Report on the Quality Assurance of Assessment of the Benchmark Assessment Agency November 2019 GETC: ABET Examinations

UMALUSI

Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training

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FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Over the past years, Umalusi has made great strides in setting, maintaining and improving standards in the quality assurance of the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET).

Umalusi has managed to achieve its success by establishing and implementing an effective and rigorous quality assurance of assessment system with a set of quality assurance processes that cover assessment and examinations. The system and processes are continuously revised and refined.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of assessment and examinations by determining the:
- level of adherence to policy in the implementation of examination and assessment processes;
- quality and standard of examination question papers, its corresponding marking guidelines and site-based assessment (SBA) tasks;
- efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes and procedures for the monitoring of the conduct, administration and management of examinations and assessment; and
- quality of marking, as well as the quality and standard of quality assurance processes within the assessment body.

Furthermore, Umalusi has established a professional working relationship with the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA). As a result, there has been an improvement in the conduct, administration and management of the GETC: ABET examinations and assessment. There is ample evidence to confirm that the assessment body, adult education and training centres, as well as the examination centres, continue to strive to improve systems and processes relating to the GETC: ABET examinations and assessment. However, despite numerous improvement initiatives there remain critical aspects, such as the implementation and internal moderation of site-based assessment (SBA) and the occurrence of irregularities, which require attention in the forthcoming examination cycle.

The Assessment Standards Committee (ASC), which is a committee of Council, and the Executive Committee of Umalusi Council (EXCO) met in December 2019 to scrutinise evidence presented on the conduct of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. Having studied all the evidence at hand on the management and conduct of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations administered by the BAA, Umalusi is satisfied that, apart from isolated instances of irregularities, there were no systemic irregularities reported that may have compromised the overall integrity and credibility of the examinations. The EXCO approved the release of the BAA results of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. However, the BAA is required to:
a. block the results of the candidates and centres implicated in irregularities, pending the submission of evidence and a detailed report to Umalusi for verification and approval; and
b. address the directives for compliance and improvement and submit an improvement plan by 14 February 2020.

The EXCO commended the BAA for conducting successful examinations.

Umalusi will continue to ensure that the quality, integrity and credibility of the GETC: ABET examinations and assessment are maintained. Umalusi will also continue in its endeavours towards an assessment system that is internationally comparable, through research, benchmarking, continuous review and improvement of systems and processes.

Umalusi would like to thank all the relevant stakeholders who worked tirelessly to ensure the credibility of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

Dr Mafu S Rakometsi

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act mandates Umalusi to develop and implement policy and criteria for the assessment of qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF).

Umalusi is mandated, through the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act (No. 58 of 2001, as amended in 2008), to develop and manage its sub-framework of qualifications, to quality assure assessment at exit-points, approve the release of examination results and to certify candidate achievements.

The Act, in terms of these responsibilities, stipulates that Umalusi, as the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training:
- must perform the external moderation of assessment of the different assessment bodies and education institutions;
- may adjust raw marks during the standardisation process; and
- must, with the concurrence of the Director-General and after consultation with the relevant assessment body or education institution, approve the publication of the results of candidates if the Council is satisfied that the assessment body or education institution has:
  - conducted the assessment free from any irregularity that may jeopardise the integrity of the assessment or its outcomes;
  - complied with the requirements prescribed by the Council for conducting assessment;
  - applied the standards, prescribed by the Council, with which a candidate is required to comply in order to obtain a certificate; and
  - complied with every other condition determined by the Council.

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on the processes followed by Umalusi in quality assuring the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. The report also reflects on the findings; areas of improvement and good practice; and areas of non-compliance; and provides directives for compliance and improvement in the management, conduct and administration of the examination and assessment. The findings are based on information obtained from Umalusi moderation, monitoring, verification and standardisation processes, as well as from reports received from the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA). Where applicable, comparisons are made with the November 2018 examinations.

Umalusi undertakes the quality assurance of the national qualifications through a rigorous process of reporting on each of the assessment processes and procedures. The quality assurance of the standard of assessment is based on the assessment body's ability to adhere to policies and regulations designed to deal with critical aspects of administering credible national assessment and examinations.

In the adult education and training sector, Umalusi quality assures the assessment and examinations for the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) qualification.

The GETC: ABET qualification is offered at community learning centres (CLC) of the community education and training colleges (public centres), adult education and training learning sites (private centres) and Correctional Services centres. The quality assurance processes of Umalusi made provision for a sample from each type of centre/site.

In addition to the November examinations, examinations in this sector are also conducted in June. The results of the June 2019 examinations had been released and the quality assurance of assessment reports are available on the Umalusi website.

The Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) conducted the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations in seven learning areas.

This report covers the following quality assurance of assessment processes conducted by Umalusi, for which a brief outline is given below:

- moderation of question papers (Chapter 1);
- moderation of site-based assessment (SBA) portfolios (Chapter 2);
- monitoring of the state of readiness to conduct the examinations (Chapter 3);
- monitoring of the writing and marking of examinations (Chapter 4);
- selection, appointment and training of marking personnel (Chapter 5);
- quality assurance of marking (Chapter 6);
- standardisation and resulting (Chapter 7); and
- Chapter 8, which outlines the state of certification of candidates' achievements.

The findings from the above quality assurance of assessment processes enabled the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council to decide whether to approve the release of results of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations or not.

The roles and responsibilities of the BAA are to:

- develop and internally moderate examination question papers and their accompanying marking guidelines and submit them to Umalusi for external moderation and approval;
- develop and internally moderate SBA tasks and their accompanying marking guidelines biennially and submit them to Umalusi for external moderation and approval;
- manage the implementation and internal moderation of SBA;
- conduct, administer and manage the writing and marking of examinations;
- manage irregularities;
- report to Umalusi on the conduct, administration and management of examinations;
- have an IT system that complies with the policies and regulations, in order to be able to submit all candidate records according to the certification directives; and
- process and submit records of candidate achievements to Umalusi for certification.

Umalusi conducts external moderation of examination question papers and accompanying marking guidelines to ensure that quality standards for the GETC: ABET examinations are maintained. This is a critical quality assurance process to ensure that the examination question papers are valid and reliable. The moderation process also ensures that the question papers are of the appropriate format and are of high technical quality.

The findings of the external moderation process at first moderation indicated that there was an improvement in the overall compliance of question papers and their corresponding marking guidelines, from 32% in November 2018 to 53.6% in November 2019.

The GETC: ABET qualification requires SBA to be conducted by AET learning centres. Assessment bodies set SBA tasks nationally, moderate them internally and submit these SBA tasks to Umalusi to be externally moderated. Umalusi is responsible for determining the quality and appropriateness of the standard of the SBA tasks.

The BAA provides all AET learning centres with common assessment tasks of all seven learning areas for implementation. The responses of students to the common assessment tasks are filed in SBA portfolios and are internally moderated by the BAA before they are presented to Umalusi for external moderation.

The purpose of external moderation of SBA portfolios is to establish whether the requirements for the implementation and moderation of SBA as prescribed by the BAA and Umalusi were met. It is of utmost importance to moderate SBA portfolios, since SBA carries the same weight as the external examinations. To ensure the consistency, validity and fairness of assessment, it is imperative that the SBA portfolios of students are quality assured at different levels. A comparison of the levels of compliance for the November 2019 examinations with those of the November 2018 examinations was made, to check if there had been improvement in the implementation and moderation of SBA. The BAA has shown improvement in the implementation, monitoring and moderation of SBA.

The purpose of verifying the state of readiness of the BAA to conduct the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations was, largely, to:

- gauge the level of preparedness of the BAA to conduct the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations;
- track the progress made in addressing the directives for compliance and improvement issued after the November 2018 and June 2019 examinations;
- verify that the BAA had systems in place to ensure the integrity of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations; and
- report on any shortcomings identified during the evaluation and verification of the BAA systems.

The audit of the state of readiness confirmed the readiness of the BAA to administer the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. Umalusi noted that the BAA shows improvement in their systems and processes in each examination cycle.

Umalusi deployed monitors while the examinations were being written to check that the examination centres complied with the policy applicable to the conduct of examinations. Monitoring was also important to identify any irregularities that might have occurred during the writing of the examinations. The comparison of the November 2019 findings with the findings of the November 2018 examinations disclosed an overall decline in compliance, with centres adhering to the set criteria by between 90% and 100% decreasing from 80% in 2018 to 70% in 2019.

Umalusi conducted the audit of the marking personnel selected and appointed to mark the November 2019 GETC: ABET examination scripts. The purpose of this process is to verify compliance to the appointment criteria by the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA); and to monitor the training of the marking personnel involved in the marking and moderation of marking of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. This BAA contracted officials who are also rendering their services to the other assessment bodies. This affects their plans if those officials are not available. The BAA is required to establish their own marking team that will be available all the time when needed.

Umalusi participated in the process of the standardisation of the marking guidelines of the question papers to ensure that justice was done to the process and that the finalised marking guidelines would ensure fair, accurate and consistent marking. The standardisation process improved the quality of the marking guidelines and ensured that all possible responses to questions were accommodated. Amendments made to the marking guidelines enhanced the clarity of instructions to markers and did not compromise the examination or marking process.

- planning prior to the conduct of the marking process;
- the adequacy of resources at the marking centre;
- security provided at the marking centre; and
- the management of irregularities identified from marked scripts.

Umalusi monitored the marking centre to ensure that marking process was properly planned and managed, which would ensure the credibility of the process and its outcomes. Proper management in the critical areas of planning, adequacy of the marking venues and accommodation, as well as maintenance of tight security, was evident at the marking centre.

External verification of marking by Umalusi served to ensure that marking was conducted according to agreed and established practices and standards. The verification of marking process revealed that the BAA maintained high quality of marking and internal moderation in all seven learning areas and complied with marking and moderation requirements.

Standardisation is a process that is informed by evidence presented in the form of qualitative and quantitative reports. Its primary aim is to achieve an optimum degree of uniformity, in a given context, by considering possible sources of variability other than candidates' ability and knowledge.

The purpose of standardisation and statistical moderation of results is to mitigate the effects of factors other than candidates' ability and knowledge on performance, and to reduce the variability of marks from examination to examination. The standardisation process was conducted in a systematic, objective and transparent manner. The decisions taken on whether to accept the raw marks or to perform upward or downward adjustments were based on sound educational, qualitative and statistical reasoning.

Information on certification is included to inform interested parties of the state of certification of candidates' achievements. The certification chapter is based on the 2019 certification processes and not the certification of the November 2019 cohort. Every effort must be made to ensure that all candidates who qualify for a certificate receive this as soon as possible. Umalusi observed improved quality and correctness of the electronic submission of requests for certification. Umalusi also observed that the requests for certification to Umalusi were closely monitored and a concerted effort was made to certificate all candidates who were due to be certified.

Based on the findings of the reports on the quality assurance of assessment processes undertaken during the November 2019 examinations, the Umalusi Council EXCO concluded that the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations were conducted in line with the policies that govern the conduct of examinations and assessment. Generally, examinations and assessment were conducted in a professional, fair and reliable manner. There were no systemic irregularities that could jeopardise the overall integrity of examinations and the results could, therefore, be regarded as credible. The EXCO approved the release of the results and commended the BAA for the maturing system.

Umalusi trusts that the report will provide the assessment body and other stakeholders with a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the different assessment systems and processes, and directives where improvements are required.

Umalusi will continue, through bilateral meetings, to collaborate with all stakeholders to raise standards in adult education and training in South Africa.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AET	Adult Education and Training
AS	Assessment Standard
ASC	Assessment Standards Committee
BAA	Benchmark Assessment Agency
CAT	Computer Applications Technology
CD: NEA	Chief Directorate: National Examinations and Assessment
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EC	Eastern Cape Province
ECDE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
FS	Free State Province
FSDE	Free State Department of Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GP	Gauteng Province
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
GPW	Government Printing Works
HOD	Head of Department
ID	Identity Document
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal Province
KZNDE	KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education
LP	Limpopo Province
LPDE	Limpopo Department of Education
MP	Mpumalanga Province
MPDE	Mpumalanga Department of Education
NC	Northern Cape Province
NCDE	Northern Cape Department of Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NW	North West Province
NWDE	North West Department of Education
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PoA	Portfolio of Assessment (lecturer portfolio)
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence (learner portfolio)
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAG	Subject and Assessment Guidelines
SAPS	South African Police Services
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SBA	Site-based Assessment
SO	Specific Outcome
SoR	State of Readiness
Umalusi	Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
WC	Western Cape Province
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER 1: MODERATION OF QUESTION PAPERS

1.1 Introduction

Umalusi conducts external moderation of question papers and marking guidelines to ensure that quality standards are maintained in all examination cycles for the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations. The moderation of question papers is a critical part of the quality assurance process, to confirm whether the question papers are relatively fair, valid and reliable. The moderation process also ensures that the question papers comply with Umalusi quality assurance of assessment requirements and the assessment guideline documents of each assessment body.

To maintain public confidence in the national examination system, question papers must be seen to be:
- fair;
- reliable;
- representative of an adequate sample of the curriculum;
- representative of relevant conceptual domains; and
- representative of relevant levels of cognitive challenge.

The purpose of external moderation is to evaluate whether the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) has the capacity to develop and internally quality assure question papers that meet set standards and requirements.

1.2 Scope and Approach

BAA appointed examiners and internal moderators with requisite learning area knowledge to develop and internally moderate question papers. These question papers and corresponding marking guidelines were presented to Umalusi for external moderation and approval.

Umalusi received seven question papers and their corresponding marking guidelines, as well as the internal moderator reports and history of the development of the question papers and marking guidelines, for external moderation in preparation for the November 2019 examination of the GETC: ABET qualification. This is the same number of question papers submitted for external moderation for the November 2018 GETC: ABET examinations.

Umalusi used an off-site model for the moderation of the question papers.

