

REPORT ON THE
QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE
Benchmark Assessment Agency (Pty) Ltd
EXAMINATION OF THE GETC: ABET L4

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Executive Summary

Umalusi quality assures the assessment for the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET L4) – hereinafter referred to as GETC: ABET L4 – conducted by Benchmark Assessment Agency (Pty) Limited.

Quality assurance of the assessment of the GETC is intended to give a broad overview of key findings regarding the quality of examination standards and processes. The specific intention of these quality assurance activities is to determine whether all assessments and all assessment processes in the examination cycle meet the required standards. These standards are judged against various criteria appropriate to the particular assessment or assessment process.

Umalusi is committed to the ongoing improvement of assessment to ensure the validity, reliability and fairness of examinations. This report therefore identifies areas of concern as well as Directives for Compliance and Improvement, both of which are intended to offer feedback to role-players involved in the processes of assessment. Umalusi believes that judicious consideration of the Directives for Compliance and Improvement can lead to improvement when assessment personnel, educators and officials consider these in relation to the context in which they operate.

This report dedicates a chapter to each of the key processes of quality assurance of assessment, namely:

1. Moderation of question papers
2. Moderation of Site-Based Assessment (SBA)
3. Monitoring of both the writing and marking phases of the examinations
4. Verification of marking
5. Standardisation of results.

CHAPTER 1: QUESTION PAPER MODERATION

Umalusi moderators evaluated four question papers (QPs) for the two learning areas (LAs) offered by Benchmark for the November 2014 examinations. The four QPs included a backup paper for each learning area. Two of the QPs submitted required only a first moderation to gain approval from the relevant Umalusi moderator. The two QPs that required second moderation were Mathematical Literacy and Natural Sciences.

The examiners and internal moderators demonstrated limited understanding of the

Subject and Assessment Guidelines (SAGs). It was recommended that Benchmark implements strategies to improve the understanding and competence of examiners and internal moderators regarding the SAGs.

The evaluation process showed that the QPs approved after second moderation were of good quality and standard and met the minimum standards.

CHAPTER 2: MODERATION OF SBA INSTRUMENTS

Benchmark also submitted, for evaluation, Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) for each learning area. The CATs for both LAs required second moderation because of concerns regarding cognitive demand and the marking guidelines. The external moderator recommended that the tasks have greater coverage of the specific outcomes and assessment criteria, as specified in the learning area unit standards. Benchmark effected the moderators' recommendations and the CATs were approved after second moderation.

CHAPTER 2: MODERATION OF SBA PORTFOLIOS

Umalusi moderated the educators' and learners' SBA portfolios of evidence off-site, i.e. at the homes of the external moderators. It was a concern that the Educator Portfolios of Assessment (POAs) were not submitted for any of the L4MLMS educators at the six ABET centres concerned. Evidence presented suggested that the L4MLMS educators did not know and understand the use of rubrics and marking guidelines. The recommendation was that Benchmark implements strategies to ensure that assessors know and understand how to plan for formative assessment. The assessment body can develop templates to assist the assessors with assessment planning and scheduling.

CHAPTER 3: MONITORING OF WRITING

Umalusi deployed monitors to assess the conduct and administration of the GETC: ABET L4 examinations. The monitoring of the writing phase identified areas of concern as the administration of the conduct of the examinations did not always meet the required standards. Benchmark must study the Directives for Compliance and Improvement noted in this report and introduce measures to effectively address the concerns raised.

CHAPTER 4: MONITORING OF MARKING

The marking centre manager planned all marking activities in detail. The only concern was the lack of security personnel at the marking venues. The monitoring of the marking phase confirmed that Benchmark Assessment Agency met, and exceeded, the minimum standards.

CHAPTER 5: MEMORANDUM DISCUSSIONS

Verification of marking took place in two stages: firstly, observing and evaluating the memorandum discussions and, secondly, moderating marked scripts, at the premises of Benchmark on 6–7 December 2014. It was a concern that the Benchmark examiners and internal moderators did not attend the memorandum discussion meetings or the moderation of marking sessions. Benchmark must ensure that all examiners and internal moderators who developed and moderated the question papers are available for the standardisation of the memoranda and the moderation of marking. Their availability should be included in their contractual obligations. The process for the standardisation of the marking guidelines succeeded in meeting the desired outcomes of developing a comprehensive marking memorandum that was well understood by all markers, who displayed competence in the use of the marking memorandum.

CHAPTER 6: VERIFICATION OF MARKING

The Umalusi moderators were able to report positively on the verification of marking as all processes and procedures were adhered to. The quality of marking was deemed to be good in all learning areas that were moderated. The cognitive levels of the question papers were in accordance with the prescribed Benchmark assessment framework policy. The difficulty level of the question papers was within prescribed norms.

The moderation of marking confirmed that the marking process was sound; that question papers were marked in accordance with the marking memoranda; and that marking was, therefore, fair, valid and reliable.

CHAPTER 7: STANDARDISATION AND VERIFICATION OF RESULTS

The pre-standardisation and standardisation meetings for Benchmark took place on 18 December 2014. Two learning areas were presented for standardisation: Communication in English and Mathematical Literacy. Raw scores were accepted for both learning areas.

CONCLUSION

The external evaluation processes identified areas of good practice, but also noted areas for improvement. The assessment body implemented some of the recommendations regarding the concerns raised during the question paper moderation process.

Benchmark should facilitate a workshop with the examiners, internal moderators and markers to reflect on the examination processes and identify areas of good practice,

Acronyms

| | | |
|---------|---|---|
| ABET | - | Adult Basic Education and Training |
| AET | - | Adult Education and Training |
| ASC | - | Assessment Standards Committee |
| BM | - | Benchmark Assessment Agency (Pty) Limited |
| CASS | - | Continuous Assessment |
| CLC | - | Community Learning Centres |
| EAG | - | Examination and Assessment Guideline |
| GETC | - | General Education and Training Certificate |
| LA | - | Learning Area |
| NQF | - | National Qualifications Framework |
| PALC | - | Public Adult Learning Centre |
| QAA | - | Quality Assurance of Assessment |
| SAGs | - | Subject and Assessment Guidelines |
| SAQA | - | South African Qualifications Authority |
| SBA | - | Site-Based Assessment |
| TVET | - | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UMALUSI | - | Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training |

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Chapter 1

Question Paper Moderation

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Quality assurance of assessment for the GETC: ABET L4 requires an engagement with every process in the examination cycle. The intention of such quality assurance activities is to determine whether all assessments and all assessment processes in the examination cycle have met the required standards.

The examination cycle commences with the preparation of question papers for the written examination. The first step in the process of quality assurance is, therefore, external moderation of question papers.

Umalusi moderates question papers to ensure that the standard is comparable to that of previous years and current policy requirements. To maintain public confidence in the national examination system, the question papers must be seen to be relatively:

- Fair
- Reliable
- Representative of an adequate sample of the curriculum
- Representative of relevant conceptual domains
- Representative of relevant levels of cognitive challenge.

Umalusi employs external moderators with the relevant subject matter expertise to carefully scrutinise and analyse the question papers, based on a set of standardised evaluation criteria.

The GETC: ABET L4 has 26 learning areas. Benchmark offered examinations for two learning areas only, as detailed in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 *BM Learning Areas for the GETC: ABET L4*

| LA No | LEARNING AREAS | LA CODE |
|-------|--------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Communication in English | L4LCEN |
| 2 | Mathematical Literacy | L4MLMS |

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

Benchmark presented question papers plus backup question papers, with the accompanying marking memoranda, for the two learning areas (LAs) it offers for moderation by Umalusi, in preparation for the November 2014 GETC: ABET L4 examinations.

The four question papers were moderated according to the 2014 *Umalusi Instrument for the Moderation of Question Papers*. This requires that moderators assess the question papers according to the following nine criteria:

1. Technical
2. Internal moderation
3. Content coverage
4. Cognitive skills
5. Marking memorandum
6. Language and bias
7. Adherence to Assessment Policies & Guidelines
8. Predictability
9. Overall impression.

Each criterion has a set of quality indicators against which the question papers are evaluated and assessed. The moderator makes a judgement for each criterion, considering four possible levels of compliance:

- No compliance (Met < 50% of criteria)
- Limited compliance (Met > 50% but <80%)
- Compliance in most respects (Met > 80% <100%)
- Compliance in all respects (Met 100% of criteria).

