

# MAKOYA

UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in  
General and Further Education and Training

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF UMALUSI  
March 2017



Why Umalusi  
standardises  
results

Page 8



WARNING..  
College  
fraud

Page 14

# INSIDE THIS PUBLICATION

## CONTENTS

From the Editor's Pen	PAGE 3
From the CEO's Desk	PAGE 4
Marking guideline discussions	PAGE 5
Quality service delivery	PAGE 7
Why Umalusi standardises results	PAGE 8
Report: State of Readiness 2016	PAGE 11
Helping schools achieve accreditation	PAGE 13
Beware of bogus colleges	PAGE 14
Scam alert	PAGE 15



Photo Caption: Well done Class of 2016



Mr. Lucky Ditaunyane

*Welcome to the first issue of Makoya in 2017. Umalusi has once again delivered on its quality assurance of assessment mandate as a Council for quality assurance in general and further education and training in South Africa.*

## From the Editor's Pen

Welcome to the first issue of Makoya in 2017. Umalusi has once again delivered on its quality assurance of assessment mandate as a Council for quality assurance in general and further education and training in South Africa. On 29 December 2016, Umalusi announced its approval of all the 2016 exit point examinations as administered by various assessment bodies: the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Independent Examinations Board (IEB), the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) and Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA).

We are delighted to bring you stories that depict key moments during the administration of the 2016 external examinations. In particular, this issue includes a most informative article written by the CEO, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, on the process of standardisation, as well as the reasons why Umalusi standardises results.

As usual, Makoya contains vital information about the work of Umalusi. Over the years, Umalusi has positioned itself as one of the key stakeholders in education. We are constantly looking for opportunities to communicate significant, strategic messages about the mandate and work of the organisation to our external stakeholders. Makoya is Umalusi's official newsletter and is one of the platforms that we use to achieve this goal.

Enjoy!



Dr. Mafu Rakometsi

## From the CEO's Desk

*The full framework of standardisation is an 18-month process that encompasses the exam cycle, from the setting of the paper to the final standardisation meeting.*

I am delighted to write this introductory piece for our official newsletter, Makoya, which covers some of the work of Umalusi, the Council for quality assurance in general and further education and training. One of Umalusi's national responsibilities is to quality assure all exit point examinations in line with the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act No. 58 of 2001. For us to approve the release of examination results, we need to satisfy ourselves that the various assessment bodies have complied with all our quality standards as outlined in the relevant directives.

It is unfortunate that in the past two months the Umalusi mandate

of standardising exit point results was subjected to unfair criticism. Suffice to say that there is nothing sinister with any of our quality assurance processes, including standardisation. To this end, Umalusi held a workshop for the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education in Parliament on 17 February 2017. The purpose of the workshop was to explain the concept of standardisation of results to members of the Portfolio Committee.

One of the key messages shared with the Portfolio Committee was that the quality assurance regime starts with the moderation of question papers and continues through the monitoring of assessment bodies' readiness

to administer examinations, the monitoring of the writing of examinations at exam centres across the country, the verification of marking, the statistical moderation of results and, lastly, the approval of datasets for certification. The full framework of standardisation is an 18-month process that encompasses the exam cycle, from the setting of the paper to the final standardisation meeting. I have sponsored an extensive piece on standardisation in this edition of Makoya, which I hope you will find useful and informative.

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William Chauke

# Marking guideline discussions: a crucial element in examinations

By William Chauke

The marking guideline discussion is one of the critical quality assurance processes used by Umalusi to ensure that the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations are conducted in a fair, valid and reliable manner every year.

For the 2016 November NSC examinations, the marking guideline discussion meetings involved 122 question papers. The meetings were conducted from 26 October 2016 to 4 December 2016. The discussion meeting for each paper ran over two days, with the exception of Business Studies, which was discussed over three days. Discussion meetings generally last from 08:30 to 18:00; while the last day starts at 08:00 and closes at 16:00. These meetings were conducted daily (including Saturdays and Sundays) in the conference rooms of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in Pretoria. Up to 18 conference rooms may be occupied during the sessions, as happened on 22 – 23 November 2016.

Marking guideline discussion

meetings are conducted in preparation for the marking processes, to ensure that markers maintain appropriate standards and uphold quality marking.