Table 1A reflects the seven learning areas assessed by BAA for the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

Table 1A: Learning areas assessed by BAA for the GETC: ABET examinations

No.	Learning area	LA code
1	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	LCEN4
2	Economic and Management Sciences	EMSC4
3	Mathematical Literacy	MLMS4
4	Natural Sciences	NATS4
5	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	SMME4
6	Life Orientation	LIFO4
7	Human and Social Sciences	HSSC4

All question papers were moderated using the Umalusi Instrument for the Moderation of Question Papers. The instrument assesses the quality and standard of the question papers and marking guidelines using the following criteria:

- technical aspects;
- language and bias;
- internal moderation;
- content coverage;
- cognitive demand;
- adherence to assessment guidelines;
- predictability; and
- marking guidelines.

Each criterion has a set of quality indicators against which the question papers are evaluated. Based on the evidence provided, Umalusi decides on the compliance of the question paper with each criterion, using one of the following four possible levels of compliance:

- no compliance (Met less than 50% of criteria);
- limited compliance (Met 50% or more but less than 80% of criteria);
- compliance in most respects (Met 80% or more but less than 100% of criteria); or
- compliance in all respects (Met 100%) of the criteria.

After evaluating the compliance of the question paper with each of the eight criteria, a decision is taken regarding the quality and standard of the question paper and corresponding marking guideline as a whole, considering one of three possible outcomes:

- approved: if the question paper meets all the criteria;
- conditionally approved, to be resubmitted: if the question paper meets most criteria; or
- rejected: if the standard and quality of the question paper is entirely unacceptable.

1.3   Summary of Findings

Umalusi completed evaluation reports based on its moderation criteria. The following findings summarise the evidence observed by Umalusi moderators during the moderation of question papers.

1.3.1 Compliance per Moderation Level

Umalusi desires that all question papers be approved at first moderation; however, a number of question papers required resubmission for second moderation in order to be approved. Table 1B below provides a breakdown of the levels at which each question paper was approved.

Table 1B: Approval status of question papers moderated

No.	Learning area description	November 2019 examination cycle		
		LA code	1st moderation	2nd moderation
1.	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	LCEN4	Approved	
2.	Economic and Management Sciences	EMSC4	Rejected	Approved
3.	Mathematical Literacy	MLMS4	Conditionally approved	Approved
4.	Natural Sciences	NATS4	Approved	
5.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	SMME4	Conditionally approved	Approved
6.	Life Orientation	LIFO4	Conditionally approved	Approved
7.	Human and Social Sciences	HSSC4	Rejected	Approved

Table 1C compares the levels of moderation and approval of the November 2018 and November 2019 GETC: ABET question papers.

Table 1C: Comparison of approval levels of November 2018 and 2019 question papers

Moderation level	Approved		Conditionally approved–resubmit		Rejected	
	2018	2019	2018	2019	2018	2019
1st	0	2	3	3	4	2
2nd	5	5	0	0	2	0
3rd	2	0	0	0	0	0

Table 1C indicates that two question papers were rejected at first moderation in November 2019, compared to four in November 2018. No question papers were approved at third moderation in November 2019, but two question papers had to undergo third moderations in November 2018. This indicates that the quality of question papers had improved at first moderation in November 2019 compared to those of November 2018.

1.3.2 Compliance per Criteria

Umalusi analysed question papers submitted by BAA for first moderation, based on the criteria in the instrument. Table 1D summarises the findings on the compliance at first moderation. When question papers were approved, all the challenges were sufficiently addressed and all question papers and their corresponding marking guidelines were fully compliant with all the set criteria. The internal moderator addressed all these challenges before the question papers and accompanying marking guidelines were approved

Table 1D: Compliance of question papers per criterion at first moderation

		Compliance frequency [56 instances]			
		None	Limited	Most	All
1.	Technical aspects	1	0	3	3
2.	Language and bias	1	0	3	3
3.	Internal moderation	1	1	3	2
4.	Content coverage	1	0	1	5
5.	Cognitive demand	1	1	1	4
6.	Adherence to policy	1	0	2	4
7.	Predictability	1	0	0	6
8.	Marking guidelines	1	0	3	3
		8	2	16	30
	Total	26			30
	Percentage	46.4%			53.6%

The level of compliance was 53.6% in November 2019, higher than the 32% compliance evident in the November 2018 question papers at first moderation, indicating an overall improvement in the quality and standard of question papers at first moderation in November 2019.

1.3.3 Compliance per Criterion

The following comments regarding compliance with each criterion are based on the first moderation level. Compliance in all respects refers to satisfying all the quality indicators within a criterion. The discussion below summarises the findings.

a) Adherence to Technical Aspects

This criterion evaluates the compliance of question papers and corresponding marking guidelines in terms of the following:
- technical layout;
- quality of figures, diagrams, tables and illustrations;
- completeness of each question paper, i.e. inclusive of assessment grids, marking guidelines, relevant answer sheets, formula sheets, addenda, etc.;
- correct question and section numbering and correct format requirements, as stipulated in the assessment guidelines;
- that the cover page contains all relevant details—time allocation, learning area and instructions to candidates;
- consistent and appropriate use of fonts; and
- consistency of mark allocation on the question paper and the marking guidelines.

Three out of seven question papers, (LCEN4, HSSC4 and LIFO4) met all the requirements, while three (NATS4, MLMS4 and SMME4) met most of the requirements of this criterion. Only one question paper (EMSC4) did not comply with the format requirements as stipulated in the assessment guidelines.

The technical challenges identified in the NATS4, MLMS4 and SMME4 question papers were: an appropriate font was not used throughout the question paper; the question paper could not be completed in the time allocated; and the quality of illustrations, graphs and tables was not appropriate and print ready.

The EMSC4 question paper did not comply fully with the technical aspects. Some of the technical challenges identified in this question paper were:
- instructions to candidates were not clearly specified and were ambiguous;
- the layout of the question paper was cluttered and not reader friendly;
- the quality of illustrations, graphs and tables was not appropriate and print ready;
- the question paper did not adhere to the format requirements as stipulated in the assessment guideline; and
- mark allocation on the question paper was not the same as that on the marking guideline.

At first moderation in 2019, five out of seven question papers (LCEN4, EMSC4, NATS4, SMME4 and MLMS4) met most of the requirements. HSSC4 question paper met all the requirements, while the LIFO4 question paper showed limited compliance with the technical aspects criterion. In November 2018, all the seven question papers were compliant with this criterion when presented for first moderation. This indicates a decline in terms of compliance with this criterion in November 2019, compared with November 2018.

b) Language and Bias

This criterion checks whether the language register used in the question paper is suitable for the level of the candidates; whether subtitles and grammar might create confusion; and identifies any elements of bias in terms of gender, race, culture, region and religion.

Three out of seven (LCEN4, HSSC4 and NATS4) papers complied fully with this criterion. In addition, three out of seven (LIFO4, MLMS4, and SMME4) question papers met most requirements. It was only the EMSC4

question paper that showed non-compliance with this criterion. The marking guidelines of LIFO4 and MLMS4 contained incorrect grammar and over-complicated syntax. Umalusi observed that passages used in the text for SMME4 were not of appropriate length and the level and complexity of the vocabulary was not appropriate.

In November 2018, three question papers (LCEN4, MLMS4, and HSSC4) complied in all respects with this criterion, while three question papers (EMSC4, NATS4 and SMME4) met most requirements of the language and bias criterion at first moderation. It was only LIFO4 that met limited requirements for this criterion. None of the seven question papers showed non-compliance when presented at first moderation. It was evident that at first moderation, the level of compliance with this criterion declined in MLMS4 and EMSC4, while LIFO4 showed improvement with regard to issues of language and biasness, when compared to November 2018.

c) Internal Moderation
This criterion evaluates whether internal moderation of the question papers and accompanying marking guidelines was conducted by the assessment body. The quality of internal moderation is also evaluated. The criterion also verifies whether the recommendations of the internal moderator were implemented or not. The quality, standard and relevance of moderation are also checked.

Only two question papers (LCEN4 and LIFO4) met all the requirements of this criterion and three question papers (MLMS4, NATS4 and SMME4) met most requirements. The EMSC4 question paper did not fully comply; and HSSC4 met limited requirements of the internal moderation criterion. The quality of the internal moderator reports of three question papers (MLMS4, NATS4 and SMM4) was poor and these question papers contained errors. While there was evidence that the EMSC4 and HSSC4 question papers had been moderated internally, the quality of the internal moderator reports was poor.

At the first moderation in November 2018, LCEN4 and LIFO4 showed limited compliance with internal moderation requirements, while two question papers (EMSC4 and SMME4) met most requirements in this criterion. Three question papers (MLMS4, HSSC4 and NATS4) met all the requirements. When compared to November 2018, the level of compliance in MLMS4, HSSC4, EMSC4 and NATS4 showed a decline in November 2019. The compliance levels of LCEN4, NATS4 and LIFO4 question papers showed significant improvement compared with those of November 2018.

d) Content Coverage
This criterion checks whether a sufficient sample of the prescribed content was covered in each question paper. The following aspects are verified:
- coverage of unit standards;
- the spread of specific outcomes and assessment standards;
- whether questions are within the broad scope of the assessment guidelines;
- whether the question paper as a whole reflects appropriate levels and depth of learning area knowledge;
- whether examples and illustrations are suitable, appropriate, relevant and academically correct;
- accurate correlation between mark allocation, level of difficulty and time allocation;
- whether the question paper allows for the testing of skills; and
- the quality of questions.

Four question papers (HSSC4, LCEN4, LIFO4 and NATS4) fully complied with the content coverage criterion. The MLMS4 question paper met most requirements, and the EMSC4 question paper showed non-compliance. The MLMS4 question paper did not reflect correlation between mark allocation, level of difficulty and time allocation; the questions did not provide clear instructional key words or verbs; and the question paper contained factual errors or misleading information. The content covered in the EMSC4 question paper was taken from the June 2018 question paper of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Umalusi rejected this question paper and recommended that the examiner sets a new question paper that would address content accordingly.

In 2018, two question papers (LCEN4 and LIFO4) showed limited compliance with this criterion, while five question papers (HSSC4, MLMS4, NATS4, SMME4 and EMSC4) complied in most respects with this criterion. This implies that there was a significant improvement in the compliance of LCEN4 and LIFO4 in 2019 when compared to 2018. The compliance of HSSC4, EMSC4 and NATS4 with this criterion declined in November 2019 compared to 2018.

e) Cognitive Demand
The cognitive demand criterion evaluates the spread of questions among different cognitive levels in each question paper. This is done by checking that the analysis grid received with the question paper clearly shows the cognitive levels of each question and sub-question; that choice questions are of equivalent cognitive demand; and that the question paper allows for creative responses from candidates.

At first moderation, four question papers (LIFO4, LCN4, MLMS4 and NATS4) complied in all respects with this criterion. The SMME4 question paper met most requirements of the cognitive demand criterion. The HSSC4 question paper showed limited compliance with this criterion, while EMSC4 did not comply at all.

The challenges identified in the EMSC4 question paper were:
- incorrect distribution of marks and marks were not aligned to the cognitive demand of the questions;
- a lack of balance in the spread of questions among cognitive levels; and
- choice questions were not of equivalent cognitive levels.

However, the internal moderator addressed all these challenges before the question papers were approved, at second moderation. In the SMME4 question paper, not all the questions were of similar cognitive levels. Additionally, source-based questions were not related to the source, making it difficult for candidates to respond to the question. Additionally, action verbs were not used in the correct context.

When compared with the November 2018 question papers at first moderation, five question papers (LCEN4, SMME4, EMSC4, LIFO4 and NATS4) met most requirements for compliance with cognitive demand requirements. The HSSC4 question paper showed limited compliance and that of MLMS4 met most requirements for this criterion. The LIFO4, LCEN4, MLMS4 and NATS4 question papers showed improvement, while the compliance of the EMSC4 and SMME4 question papers with this criterion declined when compared to the November 2018.

f) Adherence to Assessment Guideline
This criterion evaluates the adherence of question papers to policy and whether each question paper is in line with the assessment guideline of the assessment body and the requirements of Umalusi. Question papers are checked to ensure that they reflect the prescribed specific outcomes and assessment standards.

Four question papers (LCEN4, LIFO4, MLMS4 and NATS4) adhered fully to the requirements of the assessment guidelines. The HSSC4 and SMME4 question papers met most of the requirements. The EMSC4 question paper showed non-compliance with the assessment guideline. In the HSSC4 question paper, the weighting and spread of content was not appropriate, as per the assessment guideline. Furthermore, accompanying analysis grid that illustrate coverage of the prescribed contents (unit standards) and weighting was not submitted with the SMME4 question paper. The question paper for EMSC4 indicated that the assessment guideline had never been consulted: there was 100% plagiarism of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) June 2018 question paper, from Questions 2-6.

In 2018, four out of seven question papers (EMSC4, MLMS4, NATS4 and SMME4) met most of the assessment guideline requirements, while the other two question papers (LCEN4 and HSSC4), showed limited compliance with this criterion. Only the LIFO4 question paper did not comply with any quality indicators for this criterion. Thus it appears that there was an improvement in the compliance of LCEN4, HSSC4, LIFO4, MLMS4 and NATS4 in November 2019 when compared to November 2018. The compliance of the EMSC4 question paper showed a decline in 2019 when compared to 2018.

g) Predictability

This criterion checks whether questions from previous years' question papers were repeated in the current examination question papers, making them predictable. Question papers are also checked to establish whether they contain an appropriate degree of innovation, to eliminate the element of predictability.

At first moderation, as in 2018, six question papers (LCEN4, LIFO4, HSSC4, MLMS4, SMME4 and NATS4) complied fully in that they were totally unpredictable. Only the EMSC4 question paper did not comply with predictability requirements. The EMSC4 question paper was found to be a plagiarised replica of the DHET June 2018 examination question paper, from its Question 2 right up to Question 6. Compared with the November 2018 question papers, EMSC4 was the only question paper to decline drastically in terms of compliance with this criterion.

h) Marking Guidelines

The question paper and the accompanying marking guideline are approved together. If the marking guideline is not compliant, both documents are rejected until they both comply with the requirements. This criterion evaluates the compliance of marking guidelines that accompany each question paper. The criterion checks the correctness and accuracy of marking guidelines; clarity of marking instructions; allocation of marks as reflected in the question paper; and that the marking guidelines make allowance for relevant, alternative responses.

