

MAKOYA

November 2014
ISSUE
NO: 8

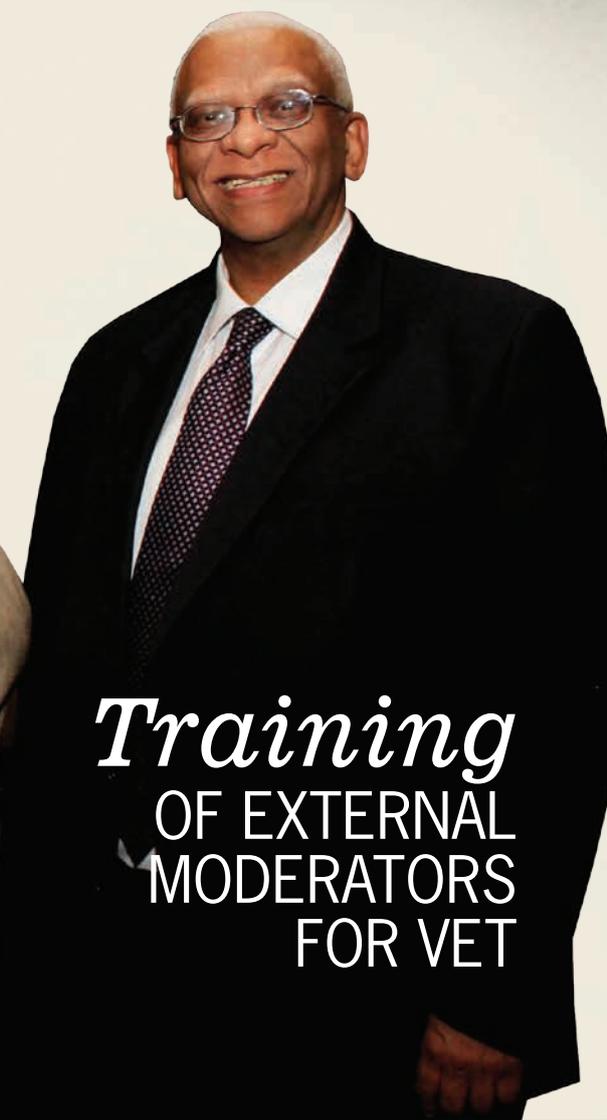


Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF UMALUSI
November 2014



*Leading
the way
at SAAEA*



*Training
OF EXTERNAL
MODERATORS
FOR VET*

Umalusi
welcomes
new
Council



*Seminar
Series*



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Editor's Pen



This issue of Makoya is packed with informative articles on the work of Umalusi as a Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training. Makoya is Umalusi's external newsletter which communicates key messages about the mandate, plans, achievements and projects of the organisation. In this issue you will read about the appointment and welcome of the new Umalusi Council whose term started on 8 June 2014. As the new Council takes over from the old one, the CEO of Umalusi, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, extends a hearty welcome to the new Council in his article. Furthermore, Mr Marco MacFarlane takes a look at the seminar series on local and international assessments in light of Umalusi's partnership with Wits University and the Centre for Education Policy Development.

Dr Celia Booyse gives a summary of UNISA's 4th annual public lecture entitled, "Sustainable Tourism in a Democratic South Africa," Also, Mr Duma Sithebe writes about the 8th SAAEA conference

in Windhoek, Namibia;-while Ms Helen Matshoba covers the events of the AEAA conference in Livingstone, Zambia. Ms Marisa du Toit weighs in on the "training of external moderators for the quality assurance of assessment in Vocational Education and Training (VET)." Ms Anne McCallum outlines the process of verification in her article aptly titled, "what can go wrong with verification of your certificate?"

Lucky

By Lucky Ditaunyane

FROM THE CEO'S DESK



Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, welcomed its newly appointed Council at a formal function in Pretoria on Tuesday, 26 August 2014.

In attendance were Umalusi staff and several dignitaries from the education sector, including the Minister of Basic Education, the Honourable Ms Angie Motshekga, who was the keynote speaker.

In her speech, Minister Motshekga emphasised the importance of Umalusi as "a key role player in the general and further education and training sector in South Africa". She noted that "over the years, Umalusi has been able to successfully execute its mandate, in large part due to the excellent and professional manner in which its Council conducts its affairs".

