

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PRIVATE AET COLLEGES.

This document is intended to contribute to a better understanding of Umalusi's quality assurance mandate, scope and initiatives as they apply to private Further Education and Training (AET) colleges.

1. Quality assurance mandate and scope

- 1.1. Why does Umalusi refer to a private Adult Education and Training Centre as a "private college"?

The Continuing Education and Training (CET) Act, No. 16 of 2016 defines a "private college" as any college that provides continuing education and training on a full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is registered or provisionally registered as a private college in terms of Chapter 6 of the Act.

The Act continues to state in section 28: No person other than a public college or an organ of state may provide continuing education and training unless that person is –

- a) Incorporated or recognised as a company in terms of the Companies Act, 2008;
- b) Registered or provisionally registered as a private college in terms of the Act.

- 1.2. Why does a private college have to be accredited?

Accreditation is a legal requirement for private colleges in terms of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act 2001 as amended, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008 as amended, and the Policy for the Quality Assurance of Private Colleges for Continuing Education and Training offering qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and the Accreditation of Private Assessment Bodies (Government Gazette 41887, of 7 September 2018)

- 1.3. What is the difference between accreditation and registration?

Accreditation is the recognition of the capacity of a private college to offer a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, and the private college's implementation of the curriculum in support of the qualification, at the required standard.

Accreditation attests to the capacity and the quality of the offering of a specific qualification in a private college.

Registration is the "licence to operate" issued by the Department of Higher Education and Training to private colleges that meet their requirements – including the requirements for registration as a private college and registration as an examination centre.

- 1.4. Are all private AET colleges expected to apply for accreditation with Umalusi?

Public Community Colleges / AET Centres are not required to apply for accreditation.

Private colleges (AET Centres) that intend to offer the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training at NQF Level 1 are required to apply for accreditation with Umalusi as outlined in the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act, 2001, as amended, and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008 as amended.

1.5. How do I apply for accreditation?

Application for accreditation is an online process, which can be accessed on Umalusi's website: www.umalusi.org.za. Click on the link "Accreditation for Private Providers". <https://www.umalusi-online.org.za/OA/>. You will then be guided through the online application process.

Information about the accreditation process is available on the Umalusi website on the following link: <https://www.umalusi.org.za/docs/misc/2018/Open-letter-to-Applicants-Private-AET-Colleges-as-at-2018-12.pdf>

1.6. Our college offers a foreign / international curriculum / SETA programme. Are we expected to apply for accreditation with Umalusi?

In terms of section 3 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, foreign qualifications offered in South Africa are required to be registered on the NQF. Once a qualification is registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF), then the private college will be required to apply to Umalusi for accreditation to offer that qualification.

1.7. Our college offers the qualification at different industrial sites. Does the accreditation apply to all the sites?

A private college is accredited to offer the qualification at a specific site. However, private AET colleges may request for authorisation to offer the qualification at an additional site. All sites where delivery takes place must conform to resource and health and safety requirements. Contracts with different sites of delivery must be forwarded to Umalusi. A site visit will be conducted at the site of delivery and monitoring may take place at additional sites of delivery.

1.8. Is provisional accreditation automatically extended?

No. The 2-year provisional accreditation is not automatically extended; This is a period of time granted to an Institution whose accreditation evaluation indicated that there are minor issues that the Institution was not able to meet at the time of application, and there is a clear indication that the Institution can be able to meet those within the 2-year period granted for improvement. If at the end of the 2 years, the Institution was not able to meet the outstanding requirements, the provisional accreditation will not be extended. In the case of AET, the provider has to demonstrate implementation of teaching and learning (secure a training contract) within the two years.

1.9. Who is responsible to assess ABET Levels 1-3?

Umalusi is mandated to quality assure assessments at the exit point of the

qualification, which in this case is ABET level 4 at NQF Level 1. The provider is responsible to assess ABET levels 1-3 and to recognize the achievements obtained at those levels.

- 1.10. The clients we offer ABET to require us to provide the learners with Umalusi certificates for ABET level 3. How does one go about getting such certificates?

Umalusi is mandated to quality assure assessments and issue certificates at exit points. In the case of the GETC: ABET, this is level 4. The providers need to clarify this with their clients at the time of signing the contract for such provisioning. There should be a clear understanding at that point of how the achievements are going to be recognized. Umalusi-accredited providers are required to register with accredited assessment bodies for the conduct of the exit examinations. Assessment Bodies can provide guidance and support to providers in the assessment of the lower levels of the qualification.

- 1.11. What is the Umalusi quality assurance approach for private colleges?

In line with its quality assurance mandate, Umalusi uses a set of criteria to accredit private colleges to offer a qualification that is registered on its sub-framework. Umalusi's main focus in regard to private colleges is their internal quality management of education provision.

The criteria for the accreditation of a private college to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework are as follows:

- Criterion 1: Mission Directed Leadership and Management
- Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning and Training
- Criterion 3: Assessment and Results
- Criterion 4: Learner Support

- 1.12. Is the accreditation of private colleges optional or compulsory?