## Delegation

The marking guideline discussion meetings were attended by subject specialists from around the country, ranging from classroom-based educators to university lecturers, according to the deployment schedule. Each of the nine provincial education departments (PEDs)

sent a delegation of two subject specialists per paper (subject) offered in the province, namely, the chief marker and internal moderator, who are expected to

train the markers on their return. The delegation representing the DBE consists of chief examiner, examiner and internal moderator(s); as well as on-site moderators for various subjects. In addition, a team of Umalusi external moderators moderate and approve the question papers, and verify marking moderators for selected subjects. The total number of external moderators who attended the marking guideline discussion meetings exceeded 250 for DBE only (that is, excluding IEB and SACAI), since most moderators attended more

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than one session for subjects with two or more papers.

*In addition to producing a marking guideline to be used nationwide during centralised or decentralised marking, a broad spectrum of subject specialists are provided a platform to discuss and give shape to the final marking guideline, as well as share different approaches.*

and Acting CFO, attended the workshop in the Western Cape. The CEO welcomed the delegates and offered appreciation for the work they do for the nation.

The workshops in all three provinces highlighted the need to authorise the moderators who would conduct verification of marking, as well as a new process introduced for the first time in 2016. At the end of the workshop all attendants embraced the notion of authorisation and were eager to give it a try. The application of authorisation requires all moderators not involved in moderating a particular paper to answer the question paper and submit the answers to the manager responsible for moderating question papers at Umalusi, within 24 hours of the paper being written. The external moderators were mandated to authorise the verification of marking moderators as well as to oversee training during marking guideline discussion meetings.

#### **Role of Umalusi's external moderators during the marking guideline discussions**

The Umalusi external moderators who approve question papers are responsible for ensuring fairness, reliability and validity of the final marking guidelines in their specific subject or paper. They are required to approve and sign off the final marking guidelines to be used by DBE, IEB and SACAI in various marking centres nationwide. Each external moderator is a subject specialist who upholds the integrity of the subject. Thus, in the event that consensus is not reached during the marking guideline discussion meetings, the external moderator plays the role of advisor, mediator, negotiator, adjudicator or judge. Therefore the external moderator has the

final say during marking guideline discussion meetings.

#### **In a nutshell**

In addition to producing a marking guideline to be used nationwide during centralised or decentralised marking, a broad spectrum of subject specialists are provided a platform to discuss and give shape to the final marking guideline, as well as share different approaches. The new process, involving the verification of marking moderators (for authorisation) answering question papers, provides each moderator an opportunity to 'be in the candidates' shoes'. The external moderators are also available to provide further guidance as necessary during marking, and when candidates come up with unusual or unfamiliar responses.

#### **Preparations done by Umalusi**

In preparing itself for the marking guideline discussion meetings and verification of marking, Umalusi conducted decentralised training workshops for the external moderators in three provinces: Western Cape (12 October 2016), KwaZulu-Natal (13 October 2016), and Gauteng (14 October 2016). The focus was to train moderators responsible for verifying the marking in all nine provinces for DBE as well as for SACAI and IEB.

Three top officials from Umalusi, the CEO, Executive Manager



Tinyiko Khosa

For the QAA Schools sub-Unit, the 2016 academic year started with a focused plan for moderating School-Based Assessment (SBA), in parallel with the almost never-ending process of question paper moderation. Guided by branch head, Ms Zodwa Modimakwane, Umalusi deliberately sampled schools and subjects that reflected differences greater than 15% between the exam mark and the SBA. This was applied in all nine provinces for the Department of Basic Education (DBE). Additionally, this approach was used for the other assessment bodies, the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) and the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI).

Such marks are usually rejected: they are not used for resulting as they are inflated; hence their validity, credibility and reliability are all questionable. Obviously, rejecting such marks disadvantages the learners at the affected schools. However, some educators hold a contrary belief; that if the SBA mark is high enough, it will boost the chances of the learners passing their subject. Therefore, part of the reason for sampling these types of schools was to help teachers dispel this myth, which year after year leads to learners being disadvantaged when their SBA marks are rejected. The reports

# Umalusi delivers another year of quality

By Tinyiko Khosa

generated during the moderation process were to be used to help assessment bodies initiate focused intervention programmes to assist the various schools to improve internal assessment practices.

The September – October period was a hectic time for the QAA Schools sub-Unit. It used this time during the State of Readiness visit to audit all the provinces with regard to marker selection processes. It was crucial that Umalusi ascertained whether the markers appointed in the various provinces for the different subjects were qualified and met all the criteria for selection as markers. Umalusi saw a great improvement across provinces with

decentralisation model has been found to be cost-effective and therefore adds positively to Umalusi's drive on 'cost containment'.