The moderator evaluates the question paper based on overall impression and how the requirements of all eight criteria have been met. A decision is then taken on the quality and standard of the question paper as a whole, considering one of four possible outcomes:

- Approved
- Conditionally approved – no resubmission
- Conditionally approved – resubmit
- Rejected – if the standard and quality of the question paper is entirely unacceptable.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The external moderators completed evaluation reports based on the moderation instrument. The moderation reports included both statistical information and qualitative feedback. This report reflects on the statistical and the qualitative feedback of the reports from external moderators.

The Table below provides a breakdown of the status of the question papers after all external moderation exercises were completed.

Table 1.2 Approval Status of Question Papers Moderated

| FULL LEARNING AREA DESCRIPTION | LA CODE | JUNE EXAM | |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----------|---------|
| | | 1st Mod | 2nd Mod |
| 1.Communication in English - Set 1 | L4LCEN | A | |
| 2.Communication in English - Set 2 | L4LCEN | A | |
| 3.Mathematical Literacy - Set 1 | L4MLMS | A | |
| 4.Mathematical Literacy - Set 2 | L4MLMS | CAR | A |

| A = Approved | CANR = Conditionally Approved > No Resubmit | CAR = Conditionally Approved > Resubmit | R = Rejected |

Table 1.3 summarises the status of question papers after first and second external moderation.

Table 1.3 Analysis of External Moderation of Question Papers

| MODERATION | APPROVED | CANR | % APPROVED + CANR | CAR (Resubmit) | % CAR | REJECTED | % REJECTED | TOTAL MODS |
|--------------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------|------------|------------|
| 1ST Mod | 3 | 0 | 75% | 1 | 25% | 0 | 0% | 4 |
| 2ND Mod | 1 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% | 1 |
| TOTAL | 4 | 0 | | 1 | | 0 | | 5 |

An analysis of both Tables 1.2 and 1.3 shows that the four QPs set for the November 2014 examinations resulted in a total of five external moderations. The Mathematical Literacy - Set 2 question paper was conditionally approved, to be resubmitted for second moderation.

The external moderator did not approve **Set 2** of the *Mathematical Literacy* question paper for three reasons:

- (a) The *Assessment Framework Grid* that was submitted was inconsistent with the items in the question paper.
- (b) The classification of items according to specific cognitive levels was not done.
- (c) Some items did not cover the subject and assessment outcomes as outlined in the Subject and Assessment Guideline documents.

The question paper was approved at second moderation.

Table 1.4 gives a summary of the compliance ratings based on the nine criteria used for external moderation of the question papers.

Table 1.4 Question Paper Compliance with Criteria

| | COMPLIANCE FREQUENCY (5 moderations) | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|-----------|-----|
| | NONE | LIMITED | MOST | ALL |
| C1. Technical Criteria | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| C2. Internal Moderation | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| C3. Content Coverage | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| C4. Cognitive Demand | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| C5. Marking Guidelines | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| C6. Language and Bias | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| C7. Adherence to Policy | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| C8. Predictability | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| C9. Overall Impression of QP | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| | 5 | | 40 | |
| | 11% | | 89% | |

The quality and standard of the question papers were very good as the five QPs had an overall compliance rating of 89%. There were five instances of LIMITED compliance regarding internal moderation, content coverage, marking guidelines, adherence to SAGs, and the overall impression of the question paper.

Below is a synopsis of the evaluation of the question papers based on the moderation criteria used. It reflects on first and second moderation processes.

C1. Technical quality

- 20% (1/5) of question papers evaluated met ALL sub-criteria of this criterion, while the other four QPs met MOST of the sub-criteria.
- The L4LCEN Set 1 QP met ALL the sub-criteria. The Set 2 QPs had numbering problems: the mark allocations on the QP did not match the marks allocated on the memorandum.
- The assessment body did not submit the history of the development of the L4MLMS QPs for both Sets 1 and 2.
- The L4MLMS Set 2 QP was incomplete: there was no assessment grid nor answer sheets. These issues were resolved when the QP was submitted for second moderation.

- The assessment body must pay more attention to detail regarding the technical requirements of question papers submitted for approval.

C2. Internal moderation

- Internal moderation met the minimum requirements as one question paper met LIMITED compliance; one met MOST compliance and three question papers met ALL criteria.
- The quality, standard and relevance of input from the internal moderator for both sets of the L4MLMS question papers were inappropriate as these did not address the relevant SAGs. The cognitive weightings of the L4MLMS Set 1 QP were incorrect. The internal moderator should have corrected this.

C3. Content coverage

- The L4MLMS Set 2 QP met LIMITED compliance as the coverage of the SAGs was not adequately addressed. Additionally, the weighting and spread of content of the SAGs were inappropriate for these QPs. The L4MLMS Set 1 QP was given a MOST compliance rating because of inappropriate weighting and spread of the SAGs.
- The concern regarding the L4MLMS QPs was misalignment with the SAGs, as outlined in the unit standards. It must be noted that this concern was addressed when the QPs were submitted for second moderation.
- The content coverage of both sets of the QPs for L4LCEN was of the required standard and was given an ALL compliance rating.

C4. Cognitive demand

- The two question papers for L4LCEN met ALL aspects of this criterion, while the two question papers for L4MLMS met MOST aspects.
- The L4MLMS QPs' weighting of the L2 and L3 cognitive demands was a concern. These points were adequately addressed when the question papers were presented for second moderation.

C5. Marking guidelines

- The backup QP for L4MLMS had LIMITED compliance with the marking guidelines, while the other four scored MOST compliance ratings.
- The marking guidelines for L4LCEN were found to be: accurate; corresponded with questions in the question papers; allowed for alternative responses; facilitated consistent marking; and marks were clearly distributed

and allocated within the questions.

- A concern for all question papers was that the marking guidelines did not indicate which learning and assessment criteria were assessed.
- The marking guidelines for both sets for L4MLMS contained mistakes and were not accurate.

C6. Language and bias

- Both question papers for L4LCEN and the first Set for L4MLMS scored an ALL compliance rating. The L4MLMS Set 2 QP scored MOST after second moderation.
- Overall, the external moderators were satisfied that the question papers were free from bias and the language used met the required standards.

C7. Adherence to Subject and Assessment Guidelines (SAGs)

- The L4MLMS Set 2 QP did not meet this criterion, achieving a compliance rating of LIMITED, while the Set 1 QP was given a MOST rating. The L4MLMS QPs were not aligned to the SAGs and did not reflect the prescribed learning outcomes. This issue was resolved when the QPs were submitted for second moderation.
- Both sets of the QPs for L4LCEN adhered to the SAGs and were given an ALL compliance rating.

C8. Predictability

- All question papers evaluated were found to be unpredictable. Questions were of such a nature that they could not be easily 'spotted' or predicted. The questions also contained an appropriate degree of innovation.

C9. Overall impression

- The external moderators were not satisfied with the quality and standard of the L4MLMS Set 2 QP and requested resubmission for second moderation, after identified concerns had been addressed.
- Excluding the L4MLMS Set 2 QP, the external moderators were satisfied with the quality and standard of the QPs when all recommendations had been effected.

Chapter 2

Moderation of Site-based Assessment

Internal assessment, called Site-Based Assessment in the AET sector, is an important component of examinations and contributes 50% towards the final mark required for certification.

This section of the report, firstly, reflects on the external moderation of the instruments used for internal assessment and, secondly, on the external moderation of the SBA tasks as implemented during teaching and learning.

1. MODERATION OF SBA INSTRUMENTS

1.1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Benchmark developed common assessment tasks (SBA tasks) for Site-Based Assessment to be implemented and used by the training and assessment centres whose learners write examinations towards certification of the GETC: ABET L4 qualification. The tasks for each learning area consist of three activities: typically an assignment, a report and a test, all with equal weightings.

Umalusi evaluates the quality and standard of the SBA tasks, based on a set of criteria and standards approved by Council. This external moderation process is similar to that of the moderation of question papers.

1.2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

Benchmark presented a set of three SBA tasks per learning area for the two learning areas for external moderation. This external moderation is conducted annually and the tasks are implemented the following academic year. The instrument used to externally moderate the SBA tasks has nine criteria:

- Adherence to Curriculum and Subject Guidelines
- Content coverage
- Cognitive skills
- Language and bias
- Formulation of instructions and questions
- Quality and standard of SBA tasks
- Marking guidelines
- Use of assessment methods and forms

- Internal moderation.