The marking guidelines for three question papers (LCEN4, NATS4 and LIFO4) complied in all respects with this criterion. Those for LIFO4, MLMS4 and SMME4 met most requirements of this criterion. Only the EMSC4 marking guidelines were not compliant with the requirements of the marking guidelines' criterion; while the LIFO4, MLMS4 and SMME4, mark allocation in the question papers did not correlate with that in the marking guidelines. Moreover, the marking guidelines for these three question papers did not provide enough detail to ensure accuracy of marking.

Umalusi identified the following challenges in the EMSC4 marking guideline:
- the language used in the marking guideline did not match that of the question paper;
- the marking guideline was not clearly laid out;
- the marking guidelinewould not facilitate consistent marking; and
- the marking guideline did not provide enough detail to ensure accuracy of marking.

In November 2018, two question papers (LCEN4 and LIFO4) showed limited compliance with this criterion. Two question papers (NATS4 and MLMS4) met most of the requirements, while three (EMSC4, HSSC4 and SMME4) were compliant in all respects. In comparison, in November 2019 there was improvement in three question papers (LCEN4, LIFO4 and NATS4); and a decline in the compliance of three question papers (EMSC4, HSSC4 and SMME4) with this criterion at first moderation.

1.4   Areas of Improvement

The following area of improvement was noted:
- with the exception of EMSC4 and HSSC4, there was a noticeable improvement in the quality of question papers and accompanying marking guidelines submitted for external moderation in November 2019, compared to those submitted in November 2018, in all eight criteria.

1.5   Areas of Non-compliance

The following were noted as concerns:
- the poor quality of internal moderation in the MLMS4 question paper when submitted for external moderation: the question paper contained errors that had not been identified and corrected during internal moderation;
- there was a significant decline in the compliance of EMSC4 and HSSC4 in all criteria when they were submitted for external moderation in November 2019 compared to 2018; and
the EMSC4 question paper that was an exact copy of the question paper from another assessment body.

1.6   Directives for Compliance and Improvement

BAA is required to act on the directive for compliance and improvement. The BAA is required to:
- strengthen the training of examiners and internal moderators, particularly in EMSC4 and HSSC4, to improve the quality of question papers;
- ensure that quality assurance measures are in place to eliminate plagiarism; and
- take disciplinary action against the examiner and internal moderator involved in plagiarism and submit a report to Umalusi.

1.7   Conclusion

The findings of the external moderation process indicated that there was an overall increase in the compliance of question papers and their corresponding marking guidelines with the criteria - from 32% in November 2018 to 53.6% in November 2019. Verification of compliance of each question paper and the corresponding marking guidelines showed both improvement and decline in compliance with each criterion. Although all identified challenges were addressed when the question papers and their marking guidelines were approved, the BAA is required to improve its internal moderation processes by strengthening its training of examiners and internal moderators. Continuous training will help to address shortcomings in the question papers and marking guidelines before they are submitted for external moderation.

CHAPTER 2 MODERATION OF SITE-BASED ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS

2.1   Introduction

Site-based assessment (SBA) is a compulsory component of the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) qualification. SBA is an important component and it contributes 50% towards the final mark in the GETC: ABET examination.

Students present their responses to SBA tasks in a portfolio of evidence (PoE). Internal moderation of SBA portfolios is an important quality assurance process and is expected to be conducted at centre and assessment body levels. Umalusi conducts rigorous external moderation of the SBA portfolios to evaluate the quality and standard of work done by the students and facilitators, in line with the requirements of the assessment guideline and criteria of Umalusi.

The purpose of external moderation of SBA portfolios is, among others, to:
- establish the scope, extent and reliability of SBA across all assessment bodies;
- ensure that SBA portfolios comply with the requirements of assessment guidelines;
- verify whether internal moderation of SBA portfolios was conducted by the assessment body at different levels;
- check on the quality of internal moderation of SBA portfolios; and
- report on the overall quality of SBA portfolios.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the final results, the implementation of the SBA is internally moderated and externally verified.

2.2   Scope and Approach

Umalusi externally moderated the SBA portfolios on-site at the Spaces Office Park, Rivonia, the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) marking centre, from 29 November to 1 December 2019. The BAA submitted SBA portfolios for all seven learning areas that they assessed, as shown in Table 2A, for the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

Table 2A: Learning areas for which SBA portfolios were submitted

Number	Learning area	LA code
1	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	LCEN4
2	Economic and Management Sciences	EMSC4
3	Mathematical Literacy	MLMS4
4	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	SMME4
5	Life Orientation	LIFO4
6	Human and Social Sciences	HSSC4
7	Natural Sciences	NATS4

Umalusi moderators were required to sample up to four student PoE and one facilitator portfolio of assessment (PoA) each, from at least three learning sites. Umalusi moderators were required to moderate a minimum of 10 SBA portfolios in total. In one learning area (HSSC4), where SBA portfolios for only two learning sites were available, six SBA portfolios were sampled from one site and four from another. The NATS4 moderator verified 10 portfolios from four learning sites. The summary of learning sites and the number of SBA portfolios moderated are shown in Table 2B.

Table 2B: Learning sites and number of SBA portfolio moderated per site

Learning site	Number of moderated SBA portfolios per learning site						
	LCEN4	EMSC4	MLMS4	SMME4	LIFO4	HSSC4	NATS4
Umsobomvu-Matthew Goniwe	4						
Frances Vorweg School	3		2	4	3	6	7
Pilanesberg Platinum Mines	3						
Nchafatso Training Programme Centre		4		4	3	4	
MMTI trading as MTC Greenside		2					1
Tharisa Minerals		4	4	4			
Samancor			4				1
AGA Mponeng					4		
Bana Ba Thari Academy							1
Total	**10**	**10**	**10**	**12**	**10**	**10**	**10**

A total of 72 SBA portfolios from nine learning sites were moderated. Umalusi moderators evaluated SBA portfolios using the Quality Assurance of Assessment Instrument for the Moderation of SBA portfolios. SBA portfolios were evaluated based on the following criteria:
- adherence to assessment guideline;
- internal moderation;
- structure and content of SBA portfolios;
- implementation of assessment tasks;
- performance of students;
- quality of marking; and
- overall qualitative evaluation of sample.

SBA portfolios were evaluated based on how the quality indicators for each criterion were met and on the overall impression of the SBA portfolios. SBA portfolios are expected to comply in all respects with the set criteria. The compliance decision taken was one of the following:
- no compliance;
- limited compliance;
- compliance in most respects; or
- compliance in all respects.

Umalusi moderation focused on the quality and standard of the SBA portfolios internally moderated by the BAA and presented to Umalusi for external moderation.

2.3 Summary of Findings

This section summarises the findings and observations of Umalusi moderators for the moderation of SBA portfolios.

2.3.1 Overall Compliance of Learning Sites

Table 2C summarises the overall compliance status of the learning sites and the level of compliance of learning sites per criterion (all learning areas).

Table 2C: Compliance of learning sites per criterion

		Compliance frequency [161 instances]			
		None	Limited	Most	All
1.	Adherence to assessment guidelines	0	3	13	7
2.	Internal moderation	0	2	9	12
3.	Structure and content of SBA portfolios	0	2	16	5
4.	Implementation of assessment tasks	0	5	0	18
5.	Student performance	0	0	11	12
6.	Quality of marking	1	2	6	14
7.	Overall qualitative evaluation	0	2	19	2
Total		**1**	**16**	**74**	**70**
Percentage		**1%**	**2%**	**19%**	**2%**
Complaince level in November 2018		**0%**	**5%**	**40%**	**55%**

Table 2C shows that there was one instance (1%) of overall non-compliance and 16 instances (10%) of limited compliance with all seven criteria. There were 74 instances (46%) overall compliance in most respects and 70 instances (43%) of compliance in all respects. Figure 2A compares the overall compliance of learning sites per criterion in November 2018 with that in November 2019.
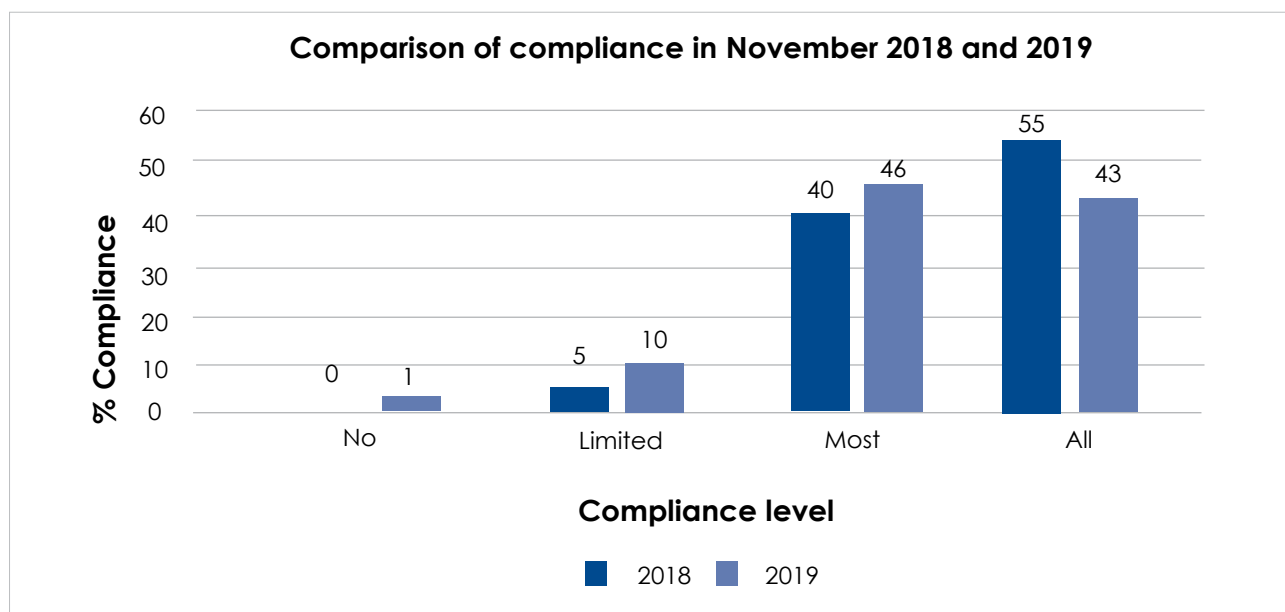
Figure 2A: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites in November 2018 and 2019

There was a decline in the overall compliance in three categories (none, limited and compliance in most respects) when compared with November 2018; and a 12% decline in overall compliance of centres that were compliant in all respects in 2019.

2.3.2 Compliance of Learning Site per Criterion

In addition to the overall compliance indicated in Table 2C and Figure 2A, the level of compliance per criterion varied per learning area and per learning site. The following section discusses the findings on the compliance of SBA portfolios of each learning site, per criterion. The findings are based on information observed from the SBA portfolios submitted for external moderation by the BAA. Compliance refers to the learning site's ability to satisfy all the requirements (compliance in all respects), as stipulated in the Umalusi SBA portfolio moderation instrument.

a) Adherence to the Assessment Guideline

This criterion checks the student and facilitator portfolios to ensure that the content adheres to the assessment guidelines of the assessment body. The assessment guideline prescribes the assessment and planning documents that should be included in all facilitator PoA. The guideline also prescribes the documents required in the students' PoE.

Seven out of 23 (30%) sampled learning sites complied fully with this criterion; 13 learning sites (57%) complied in most respects; and three (13%) showed limited compliance. The sites where limited compliance occurred were Tharisa Minerals (for EMSC4 and SMME4) and MMTI trading as MTC Greenside (EMSC4). There were no sites that showed non-compliance with this criterion. Figure 2B compares the compliance of learning sites with overall adherence to assessment guidelines in 2018 and 2019.
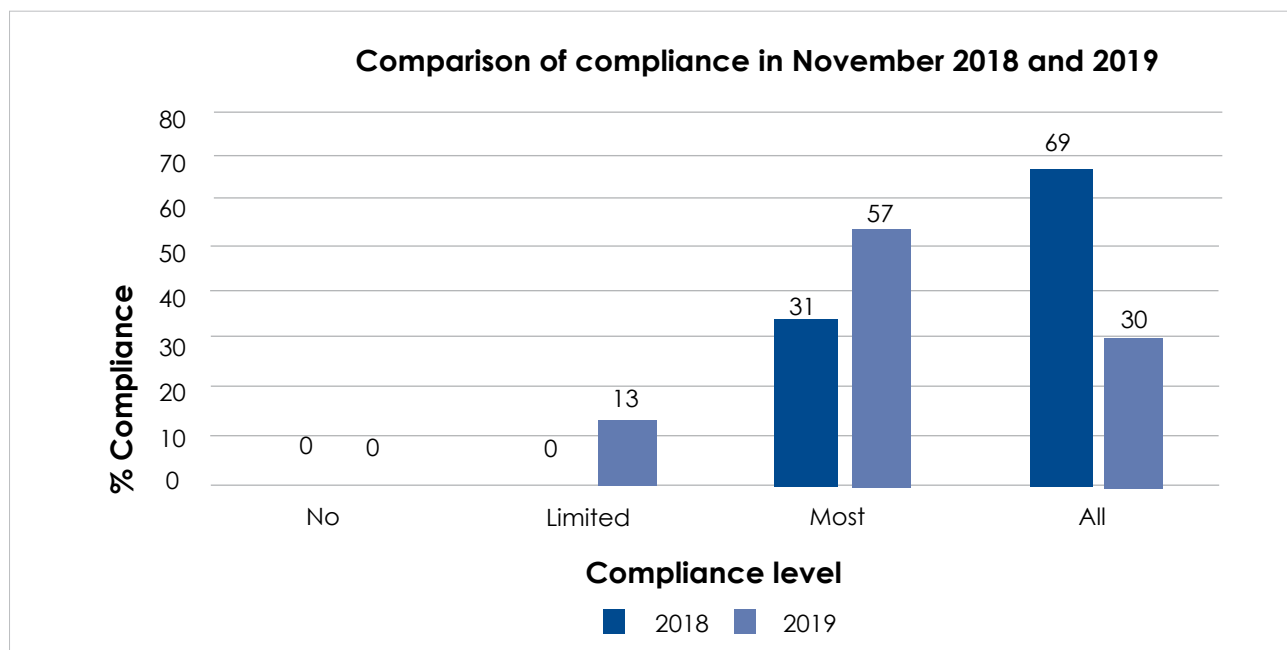
Figure 2B: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites with adherence to assessment guideline in November 2018 and 2019

Figure 2B shows that the percentage of learning sites with limited compliance and compliance in most respects increased in 2019 while the learning sites that complied fully with this criterion decreased by 39% in 2019 when compared with November 2018.

b) Internal Moderation

This criterion verifies evidence of internal moderation of SBA portfolios, and the quality of such internal moderation, by the assessment body. The expectation is that there would be internal moderation reports that contain constructive and relevant feedback from the moderator to both facilitators and students.

