candidates, the adjustments effected should not exceed 50% of the marks obtained by the candidates;
- If the distribution of raw marks is above or below the historical average respectively, the marks may be adjusted downwards or upwards respectively, subject to the limitations outlined in the two bullets immediately above;
- Computer-adjusted marks are calculated on the principles outlined in the bullets immediately above;
- For subjects with practical components of 50%, and for subjects with small numbers of candidates (<500 for DoE subjects; <200 for IEB subjects), raw marks may be accepted;
- Umalusi retains the right to amend these principles as deemed necessary, and based on sound evidence and educational principle.

Results of 2008 standardization are presented in the following section.

5. COMMENT ON 2008 STANDARDIZATION

5.1 Pre-standardization meetings were held by both Umalusi and the National Department of Education separately before the Standardization meeting. These meetings were used to consider all raw marks, in relation to all the evidence accumulated relating to the examination results. Both Umalusi and the Department of Education independently drafted proposals for the standardization of marks per subject.

5.2 The November 2008 standardization meetings were held at Umalusi and the Burgers Park Hotel, Pretoria, on the following dates:

- Independent Examinations Board (IEB) NSC results: 17 December 2008 (at Umalusi);
- Onafhanklike Afrikaanse Eksamenraad (OAE) NSC results: 21 December 2008 (at the Burgers Park Hotel, Pretoria);
- National Department of Education (DoE) NSC results: 22 December 2008 (at the Burgers Park Hotel, Pretoria)

5.3 It is important to note that virtually all of the DoE proposals for standardization were anticipated by Umalusi and were in line with the approach followed by Umalusi.

6. 2008 STANDARDIZATION DECISIONS

At the standardization meeting held on 22 December 2008, raw marks were accepted for 30 of the 68 subjects standardized. For all but one of the remainder of the subjects, minor adjustments were made upwards or downwards. Slightly larger adjustments were made for Physical Science, based on the fact that all of the evidence considered pointed to the extreme difficulty of the Physical Science papers, to the extent that they were clear outliers (for example, the research showed that the Physical Science papers were at the level of Higher Grade and above; the pairs analyses showed the average performance for Physical Science to be way below that for other similar subjects such as Mathematics, Life Sciences, and Information Technology).

7. AREAS OF CONCERN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two areas of concern were highlighted in the 2008 standardization process. These concerns are outlined briefly here:

7.1 Problems regarding the lack of preparation of both educators and candidates for the examinations were noted in several instances (see for example Accounting; Agricultural Science);

7.2 The problem of English being the language of instruction was reflected in the performance of candidates whose home language is an African language. This issue needs to be addressed urgently, especially in light of the aim of including a lot of reading and writing in the curricula and examinations. The Department of Education must improve the teaching of this language of learning and teaching, as the practice of language compensation for these candidates will not be implemented as from 2011.

Some recommendations have emerged from the 2008 standardization process:

7.3 Loops in the examining process must be closed for future NSC marks to be appropriate and fair. These loops include first, the briefing of new examination and moderation teams, which needs to include detailed consideration of old papers, memos, and commentary on these items. The second loop involves the circulation of final Umalusi-approved versions of exam papers, where errors creep in between national and provincial departments of education. The third loop is the moderation of Practical Assessment Tasks (PAT)—PATs need to be ready in time for moderation. Fourth, in 2008, some moderators were coerced into approving memos. Last, at times, insufficient scripts were provided for moderation.

7.4 Standardization-related decisions must be communicated clearly and in good time. Decisions such as the one to adopt the approach that 50% in the NSC is equivalent to 40% on the Higher Grade in the NATED 550 examinations; the decision to make Life Orientation and Mathematical Literacy easy to pass are examples of decisions needing to be communicated clearly and in good time.

7.5 Standardization teams must be provided with additional information over and above the Results and the Pairs Assessment books in future. This additional information could include the number of scripts moderated for each subject; the number of HG/ SG/ NSC learners historically enrolled and passing at 30%, 40%, 50%, and 80% levels for each subject; as well as moderators' reports for all subjects.