In thanking the Minister for his appointment, the new Chairperson of Umalusi Council, Professor John Volmink, said "the credibility of standards remains Umalusi's unique selling proposition in terms of its broader national mandate as a Quality Council in General and Further Education and Training".

As the Chief Executive Officer of Umalusi, I extend a warm welcome to the new members of Council and wish them a successful tenure at Umalusi. Their tenure started on 8 June 2014 and will end on 7 June 2018. I am greatly honoured to be in the company of such highly esteemed and experienced individuals: men and women of great stature in the educational field in South Africa.

The new members of Umalusi Council introduced were:

Professor John D Volmink (Chairperson of Council)
Extraordinary Professor, Mafikeng Campus, North-West University

Dr Laurel R Becker
Senior Lecturer, Department of Education Humanities, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria

Professor Peter AD Beets
Department of Curriculum Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Stellenbosch

Ms Fathima Dada
Vice-President, Schools International Business Unit, Pearson

Mr Marius HW Ehrenreich
Principal, Groote Schuur High School

Professor Ntate D Kgwadi
Vice-Chancellor, North-West University

Professor Coert F Loock
Associate Professor, Department of Educational Management and Vice-Dean, University of Johannesburg

Dr Eric B Mahlobo
Chief Director: Programmes and Qualifications, Department of Higher Education and Training

Professor Mahlomaholo G Mahlomaholo
Education Studies, University of the Free State

Professor Leketi Makalela
Head of the Division of Languages, Literacies and Literatures, University of Witwatersrand

Dr Mofialepule R Mampane
Senior Lecturer, Educational Psychology, University of Pretoria

Professor 'Mabokang LE Monnapula-Mapesela
Dean, Academic Development and Support, Central University of Technology, Free State

Mr Hubert M Mveli
Acting Deputy Director General: Curriculum

Dr Nkosinathi SP Sishi
Head of Department, Department of Education: Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Dr Mafu S Rakometsi
CEO: Umalusi

Mr Joe Samuels
CEO, South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Mr Ahmed Essop
CEO, Council on Higher Education (CHE)

Ms Joyce Mashabela
CEO, Quality Council on Trades and Occupations (QCTO) 

Dr Mafu S Rakometsi
Chief Executive Officer



See pictures
on p4 and p5

SEMINAR SERIES:

Working our way up on national and international assessments

The results of national and international assessments of South African learners were the focus of the August Seminar Series, organised by Umalusi, the Centre for Education Policy Development and the Wits School of Education.

South Africa's learners often fare poorly in such assessments. This seminar, held on 7 August 2014, focused on why this was the case, as well as possible interventions to improve average scores.

The first of three presentations was delivered by Dr Stephen Taylor, from the Department of Basic Education. Concerning matric results in Maths and Maths Literacy, he argued that there were now more learners taking, and passing, some form of mathematics than ever before. He demonstrated convincingly that for many learners who would never have had an opportunity to pass Mathematics, Maths Literacy provided important base skills in Mathematics that would otherwise be absent. Dr Taylor went on to discuss the results of learners in international tests like Trends in International Maths and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEC). He also touched briefly on trends in the Annual National Assessments (ANAs).

In international results, South African learners consistently scored below the mean. Despite this, he said, it was clear that the overall results were improving. For example, in the TIMSS between 2002 and 2011, Grade 9 learners improved noticeably. Indeed, he said, the scores displayed "one of the steepest improvements that we have seen in these kinds of assessments among other countries". He said it was clear that South Africa's system still had a long way to go, but there was encouraging evidence that it was at least moving in the right direction.



From left: Dr S Taylor, Prof A Muronga and Prof J Adler

Professor Jill Adler presented an innovative professional development model aimed at improving teaching and learning in Mathematics, which has been under way for five years. She concurred with Dr Taylor's assessment that Maths Literacy provided an important pathway for learners who did not necessarily have the aptitude to do Mathematics and, indeed, may not need the



Mr Marco MacFarlane

advanced mathematical skills taught in that subject. She ably demonstrated how the professional development programme for FET Phase teachers was having a positive effect on learner results, and how such targeted interventions could affect the system at large as their cumulative effects were felt.