In November 2019, 52% of learning sites complied in all respects, 39% complied in most respects and 9% showed limited compliance with this criterion. None of the sampled learning sites were non-compliant with this criterion. Figure 2C compares the compliance of learning sites with adherence to internal moderation in 2018 and 2019.

Comparison of compliance in November 2018 and 2019
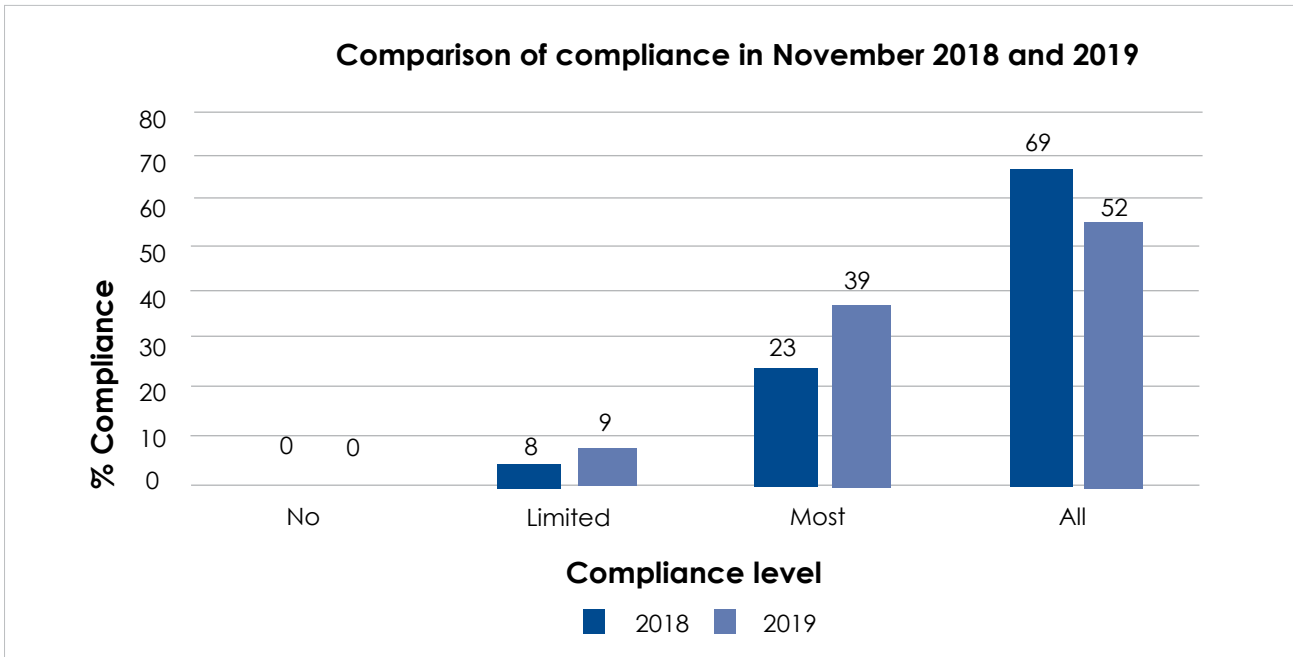
Figure 2C: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites with internal moderation in November 2018 and 2019

There was an increase in the number of learning sites that showed limited compliance and those that were compliant in most respects with this criterion. However, the number of learning sites that were fully compliant with internal moderation decreased by 17% in November 2019 when compared with 2018.

c) Structure and Content of SBA Portfolios

The structure and content criterion checks that students' portfolios contain the relevant documents indicated in the quality indicators. The expectation is that the students' SBA portfolios will be neat and presentable, with all tasks filed in an orderly manner; and will reflect that tasks were properly marked and internally moderated.

The evidence found indicated 16 out of 23 (69 %) sites were compliant in most respects. A further five of 23 (22%) were fully compliant. There was limited compliance in two of 23 (9%) learning sites moderated. Figure 2D compares the compliance of learning sites with structure and content of SBA portfolios in 2018 and 2019.

Comparison of compliance in November 2018 and 2019
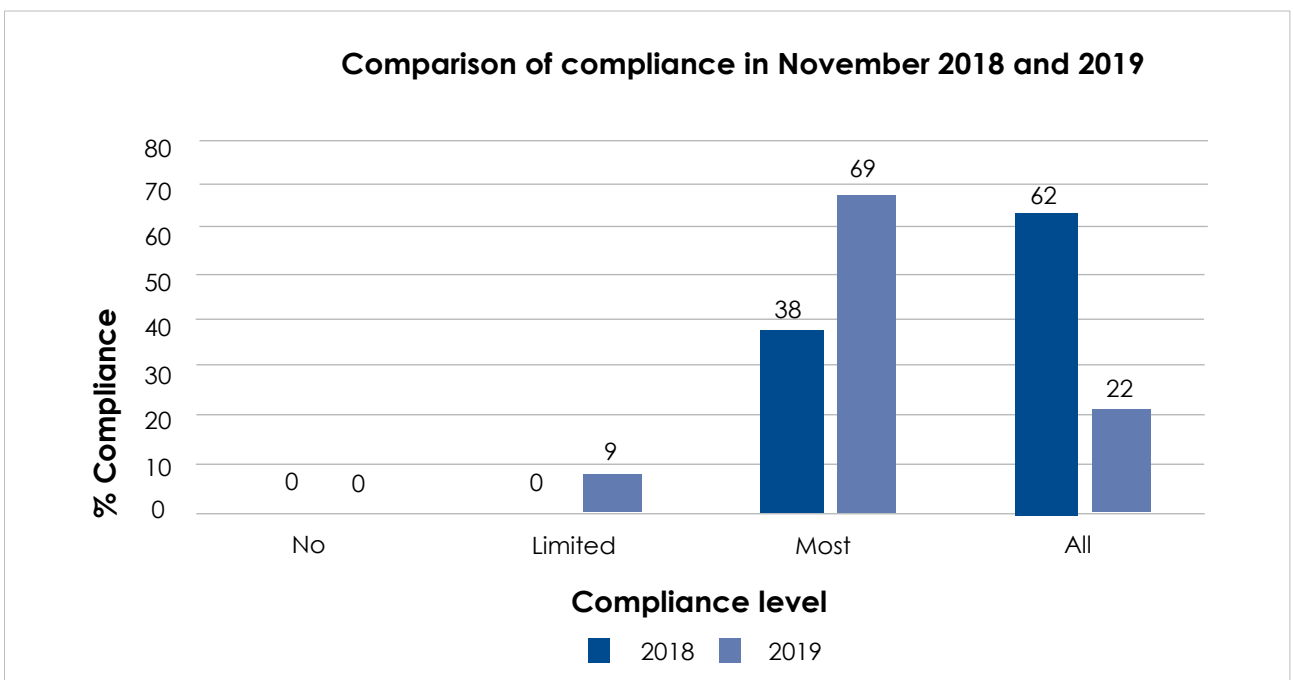
Figure 2D: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites with structure and content of SBA portfolios in November 2018 and 2019

Figure 2D indicates that although there was an increase in limited compliance and learning areas that were compliant in most respects with this criterion in November 2019, learning sites that were compliant in all respects declined drastically from 62% in November 2018 to 22% in November 2019.

d) Implementation of Assessment Tasks
This criterion checks whether all prescribed tasks have been completed and assessed according to the assessment plan contained in the student portfolio. The expectation is that the SBA tasks are completed and assessed according to the assessment plan.

At 18 of 23 (78%) learning sites, all SBA tasks were implemented in line with the assessment plan. These learning sites met all the requirements of this criterion. At five learning sites (22%) the implementation of SBA tasks showed limited compliance with this criterion. In three learning areas (EMSC4, SMME4 and NATS4) limited compliance was due mainly to the tasks not being implemented or assessed according to the assessment plan. Figure 2E compares the compliance of learning sites with adherence to implementation of assessment tasks criterion in 2018 and 2019.

Comparison of compliance of November 2018 and 2019
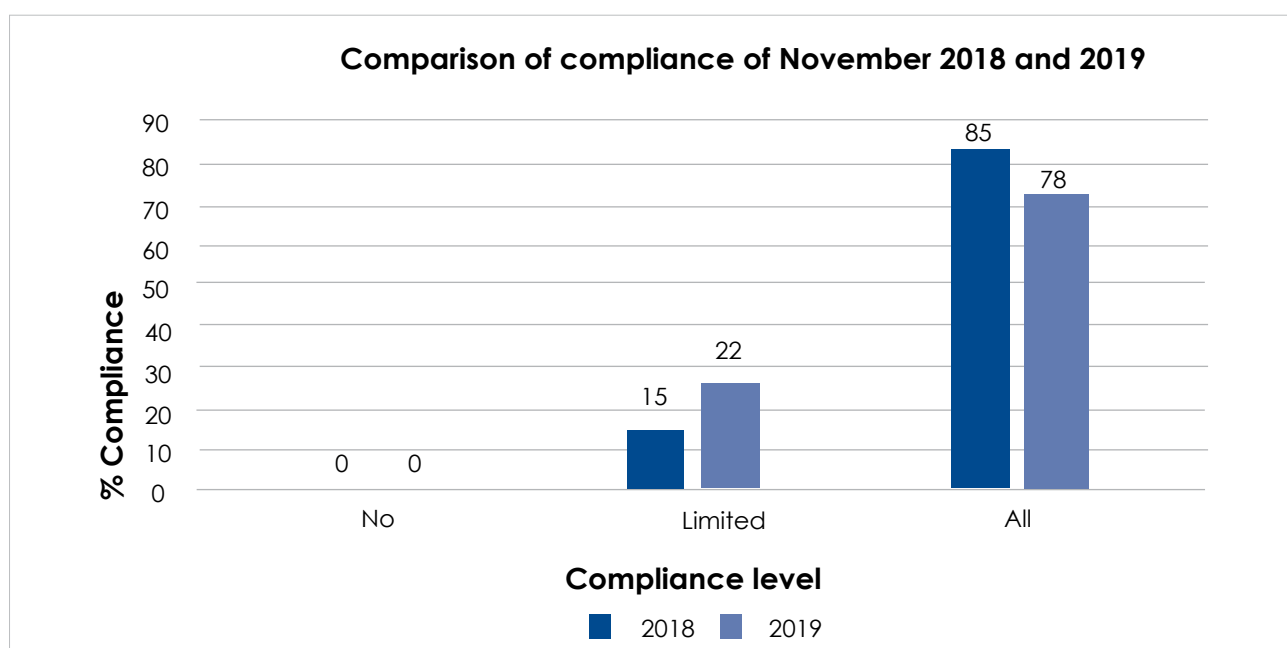
Figure 2E: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites with implementation of SBA tasks in November 2018 and 2019

A comparison with compliance in November 2018 indicates an increase in limited compliance and a decrease in the learning sites that were fully compliant with this criterion in November 2019.

e) Student performance
This criterion evaluates the performance of students against the following three quality indicators:
- the student interprets the assessment task correctly;
- the student's responses meet the expectations and demands of the assessment task; and
- the student is able to respond to all the questions (at different levels of difficulty) as set in the task.

The expectation is that student performance is compliant in all three areas.

The learning sites that were compliant in most respects were 11 out of 23 (48%), and those compliant in all respects with this criterion were 12 out of 23 (52%). Figure 2F compares the compliance of learning sites with adherence to student performance criterion in 2018 and 2019.
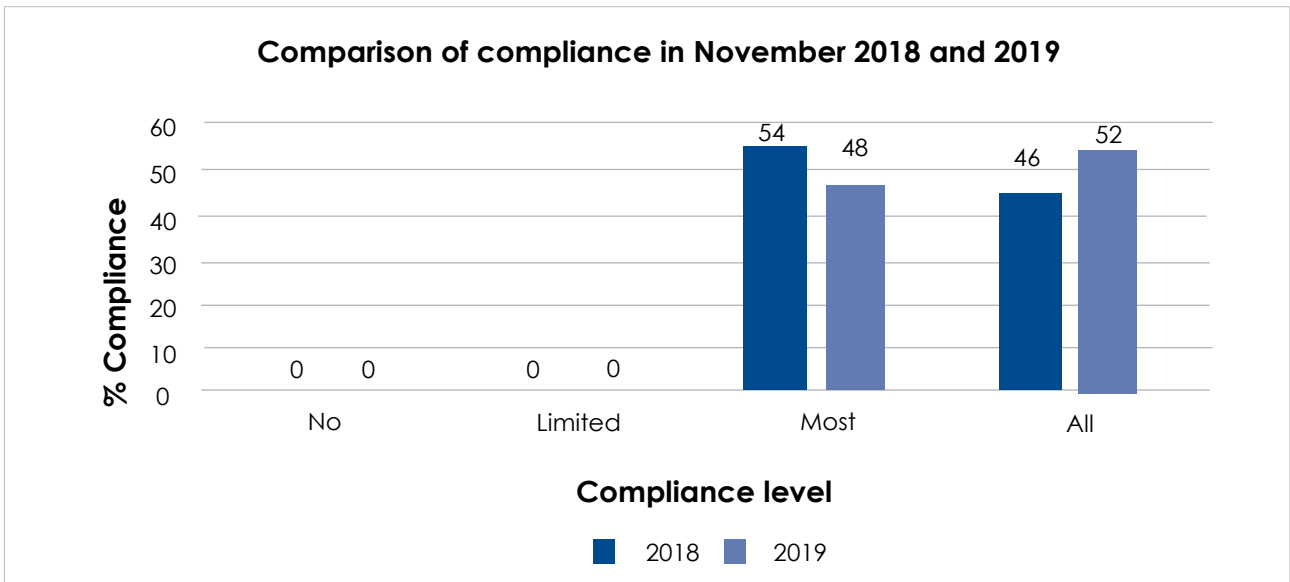
Figure 2F: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites with student performance in November 2018 and 2019

Figure 2F shows a slight decrease in the percentage compliance in most respects and a slight increase in the percentage compliance of learning sites that were compliant in all respects. There were no learning sites that showed non-compliance and limited compliance with this criterion.

f) Quality of Marking

This criterion checks whether marking was accurate and consistent with the marking guidelines. The expectation is that marking should be accurate and consistent; that totalling, recording and the transfer of marks to the mark sheet are accurate; and that the final mark allocated is in line with the performance of the student.