Each criterion has a set of specific questions against which the SBA tasks are evaluated and assessed. The moderator evaluates the task against the criterion and makes a judgement, considering four possible outcomes:

- No compliance
- Limited compliance
- Compliance in most respects
- Compliance in all respects.

The moderator evaluates the SBA tasks using a scoring system that examines how the requirements of all nine criteria have been met, as well as the quality and standard of the set of SBA tasks as a whole, considering one of four possible outcomes:

- Approved
- Conditionally approved – no resubmission
- Conditionally approved – resubmit
- Rejected – if the standard and quality of the SBA tasks are entirely unacceptable.

It is important to note that the moderation decision considers the three SBA tasks per learning area as one set of tasks (as a whole) for final approval purposes.

1.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The table below gives a breakdown of the status of the SBA tasks after the completion of all external moderation exercises.

Table 2.1 Status of SBA Task Sets after External Moderation

| MODERATION | APPROVED | CANR | % APPROVED + CANR | CAR (Resubmit) | REJECTED | % REJECTED | TOTAL |
|--------------|----------|----------|-------------------|----------------|----------|------------|----------|
| 1ST Mod | 0 | 0 | 0% | 2 | 0 | 100% | 2 |
| 2ND Mod | 2 | 0 | 100% | 0 | 0 | 0% | 2 |
| TOTAL | 2 | 0 | | 2 | 0 | | 4 |

The table shows that the SBA tasks for both L4LCEN and L4MLMS were conditionally approved and required a resubmission for second moderation (CAR). The external moderators raised the following concerns after first moderation:

- (a) The L4LCEN task had two activities only, with no test submitted as the third activity. This impacted negatively on all the sub-criteria relevant to the

test.

- (b) The L4LCEN task contained no evidence of internal moderation. No internal moderator's report was submitted. The task also did not include an assessment grid.

Table 2.2 below gives an overview of the moderation findings, based on the nine moderation criteria and measured against the four possible compliance outcomes, as evaluated after second moderation.

Table 2.2 Quantitative Analysis of Moderation of SBA Tasks

| | COMPLIANCE (4 moderations) | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | NONE | LIMITED | MOST | ALL |
| C1. Adherence to SAGs | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| C2. Content Coverage | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| C3. Cognitive Demand | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| C4. Language and Bias | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| C5. Formulation of Instructions and Questions | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| C6. Quality and Standard of SBA Tasks | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| C7. Mark Allocation and Marking Guidelines | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| C8. Use of Assessment Methods and Forms | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| C9. Internal Moderation | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| 10. Overall Impression | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 |
| Total Instances: | 2 | 4 | 19 | 15 |
| | 15% | | 85% | |

An analysis of Table 2.2 shows six instances of non-compliance across five of the criteria. Umalusi is pleased to report that the moderation of the SBA tasks had a compliance rating of 85%, with 15 instances of ALL compliant. Examiners did well to ensure that 3/4 LAs were fully compliant with the *Language and Bias* criterion. The findings are further analysed below.

C1. Adherence to Subject and Assessment Guidelines

- The three tasks as developed for each LA complied with the SAGs.
- The interpretation of the outcomes per unit standard was lacking, as the L4MLMS tasks were not aligned to each outcome in the unit standard.

C2. Content coverage

- The external moderator for L4MLMS was concerned with inadequate coverage of the Specific Outcomes and Assessment criteria linked to US ID 119373, which deals with Shape, Space and Measurement.
- The tasks for L4LCEN covered relevant topics such as an advertisement and letter writing.
- All tasks met the minimum SAG requirements.

C3. Cognitive demand

- The three SBA tasks for L4MLMS scored a *LIMITED* compliance rating. This was conditionally approved for resubmission for second moderation.
- The external moderator for L4MLMS was concerned that the weightings for cognitive L1-3 did not comply with the assessment body's own guidelines for examiners.
- The SBA tasks for L4LCEN met the SAG cognitive requirements.

C4. Language and bias

- The SBA tasks for both L4LCEN and L4MLMS met this criterion with compliance ratings in ALL respects.

C5. Formulation of instructions and questions

- The internal moderator for L4LCEN found the instructions to be appropriate in all activities.
- The instructions in the SBA tasks for L4MLMS were clear and unambiguous, but the internal moderator made recommendations to be addressed and resubmitted for second moderation. These were effected accordingly.

C6. Quality and standard of SBA tasks

- The tasks for L4MLMS achieved a *LIMITED* rating and required second moderation. The external moderator was concerned with the spread of cognitive weightings as well as alignment of specific outcomes to the unit standards.
- The three SBA tasks for L4LCEN met the minimum SAG requirements.

C7. Mark allocation and marking guidelines

- The tasks for L4LCEN achieved an *ALL* compliance rating. The external moderator was satisfied with the mark allocation and spread of marks for the various cognitive levels.
- The external moderator for L4MLMS made recommendations regarding concerns and requested resubmission. The recommendations were effected accordingly.

C8. Use of assessment instruments and forms

- The SBA tasks for L4LCEN included different forms of assessment and were structured as per the SAGs.
- The Benchmark *Exam Guidelines* policy document for L4MLMS is silent about assessment methods and forms. The external moderator recommended clear articulation of this issue in the policy document.

C9. Internal moderation

- The internal moderation of the L4MLMS tasks were found to be *LIMITED*, requiring second moderation. The external moderator made recommendations regarding the assessment grid and the alignment of specific outcomes.
- The external moderator for L4LCEN saw no concrete evidence that internal moderation had been conducted but noted that, based on indirect evidence, it may have been.

C10. Overall impression of SBA tasks

- The external moderator for L4LCEN believed, notwithstanding concerns raised, that overall, the SBA tasks met minimum standards and requirements.
- The SBA tasks for L4MLMS did not meet minimum standards and requirements after first moderation. Following second moderation, after the recommendations of the external moderator were implemented, the tasks were approved.

1.4. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The assessment body provided detailed marking guidelines with instructions to the facilitator.
2. The examples and illustrations used in the question papers were suitable,

2. MODERATION OF SBA PORTFOLIOS

2.1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Benchmark is responsible for presenting SBA marks that have been quality assured and which accurately reflect the competence of each candidate. To manage the SBA process, Benchmark is required to develop SBA tasks that fulfil all requirements of the relevant unit standards and assessment guidelines, and that encourage authenticity. In addition, the assessment body must ensure that the tasks are internally moderated.

The external moderation of SBA is an important aspect of the quality assurance process because such moderation:

- Ensures that the SBA tasks comply with national policy guidelines and Umalusi directives
- Establishes the scope, extent and reliability of SBA across all assessment bodies offering the qualification
- Verifies internal moderation of both the set tasks and the completed tasks
- Identifies challenges to this aspect of assessment and recommends solutions
- Reports on the quality of SBA within assessment bodies.

2.2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

The terms and conditions for accreditation, as agreed with Umalusi, required Benchmark Assessment Agency (Pty) Limited to register a minimum of 200 learners per learning area, across a number of learning and assessment centres and provinces. It must be noted that Benchmark could register only 51 candidates for Communication in English and 58 candidates for Mathematical Literacy. It was then agreed that Umalusi would moderate the full complement of candidates for both learning areas, as noted in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 SBA Portfolios Sample Requested

| LEARNING AREA | CODE | # PORTFOLIOS |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------|
| 1. Communication in English | L4LCEN4 | 51 |
| 2. Mathematical Literacy | L4MLMS4 | 58 |
| TOTAL | | 109 |

Benchmark did not submit the number of SBA portfolios as agreed, as nine candidates did not write the examination for Communication in English and 12 candidates were absent for the Mathematical Literacy examination. Table 2.4 shows the actual number of portfolios received for external moderation.