The rigorous training paid off in the end. All the end of year quality assurance processes were conducted successfully. The marking guideline discussions were done in an intense manner and the verification of marking was even more rigorous than in past years.

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*The 2016 academic year was a huge success from a quality assurance point of view. Where marking was found to be of poor quality, remarking was done, such as in the case of Visual Arts in the Eastern Cape.*

regard to marker appointments – it was pleasing to note that provinces were now fully committing to checking the suitability of applicants for marking positions and had rejected most of those who did not qualify according to the set criteria. Umalusi was, as a result, pleased with the quality of marking observed during the 2016 NSC examinations.

The QAA Schools sub-Unit conducted training of moderators, in parallel with the process cited above, in preparation for the end of year quality assurance processes. The training was decentralised into three provinces; Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. The

in the Eastern Cape. Intensive investigation was also conducted in Limpopo to check the extent of the Mathematics Paper 2 question paper leakage. The extent of the leakage was found to have been limited to a few candidates in the Malamulele and Giyani areas and a few isolated learners in Gauteng. Umalusi is happy to see that yet another year of quality was delivered.

Thanks must go to the commitment of Umalusi staff and the external moderators who work tirelessly during the December period to ensure that the vision of Umalusi is upheld and realised.



Dr. Mafu Rakometsi

The issue of standardising national examination results is a matter that draws public interest whenever Umalusi announces the approval of results at its annual media briefing. Many educational commentators have recently weighed in on the rationale and actual methodology of standardisation. Hopefully this piece will help to clarify the rationale that underpins the concept of standardisation.

*The adjustments, decided by the Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) of Umalusi, consistently follow certain guiding principles. The ASC is comprised of academics who have extensive experience and expertise in statistics, statistical moderation, assessment, curriculum and education.*

One of Umalusi's responsibilities as a quality council for basic education is to ensure that assessments and examinations of the qualifications for which it is responsible are of the appropriate standard and quality.

Umalusi currently quality assures the following qualifications: the National Senior Certificate (NSC); the National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)); the National Technical Certificate – N3; the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC); and the

# Why Umalusi standardises results

By Dr. Mafu Rakometsi

Senior Certificate (as amended) (SC(a)).

Each of these qualifications has prescribed components of a) external assessment, which is set nationally; and b) internal assessment, which is set and assessed at site level, i.e. national examinations set by assessment bodies and site-based assessments set by schools, colleges and adult learning centres.

The provision of national examinations is the responsibility of an assessment body. This may be an accredited private assessment body, or the two departments of education, i.e. the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

careful moderation processes in place. Other potential sources of variability include undetected errors and candidates' interpretation of questions.

Qualitative inputs from external moderators, reports by internal moderators, post-examination analysis reports and the principles of standardisation are all considered during the standardisation process. Statistical moderation is also a part of this process.

Standardisation is thus necessary to achieve both comparability and consistency of examination standards across years.

Standardisation is employed as an important quality assurance process. It is used the world over to mitigate the sources of variability that impact on candidate performance from one year to another. Variable sources include, among others, variations in cognitive demand, levels of difficulty of questions, marking, curriculum changes and interventions.

Standardisation aims, in the main, to achieve equivalence in the standard of an examination across years, subjects and assessment bodies; and to deliver a relatively constant product to universities, colleges and employers.

## What is standardisation and is it necessary?

Standardisation is the moderation process used to mitigate the impact on candidate performance of exam-related factors other than candidates' subject knowledge, ability and aptitude. Standardising examination results is necessary to reduce any variations that may occur from year to year in the standard and marking of question papers, despite the

We can expect that when standards of examinations are equivalent, certain statistical mark distributions will correspond. It is this principle of correspondence that forms the basis for comparing distributions with norms/historical averages developed over four to five years. This comparison includes medians, means, pass/failure and distinction

rates; and pairs analyses, which, in the absence of historical data, play a valuable role.

The adjustments, decided by the Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) of Umalusi, consistently follow certain guiding principles. The ASC is comprised of academics who have extensive experience and expertise in statistics, statistical moderation, assessment, curriculum and education.

While the final stages of the standardisation process may seem highly statistical, this process of adjustment is the culmination of a long process of receiving, and reflecting on, qualitative and quantitative inputs. This begins with the setting of papers. It continues through question paper moderation; the writing, marking and verification of the exams; and, finally, ends with the adjustment of mark distributions.