The learning sites were compliant in all respects with the quality of marking in two learning areas (LIFO4, and HSSC4). Generally, at 14 out of 23 (61%) sites the marking was found to be compliant in all respects with this criterion. Two out of the 23 (9%) sampled learning sites showed limited compliance in EMSC4. At one learning site (4 %) the moderator for MLMS4 reported that there was non-compliance with this criterion. The difference in marks was due mainly to inconsistent application of the marking guideline, with up to a different of 20 marks between the marker and moderator. These differences were caused by non-adherence to the marking guideline, incorrect mark allocation or incorrect addition of marks. In six out of 23 (26%) sites the result was compliant in most respects. Figure 2G compares the compliance of learning sites with adherence to quality of marking criterion in 2018 and 2019.
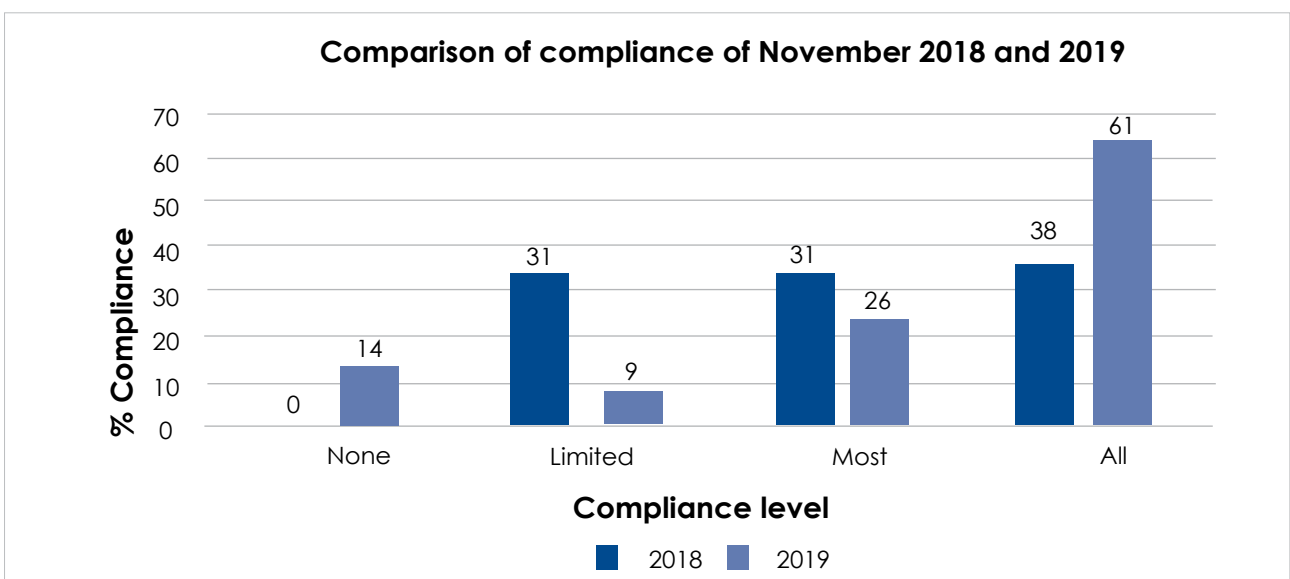
Figure 2G: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites with the quality of marking in November 2018 and 2019

Figure 2G indicates an increase in the learning sites that were compliant in all respects when compared with compliance in November 2018. Non-compliance increased by 14% in November 2019.

g) Overall Qualitative Evaluation of the Sample

This criterion checks to what extent the learning site complies with the overall minimum standards set by Umalusi. The expectation is that the SBA portfolios of each learning site should comply in all respects with the set criteria. There should be improvement when compared shown year on year.

The overall qualitative evaluation of the sampled learning sites revealed that 19 out of 23 (83%) sites were compliant in most respects, two (9%) learning sites were compliant in all respects and another two (9%) showed limited compliance with criteria. No learning site showed non-compliance in general. Figure 2H compares the compliance of learning sites in the overall qualitative evaluation in 2018 and 2019.
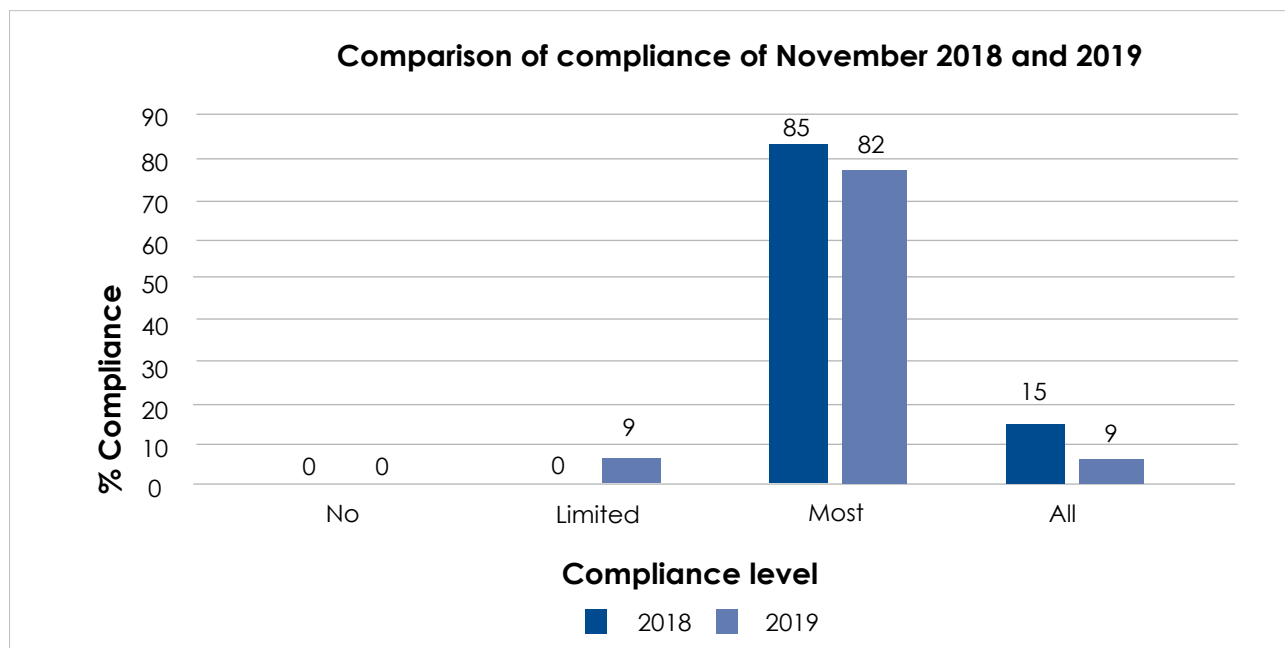
Figure 2H: Comparison of compliance of the learning sites in the overall qualitative evaluation in November 2018 and 2019

A comparison of overall compliance in 2018 and 2019 shows that there was generally an increase in the percentage of limited compliance learning sites and a slight decrease in compliance in most and all respects in November 2019.

2.4   Areas of Improvement

The following area of improvement was observed:
- sampled learning sites indicated an overall non-compliance in only one out of seven criteria.

2.5   Areas of Non-compliance

The following were identified as areas of non-compliance:
- reduction by 39% in the overall percentage of learning sites that were compliant in all respects in November 2019 when compared with the overall compliance in November 2018;
- increase by 1% in the learning sites that showed overall non-compliance with criteria in November 2019 when compared with 2018; and
- increase by 14% in the learning sites that were non-compliant with the quality of marking criterion in 2019 when compared with 2018.

2.6   Directives for Compliance and Improvement

The BAA is required to:
- strengthen its support to learning sites that indicated non-compliance with the quality of marking;
- monitor the learning sites that did not fully meet the requirements relating to the implementation and moderation of SBA portfolios as stipulated in the assessment guideline.

2.7   Conclusion

There has been a general, overall decline in five out of the seven criteria, especially in compliance in all respects, of SBA portfolios of all learning sites moderated by Umalusi in 2019, compared with 2018. This decline in compliance was more evident in the quality of marking criterion, where compliance reduced by 14%.

Any non-compliance poses a risk in terms of the credibility of the SBA mark, which contributes 50% towards the final mark per learning area. It is recommended that the BAA strengthen support and monitor those learning sites that showed non-compliance and/or limited compliance with any of the seven criteria, as measures to address non-compliance mentioned in this report.

CHAPTER 3 MONITORING THE STATE OF READINESS TO CONDUCT EXAMINATIONS

3.1   Introduction

In keeping with the risk management-based approach as an independent, objective and value-adding quality assurance process, Umalusi undertook the critical external audit evaluation of the state of readiness of the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) to conduct November 2019 General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations.

The audit focused specifically on risks related to the examinations. The main objectives of the verification were to:
- evaluate the level of preparedness of the BAA to conduct the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations;
- track the progress made in addressing the directives for compliance and improvement issued after the November 2018 examinations;
- verify that the BAA has systems in place to ensure the integrity of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations; and
- report on any shortcomings identified during the evaluation and verification of the BAA systems.

There were no areas of non-compliance noticed during the conduct of the state of readiness of the BAA to conduct the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

3.2   Scope and Approach

Umalusi audited the BAA on its readiness to administer the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. Umalusi adopted a risk management-based approach in evaluating the level of preparedness of assessment bodies to conduct the 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. The intention was to timeously identify any potential risk that might compromise the delivery of a credible examination. The following process was implemented:

Phase 1: Requirements and desktop evaluation
A.   Documents that had to be submitted:
- annual management plans;
- improvement plans based on the directives for compliance and improvement issued at the end of the previous year's examinations;
- progress reports submitted on a quarterly basis.

B.   Desktop evaluation conducted on:
- submitted self-evaluation reports, and
- progress reports submitted on a quarterly basis.

Phase 2: Risk analysis and feedback
Umalusi used the submitted documents to determine a risk profile if any of the BAA. The process informed Umalusi's verification of the state of readiness of the BAA.

Phase 3: Conduct of evidence-based verification audits
This process was used to evaluate the systems and related evidence, as outlined in the submitted reports and/or any other reports received from the BAA. Verification audit instruments were administered during on-site verification visit and the findings were classified according to their potential impact on the forthcoming examinations.

The information set out in this report is limited to the findings from the audit visits to the BAA. It is subject to the evidence and data provided by the BAA at the time of the Umalusi visit and/or subsequent submissions.

3.3   Summary of Findings

The findings gathered from the audit visit are detailed hereunder.

3.3.1 Management

Umalusi audited the state of readiness of the BAA and found the assessment body had adequate capacity, both financial and human capital, to manage and conduct the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. Notably, the assessment body had put contingency measures in place to address possible challenges that might compromise the delivery of credible examinations.

3.3.2 Registration of Candidates and Examination Centres

a) Registration of Candidates

The registration of candidates was conducted and finalised before the Umalusi audit. Candidates were registered using South African identity documents. All candidate who were foreign nationals were registered using their passports. BAA did not report any challenges in the registration process. The number of candidates registered for the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations is provided in Table 3A.

Table 3A: Number of candidates enrolled (Data provided by BAA)

Number of candidates	Number of candidates granted concessions
586	1

One candidate was granted an amanuensis to read the questions to the candidate and write the response dictated by the candidate. Fifteen minutes' extra time was granted per hour, as per criteria outlined in the Guidelines for Concessions. The application for concession for the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations was completed and is available for verification.

b) Registration of Examination Centres

BAA registered 31 examination centres and audited seven centres in June 2019. BAA will conduct a desktop and physical evaluation of centres prior to the conduct of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. At the time of the audit the assessment body had planned to undertake follow-up telephonic support to verify the readiness of the centres that would not be audited.

BAA classified examination centres according to their risk profiles. The following criteria was used:
- all centres that were implicated on behavioural irregularities are classified as high-risk centres;
- all centres that were implicated on technical irregularities are classified as medium risk; and
- centres visited and had no issues are classified

The Number of classification is indicated on Table 3B below.

Table 3B: Number of examination centres per category

High-risk	Medium-risk	Low-risk
4	0	27

3.3.3. Site-Based Assessment

The management plan for the submission, processing and moderation of site-based assessment (SBA) was verified. BAA provided support to all the centres registered to write the November 2019 examinations, including providing support centres with videos on conducting SBA. These were distributed to all centres.

BAA had appointed a sufficient number of SBA moderators and all moderation instruments were readily available and verified.

3.3.4 Printing, Packaging and Distribution

BAA has in place a detailed management plan for the printing, packaging and distribution of question papers and other examination material. All printing would take place at Colourtech Printing (Pty) Ltd in Bapsfontein. A signed service level agreement outlining all obligations, processes and management of consignment was in place. Printing was to be done on 22 and 23 October 2019, with dispatch of question papers scheduled for 24 October 2019. All centres would receive their question papers between 29 and 30 October 2019.

All staff working at the printing facility had police clearance reports. The printing site was highly secured, with 24-hour security guards at the entrance to the premises and cameras situated inside and outside the printing, packaging and distribution area. To strengthen security, BAA introduced the use of locked crates. A lock code would be used to open the crate containing the examination question papers. These would be sent to all chief invigilators as a text message one hour before the commencement of the examination session.