Table 2.4 SBA Portfolio Sample Moderated

| CENTRE NAME | # SUBMITTED | | # MODERATED | |
|------------------------------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------|
| | L4LCEN | L4MLMS | L4LCEN | L4MLMS |
| 1. Bokone ABET Centre | 11 | - | 11 | - |
| 2. Cullinan Mine ABET Centre | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 3. Modikwa ABET Centre | 18 | 18 | 11 | 9 |
| 4. Bagshaw ABET Centre | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| 5. FN Battery ABET Centre | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| 6. Siyaloba ABET Centre | - | 24 | - | 9 |
| 7. Camdeboo ABET Centre | - | 3 | - | 3 |

The external moderation of portfolios for the November examination was conducted off-site, i.e. at the homes of the external moderators, from 18–21 November 2014. Benchmark submitted 30 of the 53 portfolios for L4LCEN (57%), and 48 of the 54 portfolios for L4MLMS (89%). Umalusi moderators evaluated a total of 23 SBA portfolios for L4LCEN and 24 SBA portfolios for L4MLMS.

The external moderators evaluated the SBA portfolios using an instrument designed for this purpose. The evaluation also considered the reports from internal moderators. The evaluation instrument provided for qualitative feedback as well as quantitative analysis of the responses. SBA moderation takes into account the following criteria:

- C1. Does the Educator Portfolio of Assessment (POA) contain all **relevant policy and Assessment Guideline documents**?
- C2. Is there an **Assessment Plan** in the Educator POA, aligned to policy?
- C3. Is there **evidence** that the educator **implemented** the three tasks as per the Assessment Plan/Schedule?
- C4. Is there **evidence** that the educator **has completed marksheets** for all learners for each task?
- C5. Is there any **evidence** that **internal moderation** was conducted?
- C6. Does the Learner Portfolio of Evidence contain all **relevant documents**?
- C7. Is there any evidence that the learners **completed the tasks**?
- C8. Are the tasks **assessed according** to the agreed **criteria**?
- C9. Did the educator **use** the **marking guidelines/rubrics appropriately** to allocate marks?
- C10. Did the learners **complete** the assessment tasks?
- C11. Did the learners **interpret** the assessment tasks **correctly**?
- C12. Did the **learners' responses meet the expectations/demands** of the tasks?
- C13. Were the learners able to **respond to the different cognitive levels** as set in

the tasks?

C14. Was the **marking consistent** with the marking tools?

C15. Is the **quality and standard** of the marking **acceptable**?

C16. Is the **mark allocation in line** with the **performance of the learner**?

C17. Is the **totalling and transfer of marks** to the marksheets **accurate**?

2.3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Table 2.5 summarises the compliance ratings, based on evaluating the evidence against the evaluation criteria.

Table 2.5 SBA Portfolio Compliance with Criteria

| | COMPLIANCE FREQUENCY (out of 187) | | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|---------|------------|-----|
| | NONE | LIMITED | MOST | ALL |
| C1. | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| C2. | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 |
| C3. | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| C4. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| C5. | 0 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| C6. | 1 | 4 | 6 | 0 |
| C7. | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| C8. | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 |
| C9. | 0 | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| C10. | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 |
| C11. | 0 | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| C12. | 0 | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| C13. | 0 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| C14. | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| C15. | 1 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| C16. | 0 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| C17. | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 |
| | 53 | | 134 | |
| | 28% | | 72% | |

An analysis of Table 2.5 clearly illustrates that internal assessment was a concern, as 28% of portfolios evaluated fell below the acceptable compliance ranges: 53/187 instances of NO and LIMITED ratings. Of particular concern was that the 47 portfolios evaluated had a total of 26 NO compliance ratings. The findings of the evaluation process are explained below, using each criterion as a reference.

- C1. Does the Educator Portfolio of Assessment (POA) contain all **relevant policy and Assessment Guideline** documents?
- The educator portfolios did not comply with this criterion: 6/11 portfolios were given *NONE* ratings for L4MLMS; the remaining five portfolios for L4LCEN met *MOST* of the compliance ratings.
 - The assessment body did not submit a single POA for L4MLMS educators.
- C2. Is there an **Assessment Plan** in the Educator POA, aligned to policy?
- The educator portfolios for L4LCEN contained some documents relating to assessment planning or scheduling, but there was no evidence of any rubrics or marking guidelines.
 - The assessment body did not submit a single POA for L4MLMS educators.
- C3. Is there **evidence** that the educator **implemented** the three tasks as per the Assessment Plan/Schedule?
- The assessment body did not submit a single POA for L4MLMS educators.
 - Not one of the POAs for L4LCEN had any evidence that the SBA tasks were implemented. It appears the educators worked directly from the workbooks provided by the assessment body.
- C4. Is there **evidence** that the educator **has completed marksheets** for all learners for each task?
- All portfolios evaluated had copies of completed marksheets.
- C5. Is there any **evidence** that **internal moderation** was conducted at the following levels?
- The 23 portfolios evaluated for L4LCEN contained evidence that internal moderation had been done.
 - 10/24 L4MLMS portfolios had some evidence of internal moderation. The remaining 14 portfolios had no evidence of any internal moderation having been conducted.
- C6. Does the Learner Portfolio of Evidence contain all **relevant documents**?
- The learner portfolios for L4LCEN satisfied *MOST* of the sub-criteria, but the L4MLMS portfolios did not meet the minimum standards. Twenty portfolios met *LIMITED* requirements and three portfolios met *NONE* of the requirements.
- C7. Is there any evidence that the learners **completed the tasks**?
- Yes. Except for nine learners from Siyaloba, who met *MOST* of the sub-criteria, all other learners completed the SBA tasks and met *ALL* the requirements.

- C8. Are the tasks **assessed according** to the agreed **criteria**?
- The assessors did very well: 38/47 portfolios had evidence that the tasks were assessed according to the agreed criteria.
 - The assessor from Siyaloba did not use the criteria and was given a rating of *LIMITED* compliance.
- C9. Did the educator **use** the **marking guidelines/rubrics appropriately** to allocate marks?
- In contrast to criterion 8 above, the assessors for L4LCEN did not use the rubrics and/or marking guidelines. All were given *LIMITED* compliance ratings.
 - The L4MLMS assessors used the rubrics. Three complied with *ALL* requirements and two met *MOST* sub-criteria. Two assessors did not use the rubrics and/or marking guidelines.
- C10. Did the learners **complete** the assessment tasks?
- All the learners completed the SBA tasks. L4MLMS learners did particularly well as 5/6 centres met *ALL* requirements.
 - The L4LCEN tasks proved a slight challenge: 3/5 centres met *MOST* requirements; the remaining two centres met *ALL* requirements.
- C11. Did the learners **interpret** the assessment tasks **correctly**?
- Overall the learners interpreted the task well. Ten learners from Siyaloba had a *LIMITED* understanding of the L4MLMS tasks.
- C12. Did the **learners' responses meet the expectations/demands** of the tasks?
- Overall the learners' responses met the expectations of the tasks, with the exception of 10 learners from Siyaloba who had a *LIMITED* understanding of the L4MLMS tasks.
- C13. Were the learners able to **respond to the different cognitive levels** as set in the tasks?
- Learners from Cullinan, FN Battery and Siyaloba ABET centres struggled with the L4MLMS tasks.
 - Overall all the learners did well with the L4LCEN tasks.
- C14. Was the **marking consistent** with the marking tools?
- The marking of the L4LCEN tasks was consistent with the marking tools.
 - The markers from Cullinan and Modikwa ABET centres were inconsistent with the use of the L4MLMS marking tools and may have had difficulty understanding the use of rubrics and marking guidelines.

- C15. Is the **quality and standard** of the marking **acceptable**?
- The standard of marking was very good, except for the marking at Cullinan and Modikwa ABET centres.
- C16. Is the **mark allocation in line** with the **performance of the learner**?
- The markers for L4LCEN did exceptionally well, but again the markers at Cullinan and Modikwa demonstrated competence issues.
- C17. Is the **totalling and transfer of marks** to the marksheets **accurate**?
- Yes, the totals and transfer of marks on all marksheets were accurate, with compliance ratings varying from *MOST* to *ALL*.

2.4. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. Evidence suggested that the SBA tasks for L4LCEN were well developed, with educators and learners complying with most requirements.

2.5. AREAS OF CONCERN

1. It is a concern that no Educator Portfolios of Assessment (POAs) were submitted for the L4MLMS educators at the six ABET centres sampled.
2. Evidence presented suggested that the L4MLMS educators did not understand the use of rubrics and marking guidelines.
3. It was of serious concern that none of the 47 portfolios evaluated had any reference or supporting documents for the implementation of the tasks.
4. Umalusi is concerned with the low enrolment numbers as this impacts negatively on quality assurance of assessment practices and the viability of the assessment body.