Given the complex nature of the stages and processes followed, it can lead to misinterpretations, especially if one observes any one of the stages in isolation, or just the final one. The whole process of standardisation is the basis on which Umalusi can declare exams fair, valid and credible and thereby build public trust and confidence.

### **Is standardisation unique to South Africa?**

Standardisation is an international practice, and all large-scale assessment systems use some form of standardisation. The method used by the Cambridge International Examinations body involves comparing the mean and standard deviations of current exams with those of previous years. This data is then used to 'set' grade boundaries: i.e. an A could be 80% and above in one year, but could be set at 75% the following year, depending on the data.

This system is also used by a number of African countries whose educational systems are still closely

aligned with the Cambridge system. The method used in South Africa is that of 'norm-referencing'. The following sections outline the methodology and the principles underlying this methodology.

### **What are the principles and assumptions underlying standardisation?**

One of the main assumptions underlying standardisation is that for sufficiently large populations (cohorts), the distribution of aptitude and intelligence does not change appreciably from year to year: i.e. one can expect the same performance levels from cohorts of roughly the same size across time.

The standardisation process is based on the principle that when the standards of examinations from one year to the next are equivalent, there are certain statistical mark distributions that will correspond (or be the same, apart from unintended statistical deviations). Standardisation is a statistical moderation that consists of comparing mark distributions for a current examination with the corresponding average distributions of a number of past years, to determine the extent to which they correspond.

If there is good correspondence, it can be accepted that the examinations were of equivalent standards. If there are significant differences, the reasons for those differences need to be established. These differences may be due to factors such as (among others) a marked change in the composition of a group of candidates offering a particular subject; poor preparation for the examinations because of some disruption in the school programme; or very good preparation because of special support from educators.

In the absence of valid reasons for the differences, it should be accepted that the differences are due to deviations in the standard

of either the examination or its marking, and the marks should be adjusted to compensate for such deviations.

In view of the DBE's current policy regarding progressed learners, analyses of the statistical mark distributions, including and excluding the progressed learners, was provided to the ASC. Generally, the difference between these groupings was considered to be small. Furthermore, because progressed learners have in recent years been part of the cohort writing the NSC – but without having been identified as such – their marks would have been included in the historical average.

### **How is standardisation achieved?**

Standardisation decisions are finalised at a meeting between the assessment body and Umalusi. The assessment body presents its results after completing an analysis of its examination results with a view to identifying any unexpected results, idiosyncrasies and cases deserving of special attention.

Subjects are moderated independently; the decision taken on one subject has no influence on decisions taken on other subjects.

The results are also examined in light of any interventions implemented in the teaching and learning process, shifts in learner profiles, and so on. The assessment body makes sure that it has a thorough understanding of which adjustments will be appropriate, and what they would like to propose in this regard at the standardisation meeting with Umalusi.

The standardisation process compares the statistical distribution of the raw examination marks of the current examination with the predetermined, historical average distribution of the raw marks over the last five years. It considers what adjustments are required to bring

the distribution of raw marks in line with the expected distribution.

It also takes into consideration comparative subject analysis and moderation, and marking reports. Umalusi will consider adjustments only where there is compelling evidence that it is necessary to do so, in which case the following may occur:

- a) If the distribution of the raw marks is below the historical average, the marks may be adjusted upwards, towards the historical average. This is subject to the limitation that no adjustment may exceed half of the actual raw mark, i.e. half of what the candidate achieved; or 10% of the maximum marks for the subject.
- b) If the distribution of the raw marks

is above the historical average, the marks could be adjusted downwards, towards the historical average, subject to the limitations cited in a) above.

### Conclusion

According to Section 17a(4) of Umalusi's founding Act, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act, 2001 (as amended in 2008), "the Council may adjust raw marks during the standardisation process".

Standardisation offers at least some confidence in comparability between successive examination standards, thus giving candidates equal opportunity over the years regardless of possible deviations in

the standard of the question paper that the candidates wrote.

It must, however, be noted that currently examination test items are not pretested and calibrated. It is hoped that as the assessment systems start to use pretested items, the need for standardisation at the back-end of the examinations will be minimised.

Finally, it must be emphasised that mark adjustments do not compensate for the effects of poor teaching or learning. Its sole purpose is to ensure that equivalent standards are maintained across years for the different assessment bodies.



