

For Immediate Release

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Umalusi reports to Parliament on certification backlog

On Wednesday, 22 February 2017, Umalusi presented a comprehensive status report to parliament's Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training regarding delays in the issuing of certificates for one of its qualifications, the National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)) which is offered at public and private TVET colleges. The presentation was part of a multi-stakeholder briefing to the portfolio committee by Umalusi, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the State Information Technology Agency (SITA).

The report given to the portfolio committee made it clear that part of Umalusi's mandate is to issue certificates to learners if they satisfy all pass requirements for qualifications that fall under Umalusi's sub-framework of qualifications – which are on levels 1-4 of the National Qualifications Framework. In order for Umalusi to fulfil its certification mandate, the relevant assessment bodies such as DHET must, after administering examinations, submit the required resulting data (final marks) to Umalusi for certification. The final marks submitted by the assessment body are firstly subjected to rigorous verification by Umalusi against a set of regulatory requirements. Based on the stringent verification process, Umalusi cannot issue certificates if the data submitted by the assessment body does not meet regulatory requirements set by Umalusi – this is part of Umalusi's quality assurance mandate for all qualifications. Therefore, final marks are likely to be returned to the assessment body if there are:

- Outstanding final marks that result in error reports due to:
 - Marks initially indicated as absent and subsequently changed to a valid mark;
 - Unexplained changes to approved raw marks;
 - Unexplained changes in statistical moderation records, etc

In short, Umalusi cannot accept incorrect calculations or any changes in the final marks. To this end, Umalusi performs verification tests on the resulting data and provides feedback to the assessment body. Regarding the backlog in the issuing of NC(V) certificates, Umalusi reported that, so far, it has processed all certification requests from DHET and as of the end of January 2017, the organisation has not receive new data sets.

In an attempt to expedite the process, Umalusi further reported that it has granted a once-off **concession** to the DHET to sort out the mark anomalies for the period **November 2014 – March 2016**. To achieve this, DHET needs to do the following:

- To formalize the mop up processes for these two exam cycles with the colleges;
- To provide affidavits testifying to the full verification process undertaken and accuracy of data;
- To provide a time-plan to Umalusi in writing;
- To provide a test data set for these cycles for checking;
- Commit itself to an agreement that once certified no further changes to marks will be accepted by Umalusi.

Umalusi indicated to the portfolio committee that it will not finalise certification of the data sets until the abovementioned requirements are met. That said, Umalusi remains committed to issuing certificates credibly and reliably, and within the requirements of its mandate.

The CEO of Umalusi, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, made the following comment; "Umalusi remains extremely sensitive to the plight of learners who are still waiting for their certificates as a result of this unfortunate backlog. We promise to work with the DHET and SITA to find a speedy solution to this matter."

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