2.6. DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

1. It is imperative that Benchmark Assessment Agency ensures that educator portfolios are submitted with the requested moderation sample for evaluation.
2. Benchmark Assessment Agency must ensure that all educators understand and use the SBA assessment rubrics. Systems must be put in place to ensure that the use of the rubrics is explained to the assessors.
3. Benchmark Assessment Agency must implement a strategy to ensure that assessors know and understand how to plan for formative assessment. The assessment body can develop templates to assist the assessors with assessment planning and scheduling.

Chapter 3

Monitoring of Writing

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to report on how examinations were conducted in the two centres that wrote under the auspices of Benchmark. This report will summarise all the activities as they transpired during the writing of examinations, list areas of good practice and those that need to be improved, and recommend a course of action that can lead to improved performance and delivery.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi visited two Benchmark examination centres as depicted in the table below.

Table 3.1 Centres Monitored for the Writing of Examinations

| NAME OF MONITORS | EXAMINATION CENTRE | LOCATION | DATE OF VISIT | LEARNING AREA WRITTEN | NO. OF CANDIDATES |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| CJ Mokoena C Nyangintsimbi | Modikwa AET Centre | Driekop, Limpopo | 24/11/2014 | L4MLMS | 18 |
| CJ Mokoena C Nyangintsimbi | Bokone AET Centre | Atok | 27/11/2014 | L4LCEN | 20 |

The two examination centres monitored in Limpopo were the only centres in the province writing examinations offered by Benchmark. During the monitoring visits, an Umalusi pre-designed monitoring instrument was completed. The instrument required recording of all relevant observations in the examination centres and also verbal responses from the delegated personnel on the conduct, management and administration of the writing processes.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

(a) Delivery and storage of examination material

The examination materials were couriered from the assessment body to the exam centres and back to the assessment body after the completion of the writing process. The materials were delivered at least one month before the commencement of the examination. Modikwa AET Centre, as an example, received their examination

materials on 30 October 2014.

The concern with the very early delivery date was the storage of the question papers for this lengthy period. The question papers were stored in a lockable cupboard at Modikwa, but the keys to the office were left with the security guards on duty every day when the chief invigilator went home. This meant the security guards had unfettered access on a daily basis to the offices where the exam material was stored.

(b) Invigilator training

The chief invigilators reported that they received training before the start of the examinations. The training was conducted telephonically and lasted approximately 15 minutes. The concern with this type of training was that it lacked depth and rigour as it could not adequately address the key policies and regulations pertaining to examinations.

(c) Preparation of the examination room

The two examination centres did not have the relevant examination policies and regulations on file. There were no copies of the examination manual, examination time table, invigilation time table and the attendance register for invigilators and monitors in the examination file at the Modikwa AET Centre.

The desks and chairs used in the examination rooms were of an acceptable standard and both centres used seating plans to organise the writing process.

The 20 candidates at Bokone AET Centre writing L4LCEN were allowed to sit for the examination without any proof of identification. The chief invigilator did not record this as an irregularity.

Candidates at both examination centres were allowed to enter the exam room with cell phones. The monitor heard the invigilator tell the candidates at Bokone AET Centre that as long as the cell phones were not on their desks, it was okay to have the cell phones with them. One candidate's cell phone rang continuously, creating a disturbance. The invigilator only removed the cell phone after a while. The chief invigilator did not record this incident as an irregularity.

(d) Time management

Neither examination centre managed time well as the question papers only arrived 20 minutes before the start of writing. By the time the question papers were distributed,

candidates only had about 15 minutes to complete the cover page, read the instructions and check the paper for technical accuracy. Candidates had less than 10 minutes' reading time. The invigilator did not explain the examination rules before the start of the examination.

(e) Activities during writing

In both centres, writing of examinations started at the correct time. A disturbing factor was candidates constantly asked the invigilator at Bokone AET Centre for clarity relating to the questions in the question paper. Every time when asked, the invigilator explained in detail to the candidates what was expected of them. This irregularity was not reported by the chief invigilator.

Bokone AET Centre allowed candidates to go to the toilets without supervision. This was a clear violation of Benchmark policy, which states that once writing has commenced, no candidate will be allowed to leave the examination room for any reason, except in emergencies, and with supervision.

A matter worth noting was the manner in which scripts were collected at the end of the examination session. Candidates simply stood up and left their scripts on their desks. This system had some shortcomings as a candidate could easily take another candidate's script without being noticed, or may leave the room without having completed some crucial information needed for script identification.

(f) Packaging and transmission of scripts after writing

Modikwa AET Centre was not provided with any plastic bags or a container in which to secure the scripts for transporting to the assessment body. This is a concern as the scripts remained at the centre for approximately three days before being couriered to the assessment body.

(g) Monitoring by the assessment body

The assessment body monitored the conduct of examinations at both centres.

(h) Irregularities

It was a concern that neither examination centre recorded or reported any of the irregularities that were evident during the external monitoring of the writing phase of the examination.

4. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. None noted.

5. AREAS OF CONCERN

1. The question papers and examination materials were delivered one month before the commencement of the examination at the examination centres. This is a concern considering the inadequate security measures for the safekeeping of these materials at the centres.
2. The use of teleconferencing to train chief invigilators was a concern as there was no evidence that the training had the necessary depth and rigour required to conduct credible examinations.
3. It was a concern that the Modikwa AET Centre did not have any copies of examination policies and regulations. The centre could also not provide any evidence of planning for the conduct of the examination.
4. Bokone AET Centre allowed candidates to write the examination without proper identification.
5. It was clear that the invigilators at both centres monitored did not understand, or respect, examination regulations when they allowed candidates to keep cell phones on their desks and even allowed them to use the cell phones during the examination!
6. The invigilators at both centres demonstrated poor understanding of examination regulations: they arrived late with the examination material, did not check the question papers for technical correctness, and did not read the examination rules and instructions to the candidates before the commencement of the examination.
7. It was a serious concern that the invigilator at Bokone AET Centre assisted the candidates in understanding various aspects related to questions.
8. It was a concern that the completed answer scripts remained at Modikwa AET Centre for a number of days before they were sent to the assessment body.
9. The assessment body did not report irregularities observed by Umalusi monitors.

6. DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

1. The assessment body must ensure that security measures at the examination centre are improved before dispatching examination materials to the centre.

2. The assessment body must put in place a training programme for the effective training of chief invigilators and invigilators. The assessment body must provide evidence of the training schedule, course content and attendance registers.
3. It is the responsibility of the assessment body to ensure that all centres accredited to write the examinations offered by the assessment body meet the minimum standards to conduct the examination. The examination centres must provide evidence of planning for the conduct of the examination. The assessment body must verify the state of readiness of an examination centre to conduct the examinations. Benchmark must provide Umalusi with state-of-readiness reports. Benchmark Assessment Agency must develop and provide examination centres with comprehensive directives on the conduct of examinations.
4. Benchmark must put measures in place to ensure that no candidate is allowed to write the examination without proper identification.
5. Benchmark must issue policy directives regarding the possession and use of cell phones when candidates sit to write the examination. The examination centres must submit comprehensive reports to Benchmark concerning the conduct of the examination.
6. It is imperative that all invigilators adhere to policies and regulations regarding the conduct of national examinations. Benchmark must issue a code of conduct for chief invigilators and invigilators. Signed copies of this code must be filed for record keeping.
7. Benchmark must investigate the incident of the invigilator assisting the candidates at Bokone AET Centre, and submit a written report to Umalusi.
8. The assessment body must put a system in place to ensure that all examination scripts are returned to the assessment body within 24 hours (or less) after the completion of the examination.
9. Benchmark Assessment Agency must submit a comprehensive irregularity report to Umalusi for the writing and marking phases of the examination.

Notes

Chapter 4

Monitoring of Marking

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of external monitoring of the marking phase of the examination is to evaluate the integrity of the marking process. Marking practices are observed for any anomalies or challenges that may impact on the integrity of the process. At the same time, best practice that will enhance the marking process is identified.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi monitored the marking phase of the GETC: ABET 4 examination, as offered by Benchmark, at its head office in Rivonia in Johannesburg, as shown in the table below.