# Report: assessment bodies' State of Readiness for 2016 November GETC Exams

By Dr. Nkoloyakhe Mpanza:  
Manager QAA-AET

The General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) is a qualification for adults and out of school youth (NQF Level 1). This qualification is offered by both public and private assessment bodies. Umalusi, as a quality council, checks whether the assessment bodies are ready to conduct the GETC-AET Level 4 examination. This is in line with Umalusi's mandate to ensure that examinations are conducted in a fair, valid and credible manner, to ensure the integrity of examinations.

Umalusi conducted visits to establish the State of Readiness to conduct the 2016 November GETC-AET Level 4 examinations in all nine provincial education departments (PEDs). It also visited two private assessment bodies: the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) and Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA). IEB was visited on 19 September 2016 and BAA on 26 September 2016.

The Senior Manager of the Quality Assurance of Assessment (QAA) Unit led the Umalusi team. It was comprised of managers and assistant managers from the QAA Unit, Qualifications, Certification and Curriculum (QCC) Unit and the Statistical Information and Research (SIR) Unit. The Standardisation and Resulting and Evaluation and Accreditation (E&A) Unit Manager, responsible for the accreditation of private assessment bodies, was also part of the team. This allowed Umalusi to conduct the State of Readiness holistically and to verify all processes. Management issues were also discussed and verified.

The following is a brief overview of the findings of the visits:

## Registration of Candidates and Examination Centres

It is important to verify whether registration of examination centres and candidates has been done correctly and in good time. Examination centres, once registered, are audited to ensure that they are ready to conduct GETC examinations. The registration of candidates has an impact on resulting and certification so it is important that preliminary schedules of entries are sent to examination centres for candidate information to be checked, corrected and verified.

During the State of Readiness visit to PEDs, the registration of candidates and processing of applications for concessions had been completed in one PED. Preliminary schedules of entries had been sent to centres for verification and correction of information. The other eight PEDs hoped to complete data capture by 30 September 2016. One PED indicated that it would not be sending preliminary schedules to centres, citing time constraints. This would impact negatively on certification if errors had been made when candidate information was captured. No PEDs submitted information regarding immigrant candidates; or any finalised applications for concessions. Only one PED provided information on the management of concessions.

During the State of Readiness visit in September, private assessment bodies were still registering candidates and examination centres. Management plans for all other processes were in place.



Dr. Nkoloyakhe Mpanza

## Internal Assessment

Site - Based Assessment (SBA) contributes 50% of the final pass mark of GETC candidates.

The moderation of internal assessment in eight PEDs is conducted by the PEDs. They have management plans for moderation at different levels. These PEDs have dedicated provincial officials who manage the moderation processes. There was evidence of training of district and provincial moderators, as well as moderation tools and moderation reports in most PEDs. However, this evidence was not available in two PEDs.

In both private assessment bodies, SBA portfolios were moderated during the marking process. Because of the nature of the sector, it was not possible for moderation to be conducted at centre, district and provincial levels.

Moderation of internal assessment in one PED was conducted by the AET Curriculum Implementers (DHET). The PED was responsible only for capturing marks. The Examination section relied on the moderation done by curriculum officials, without any verification. AET curriculum officials were not available during the State of Readiness visit: Umalusi could not verify any evidence.

## Printing, Packaging and Distribution of Examination Material

Printing and packaging of examination material for the GETC examinations is done in the same manner and time as that of the NSC examinations. Six PEDs have their own printing centre. Printing is done in-house by the permanent staff of PEDs. This is an advantage in eliminating risk of question paper leakage. Printing is done according to management plans that are in place in all PEDs. The other three PEDs and two private assessment bodies have contracts with outside service providers for printing, packaging and distribution to storage and/or distribution points. Printing staff in PEDs and service providers are security vetted and/or sign confidentiality forms. Security measures were in place in all PEDs although there was room for improvement. There was evidence of sufficient security measures in place in all assessment bodies. The printing areas verified by Umalusi had proper surveillance systems, controlled and restricted entrance to the printing and packaging areas, and constant monitoring by management of the assessment bodies.

Extra question papers were printed for each paper for any unforeseen circumstances, which might be a good practice. The safekeeping accountability of these extra question papers need improvement. A strict reconciliation audit of all material printed must be done at the end of each examination session.