BAA appointed a courier company to distribute the question papers to the examination centres. All vehicles used would be monitored.

3.3.5 Conduct of Examinations

The management plan to conduct the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations was verified.

The appointment and training of BAA's invigilation team had not been finalised at the time of the Umalusi audit. The invigilators were to be trained online and BAA would monitor the process. Chief invigilators would be using a video developed by BAA to assist and support them in the management of examination processes.

A two-tier monitoring approach including head office and provincial monitors was to be used. Five monitors (two BAA officials and three external monitors) would be deployed to monitor the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. BAA has developed the monitoring instrument that will be administered during the examinations. Appointment and training of monitors would be completed by 1 November 2019. A monitoring plan for monitoring the November 2019 examinations was available. Sixteen examination centres were sampled for monitoring and these included all new centres and high-risk centres.

3.3.6 Appointment and Training of Marking Personnel

BAA selected marking personnel from a pool of contract workers. Umalusi verified the contracts and curriculum vitae of currently appointed workers. The criteria for the appointment of marking personnel did not include all categories of marking personnel in the sector.

BAA increased the number of marking personnel by three, one additional marker for Communication in English, Mathematical Literacy and Life Orientation respectively.

Novice markers were included in the appointments, selected from the pool of Level 3 markers. All markers were to be trained using the BAA marking manual and a management of irregularities manual.

BAA would train internal moderators and examination assistants, who would then be responsible for the quality assurance of marking process. Marking was to be conducted over two days, from 30 November–1 December 2019.

3.3.7 Management of Examination Irregularities

The BAA has a functional Examination Irregularity Committee (EIC) that consists of the Executive Manager, Quality Assurance Manager, Logistics and Certification Manager, Office Administrator and three Umalusi officials. The management of irregularities is a component of training for chief invigilators and invigilators.

3.3.8 Capturing of Marks

The policy guidelines on the process of capturing were made available and the level of implementation and adherence to rules and regulations reflected compliance. The management plan for the capturing of candidates' marks was also available. Two permanent employees were to be responsible for the capturing of GETC: ABET marks. This was to take place at the BAA head office, where a senior capturing officer would manage the capturing process and a system administrator/officer would supervise the process.

There was sufficient evidence of a double-capturing process and method in operation.

3.4   Areas of Improvement

The following good practices were noted during the state of readiness audit:
- all staff working at the printing facility had police clearance reports;
- coding of all attendance registers is commendable; and
- the requirement of a password when opening question papers.

3.5   Areas of Non-compliance

No areas of non-compliance were identified by Umalusi that would impact on the delivery of credible November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

3.6   Directives for Compliance and Improvement

No directives for compliance and improvement were issued.

3.7   Conclusion

The findings of the verification audit confirmed the readiness of the assessment body to administer and manage the November 2019 examinations. BAA is commended for striving to strengthen security of the examination material.

CHAPTER 4 MONITORING THE WRITING AND MARKING OF EXAMINATIONS

4.1   Introduction

Umalusi monitors the conduct, administration and management of national examinations to ensure delivery of a credible examination. The November examination cycle opens a window of opportunity to further education for candidates who are registered to write the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Education and Training (GETC: ABET), as managed by the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA).

The November 2019 GETC: ABET examination cycle commenced on 4 November 2019 and ended on 21 November 2019. This was followed by the marking of the answer scripts, from 30 November 2019 to 1 December 2019. Umalusi monitored a predetermined sample of examination centres that was representative of the nine provinces.

4.2   Scope and Approach

The November 2019 BAA GETC: ABET examinations were administered in 31 examination centres. Umalusi monitored ten predetermined centres during the writing phase (4–21 November 2019). Subsequently, Umalusi monitored the marking, on Saturday, 30 November 2019. Table 4A provides details of the examination centres and marking centre monitored by Umalusi.

Table 4A: Examination centres monitored for the writing of examinations

No.	Province	Centre	Date	Learning area	Candidates
	Gauteng	Francis Vorweg School	19/11/2019	Natural Sciences	8 (Registered) 8 (Wrote)
1.		Matthew Goniwe (GCRA)	4/11/2019	Mathematical Literacy	23 (Registered) 23 (Wrote)
2.		Nchafatso Training Centre	14/11/2019	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	19 (Registered) 19 (Wrote)
3.		West End Claybrick (Pty) Ltd	8/11/2019	Communication in English	4 (Registered) 4 (Wrote)
4.	Limpopo	Bana-Bathari Academy	4/11/2019	Mathematical Literacy	41 (Registered) 40 (Wrote)
5.	Western Cape	Omnico	8/11/2019	Communication in English	4 (Registered) 4 (Wrote)
6.	Mpumalanga	MMTI Trading as MTC Greenside	4/11/2019	Life Orientation	3 (Registered) 3 (Wrote)
7.	North West	Pilanesberg Platinum Mine	4/11/2019	Mathematical Literacy	18 (Registered) 16 (Wrote)
8.		Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre)	8/11/2019	Communication in English	15 (Registered) 12 (Wrote)
9.		Tharisa Mine	12/11/2019	Economic and Management Sciences	14 (Registered) 13 (Wrote)
Marking centre monitored					
1.	Gauteng	Spaces Office Park. Corner of 12th Street and Rivonia Road, Rivonia	30/11/2019		

Umalusi evaluated the levels of compliance of centres on the conduct, administration and management of the examinations using the Instrument for Monitoring of the Examinations: Writing Phase to collect data from the centres visited. Umalusi adopted the following approach:

- data was collected using the monitoring instrument, which is comprised of seven -critical criteria, as reflected in Table 4B;
- data was collected through interviews with chief invigilators of the monitored centres, verification of the documents provided by the examination centres as part of the evidence required and observations while monitoring at the centres; and
- completed reports on overall findings were submitted by Umalusi monitors.

The findings are detailed in 4.3 hereunder, in a consolidated analysis of the reports from the monitoring of writing and of the marking centre.

4.3   Summary of Findings

The section that follows summarises the findings of the monitoring of writing and marking of the BAA GETC: ABET examinations.

4.3.1   Monitoring the Writing of Examinations

Table 4B summarises the findings from the monitoring of examination centres during the writing of examinations. These findings are recorded as per the seven critical criteria used.

Table 4B: Compliance levels in each key monitoring area, per centre monitored

Key monitoring area	Examination centres									
	Francis Vorwerg School	Matthew Goniwe (GCRA)	Nchafatso Training Centre	West End Claybrick	Bana-Bathari Academy	Omnico	MMTI Trading as MTC Greenside	Pilanesberg Platinum Mine	Samancor (Khuphu-ka Training Centre)	Tharisa Mine
Preparation for the examination	100	100	100	81	100	100	88	100	94	88
Invigilators and their training	100	25	100	100	100	100	50	100	75	100
Preparation for writing	100	100	92	83	100	92	75	100	100	100
Time management of activities	100	69	100	76	100	92	85	100	100	100
Activities during writing	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Packaging and transmission of scripts after writing	100	90	90	90	100	100	100	100	100	90
Total	**600**	**484**	**582**	**530**	**600**	**584**	**498**	**600**	**569**	**578**
AVERAGE %	**100**	**81**	**97**	**88**	**100**	**97**	**83**	**100**	**95**	**91**

a) Preparation for the Examination
Six out of ten monitored examination centres complied with the criterion on preparation for the examination by achieving at least 81%. The centre with the lowest compliance percentage, of 81%, was West End Claybrick.

In all ten-examination centres, the examination material was sealed in BAA boxes that could be opened only with a password provided by BAA. The examination material was stored in a safe environment when it arrived at eight examination centres and was accessed by authorised personnel. In two examination centres, examination material was delivered to the examination venue—Matthew Goniwe (GCRA) and Tharisa Mine–the examination material was stored in offices and brought to the examination venue the morning of the examination.

The low compliance level was due to the following:
- there was no pre-examination audit report or any other verification documents in two examination centres, MMTI and West End Claybrick;
- there was insufficient space to accommodate all candidates and inadequate space between desks at Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre);
- noise outside the examination venue could disturb and/or distract candidates (West End Claybrick); and
- examination centre not in possession of dispatch documents, at West End Claybrick.

b) Invigilators and their Training
Seven out of ten monitored examination centres had a compliance level of 100%, while the other three had compliance levels of 25%, 50% and 75% respectively. The low level of compliance was due to:
- unavailability of a letter of delegation for the chief invigilator where the chief invigilator was not the principal or centre manager (Matthew Goniwe (GCRA));
- outdated evidence of chief invigilator training (MMTI and Khuphuka Training Centre (Samancor));
- the absence of appointment letters (Matthew Goniwe (GCRA)); and
- no training of invigilators for the current examinations (Matthew Goniwe (GCRA), Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre) and MMTI).

c) Preparations for Writing
Six out of ten examination centres monitored were 100% compliant with this key monitoring criterion. These centres were Francis Vorwerg School, Matthew Goniwe (GCRA), Bana-Bathari Academy, Pilanesberg Platinum Mine, Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre) and Tharisa Mine. Candidates were admitted to the examination venue at least 30 minutes prior to the start of examinations to all centres but two. The other two examination centres— MMTI and West End Claybrick—admitted candidates into the examination venue 25 minutes and 14 minutes, respectively, prior to the start of the examination. At West End Claybrick, the examination venue had to be changed, resulting in a delay in admitting the candidates into the examination venue. Candidates were seated according to the seating plans available at nine examination centres. The exception was West End Claybrick, where a boardroom was used as an examination venue and the four candidates used the boardroom table.

The contents of examination files available in three centres were incomplete: MMTI, Omnico and West End Claybrick. At two of the examination centres—MMTI and Omnico—there were no relief or invigilation timetables, while at West End Claybrick examination centre, in addition to the unavailability of invigilation and relief timetables, there was no seating plan and no irregularity forms, copies of dispatch forms and absentee forms.

At MMTI examination centre, candidates were admitted to the examination room with their bags, caps and cell phones.

d) Time Management of Activities during the Examination
Six out of ten examination centres were 100% compliant with this key monitoring area. These centres were Tharisa Mine, Francis Vorwerg, Nchafatso Training Centre, Bana-Bathari Academy, Pilanesberg Platinum Mine and Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre).

Four examination centres were less than 100% compliant because of the following:
- question papers were not distributed on time (West End Claybrick and Matthew Goniwe (GCRA));
- question papers were not checked for technical accuracy with the candidates (West End Claybrick and Omnico); and
- the candidates were not given the prescribed reading time before writing (West End Claybrick and Matthew Goniwe (GCRA)).

At Matthew Goniwe (GCRA), the delay in distributing question papers was caused by a shortage of Mathematical Literacy question papers, which was realised only when the papers were opened. Owing to delays in starting the examinations at West End Claybrick and Matthew Goniwe (GCRA), the examinations did not end at the stipulated times.

e) Activities during Writing
All ten examination centres complied fully with the criteria of this key monitoring area. No irregularities were reported at any of the sampled examination centres. The invigilators were vigilant and did not engage in any other activities.

f) Packaging and Transmission of Scripts after Writing
Six out of ten examination centres were fully compliant with this key monitoring area. These centres were Francis Vorwerg School, Bana-Bathari Academy, Omnico, MMTI, Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre) and Pilanesberg Platinum Mine.

At these examination centres, answer scripts were sealed in official plastic satchels. They were counted and packed in safe and secure venues where the invigilation team was present. The answer scripts were kept in a safe or strong room until the courier service collected them, as per arrangements with the assessment body.
Six examination centres monitored completed situational reports with the exception of Tharisa Mine, Matthew Goniwe (GCRA), Nchafatso Training Centre and West End Claybrick.

g) Monitoring by the Assessment Body
Three out of ten examination centres fully complied in this key monitoring criterion. These centres are Nchafatso Training Centre, Pilanesberg Platinum Mine and Bana-Bathari Academy. There was no evidence of monitoring by the BAA in the other seven examination centres at the time of the Umalusi visit.

4.3.2 Monitoring the Marking of Examinations

Umalusi monitored the marking of examination scripts on 30 November 2019. The marking centre provided the number of scripts to be marked and number of marking personnel, as indicated in Table 4C.

Table 4C: Learning area information

Learning area	Number of scripts	Marking personnel
Language, Literacy and Communication: English	215	7
Mathematical Literacy	201	7
Life Orientation	61	2
Human and Social Sciences	26	2
Economic and Management Sciences	32	2
Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	41	2
Natural Sciences	12	2

Natural Sciences was marked on 7 December 2019 as per the request by the assessment body. The marking personnel was not available on 30 November 2019. Umalusi did not monitor the marking process.

a) Planning for Marking

BAA developed a detailed marking management plan that was followed when marking took place.

The marking centre manager implemented a well-designed marking management plan. The marking was scheduled for 30 November 2019 to 1 December 2019. The marking personnel were trained as per the management plan and training took place on 9 November 2019. The marking personnel, including the management team, reported for duty on 30 November 2019. The marking guidelines were kept at the BAA head office. Marking personnel were supplied with the guidelines at least five days prior to the commencement of marking to familiarise themselves and prepare for the marking guideline discussion. The norm time for daily start and finish at the marking centre was 08:30 to 16:00.

b) Marking Centre

Marking took place at Spaces in Rivonia Road, Johannesburg. This facility was suitable, with adequate space in six rooms to accommodate the six learning areas to be marked as well as a script-control room. The furniture was suitable for marking. The marking centre was conducive for marking and was well resourced. The marking centre complied with occupational health and safety requirements. There were fire extinguishers on each floor the markers occupied, the ground and first floors. BAA did not provide accommodation for the markers.

c) Security

There were adequate security measures at the marking centre: security guards for the building, including one at a lockable gate to the basement parking; and security guards hired by BAA at the reception desk. Entry to the marking centre was controlled: all marking and management personnel, including the Umalusi monitor, were required to sign in at the front desk and name tags were required to be worn at all times.