Table 4.1 Centre Monitored for the Marking of Examinations

| NAME OF MONITORS | EXAMINATION CENTRE | LOCATION | DATE OF VISIT | LEARNING AREAS MARKED | NO. OF CANDIDATES |
|------------------|--------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| CJ Mokoena | Benchmark | Rivonia, | 06/12/2014 | L4MLMS | 46 |
| | Head Office | Gauteng | | L4LCEN | 42 |

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

(a) Planning for marking

The answer scripts from all examination centres were centrally marked at the offices of Benchmark in Johannesburg. The marking involved a total of 88 scripts for both Mathematical Literacy and Communication in English. A detailed management plan and relevant supporting documents for the management of the marking session were available.

(b) The marking centre

The marking centre had all the required resources, such as telephones, fax machines, photocopy machines, scanners, internet, etc. Each learning area was marked in a separate room. Both marking rooms had sufficient space and proper furniture to accommodate all the markers. Marking started at 8 a.m. and was concluded by 4 p.m. on the second day of marking.

(c) Safety and security of examination material

There were security guards at the main entrance gate of the marking centre, but no officials at the marking rooms to control the flow of scripts.

A strong room was used for the safekeeping of all exam material. The risk of scripts getting lost was low as all marking was done in a central venue.

(d) Marking personnel

All markers appointed were qualified educators teaching in public schools. Most were qualified assessors with at least three years' teaching experience in their subject of expertise.

There was only one examination assistant (EA), who currently is a student at a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college. The examination assistant passed the requisite competency test.

(e) The training of markers

Benchmark did not make use of internal moderators, but appointed chief markers to oversee the marking process. The chief markers and markers for the two learning areas were trained in preparation for the marking process.

The chief marker and the markers form the discussion panel for each question paper. The chief marker led the discussions. The markers then marked exemplar scripts after the memorandum discussions were completed. Marking of the examination scripts started only once the chief marker was satisfied that all markers had an acceptable level of understanding and competence to do so.

(f) Marking procedure

All scripts were stored in a strong room and only the marking centre manager had access to this area. From the strong room, scripts were taken to the marking rooms for marking. No changes to the memorandum were allowed once it was approved.

The chief markers moderated a sample of scripts as the markers completed a batch of scripts. The chief marker gave feedback to the markers where necessary. The Umalusi moderator verified a sample of the scripts moderated by the chief marker. The chief marker and external moderator gave feedback as necessary.

The examination assistant assisted in checking the correctness of sub-totals and totals as indicated in the answer scripts. Marks were then transferred to the marksheets. Marking procedures were in accordance with policy and directives, except that minutes were not kept of memorandum discussions.

(g) Handling of irregularities

Benchmark established an Irregularities Committee comprised of the managing director, the marking centre manager, and the chief markers for the two learning areas. The markers were trained to identify irregularities during the marking process. No irregularities were identified during the marking process.

(h) Electronic capturing of marks

The completed marksheets were electronically captured on the Examination Administration System. A double capturing system was used to minimise errors.

4. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The centralised marking centre worked very well for the marking of the GETC: ABET L4 answer scripts. The marking centre manager had good administrative processes and procedures in place.

5. AREAS OF CONCERN

1. There was no security in the building where the actual marking was done to control the flow of scripts.

6. DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

It is strongly recommended that Benchmark Assessment Agency review its security arrangements at the marking centre and put measures in place to restrict the flow of scripts into and from the marking venues. All scripts into and out of the marking venues must be authorised by the marking centre manager.

Notes

Chapter 5

Memorandum Discussions

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The marking process involves a large number of people, each of whom may have a slightly different interpretation of the question paper and marking memorandum. Furthermore, each script marked is unique and a judgement of its adherence to the memorandum has to be made.

The memorandum discussion workshops create a platform for markers, chief markers, internal moderators and Umalusi's external moderators to discuss and approve the final marking instrument. This is the platform where all possible model answers are considered and taken into account.

The purpose of the workshops is to ensure that all possible variables are considered; that all role-players in the marking process adhere to the same marking standard and that all marking is fair, consistent and reliable.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

Benchmark Assessment Agency facilitated memorandum discussions at their offices in Johannesburg on 6 December 2014. These workshops created a platform for examiners and internal moderators to discuss the marking instrument and consider all possible model answers. The external moderator for each learning area attended the marking guideline discussions to:

- (i) Ensure that the approved question paper was the one presented to candidates
- (ii) Guide the interpretation of the questions and the required answers
- (iii) Approve the final memorandum to be used by all markers in a specific learning area.

Umalusi moderated 100% of the two learning areas for the November 2014 examinations. The two learning areas selected were Communication in English and Mathematical Literacy.

The external moderators evaluated the finalisation of the marking guidelines using a standardised instrument designed for this purpose. This report reflects on the evaluation

process based on the key reporting criteria used in the instrument.

The finalisation of the marking guidelines take into account the following criteria:

- C1. Outline the **processes and procedures** followed during the memorandum discussion. (Who chaired the session, when did it take place, etc.)
- C2. What **role** did you as **Umalusi moderator** play in the memorandum discussion?
- C3. Do the examination question paper and memorandum represent the **final version of the paper moderated and approved**, or conditionally approved, by Umalusi?
- C4. Were the **changes recommended** by you appropriately **amended in the marking memorandum**?
- C5. **Did the chief marker/s mark a sample of scripts?** Complete the table below.
- C6. Was the **chief marker's report** of the previous examination discussed at the memorandum discussion?
- C7. **Did all markers, examiners and internal moderators attend** the memorandum discussion?
- C8. **Did all markers, examiners and internal moderators come prepared** to the memorandum discussion, e.g. each having worked out/prepared possible answers?
- C9. Did each marker, examiner and internal moderator receive a **sample of scripts to mark**?
- C10. Were there any **changes and/or additions made to the marking memorandum** during the memorandum discussion? List the changes/ additions that were made.
- C11. What **impact** did the changes/additions have **on the cognitive level** of the answer/response required? C12. Were clear motivations provided for the changes/additions to the marking memorandum? Elaborate.
- C13. **Did you approve the changes/additions** to the marking memorandum? Elaborate.
- C14. Where a learning area is marked at more than one marking centre, **what measures are in place to ensure that changes to the memorandum are communicated effectively** and the same adjustments are implemented by all marking centres involved?
- C15. Were **minutes of the memorandum discussions** submitted to the marking centre manager/delegates at the memorandum discussion meeting?
- C16. Having gone through the memorandum discussion, **list the concerns/problems that were not appropriately addressed** during the setting and moderation process.
- C17. **Overall impression and comments.**

The internal moderator, chief marker and the markers form the discussion panel for each question paper. The internal moderator leads the discussion. The markers and the internal moderator mark a section of exemplar scripts after the memorandum discussions are completed. Marking of the examination scripts starts only once the internal moderator is satisfied that all markers have an acceptable level of understanding and competence to do so.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Overall the evaluation reports showed that there was a clear understanding of the purpose of the meetings and the role that these play in the assessment process. The following summary is based on the moderators' evaluation reports:

- (a) The group was addressed by the Benchmark director, as well as the examination official, who outlined the expectations, principles, procedures and processes governing the memorandum discussion, approval of final memorandum, and the application of the approved memorandum during the marking process.
- (b) The memorandum discussions were led by a substitute Benchmark internal moderator appointed for the day, as the permanent Benchmark internal moderator and examiner for L4MLMS were not available.
- (c) The entire sessions were devoted to critical discussion of the memoranda in terms of correct answers, acceptable alternative answers, refinement and finalisation of the memoranda to facilitate consistent and efficient marking of scripts at the marking centres across the provinces.
- (d) Prior to the discussion of the marking guidelines, Umalusi moderators explained the guiding principles and procedures governing the design and acceptance of the final marking guidelines. The Umalusi moderators made a concerted effort to discuss core principles of marking specific to learning areas, for example, the allocation of carried accuracy (CA) of marks and breakdown in a solution.
- (e) As the answers to each sub-question were discussed, the marking guidelines were updated when, with valid reason, it was necessary do so. Alternative solutions put forth by participants were critically debated by all but were accepted by the Umalusi moderators only if they were convinced such answers were correct and justified in the context of the question. The Umalusi moderators contributed by providing guidance, support and critical feedback throughout the discussions.