Not all nodal points had double locking systems. In three PEDs a need was identified to verify the storage facilities at various districts and distribution points for security compliance, including strongrooms, surveillance cameras, alarms and response security. Most PEDs did not verify security at AET examination centres.

## Conduct of Examination

During the visit all PEDs had plans in place for the appointment and training of chief invigilators and invigilators. In all PEDs training of invigilators was planned for the end of October 2016. Invigilators were to be

trained by the chief invigilators. PEDs had plans to implement monitoring of the writing phase of the examination. Examination monitors, both district and provincial, had been trained in all PEDs when Umalusi visited. There were management plans in place for this process. Training programmes and monitoring instruments to be used were ready.

PEDs did not audit AET examination centres. In two PEDs, centres were provided with audit forms to audit themselves. PEDs relied on the information provided by the centres. There was no categorisation of centres in terms of risk profile. This meant that all AET examination centres would be monitored as normal low-risk centres. PEDs and other assessment bodies did not have contingency plans for monitoring examinations that were high risk.

## Appointment and training of the marking personnel.

All PEDs had yet to finalise the appointment of markers during the State of Readiness visit. In most, the selection of markers had been done and they were about to finalise the appointments. In Limpopo and Eastern Cape, the plans were in place and they were awaiting the finalisation of registration data. (Late capturing of registration data hinders other processes like the appointment of markers and printing processes.)

The training of chief markers and internal moderators was coordinated at national level. A management plan was in place in all PEDs for the training of chief markers. Senior markers and markers were to be trained in provinces at the respective marking centres, prior to commencement of marking, by the chief markers and internal moderators. The private assessment bodies also trained their markers at the marking venue.

## Marking Centres and Centre Managers

At the time of the State of Readiness visit, only one PED had secured its marking centre(s) for the GETC examinations. All other PEDs planned to finalise marking venues by 30 September 2016.

Centre managers and deputy centre managers (admin and script control) were selected but still awaiting appointment at the time of the visit. In all PEDs, marking centre managers for the GETC examinations were appointed from among the examination officials. PEDs appointed staff from DCES level upwards as centre managers. The appointment of centre managers had not yet been done, in all PEDs. The training of centre managers was planned to take place, according to the respective PEDs' management plans, in November 2016.

## Capturing, Resulting and Certification

Capturing of marks in most assessment bodies was done in-house by data capturers who were permanent employees: one assessment body employed temporary staff to capture candidates' marks. A double capturing system was adopted by all assessment bodies that were verified. This approach ensures that captured data is verified and correct. Data capturers signed a declaration of confidentiality. Most PEDs had permanent employees as data capturers. The capturing process was to take place as per the management plan of each assessment body. Information regarding capturing, resulting and certification had not been verified in two PEDs at the time of the visit. (Incorrect capturing of candidate registration information has a negative impact on certification.)

## Conclusion

The audit of the State of Readiness of the three assessment bodies confirmed that they were compliant with most requirements to administer the 2016 November GETC-AET examinations.

Letters were sent to the three assessment bodies indicating their State of Readiness. All three need to consider the areas for improvement indicated in the letters sent to them. They were also required to report to Umalusi on full compliance to administer the 2016 November GETC-AET examination.



Khensani Motsi

# Helping independent schools achieve full accreditation

By Khensani Motsi

accreditation must address areas of partial compliance within one year and submit evidence of compliance. A follow-up site visit may then take place to verify the evidence of compliance. The accreditation status of the school is then reviewed.

This report is based on an analysis of a sample of 23 independent schools that took part in the accreditation process in 2014 and 2015. They received an initial outcome of one year provisional accreditation.

Between February 2016 and September 2016 and after receiving evidence of compliance, Umalusi visited schools to verify the evidence. Eight-six percent of the schools were subsequently granted seven years' accreditation. The 14% that had not met the conditions within the specified period lost their provisional accreditation. Their status was changed to 'no accreditation'.

The greatest contributing factor to schools not meeting the requirements for seven years' accreditation on first presentation of the report to the Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC) was the indicator relating to professional teaching qualifications and current registration with the South African Council for Educators (SACE). To meet this criterion, at least 80% of the teachers at a school must hold a professional teaching qualification and current registration with SACE. Of the 23 schools, 52% had less than the required 80% of professionally qualified, SACE-registered educators. All but one school ensured that they met this requirement within the specified provisional accreditation period.