Professor Azwinnidini Muronga argued powerfully in the final presentation that society as a whole needed to get behind not just the results of assessments, but dealing with the substance of learning and doing Science and Mathematics. It was easy, he said, to come up with an assessment that provided better scores, but it was the skills and aptitudes that such scores represented that must be enhanced and celebrated in our society. Professor Muronga noted that it was not only well-off, urban schools that achieved top results: many rural and poorer schools had a tradition of producing top achievers. How did they do it? Through the commitment of the teachers, the learners and the community in which the school was embedded, he said. This 'holy trinity' of schooling provided an environment where learning was cherished and learners were given the opportunity to truly achieve – not just by aiming for top marks, but for true skill in their disciplines.

Overall, the three speakers agreed that the best interventions were those done early in a learner's school career, as these were most likely to lay the groundwork for future advanced learning.

Once again, the seminar in this series generated a wealth of important discussion and debate. Delegates left with a sense that South Africa's system was moving in the right direction – and, perhaps, with ideas of their own about how to keep it moving that way. 🌟

Leading the way

Umalusi steals the show at the 8th SAAEA Conference

Umalusi staff stood tall in all instances at the 8th Southern Africa Association for Educational Assessment (SAAEA) conference held in Windhoek from 16-18 June 2014. Whether it was leading academic discussions, delivering thought-provoking presentations or creatively representing the rainbow nation in a truly unique South African dance at the cultural evening, Umalusi's involvement was outstanding.

This year the SAAEA Conference was hosted by the Namibian Ministry of Education with the theme "Educational assessment and evaluation in diversity". The conference theme was translated into three sub-themes:

1. Quality assessment for all and multiculturalism
2. Conflict between assessment and other related policies in education
3. Quality assessment for all and the socio-economic challenges.

Five Umalusi delegates, led by the Chief Executive Officer, attended and presented papers at the three-day conference. The team did Umalusi proud by presenting seven papers. Dr Celia Booyse and Mr Biki Lepota each presented two papers and also chaired sessions. Umalusi presenters were noticeably mobbed by the conference delegates after their presentations. Needless to say, all the presentations were of high quality.

The first of Dr Booyse's papers was on "The impact of feedback on the quality of assessment in a diverse schooling community". The focus was on "the use of formative assessment practices: the value of effective questioning in eliciting evidence of understanding; the role of peer- and self-assessment; and how clear task- and assessment criteria could include reflective thinking practices." The second paper was titled, "Towards answering questions about productive thinking: an analysis of Practical Assessment Tasks of the NSC Services Subjects". This paper had its focus on "the educational challenge of developing learners with critical minds and an ability to apply productive thinking skills in the particular socio-economic environments that are needed in growing an economy."



From left: Dr EZ Mazibuko, Mr D Sithebe, Dr MS Rakometsi, Dr C Booyse, Mr M MacFarlane, and Mr F Chinyamakobvu.

Mr Lepota challenged the audience with his paper called "Let the playing field be levelled before reading scores can be compared across languages". This paper sets out "to investigate to what extent the low scores in the 2006



Mr Duma Sithebe

Sepedi version of the PIRLS reading test are attributable to unintended sources of question difficulty". On his second paper, titled "Challenges with interpretations and uses of language scores: focus on South African home language exams", Mr Lepota: "The main thesis was that to achieve equivalence and to enable full comparison of cross-languages marks, it is necessary for all home languages to measure the same construct using the same measurement scale, otherwise it would be difficult, if not impossible, to make meaningful comparisons of results across all official languages."

Mr Frank Chinyamakobvu shared his research from the Kha-Ri-Gude project in a paper called "Benefits of learning through mother tongue: lessons from the Kha-Ri-Gude mass literacy campaign in South Africa".

Mr Marco MacFarlane clarified the similarities and differences between regional education systems in his paper,

"A comparative report on the education landscape of the countries in the Southern African Association for Educational Assessment".

I also presented a paper, co-authored with Dr Booyse, titled "Question paper compliance in terms of cognitive categories, level of difficulty and progression for subjects in selected vocational programmes in South Africa". This presentation shared the findings of the item-by-item analysis of the NCV Level 4 examination papers of the subjects in the Hospitality and Tourism programmes, which Umalusi had undertaken in 2011 and 2012. In a nutshell, the analysis found that the level 4 NCV examinations in the Tourism and Hospitality Studies programmes did not fully comply with the requirements of the Assessment Guidelines.