- (f) Once the marking guidelines were provisionally finalised, chief markers and markers were trained in their use. Feedback on the allocation of marks to responses contained in the dummy script helped to test and refine the marking guidelines.
- (g) Throughout the memoranda discussions the external moderators helped the examining panel to explain mark allocation to participants and ensured that additional solutions were correctly and unambiguously reflected in the memorandum. This ensured that the adjusted memoranda that resulted could be used effectively by all markers. The external moderators served as adjudicators in cases of differences of opinion, mark allocation, and the viability and correctness of certain solutions provided by some participants.
- (h) The external moderator for L4MLMS helped to correct a misprint in some QPs. This related to a work place floor plan diagram in Q15 of the L4MLMS QP. The external moderator noted that while some question papers had the wrong diagram, others were printed correctly as per the approved external moderator report dated 28 August 2014. No plausible explanation was put forth by the examination official for this discrepancy.
- (i) At the end of the memoranda discussions, the Umalusi moderators approved and signed off the final memoranda for both learning areas.

4. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The marking of exemplar scripts to ensure an acceptable level of competence before the commencement of marking worked well for all markers.

5. AREAS OF CONCERN

1. The assessment body did not implement the recommendations of the external moderator for L4MLMS as detailed in section (h) above regarding the misprint of the work place floor plan diagram in Q15 of the question paper.
2. The examiner and internal moderator for L4MLMS did not attend the finalisation of the memoranda and moderation of marking discussions as they were involved in the marking of the National Senior Certificate (NSC).

Chapter 6

Verification of Marking

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Moderation of marking is a critical process in the quality assurance of an examination because the marking process involves a large number of people, each of whom may have a slightly different interpretation of the question paper and the marking memorandum.

Moderation of marking validates the process of marking and determines whether marking has adhered to the marking guidelines approved by the external moderators after memorandum discussions. Moderation of marking also determines the standard of internal moderation and whether or not internal moderators have fulfilled their duties responsibly.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

The moderation of marking took place at the offices of Benchmark Assessment Agency in Johannesburg on 6–7 December 2014 and included two LAs, i.e. Communication in English and Mathematical Literacy.

The moderation process evaluated adherence to agreed marking practices and standards. Moderation focuses on the following aspects:

- Quality and standard of marking
- Adherence to marking memoranda
- Consistency of allocation of marks
- Accuracy of totals
- Internal moderation.

In addition to these aspects, the external moderators were also asked to scrutinise the answer scripts for possible irregularities.

3. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Although 53 candidates wrote the L4LCEN examination and 54 candidates wrote the L4MLMS examination, it must be noted that Benchmark Assessment Agency made only nine scripts available for external moderation of marking for each learning area, as

explained in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Number of Scripts Moderated

| | # WROTE | # MARKED | # MODERATED |
|--------|---------|----------|-------------|
| L4LCEN | 42 | 42 | 9 |
| L4MLMS | 46 | 46 | 9 |

The Umalusi moderators were able to report positively on the verification of marking as all processes and procedures were adhered to. The quality of marking was deemed to be good in the learning areas moderated. The following summary is based on the moderators' evaluation reports and reflects on each moderation criterion.

C1. Adherence to marking memorandum

- The marking teams for both L4LCEN and L4MLMS consisted of the internal moderator, chief marker and two markers.
- The internal moderator, chief marker and markers understood and applied the memoranda consistently. They recognised alternative answers presented by candidates and awarded carried accuracy (CA) marks appropriately.
- Marking was centralised and allowed for markers to discuss issues with the internal moderator if necessary.

C2. Consistency and accuracy

- Umalusi's moderation of marking confirmed that marking was generally accurate and consistent.
- There was one incident of inconsistency with the marking of L4LCEN, but this issue was quickly resolved with the assistance of the chief marker and internal moderator.
- An issue regarding incorrect allocation of marks for the L4MLMS paper was resolved after intervention by the internal moderator.
- The aforementioned two incidents did not compromise the credibility of the marking process, but rather served to strengthen the marking process.

C3. Quality and standard of marking

- External moderators were satisfied that marking was of an acceptable standard.
- Markers were amenable to suggestions by the internal moderator and applied such suggestions appropriately in the marking process.
- In most instances alternative answers were recognised and the markers

awarded the necessary marks.

C4. Internal moderation

- Internal moderation was reasonably efficient and effective in all cases. The internal moderator ensured that marking was conducted in accordance with the agreed marking memorandum and practices, thus resulting in fair, valid and reliable marking.
- The internal moderators were reasonably proficient and diligent in identifying and appropriately correcting errors made by one or two markers. Generally the internal moderators' suggestions were followed in the marking process.

C5. Candidates' performance

Table 6.2 Candidates' Performance in L4LCEN

| CENTRE NUMBER | L4LCEN | EXCELLED/ STRUGGLED WITH QUESTIONS/ SECTIONS OF SYLLABUS |
|---------------------|--------|---|
| Bokone – Learner 1 | 59 | Average performance for all questions |
| Bokone – Learner 2 | 40 | Performed poorly for Question 1&3; average for question 2 |
| Bokone – Learner 3 | 33 | Performed poorly for Question 1&3; average for question 2 |
| 4U Development | 83 | Performed excellently for all questions |
| Cullinan | 57 | Average performance for all questions |
| Luthando | 58 | Above average performance for all questions |
| Modikwa – Learner 1 | 79 | Performed excellently for all questions |
| Modikwa – Learner 2 | 53 | Performed poorly for Question 1&2; average for question 3 |

Table 6.3 Candidates' Performance in L4MLMS

| CENTRE NUMBER | L4MLMS | CANDIDATE STRUGGLED WITH QUESTIONS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS: | COMMENTS |
|--------------------------------|--------|--|--|
| Modikwa AET Centre [MV Nkwana] | 38 | Section A: 6 out of 16 Section C: 8 out of 21 Section D: 3 out of 21 Section E: 6 out of 21 | Multiple choice questions were poorly answered. Candidate was not able to perform calculations associated with exchange rates. Candidate did not have sufficient grasp of reading and interpreting graphs and solving word problems. Topics associated |

| CENTRE NUMBER | L4MLMS | CANDIDATE STRUGGLED WITH QUESTIONS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS: | COMMENTS |
|--|--------|--|--|
| | | | with geometry and measurement posed a challenge. Candidate was not able to perform elementary statistical calculations. |
| Modikwa AET Centre [DE Shabangu] | 36 | Section A: 7 out of 16 Section C: 9 out of 21 Section D: 6 out of 21 Section E: 5 out of 21 | Multiple choice questions were poorly answered. Candidate did not have sufficient grasp of reading and interpreting graphs and solving word problems. Candidate lacked skills to interpret and analyse data given in a table. Topics associated with geometry and measurement posed a challenge to candidate. Candidate was not able to perform elementary statistical calculations. |
| Modikwa AET Centre [Alice Shale Seshane] | 16 | Section A: 3 out of 16 Section B: 4 out of 21 Section C: 4 out of 21 Section D: 0 out of 21 Section E: 5 out of 21 | Candidate did not prepare adequately for examination. |
| Modikwa AET Centre [HP Moroga] | 20 | Section A: 6 out of 16 Section B: 2 out of 21 Section C: 2 out of 21 Section D: 2 out of 21 Section E: 8 out of 21 | Candidate did not prepare adequately for examination. |
| Modikwa AET Centre [Mankie Lesebe] | 16 | Section A: 3 out of 16 Section B: 5 out of 21 Section C: 5 out of 21 Section D: 2 out of 21 | Candidate did not prepare adequately for examination. |

| CENTRE NUMBER | L4MLMS | CANDIDATE STRUGGLED WITH QUESTIONS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS: | COMMENTS |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---|---|
| Modikwa AET Centre [Koketso Shaeeda] | 23 | Section E: 3 out of 21 Section A: 5 out of 16 Section B: 5 out of 2 Section C: 2 out of 21 Section D: 4 out of 21 Section E: 7 out of 21 | Candidate did not prepare adequately for examination. |
| Modikwa AET Centre [GP Malebane] | 14 | Section A: 3 out of 16 Section B: 4 out of 21 Section C: 3 out of 21 Section D: 4 out of 21 Section E: 2 out of 21 | Candidate did not prepare adequately for examination. |
| Cullinan L Centre [Ephraim Koto] | 15 | Section A: 4 out of 16 Section B: 1 out of 21 Section C: 4 out of 21 Section D: 0 out of 21 Section E: 6 out of 21 | Candidate did not prepare adequately for examination |
| Camdeboo [Auslin Jooste] | 53 | Section C: 10 out of 21 Section D: 5 out of 21 | Candidate did not have sufficient grasp of reading and interpreting graphs and solving word problems. Topics associated with geometry and measurement posed a challenge to candidate. |

C6. Findings and suggestions

- Generally the question papers were found to have been fair, seen to have covered most of the syllabi content and were pitched at the correct cognitive level for no learners to be disadvantaged.
- The question paper assessed the core assessment standards adequately and was cognitively balanced.
- The language used was suitable and comparable for NQF Level 1 (ABET Level 4) candidates.
- The structure of the memorandum, which also contained alternative answers,

contributed to successful facilitation of marking and moderation.