To ensure that all scripts were accounted for during marking, a form was filled in when answer scripts were moved to the marking rooms. Answer scripts were transported from the BAA head office by BAA Logistics, accompanied by security guards.

d) Handling of Irregularities

Handling of irregularities was discussed during the training of marking personnel. When irregularities were identified by markers they were to be reported to the chief marker; a detailed report would be compiled and reported to the marking centre manager, who would then start the process of conducting an investigation. When answer scripts were removed for investigation, an irregularity form was to be completed.

BAA had measures in place to deal with missing scripts. The marking centre did not experience any irregularities.

4.4   Areas of Improvement

The following areas of improvement were noted:
- three out of 10 examination centres achieved an average 100% for compliance in November 2019, compared to zero out of ten in November 2018; and
- all ten examination centres achieved compliance levels of 100% in the 'activities during writing' key performance area in November 2019, compared to eight out of ten in November 2018.

4.5 Areas of Non-compliance

The following areas of non-compliance were observed (refer to annexure 4.1)
- candidates' desks were too close together as the one-metre-apart rule was not observed(one centre);
- examination venue was noisy; (one centre)
- invigilators were not trained; (two centres)
- invigilators were not appointed in writing; (one centre)
- there was no seating plan; and (one centre)
- candidates were not admitted into the examination room 30 minutes prior to the start of the examination as prescribed. (two centres)

Annexure B outlines in details the areas of non-compliance and the centres affected.

4.6 Directives for Compliance and Improvement

BAA is required to ensure that:
- the examination centres are evaluated and their preparedness to conduct examinations verified; and such a report must be available as evidence;
- invigilators are trained for every examination cycle and evidence relating to training must be issued to all examination centres and examination teams; and
- examination centres are monitored frequently to ensure compliance with the policy of the examinations as prescribed for the conduct and administration of examinations. Reports must be left at the examination centres as proof of external monitoring having been conducted and special attention must be given to the centres that did not comply.

4.7 Conclusion

Overall, the writing of the examinations went well. There was improvement from November 2018; however, some examination centres did not address the directives for compliance and improvement that were raised in the November 2018 examination cycle for the writing of examinations in the November 2019 examination cycle. These directives related to the training of invigilators.

There were no directives for compliance and improvement issued in November 2018 regarding BAA's marking of examinations and, again in November 2019, the marking processes were well managed and carried out in accordance with the management plan developed for marking.

CHAPTER 5 SELECTION, APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING OF MARKING PERSONNEL

5.1   Introduction

Umalusi audits the selection, appointment and training of marking personnel to ensure that the quality and standard of marking of candidates' scripts of the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations are maintained. Inconsistency in the marking of GETC: ABET scripts compromises the fairness and reliability of marks awarded to candidates and therefore threatens the credibility of the GETC: ABET examinations and the qualification as a whole. The appointment of qualified and competent marking personnel is imperative for assessment bodies and for Umalusi.

The purpose of this process was to verify the quality of marking personnel appointed; and to monitor the training of marking personnel who would be involved in the marking and moderation of marking of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

5.2   Scope and Approach

Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) conducted the selection and appointment of marking personnel on 3 November 2019. The marking personnel appointed would be involved in the marking of the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations. Umalusi conducted an audit of individuals selected and subsequently appointed to undertake the marking of the examinations for this qualification. The verification process was conducted by analysing the applicants' curriculum vitae and contracts against the BAA selection criteria.

To conduct the audit, Umalusi randomly sampled files of markers, internal moderators and chief markers selected to mark in each learning area. The total number of marking personnel appointed per learning area was determined based on the number of candidates registered per learning area. Table 5A presents the learning areas and the number of applications that were audited.

Table 5A: Learning areas and the number of applications audited

Learning area	Number of applications audited	Appointment
Economic and Management Sciences	1	Chief marker
Language, Literacy and Communication: English	1	Marker
Mathematical Literacy	1	Marker
Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	1	Internal moderator
Natural Sciences	1	Chief marker
Human and Social Sciences	1	Internal moderator
Life Orientation	1	Marker

BAA selected and appointed 25 marking personnel (markers, chief markers and internal moderators) from the pool of contract workers. Two examination assistants were appointed. Table 5B shows the number of marking personnel appointed by BAA, per learning area, to mark the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

Table 5B: Appointed marking personnel per learning area

Learning area	Registered candidates	Markers	Internal moderators	Chief markers	Total
Mathematical Literacy	199	5	1	1	7
Communication in English	184	5	1	1	7
Life Orientation	87	1	1	1	3
Economic and Management Sciences	20	0	1	1	2
Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	43	0	1	1	2
Human and Social Sciences	27	0	1	1	2
Natural Sciences	26	0	1	1	2
Total	**586**	**11**	**7**	**7**	**25**

5.3   Summary of Findings

The following section discusses the findings of the audit conducted by Umalusi at BAA.

5.3.1 Recruitment and Appointment of Marking Personnel

BAA has a pool of examiners and internal moderators who are contracted to develop and moderate adult education and training (AET) Level 1-3 and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 1 question papers. Recruitment is conducted through various means, including the BAA website and word-of-mouth. Potential candidates are required to submit their curriculum vitae and shortlisted candidates are invited to an interview at the BAA offices. The selection panel consists of the chief executive officer, the quality assurance manager and an administration person who acts as a scribe. Successful candidates are offered a five-year contract. Training is arranged and appointed examination personnel are utilised for the AET Level 1-3 processes to allow them to gain experience in the assessment process, while their progress is monitored. They are gradually introduced, as novices, to the NQF Level 1 processes. Most marking personnel appointed by BAA also offer their services to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). This creates a challenge when they are not available on certain dates, which might compel BAA to reschedule.

5.3.2 Criteria and Requirements for the Appointment of Marking Personnel

To be considered for appointment as marking personnel, applicants must:
- have a three- or four-year teaching diploma or degree qualification;
- have at least two years' teaching experience in the relevant learning area at ABET Level 4 or equivalent;
- occupy a teaching, lecturing, training or facilitator post at an educational institution, or be an official of the Department of Higher Education and Training involved in the learning area applied for; and
- have necessary language proficiency and learning area competency to mark the relevant examination answer scripts.

A qualification in the learning area applied for was not a criterion for appointment.

Applicants were required to submit:
- curriculum vitae showing tertiary qualifications;
- certified copy of certificate, diploma or degree qualification in education. A certificate or diploma in ABET would be advantageous;
- evidence of assessor and/or moderator training;

- evidence that applicant's foreign qualifications were evaluated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (foreign nationals); and
- work permit or any relevant documentation that allows the individual to work legally in South Africa (foreign nationals).

Prospective applicants for appointments as examination assistants were expected to include proof of their registration at a recognised institution of higher learning. Appointed applicants should also be willing to attend training arranged by BAA.

5.3.3 Submission of Requisite Documents

Each contracted employee has a file that contains all requisite personal documents, as stipulated in the selection criteria. A contract of employment stipulates the conditions and the period of their employment. The contracts verified indicated appointments as an examiner, an internal moderator and a moderator of site-based assessment (SBA) portfolios. All contracts verified were active; none had expired.

5.3.4 Qualifications of Applicants

All appointed marking personnel verified by Umalusi were in possession of relevant qualifications, as stipulated by BAA criteria. From the sample, the appointed marking official with the highest education qualification was the chief marker of Mathematical Literacy, who holds a Bachelor of Education degree with Mathematics as a major subject. The marking official with the lowest qualification was the internal moderator of Language, Literacy and Communication: English, with a Certificate in ABET. There was evidence of a module in English Communication having been passed.

5.3.5 Teaching Experience

Seven appointed marking personnel were sampled and all had indicated in their curriculum vitae that they had extensive teaching experience. The least teaching experience was six years; and the highest, 32 years. Experience includes teaching in different sectors, such as the mainstream schooling sector and the AET sector.

5.3.6 Marking Experience

Marking experience held by individuals sampled ranged from six years to 30 years. These years were indicated in the curriculum vitae of the sampled marking personnel. The BAA included one novice marker in each of Mathematical Literacy, Communication in English and Life Orientation. The aim of including novice markers was to build capacity and to increase the size of the pool of marking personnel.

5.3.7 Training of Marking Personnel

BAA appointed a consultant to assist with training the appointed markers. Training was conducted on 9 November 2019. The purpose was to build capacity among the marking personnel to improve the quality of marking and moderation. Umalusi verified the training material. Marking personnel were trained on marking and quality assurance of examination scripts as well as moderation of SBA portfolios.

The training focused on the following aspects:
- principles of marking;
- moderation of marking;
- controlling the flow of scripts;
- identification and management of irregularities;
- moderation of SBA portfolios; and
- transfer of marks.

5.4   Areas of Improvement

The following was noted:
- training material covered important aspects of the marking and moderation process when compared with that of 2018; and
- Scheduling the training of marking personnel closer to the marking and moderation dates ensured that markers would still be aware of issues that were discussed during their training.

5.5   Areas of Non-compliance

The following concern was noted:
- a qualification in the learning area applied for was not included as a criterion for appointment; and
- most marking personnel also work for the DHET and are sometimes not available and at such times BAA must change planned dates.

5.6   Directives for Compliance and Improvement

The BAA is required to act on the following directive for compliance and improvement.
- the BAA is required to strengthen its criteria for the appointment of marking personnel by including a qualification in the learning area applied for.

5.7   Conclusion

Umalusi conducted the audit of the appointment of marking personnel for the BAA. Umalusi found that the process had been properly conducted and all appointed marking personnel met the requirements set by BAA. Qualification in the learning area applied for was not included as a criterion for appointment. BAA is required to include this requirement so as to attract applications from candidates with knowledge and experience in each learning area. This will also improve the quality of marking and moderation. It is also recommended that the BAA should have its own set of marking personnel who would be available when they are required. Scheduling the training of marking personnel closer to the marking and moderation dates ensured that markers would still be aware of issues that were discussed during their training.

CHAPTER 6 QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MARKING

6.1   Introduction

The quality assurance of marking conducted for the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) was comprised of two processes: the standardisation and approval of the final marking guidelines; and verification of the marking of candidates' scripts.

The meetings for standardisation of marking guidelines provide a platform for markers, internal moderators and Umalusi moderators to discuss expected responses to each question of the examination question paper written for the November 2019 GETC: ABET examination. The meetings ensure that all personnel involved in the marking process have a common understanding and interpretation of the marking guidelines. Furthermore, this process aims to ensure that all possible alternative responses are included, that responses are corrected and clarity of marking instructions are provided in the final marking guidelines.

Participants were expected to engage in discussions and agree on the expected responses before the final marking guidelines were approved.

Verification of marking is the quality assurance process conducted by Umalusi to ascertain that marking is conducted fairly and that marking guidelines are applied consistently in all learning areas. Verification of marking evaluates adherence to the standardised marking guidelines approved by Umalusi during the standardisation of marking guideline meetings. The purpose of verifying the marking is to:
- determine whether the approved marking guidelines are adhered to and consistently applied;
- determine whether mark allocation and calculations are accurate and consistent;
- ascertain whether internal moderation is conducted during marking;
- identify possible irregularities; and
- confirm that marking is fair, credible, reliable and valid.

6.2   Scope and Approach

The BAA conducted the standardisation of marking guideline meetings for the November 2019 General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations on 30 November 2019 for six learning areas and on 7 December 2019 for Natural Sciences (NATS4). Marking guidelines for all seven learning areas were standardised. The BAA conducted the standardisation of marking guideline meetings for six learning areas at Spaces, in Rivonia, Johannesburg, while the process for NATS4 was conducted at the BAA offices in Rivonia. The seven learning areas assessed by the BAA are indicated in Table 6A.

Table 6A: Learning areas assessed by the BAA

No.	Learning areas	Learning area code
1	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	LCEN4
2	Economic and Management Sciences	EMSC4
3	Human and Social Sciences	HSSC4
4	Life Orientation	LIFO4
5	Mathematical Literacy	MLMS4
6	Natural Sciences	NATS4
7	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	SMME4

Umalusi deployed one moderator per learning area to attend the standardisation of marking guideline meetings, the standardisation of marking guideline process and to report on the findings using the Quality Assurance Instrument for the Monitoring of the Standardisation of Marking Guidelines. The instrument requires moderators to report the findings based on the following criteria:

- attendance of internal moderators, examiners and markers at the meetings;
- verification of question papers;
- preparation for the standardisation of marking guidelines;
- standardisation of marking guidelines process;
- training at the standardisation of marking guidelines meetings; and
- approval of the final marking guidelines.

Umalusi moderators attended the standardisation of marking guidelines meetings to monitor the proceedings, provide guidance where needed, take final decisions and to approve the final marking guidelines to be used during actual marking.

After the standardisation of marking guideline meetings, Umalusi verified marking in all seven learning areas.

Verification of marking was conducted on the day the final marking guidelines were approved. Umalusi selected samples of scripts for verification while the marking process was in progress. The selected samples were representative of candidates' different levels of achievement. On-site verification of marking enabled the marking personnel to implement recommendations by Umalusi moderators immediately while marking was under way.

Umalusi moderators conducted the verification of marking and reported on the findings using the quality assurance Instrument for the Verification of Marking. The instrument focuses on the following criteria:

- adherence to marking guidelines;
- quality and standard of marking;
- irregularities; and
- performance of candidates.

6.3   Summary of Findings

The section below summarises the findings on the standardisation of marking guidelines and the verification of marking conducted by Umalusi on the BAA processes.

6.3.1 Standardisation of Marking Guidelines

To gauge the success of the standardisation of marking guideline meetings, Umalusi moderators checked attendance, preparation and the rigour with which the meetings were conducted. This section reports on the findings of the standardisation of marking guidelines, as observed by Umalusi, regarding compliance with each criterion.

a)   Attendance of Marking Personnel
This criterion checks the attendance of markers, examiners and internal moderators at the standardisation of marking guideline meetings. It is mandatory that anyone who is to be involved in marking and quality assurance of marked scripts must attend these meetings.

All marking personnel appointed to mark candidates' scripts for the November 2019 GETC: ABET examinations attended the standardisation of marking guideline meetings for their respective learning areas. Table 6B below indicates the number of marking personnel who attended the standardisation of marking guideline meetings per learning area.