Private colleges that offer the curriculum leading to the General Education and Training Certificate Adult Basic Education and Training at NQF Level 1 are obliged to be accredited with Umalusi and to comply with the monitoring and evaluation requirements of Umalusi.

- 1.13. We are in the process of establishing a private AET college. Do we start with accreditation or registration?

Lodge an application for accreditation with Umalusi and registration with the DHET at the same time. Once the self-evaluation report submitted by the private college meets the minimum requirements, Umalusi will advise the DHET thereof. The DHET will then conduct their processes leading to provisional registration as a private college and examination centre if the college meets the minimum requirements.

The accreditation process will continue for the private college that is granted provisional registration by the DHET. However, without provisional registration by the DHET, the accreditation process will not be able to continue, since registration of a private college is a pre-requisite for accreditation.

- 1.9 Is it a problem if our teachers/lecturers/facilitators are not registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE)?

Yes. The South African Council For Educators Act No. 31 of 2000, as amended, "applies to all educators, lecturers, and management staff of colleges." Section 3(a),(c), and (f).

Chapter 3 Section 21(2) further states that "No person may be employed as an educator by any employer unless the person is registered with the council."

- 1.10 Does Umalusi accredit private providers of curriculum material, including teaching and learning aids?

No – Umalusi accredits private colleges that offer a curriculum that leads to the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training at NQF Level 1.

- 1.11 Does Accreditation with Umalusi mean we can offer any qualification and any subjects?

No, you can only offer the programme and subjects that you have been registered and accredited to offer.

- 1.12 Does the public know about our college's accreditation status?

Accredited colleges are listed on Umalusi's website. This information can be accessed at www.umalusi.org.za on the link "Search Accredited Service Providers". (<https://www.umalusi-online.org.za/enquiries>)

- 1.13 Will our college be registered as an examination centre even if it is not accredited by Umalusi?

Once a private college has met the minimum requirements at the desktop evaluation stage of the accreditation process, the DHET may provisionally register the private college if it meets the requirements of the DHET. The provisional registration will be with a condition that the private college must obtain accreditation by Umalusi within a specified period.

- 1.14 How much do we have to pay for the accreditation application?

The fees are based on the number of qualifications and subjects applied for by the private college. These fees relate to the processing and evaluation of the college's application. The fees are payable per step in the process and you will not be able to move on in the accreditation process without making the relevant payments. Details can be accessed on the following link:

<https://www.umalusi.org.za/docs/misc/2018/Open-letter-to-Applicants-Private-AET-Colleges-as-at-2018-12.pdf>

- 1.15 Who evaluates our self-evaluation and monitoring reports?

Self-evaluation and monitoring reports are evaluated by adequately qualified and experienced educationists, college heads, senior lecturers or subject experts, who are appointed and trained by Umalusi for that purpose.

- 1.16 Can we use generic policies in order to support our compliance with the accreditation criteria?

Yes, as a guideline, but they should be customised to suit the specific context of your college and adhere to the qualification requirements.

- 1.17 Our college's internal policies are not documented, but are known to all staff members, students and employers. Is it really important that they should be documented?

Yes. Policy documentation will ensure consistent and effective implementation, monitoring, review, and general improvement of their effectiveness.

- 1.18 Can we ask an education consultant to compile our self-evaluation report or to develop policies for us?

Although it is obviously the prerogative of colleges to use consultants in portfolio and/or policy development, it is Umalusi's considered view that policies compiled by consultants do not always provide an opportunity for staff members and learners at the college to participate actively in their development. Subsequently, it is unlikely for staff members to take full ownership of the processes of policy implementation, monitoring and review. In the main, Umalusi believes that an increased role of consultants limits the entrenchment of an internal culture of quality management.

The self-evaluation report should be completed by the directors of the company (owner) or the campus head (people involved in the management and day to day running of the college) so that they can answer questions during the accreditation process. Consultants are not always available to answer on behalf of the college. The requirements are explained in detail at the Quality Promotion workshops, which consultants may not attend. The campus manager/director or appointed quality assurance manager should attend the Quality Promotion workshop.

- 1.19 How do we know that the evidence we provide will sufficiently support our compliance with the criteria?

Quality Promotion workshops are held during the course of the year to assist colleges on how to apply for accreditation, to explain the evidence required for the self-evaluation report, and on what to expect during the site verification visit.

- 1.20 Surely, our narrative should be sufficient to support our compliance with the accreditation criteria?

No. Narratives serve to explain what the college perceives to be its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the compliance criteria. Compliance is mainly determined by the relevance and adequacy of supporting evidence provided by the college, which can be confirmed through observation of the actual implementation of the policies.

2. Site visits

2.1 What preparation is needed for the site visit?

The ability of all staff to be able to display an understanding of applicable policies and demonstrate that they can implement the policies and procedures accordingly. The key personnel must attend a Quality Promotion workshop to ensure that they understand what is required for the site visit and the programme for the day.