C7. Irregularities

Table 6.4 Irregularity Register

| LEARNING AREA | IRREG. | COMMENTS |
|---------------|--------|---|
| L4LCEN | None | There were no instances of irregularities in the scripts. |
| L4MLMS | None | There were no instances of irregularities in the scripts. |

C8. Adjustment of marks

- Both external moderators recommended that raw marks be awarded for this examination.
- The cognitive level of the question paper was in accordance with the prescribed Benchmark assessment framework policy.
- The difficulty level of the question paper was within the prescribed norms.
- The questions were fair and comparable to questions set across other assessment bodies for both L4LCEN and L4MLMS – NQF Level 1 (ABET L4).
- Candidates seemed not to have been ready or prepared for the examination.
- The language used in the paper was unambiguous and accessible to second language learners.

4. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

1. The marking process complied with the minimum standards and requirements, but no exceptional practices were noted.

5. AREAS OF CONCERN

1. None noted.

6. DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

1. None noted.

Notes

Chapter 7

Standardisation and Verification of Results

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Standardisation of results and verification of the capturing of marks are quality assurance processes undertaken to ensure fairness and validity of the learner attainment through statistical moderation and standard deviation of the actual performance of the learner and the current cohort.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

The Benchmark Assessment Agency (Pty) Ltd presented two learning areas for standardisation at the standardisation meeting held on 18 December 2014. Benchmark administered the examination of the GETC: ABET L4 for the first time since its existence in 2010. Umalusi standardised the two subjects despite the small number of candidates. The standardisation principles were applied consistently to all assessment bodies.

3. DECISIONS: BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT AGENCY

Since there is no historical norm, raw marks were accepted for the two learning areas presented for standardisation by Benchmark Assessment Agency, namely:

1. Communication in English, and
2. Mathematical Literacy.

The table below indicates a summary of the decisions taken at the standardisation meeting.

Table 7.1 Standardisation Statistics

| DESCRIPTION | Total |
|--|----------|
| Number of learning areas presented for standardisation | 2 |
| Raw marks | 2 |
| Adjusted (mainly upwards) | 0 |
| Adjusted (mainly downwards) | 0 |
| Number of learning areas standardised: | 2 |

Conclusion

This report has reflected on the key quality assurance of assessment processes as explained in the various chapters dedicated to each process. An analysis of each process and the various quantitative and qualitative evaluation reports highlighted areas for improvement and noted good practices.

CHAPTER 1: QUESTION PAPER MODERATION

Umalusi is satisfied that all question papers approved by external moderators met the Subject and Assessment Guidelines, notwithstanding the concerns raised above. The process to evaluate the question papers served its purpose as constructive feedback was given by the external moderators and the assessment body reworked the recommendations into the revised question papers. The quality and standard of the approved question papers did not compromise the GETC: ABET L4 examinations and were fit for purpose.

CHAPTER 2: MODERATION OF SBA INSTRUMENTS

Benchmark developed and submitted SBA Common Assessment Tasks (CATs) for external evaluation. The SBA tasks for both L4LCEN and L4MLMS were conditionally approved and required a resubmission for second moderation (CAR). The L4LCEN tasks had only two activities, with no test submitted as the third activity. This impacted negatively on all the sub-criteria relevant to the test.

Additionally, the L4LCEN task did not contain any evidence of internal moderation. An internal moderator's report was not submitted. The task did not include an assessment grid. The SBA CATs did, however, provide detailed marking guidelines, with instructions to the facilitator. In most instances, the examples and illustrations were suitable, appropriate, relevant and academically correct.

It was recommended that the assessment body implement strategies and interventions to ensure that examiners and internal moderators have a better understanding of the specific outcomes and assessment criteria of the specific unit standards, to improve the quality and standard of the SBA CATs.

CHAPTER 2: MODERATION OF SBA PORTFOLIOS

The external moderation of SBA portfolios for the November examination was

conducted off-site, i.e. at the homes of the external moderators, from 18–21 November 2014. Benchmark submitted 30 of the 53 portfolios for L4LCEN (57%), and 48 of the 54 portfolios for L4MLMS (89%). Umalusi moderators evaluated a total of 23 and 24 SBA portfolios for L4LCEN and L4MLMS respectively.

The evaluation of SBA portfolios was of an acceptable standard. Benchmark must investigate strategies to strengthen internal moderation of SBA portfolios. Internal moderation is an important level of quality assurance, as internal moderators must support educators and give guidance on understanding and implementing SBA tasks. Umalusi acknowledges that the implementation and marking of SBA tasks at institutional level is the responsibility of Adult Education and Training Centres and that it is difficult for the assessment body to account for daily operational issues. Benchmark must, however, put measures in place to monitor and evaluate the implementation of internal assessment and the improvement thereof.

CHAPTER 3: MONITORING OF WRITING

Umalusi deployed monitors to assess the conduct and administration of the GETC: ABET L4 examinations. The monitoring of the writing phase identified areas of concern as the administration of the conduct of the examinations did not meet the required standards. Benchmark must peruse the Directives for Compliance and Improvement noted in this report, and introduce measures to effectively address the concerns raised.

CHAPTER 4: MONITORING OF MARKING

The monitoring of the marking phase confirmed that Benchmark Assessment Agency met, and exceeded, the minimum quality standards. All marking was seen to be largely fair and valid, with no incident that could compromise the integrity of the marking process.

CHAPTER 5: MEMORANDUM DISCUSSIONS

External moderator reports indicated that the finalisation of the marking guidelines met the required standards. This resulted in comprehensive memoranda that were well understood by all markers, who also displayed competence in the use of the marking memorandum. The memorandum discussion meetings were professionally managed and the purpose of the meetings was fulfilled, to a large extent, in each learning area. The memorandum discussions can be said to have served their intended purpose in every externally moderated learning area. Umalusi is satisfied that the concerns raised in the main report did not compromise the integrity and validity of the question papers and the marking guidelines. The memorandum discussions served to strengthen and

improve the marking process.

CHAPTER 6: VERIFICATION OF MARKING

The moderation of marking took place at the offices of Benchmark Assessment Agency (Pty) Ltd in Johannesburg on 6–7 December 2014 and included two LAs, i.e. Communication in English and Mathematical Literacy. The moderation and verification of marking confirmed that the process was sound and that the marking of question papers adhered to the marking memoranda.

External moderators did not note any irregularities that could compromise the integrity of the examinations or the marking process. All marking was seen to be largely fair, valid and credible.

CHAPTER 7: STANDARDISATION AND VERIFICATION OF RESULTS

Raw marks were accepted for both learning areas during the standardisation process. Umalusi remained consistent in applying the standardisation decisions for the GETC ABET Level 4 qualification, irrespective of the sample size. Umalusi Council, through the Accreditation Committee of Council, is satisfied with the manner in which Benchmark presented their results for standardisation. Therefore Benchmark needs to migrate from the pilot phase.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, notwithstanding the few concerns raised above, Umalusi Council approved the release of the Benchmark Assessment Agency 2014 GETC: ABET L4 results at the approval meeting held on Sunday, 28 December 2014. The results were approved on the basis that, after careful consideration of all the qualitative reporting on the quality assurance conducted, Umalusi found no reason to suggest that the credibility of the Benchmark Assessment Agency 2014 GETC: ABET L4 November 2014 examinations was compromised in any way.

Notes

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