It is worth noting that Umalusi led the Research Forum of SAAEA until this responsibility was delegated to Zambia. 

UMALUSI WELCOMES



NEW COUNCIL



CERTIFICATE VERIFICATION:

WHY – AND HOW – IT CAN GO WRONG

It is vital that information submitted to Umalusi for certificate verification corresponds exactly with candidate details on the original certificate – and learners must make sure there are no errors on their certificates.

Umalusi issues certificates for qualifications that can be used to access work and, depending on the qualification, to study at an institution of higher learning. Whether the owner of a certificate is entering a work place or an institution of higher learning, the exit level certificate – or the information on it – will probably be sent to Umalusi for verification. The following are all Umalusi-certified exit level certificates:

- Senior Certificate
- National Senior Certificate (FET Colleges)
- National Senior Certificate (Schools)
- National N3 certificate
- National Certificate (Vocational) Levels 2, 3 and 4
- General Education and Training Certificate.

When Umalusi is asked to verify whether a certificate supplied by a candidate corresponds with the information on the Umalusi certification database, problems can occur.

Candidates supply their personal information – name(s), surname, date of birth and ID/passport number – when they register to write an examination. This is printed on the certificates. If no ID number is available, the date of birth is printed on the certificate. Every certificate is issued with a 12-character, alpha-numeric number – 11 digits and 1 alpha letter, e.g. 08082011766W – which is unique to each candidate's record.

Sadly, and all too often, candidates do not check the accuracy of the information on their certificates. Or a candidate has been issued with an ID document after writing the examinations, which differs, for various reasons, from the registration information and, therefore, that printed on the Umalusi certificate. While this does not invalidate the Umalusi certificate, it does place the onus on the candidate to prove that the certificate is legitimately theirs.

When the change in ID information is as a result of a voluntary change following a legal process, the candidate receives a letter from the Department of Home Affairs confirming the change. This would prove ownership of the Umalusi certificate.

However, if the candidate has supplied information to the Department of Home Affairs that differs from that supplied when registering to write the matric examination, the candidate is required to supply an affidavit and any other supporting documents, indicating that at the time of writing the matric examination their personal information was 'X' and is now 'Y'. In addition, they must supply a letter from, for example, the school at which they wrote the exam, or from the pastor of the church they attend.



Ms Anne McCallum

This is sometimes problematic, however: because of the prevalence of fraud, particularly in respect of matric certificates, many employers will not accept affidavits and other information.

The following incident is an example of how certificate verification can go wrong when incomplete information is supplied by a verification agency; and when identities are confused, or "stolen":

There are two Aphane families who live in neighbouring towns and who each became a son richer on the same day – 1991/12/29. For traditional reasons, they gave their sons the same names – Siphso Thabang.

Eighteen years later there are two young men named Siphso Thabang Aphane. They attend different schools. Both register to write their matric examinations in the same year. Both have received their ID books – but the Department of Home Affairs has issued the same ID number to both. One discovers the duplication and he is issued with a new ID number.

There is now a Siphso Thabang Aphane (Siphso 1) with ID number 911229 549 ..83, and a second Siphso Thabang, with ID number 911229 006 .. 89. Both write their matric examinations. Siphso 1 passes. Siphso Thabang Aphane with ID number 911229 006 ..89 – let's call him Siphso 2 – does not. Both receive a certificate from Umalusi: Siphso 1, a National Senior Certificate (the full qualification); and Siphso 2, a Subject Statement that lists only the subjects passed.

Sometime later Siphso 2 applies for a job, but without a matric certificate he has no hope of getting it. He remembers his namesake who passed the National Senior Certificate. He goes to the Department of Education and requests a replacement certificate, claiming he has lost his original. At the same time, he requests and receives a Confirmation letter (confirming his results), which he submits to his prospective employer. In due course, he receives his "replacement" certificate – but the ID number (that of Siphso 1) on it differs from that in Siphso 2's identity document. He claims that the Department of Home Affairs issued him with a new ID number.