2.2 How experienced and qualified are Umalusi's site evaluators?

The site evaluators and subject specialists that are appointed and trained by Umalusi are experienced educationists, college heads, senior lecturers or subject experts.

2.3 The private college sector is fairly competitive. Why should our college be site visited by educationists, college heads, senior lecturers or subject experts from other colleges?

Colleges are always informed prior to the site visit about their site evaluators thus they are given an opportunity to express their unhappiness with any of the evaluation personnel Umalusi assigns to the college.

Site evaluators and subject specialists are required to sign relevant documents to ensure that they conduct themselves ethically and with utmost confidentiality. Furthermore, it is Umalusi and not the site evaluator that makes the final accreditation decision.

2.4 Our college was visited by Umalusi. Will there be another visit?

There may be another visit to verify evidence subsequently submitted if your college is granted a "window period" to meet specific conditions within a given period, or receives an outcome of provisional accreditation. There may also be a visit as part of the monitoring process. Umalusi may also visit a college if there is a complaint lodged by students, parents, a member of the public or any government department.

3. Monitoring

3.1. How will Umalusi monitor the compliance of colleges that are accredited for 7 years?

In year 2 and year 4 of the accreditation, accredited colleges will be required to submit a monitoring report, which may be followed by a site visit. If there are complaints or concerns about an accredited college, Umalusi has the right to conduct an unannounced site visit at any time during the period of accreditation.

3.2. Is it compulsory to submit biennial monitoring reports?

Yes. Accredited private colleges are required to submit biennial monitoring reports as a condition of their accreditation. Umalusi may institute steps to withdraw accreditation of private colleges which fail to submit the required monitoring reports or that fail to maintain the required standards for accreditation.

3.3 What is the purpose of post-accreditation monitoring?

The purpose of post-accreditation monitoring is to facilitate on-going improvement of the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that the accredited institution continues to meet Umalusi's accreditation criteria.

3.4 What happens to private colleges that do not submit their biennial monitoring reports to Umalusi?

Their accreditation status will be reviewed and consequently the college's accreditation may be withdrawn. Such colleges will be notified of the implication of their failure to maintain their accreditation status.

Furthermore, the accreditation status of colleges is regularly communicated to the DHET. Failure of private colleges to maintain their accreditation status may lead to a review by the DHET of their registration as a private college and examination centre.

3.5 Does our centre have to pay an administration fee every time it is monitored?

No. A biennial accreditation fee is payable.

However, if a private college does not submit the required monitoring report and Umalusi is required to conduct a monitoring site visit, the private college will be required to pay a monitoring fee.

Colleges which fail to pay the biennial accreditation fee may have their accreditation status reviewed.

4. General

4.1. As far as we are concerned we comply with all the accreditation criteria but our accreditation report says we are not fully compliant.

To address this, compare the evidence provided by your college with Umalusi's evidence requirements. You may address queries to the Manager of the private colleges' sub-unit at Umalusi.

Private colleges which do not meet the minimum requirements for accreditation at the first presentation of the report to the Accreditation Committee of Council are granted a "window period" within which to meet specific conditions.

Together with the letter advising you of the outcome of your application, you will receive an indication of any conditions which must still be met in order to be granted accreditation. Those items must be attended to and evidence of meeting those conditions must be submitted to Umalusi, together with the required fee. Failure to submit evidence and pay the required fee will automatically result in an outcome of "no accreditation".

Please note that at the time of review, all the accreditation criteria must still be met. Therefore, if standards drop from the time of the initial site visit, that will be taken into account in determining the outcome of the college's application for accreditation, even if the item was not specified in the "conditions to be met for accreditation".

There is a fee payable for evaluation of evidence submitted in compliance of the conditions to be met. The fee is indicated on the schedule of fees in the "Open Letter to Applicants – Private Colleges" on the Umalusi website: www.umalusi.org.za.
 The fees are revised on an annual basis.

4.2 What are the costs associated with accreditation and monitoring?

Please refer to the fees indicated in the "Open letter to applicants" found on the Umalusi website.

4.3 Why do private providers have to pay such high accreditation fees?

Fees are calculated on the costs incurred for conducting the evaluation process. The Constitution of South Africa, Chapter 2: Bill of Rights, paragraph 29 states:
 (3) Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, **at their own expense**, independent educational institutions that—
 (a) do not discriminate on the basis of race;
 (b) are registered with the state; and
 (c) maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.
 In addition, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001, Section 13 (1)c states: The funds of the Council consist of money received by the Council in respect of fees charged for services.

4.4 Is there an appeal process if we don't agree with the final outcome of our application?

In terms of the Umalusi appeal process, a request for an appeal must be submitted to the office the Umalusi Chief Executive Officer within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the accreditation application, indicating in detail the reason(s) for the appeal. Appeals must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and emailed to Cindy.Thomas@umalusi.org.za and Gugulethu.Nkambule@umalusi.org.za.
 Payment of the required fee must be made before an appeal is considered. The cost of the appeal will be determined by the nature of the appeal. Should the finding of the appeal be in favour of the appellant, the fee paid will be refunded to the appellant.

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