The next significant factor, which affected 30% of the schools granted one year provisional accreditation and which contributed to schools not being granted seven years' accreditation, related to health and safety. Issues included a lack of a current health and safety certificate; lack of a certificate of acceptability as food premises; an absence of, or unserviced, fire-fighting equipment; lack of a health and safety committee; and inadequate or unhygienic

ablution facilities. Schools generally attended to these concerns, but 10% failed to obtain health and safety certificates within the specified period.

With regard to teaching and learning activities, moderation was a concern in 25% of the sampled schools where this was not formalised, planned and implemented, or did not cover aspects such as the proper spread of cognitive levels in assessment tasks. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning was also a key concern, particularly relating to the drafting of teaching and assessment plans, formalising processes and developing tools with quality criteria. Schools responded well and introduced structures to meet the required moderation and monitoring criteria.

Other issues that had contributed to an initial outcome of one year provisional accreditation included:

- Incorrect registration details: schools operating from addresses, or offering grades, different from those indicated in the registration forms;
- Staff employment contracts that were not aligned with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act;
- No strategic plan in place;
- No staff appraisal system in place;
- Inadequate learner support in various subjects;
- Results below the national average;
- Concern about the financial viability of the school;
- Lack of learning and teaching support material, such as textbooks;
- Lack of an academic committee;
- Policies which were either not in place or in need of review; and
- Inaccurate assessment records.

In all these instances the schools made satisfactory improvements in the highlighted areas.

Based on the evaluation of evidence of implementation and as summarised here, schools generally took cognisance of the recommendations made by Umalusi and effected the required changes. Evidence suggests that schools have generally improved since the initial site visits.

Umalusi is required to quality assure independent schools that are registered in accordance with the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996) and offer qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.

Independent schools are required to participate in a process that measures, against standards, the school's capacity to deliver a qualification and its supporting curriculum/programme, and the quality of the implementation of such, to the required standard. If the institution is found to meet the standards, the institution is accredited to offer the specific qualification as contemplated in the 'Policy and criteria for the quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of independent schools and private assessment bodies'.

Four core criteria are used to evaluate independent schools for accreditation. All four criteria have indicators that have been communicated to independent schools since the rollout of full accreditation in 2013. This was done through consultative meetings, accreditation instruments, quality promotion meetings, information sessions and Umalusi's website:

- Criterion 1 – School Ethos
- Criterion 2 – Leadership, Management and Communication
- Criterion 3 – Teaching and Learning
- Criterion 4 – School Results

As an outcome of the accreditation process, an independent school may be granted seven years' accreditation; one year provisional accreditation; a reasonable period to meet the minimum requirements; or no accreditation. Independent schools that are granted provisional

# Beware of bogus colleges, students warned.

Many South Africans have fallen victim to unscrupulous private institutions of higher learning that are not registered or accredited service providers. Potential students must verify the accreditation of any private college or university before paying any fees.

Umalusi, together with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Quality Council of Trade and Occupation (QCTO), embarked on a campaign to alert the public to bogus technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, from 16–20 January 2017 in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

Based at 66 Jorissen Street, the campaign created public awareness around illegal TVET colleges and the need for the private college sector to comply with regulations.

Media coverage was thorough, with the Daily Sun and The New Age newspapers, as well as ANN7, SABC News and Soweto TV covering the four-day event.

Staff engaged with the public and distributed information leaflets, and paid random visits to various colleges in the Johannesburg CBD – some of which were not registered by the DHET or any

other accreditation body. Others were found to be in the process of seeking accreditation, but were operating under the pretence of having obtained full accreditation. Illegal operations use various methods to lure unsuspecting students.

The public was made aware that the Umalusi logo may not be used by any providers, even those that meet all accreditation requirements. However, once all accreditation requirements have been met and, on receipt of the accreditation letter, a provider may publicly promote its accreditation status by displaying the statement: Provisionally accredited by Umalusi, Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training – Accreditation number: 16 FET02 00074 PA.

During the campaign people were told how to verify accreditation and advised on the process to follow if they found they had paid money to an unregistered college.

## Steps to follow on how to claim a refund from an unregistered college:

1. Inform the DHET; get written confirmation from the Department that the programme/college is not registered.



Sphiwe Mtshali

2. Request a refund from the college principal; failing which you will have to approach the courts.

3. For amounts up to R15 000 you can approach the Small Claims Court, by presenting the confirmation document from the DHET.