CERTIFICATE VERIFICATION: WHY – AND HOW – IT CAN GO WRONG

On behalf of his prospective employer, a verification agency submits a request to Umalusi to verify Siphso 2's matric credentials. No certificate, or ID, numbers are submitted: just names, surname, date of birth and the year he qualified. The verification returns a positive result, and Siphso Thabang Aphane, ID number 911229 006 .. 89, i.e., Siphso 2, is appointed to the position, because he has evidently passed his matric. No one is the wiser that Siphso 2 does not in fact have a National Senior Certificate and that the document he supplied merely verifies Siphso 1's credentials.

This (fraudulent) incident illustrates how important ALL necessary information is when seeking reliable verification. This means submitting:

- A certificate number
- An ID number
- A date of birth
- The names and surname as they appear on the certificate.

Umalusi requires all this information for accurate verification and to prevent situations such as the above occurring.

Further, a candidate who has a qualification may be given an 'Unconfirmed' or, worse, a 'No record found' verification result if incomplete information is submitted.

Should any of the information supplied not correspond with that on the Umalusi database, or no record can be found for a candidate using the information supplied, the consequences may be negative.

A negative result will also occur when a request is submitted for a woman using her married surname instead of her maiden name, if that appears on the certificate. Umalusi will have no record of a candidate by the (married) name on the certification database.

The most accurate way of obtaining a 'Confirmed' verification result, apart from supplying Umalusi with a photocopy of the certificate, is for the verification agency to supply the certificate number and all other information as printed on the certificate.

It is therefore important that all candidates check their personal information is correct on the certificate as soon as they receive it. There is a six month period after the certificate has been issued during which administrative mistakes, such as date of birth, ID number and spelling errors in names, can be corrected. 🇷🇷

To protect the identities of the people involved, names and other information have been changed. The scenario is, however, perfectly accurate.

TOURISM PUBLIC LECTURE: A PLATFORM FOR RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING



Dr Celia Boooyse

'Sustainable tourism in a democratic South Africa – transforming lives' was the theme of the 4th Annual Public Lecture hosted by the Department of Tourism, in partnership with the Tourism Business Council of South Africa (TBCSA) and University of South Africa (Unisa), on 2 September 2014 at the Unisa main campus.

The lecture focused on tourism issues and provided tourism stakeholders, research and higher education institutions with an arena for engagement and to begin to map a way forward for the sector. The newly appointed Minister of Tourism, Mr Derek Hanekom, attended.

Dr Celia Boooyse, Manager: Curriculum, represented Umalusi as a panel member to respond to the lectures of Professors Cina van Zyl and Maggi Linington from Unisa, and Chef Stephen Billingham, the President of the South African Chefs Association (SACA). Dr Boooyse's co-panellists were Ms Kathy Bergs, general manager of Fair Trade Tourism, and Mr Mavuso Msimang, TBCSA board chairman.

It provided a prime opportunity for Umalusi to strengthen stakeholder relations across sectors, while delegates appreciated receiving information on Umalusi's past and current research, along with those reports.

In her response, Dr Boooyse said she appreciated the suggestion from Mr Billingham that there needs to be a seamless learning process from high school learner to trade professional. His suggestion that the high school Tourism and Hospitality Studies' curriculum include financial accounting, legal aspects and business management was in line with recommendations made in Umalusi's 'At your Service report on NCV' and the reports to be launched on the NSC subjects, Tourism, Hospitality Studies and Consumer Studies. Dr Boooyse added that research showed management, leadership, communication (language) and organisational competencies were crucial in the hospitality and tourism industry. Her references to the importance of emotional intelligence and the development of soft skills were reiterated by Mr Hanekom when he presented his final response on the day's discussions.

Stakeholders displayed enthusiasm and were keen to engage in efforts to uplift Tourism and related subjects at school level to bring about more capable, motivated individuals entering the tourism industry at tertiary level. 🇷🇷

UMALUSI TRAINS 18 NEW QAA MODERATORS FOR VET SECTOR

Among other responsibilities, Umalusi must, as a Quality Council, assure the quality of assessment at exit points for the qualifications it certifies. In assuring consistency in standards, Umalusi is responsible for setting, monitoring and maintaining national standards across subjects and programmes, over time. This responsibility is met through well-established quality assurance processes.

The Quality Assurance of Assessment (QAA) Unit recently trained 18 new external moderators to moderate the assessment standards of the national examinations for Vocational Education and Training (VET). This brought the number of external moderators appointed by Umalusi for the VET sector to 117. The team consists of personnel from universities, universities of technology, colleges and the private sector.