7.6 All standardization decisions—made by Umalusi and the DoE—must be recorded, along with the reasoning underpinning them, so that all decisions are logically and publicly defensible.

8. RECOMMENDATION

It was recommended that the concerns and recommendations listed in Section 7.7 above be forwarded to the relevant directorates in the Department of Education.

9. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the 2008 standardization process was systematic, rigorous, and fair. The quality of the 2008 examination papers is commendable, given the newness of the curriculum, and the fact that these papers have been set for the first time. That raw marks were used for about half of the papers indicates that many papers were pitched at the desired levels. Commentary on the other papers needs to be taken into account in order to pitch these papers at desired levels in future.

Extensive information in the form of historical averages and norms; pairs analysis; examiner-, moderator-, and marker reports; and research findings, was available for use in decision-making. More such information is needed as standard, as outlined in Section 7.7 of this report.

Two concerns were raised, and a number of recommendations put forward in relation to future NSC examinations. One concern is the lack of readiness of candidates to write the exams in some subjects. The second concern is for African-language speakers in future, text-dense examinations,

especially once language compensation marks are no longer awarded. These concerns and requests will be forwarded to the relevant directorates in the Department of Education.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Considering that the November 2008 examinations have introduced a new qualification paired with a new curriculum, and that, for the first time ever in South Africa, all matriculants have written the same national exams, it should be a source of considerable satisfaction that the transition has been made with relatively few upsets or surprises. As such, this is a moment to acknowledge how far the South African education system has come, but it is equally a moment in which to apprise ourselves of the long way we still need to go. There are new challenges that face the quality assurance of assessment for the NSC: continuous assessment (CASS) will remain a challenge to the departments of education and teachers for some time to come, but it is a challenge that can only help to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning if we engage with it fully. It is clear that the training of educators is an urgent priority—for an education system is only as good as its teachers. A review of the various chapters of this report shows that there is much to feel pleased about: memo discussions have become more wide-ranging and meaningful; the use of sample scripts in finalizing the memo is a positive step in the right direction; increased co-operation in the moderation process speeds up the finalization of papers; chief examiners and moderators are diligent in their efforts to create consistent standards; assessment bodies have taken the initiative to find suitable sites as exam centres. All these have been identified as positive steps in the right direction.

While positive strides have been made, this conclusion would not be balanced or complete if there were no acknowledgment that almost every aspect of the quality assurance process could be strengthened—precisely in order to make teaching and learning better and more meaningful. The implementation of CASS moderation is a case in point: provincial departments have developed fine plans for supporting HODs and educators in the implementation of CASS, but these need to be translated into action. Similarly, the introduction of a subject such as Life Orientation, which has no nationally examinable components, presents a whole new set of challenges that have only partly been thought through. It is also clear that the development of a cadre of excellent markers who are able to mark the answers to cognitively-demanding questions must be a high priority: the credibility of examinations lies in markers' ability to assess fairly, reliably and consistently. Standardization of the new results has brought about new processes and procedures around resulting, and these will impact on registration, which clearly also needs tightening up. Standardization has also alerted Umalusi once again to the fact that the learning of languages is an issue that needs urgent and quality attention: learners' performance in the NSC depends critically on their language skills, even more so now than previously as reading and the interpretation of texts becomes an increasingly important part of the way examinations are designed.

On the whole, Umalusi is satisfied that the 2008 NSC examinations were conducted in a manner that renders them fair, valid and reliable. Umalusi acknowledges that a few irregularities were reported but these were addressed appropriately. Umalusi is satisfied that the credibility of the 2008 NSC examinations is very much in keeping with that of the Senior Certificate which is now being phased out. The serious irregularities that have been reported will still be subjected to investigation, but Umalusi is satisfied that the overall conduct of the examinations has been such that it can approve the 2008 results.

Umalusi takes this opportunity to express gratitude to the national Department of Education and all the other the assessment bodies for their continued support and co-operation for Umalusi's quality assurance initiatives throughout the year. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

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