4. For amounts above R15 000 you will have to engage an attorney. Students who cannot afford legal fees can approach the Legal Aid Board (Tel: 0800 110 110).

5. For disputes on contractual agreements, you must contact the Office of Consumer Affairs in your region or the office of the National Consumer Commission (NCC) (012 761 3000), or [complaints@thncc.org.za](mailto:complaints@thncc.org.za)

6. Inform the nearest police station. Sign an affidavit and open a case if you wish, noting that the DHET will open a case on your behalf.

7. Be aware that any dispute arising out of a contractual agreement must be settled in court.



# Scam alert: Umalusi has NOT changed its banking details

Management has been made aware of a number of bank account scams involving Umalusi customers. Please note that Umalusi has not changed its banking details since the account was opened in 1988.

The South African Banking Risk Information Centre (Sabric) has warned that a scam based on 'informing people of a change in banking details' is on the rise in the country.

Criminals are always on the lookout for new ways to make easy money. However, most fraud attempts recycle old ideas that catch new people. Independent schools, TVET colleges, assessment bodies, and certification and verification customers must be aware of business-to-business identity theft scams that fraudulently divert payments into accounts that do not belong to suppliers.

Perpetrators of this scam usually assume the identity of a supplier, in this case Umalusi. The fraudsters may call the targeted business to introduce themselves as the new account manager at Umalusi. An email or a letter using fraudulent letterheads is sent to inform the targeted business of changes in banking account details. The perpetrators will request all future payments be paid into the new account. Please be warned that the new bank details belong to an account under the control of the fraudsters.

This is an old scam, but the perpetrators' attention to detail makes these communications seem authentic, which can turn Umalusi's unsuspecting customers into easy targets. The perpetrators ensure that correspondence from the targeted business to verify the notification is diverted

to a member of their group, who then 'confirms' the instruction as legitimate. Businesses should take the time to verify any notifications of changes in banking details from suppliers, even when under pressure at the end of the month, unless the legitimacy of the notice is certain. Businesses must always ensure that they are satisfied with the validity of communications from a supplier.

Tips to avoid becoming a victim of 'change of banking account' scams include:

- Verify all notices of changes in bank account details.
- Beware of false confirmation e-mails from almost identical e-mail addresses, such as .com instead of co.za, or org.za; or slight variations in genuine addresses that can be easily missed.
- It is essential to always confirm the identity of the person your business is dealing with.
- Never throw away your business (and suppliers') invoices – or any communication material – that contains a letterhead. Instead, you must shred all unused documents.
- Verify any request for, or changes to, information with the supplier over the telephone, ideally with someone you know and have known for some time.
- Use your database contact details to confirm notifications for any changes in banking details via official correspondence with your suppliers (such as a letter), preferably before processing the next payment.
- Do not publish your bank account details on the internet. This private information can be

used fraudulently, to trick genuine customers into making payments to accounts.

- Ensure that your company's private information is not disclosed to third parties who are not entitled to receive it; or third parties whose identities cannot be accurately verified.

Umalusi has revised its invoices to include the Umalusi logo, banking details and reference numbers to ensure authenticity.

## What can you do as a victim of this type of fraud?

- If you are a victim of this type of fraud, first notify the police.
- You can also commence a civil recovery of these monies against the fraudster. It may be necessary to use tracing mechanisms to trace the identity of the fraudsters, and freezing injunctions to freeze the assets of the fraudsters.
- Finally, check with your insurer that it is an insurable loss.

As Umalusi is not a party to the transaction, we cannot act on behalf of any of our customers to recover monies wrongfully deposited. The outstanding debt will remain until the amount is settled in Umalusi's bank account.

Please contact Umalusi if you have received any correspondence about its changing banking account details. We would like to establish whether any other independent schools, TVET colleges, assessment bodies, and certification or verification customers were targeted.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Umalusi staff united in colour during the CANSA SHA-VATHON Cancer Awareness Campaign on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017



**UMALUSI**



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### **UMALUSI FRAUD HOTLINE**

**FreeCall:** 0800 000 889

**FreeFax:** 0800 00 77 88

**FreePost:** KZN 138 Umhlanga Rocks, 4320

**Email:** [umalusi@tip-offs.com](mailto:umalusi@tip-offs.com)

**Website:** [www.tip-offs.com](http://www.tip-offs.com)

### **Social Media:**

 [www.facebook.com/UmalusiSA](https://www.facebook.com/UmalusiSA)

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