Appointed on three-year contracts, external moderators moderate the standard of question papers and practical tasks that form part of the final examinations; assessments conducted at the sites of learning; and the marking of national examinations.

Moderators also contribute to the standardisation of results by submitting qualitative reports for the quality assurance processes in which they are involved.

To ensure the integrity of the quality assurance processes, Umalusi conducted a three-day training session, from 16–18 July 2014, to equip the new moderators for the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) and the National Technical Certificate (N3) with the knowledge and skills to efficiently and effectively execute the quality assurance processes. Question paper moderation received most attention as it is considered the most important mechanism for setting assessment standards. Deliberations of a high standard were maintained during the training session.

Umalusi is confident that the moderators will make positive contributions to improving the quality of assessment in technical and vocational education, and we look forward to working with the team. 🇿🇦



Ms Marisa Du Toit

INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT, EXAMINATIONS PRACTICES SHARED AT 2014 AEEA CONFERENCE

The Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEEA) held its 32nd annual conference from 11–15 August 2014 at the Zambezi Sun Hotel in Livingstone, Zambia.

The theme, Educational Assessment in a Knowledge Society, provided a platform for countries to share best assessment and examinations practices in the continent.

The conference draws delegates from Examination Councils throughout Africa (East, Central, West and SADC regions) and outside of Africa (Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America). It provided a platform for Umalusi to benchmark itself in terms of assessment and examinations practices, and an opportunity for Umalusi to share its own research findings on an international platform.

South Africa was represented by delegates from Umalusi, the Independent Examinations Board and Tshwane University of Technology. Umalusi was represented by Ms Helen Matshoba, Manager in the Qualifications sub-unit, who presented a paper titled



Ms Helen Matshoba

"The nature and purpose of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) in addressing the changing needs of the South African economy". Her paper argued that since the curriculum and assessment underpinning the NCV were designed for the changed needs of the economy, it should replace the N-courses. The argument was supported by research on a comparative curriculum and assessment analysis of engineering subjects in the NCV and the N-courses.

Of particular interest to Umalusi was the work done by Nigeria's Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), which delivers the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). The JAMB has been preparing that country to deliver Computer Based Testing (CBT) since 2007 and offered the first CBT in 2013. The information presented an opportunity for Umalusi to learn from JAMB in preparing to implement CBT for the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA).

The Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) shared the work that they are doing around e-marking. Selected papers from the annual conferences are published in AEAA journals, and that of the 2013 conference, held in Arusha, Tanzania, was distributed at this year's event. Of more than 60 papers presented in 2013, only 23 were published in the journal. Ms Matshoba's paper, titled 'Making a case for Life Orientation to be a nationally examined subject in the South African National Senior Certificate', was one of only 23 selected for publication. Umalusi received 10 copies of the journal.

In 2015, the conference will be held in Ghana. Umalusi looks forward to another opportunity to engage with role players in educational assessment on a broader scale.

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From left: Dr L Ntoi, Ms H Matshoba, Mr M Chilala, Ms M Maneo.

UMALUSI NEW STAFF



Dr Phihlo Pitjeng
Data Manager



Ms Agnes Mohale
Statistical Information and
Research Unit: Researcher



Mr Clifford Mokoena
Monitoring and Evaluation-
QAA Unit : Assistant Manager



Mr Elton Chirowamhangu
Corporate Service - Finance
Unit : Assistant Manager



Mr Gumani Makwarela
Corporate Services:
Registry Clerk



Mr Isaac Mokhele
QCC Unit : Verification
Officer



Mr Klaus Lettau
Evaluation and
Accreditation: Evaluator



Ms Reabetswe Mathebe
Evaluation and Accreditation:
Senior Administrator



Ms Refilwe Selesho
Manager: Human Resource
Management & Development



Ms Reginah Kupa
Monitoring & Evaluation -
QAA Unit: Admin Assistant



Mr Marcus Lamola
Standardisation - QAA Unit:
Assistant Manager



Ms Cindy Thomas
Evaluation and Accreditation:
Schools Sub Unit Manager



Ms Coleen Millar
Team Leader: Evaluation and
Accreditation - Schools

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