Table 6B: Number of marking personnel per learning area

No.	Learning area	Number of marking personnel
1	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	8
2	Economic and Management Sciences	3
3	Human and Social Sciences	3
4	Life Orientation	2
5	Mathematical Literacy	9
6	Natural Sciences	2
7	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	2

Language, Literacy and Communication: English (LCEN4) and Mathematical Literacy (MLMS4) had the highest enrolments and, consequently, the highest number of marking personnel, with eight in LCEN4 and nine in MLMS4 meetings. Three learning areas had only the chief marker and internal moderator present as marking personnel, because of the low number of scripts to be marked.

b) Verification of Question Papers

This criterion verifies whether the question paper and the accompanying marking guideline to be discussed are those approved during external moderation.

Umalusi has the responsibility to moderate and approve examination question papers for all the qualifications registered on its sub-framework. An Umalusi moderator appends his or her signature to the hard copy of the question paper as a sign of approval. In light of the above, Umalusi moderators who attended the various learning area meetings had a responsibility to verify that the question paper and the corresponding marking guideline to be discussed at each meeting were the final versions that had been approved by Umalusi during the moderation process.

This was done at the beginning of the process in all seven learning areas. All Umalusi moderators confirmed that the question papers for the seven learning areas assessed by BAA were the correct ones. A similar confirmation was made in respect of the accompanying marking guidelines.

c) Preparations for the Standardisation of Marking Guidelines

This criterion verifies the preparations carried out by marking personnel before they attend the standardisation of marking guideline meetings.

Participants were expected to prepare before attending the meetings. To ensure that they were well prepared, BAA emailed the question papers to the appointed marking personnel immediately after the examination had been written. Upon receipt, marking personnel were expected to familiarise themselves with the question papers and to work out their own responses, for consideration during the discussions. Two days later, BAA sent one dummy script per learning area, together with its marking guideline, to the marking personnel to practise marking on their own. On the day of the meeting, the marking personnel brought the marked dummy scripts to the marking centre.

d) Standardisation of Marking Guidelines Process

This criterion checks the actual process of standardising the marking guidelines in each learning area; the quality and rigour of discussions per group; and the decisions taken during discussions.

At the marking venue, marking personnel went to different rooms where discussions for each learning area group were conducted.

In the various learning area groupings, different individuals chaired the meetings. For LIFO4, MLMS4, SMME4 and NATS4, the internal moderators chaired the standardisation of the marking guideline meetings, while chief markers chaired the discussions for EMSC4, HSSC4 and LCEN4.

The chairperson in each group was responsible for briefing participants on the expectations, principles and procedures that govern the standardisation of marking guidelines. The chairperson also checked that all marking personnel had prepared as required in advance of the meeting.

Using responses brought by participants, rigorous discussions were held to establish the correctness of responses, to elicit alternative responses that may be included and to check the clarity of marking instructions. Amendments to the marking guidelines were discussed before final decisions were taken on whether to accept or reject any proposed changes.

Most amendments approved involved the inclusion of alternative responses. Other amendments were corrections made to responses and clarity to the marking instructions. In learning areas where amendments were made to the marking guidelines, it was observed that the changes did not influence the cognitive levels of the responses required. This was mainly because alternative responses and correction of alternative responses in the marking guidelines were common amendments. Annexure B indicates all amendments made to the marking guidelines in all learning areas. Ultimately, the standardisation process improved the quality of the marking guidelines.

In all the meetings, participants were actively involved in the discussions. This was an indication that the participants had prepared for the standardisation meetings.

The role of Umalusi moderators during this process was to:
- observe proceedings;
- provide guidance on the interpretation of questions and required responses;
- adjudicate, where marking personnel were unable to reach consensus about responses; and
- approve the final marking guidelines to be used during the marking process.

e) Training at the Standardisation of Marking Guideline Meeting
This criterion checks whether training in the use of the amended marking guidelines was conducted. The achievement of a common understanding and interpretation of the marking process is also verified. Participants to the standardisation of the marking guideline meetings are required to attend the discussions having marked the dummy scripts provided to them by the BAA. They are expected to conduct pre-marking as a way of familiarising themselves with the candidates' responses.

After discussion of the marking guidelines and incorporating any amendments, the marking personnel were required to mark another dummy script. This was done to test the accuracy of the amended marking guideline as well as to check whether further amendments were required. This also checked whether the marking instructions were clear and to establish whether there was common understanding and interpretation of the standardised marking guidelines.

f) Approval of the Final Marking Guidelines
This criterion checks the quality of standardised marking guidelines in terms of accuracy, correctness, inclusion of alternative responses and allowing for consistent accuracy in marking.

Once Umalusi and all marking personnel were satisfied with the amendments, the Umalusi moderators approved the final marking guidelines as the final documents to be used in the marking process. All marking guidelines used at the marking centre were approved as the final documents to be used during the marking process; this was done with the concurrence of Umalusi. Umalusi moderators thus appended their signatures to the final marking guidelines as a sign of approval.

6.3.2 Verification of Marking

Verification of marking is a rigorous process that Umalusi conducts after candidates' scripts have been marked and quality assured by the chief markers and internal moderators of the assessment body. Compliance per criterion by the BAA on the marking processes, as reported by Umalusi moderators, is summarised in the following section.

a) Adherence to the Marking Guidelines

This criterion checked whether markers interpreted and consistently applied the approved marking guidelines. It further verified whether candidates' responses were credited, based on the merit of the examination item and the expected response in the marking guidelines.

There were no adjustments made to the approved marking guidelines by markers. During marking, Umalusi observed that markers in all learning areas consistently adhered to the approved marking guidelines. Discrepancies found were minimal and these were corrected by the internal moderator. Markers were also made aware about these discrepancies and were required to pay more attention during marking.

b) Quality and Standard of Marking

Umalusi measured the quality and standard of marking in terms of adherence to the marking guidelines; correct allocation of marks per item; variation in marks between markers, internal moderators and Umalusi moderators; and the accurate totalling and transfer of marks.

Umalusi moderators reported that marking personnel were consistent in awarding marks and adhered to the marking guidelines in all learning areas. A significant number of examination scripts moderated by Umalusi had been internally moderated as well. Internal moderators were at the venue during the marking process and were able to moderate scripts on site. Minor errors (within the tolerance range of +/-3 marks) were identified and corrected by the internal moderators. Addition and transfer of marks was accurate. Common errors, either in addition or the transfer of marks, committed by markers were corrected by the internal moderator and examination assistants. The quality of marking was good and moderation was thorough.

c) Irregularities

This criterion verified whether the marking personnel were trained and able to identify any suspected irregularities. The criterion also verified the ability of the marking personnel to manage identified irregularities.

The marking personnel were trained in identifying and handling suspected irregularities. There were no irregularities identified during the marking of scripts in all learning areas. Umalusi moderators confirmed that the marking personnel were vigilant in checking scripts for any possible irregular behaviour.

d) Performance of Candidates

This criterion analyses the overall performance of candidates and their performance per question. Analyses of performance presented in this chapter are limited to a sample of scripts verified by Umalusi per learning area.

The verification of marking process requires that external moderators report on candidate performance, per question, for the sampled scripts. The results of this exercise provide information on where candidates performed well and where they experienced challenges in responding to questions. The section below provides a summary of the average performance, per question, per learning area, based on sampled scripts.

i) Language, Literacy and Communication: English

For LCEN4 the marking of a sample of ten scripts was verified. Five of ten candidates passed (achieved 40% or more) while the other five achieved less than the 40% pass mark. The highest mark achieved by a candidate was 76% and the lowest was 11%. Figure 6A indicates the average performance, per question, based on ten sampled scripts.

Average % Per Question

Figure 6A: Candidate performance per question – LCEN4

Figure 6A indicates the highest average performance (69%) was achieved in Question 2, which contained a comprehension passage. The lowest average performance, of 20%, was in Question 3, which assessed poetry and required candidates to explain, comment or offer an opinion. Table 6C shows the mark distribution of the sampled scripts.

Table 6C: Mark distribution as a percentage – LCEN4

MARK DISTRIBUTION (PERCENTAGE)									
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
0	1	3	1	2	0	1	2	0	0

Table 6C indicates that, of ten scripts sampled, no candidate achieved less than 10% and none achieved 80% and above.

ii) Economic and Management Sciences

Verification of marking was conducted on a sample of ten scripts. The performance in EMSC4 was acceptable. In six of the ten scripts moderated, candidates passed (achieved 40% or more) while four achieved below the 40% pass mark. The highest mark obtained was 66% and the lowest, 20%. Figure 6A indicates the average performance, per question, based on ten sampled scripts.

Average % Per Question
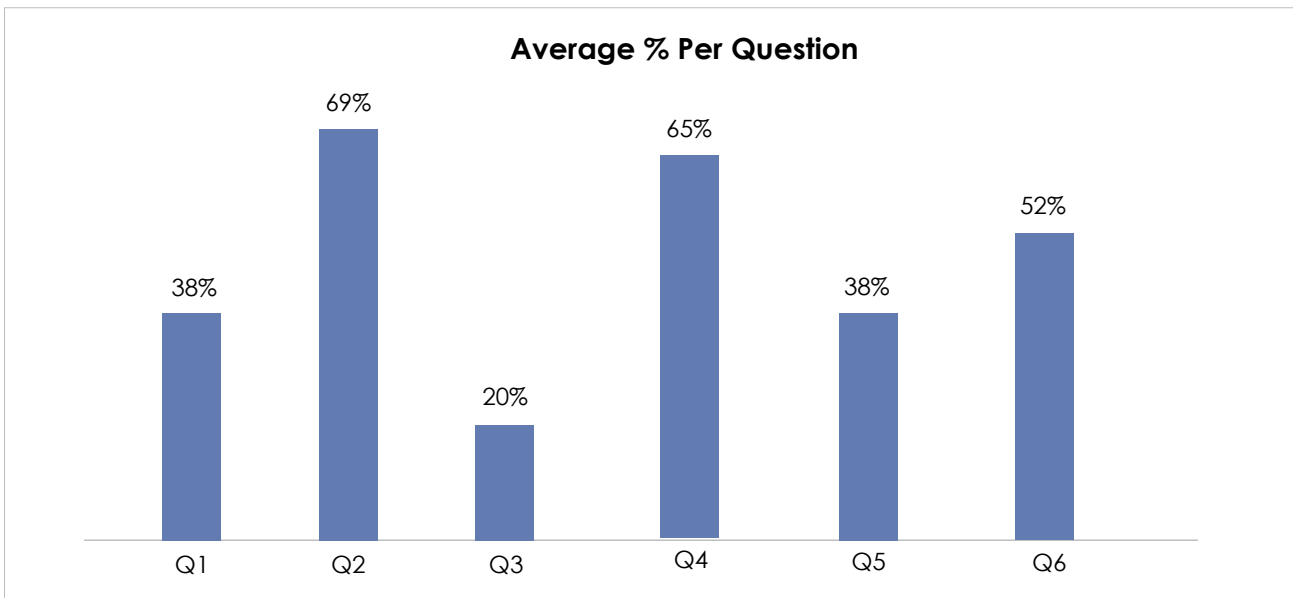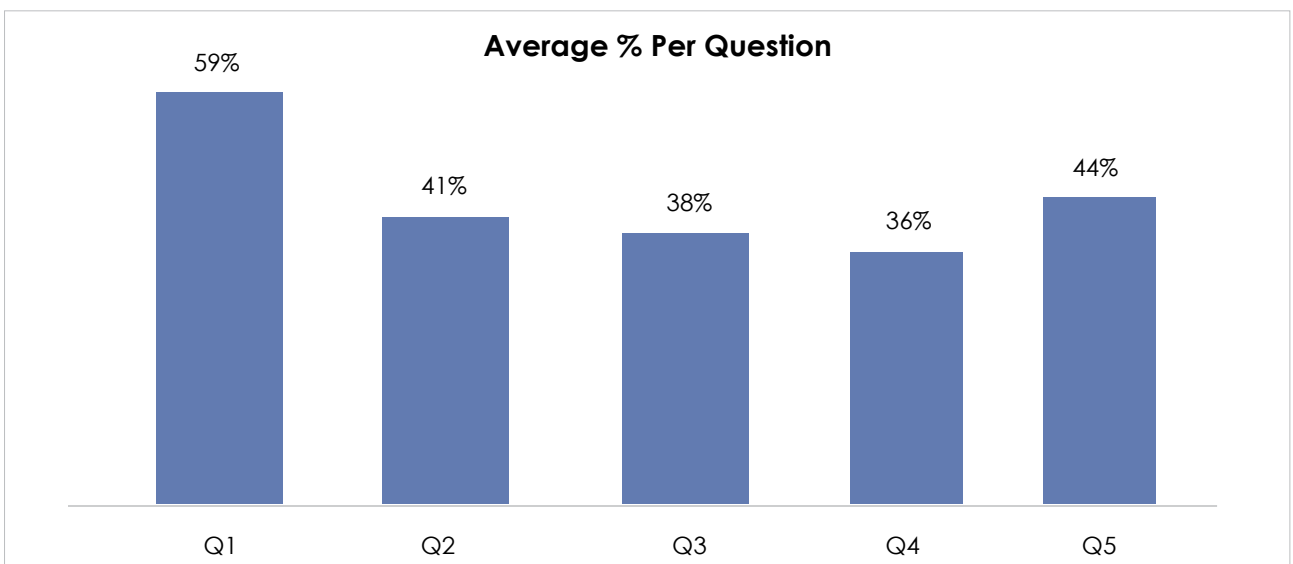
Figure 6B: Candidate performance per question – EMSC4

Figure 6B indicates that Question 1 had the highest average performance (59%). Question 1 assessed the whole syllabus and was made up of short-response, objective questions like true or false; matching items; and filling in and choosing between words. Question 4, which assessed the accounting section, had the lowest average performance, at 36%: this question challenged candidates. Of the ten candidates sampled, only three managed to achieve above 50% in Question 4. Table 6D shows the mark distribution of the sampled scripts.

Table 6D: Mark distribution as a percentage – EMSC4

MARK DISTRIBUTION (PERCENTAGE)									
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
0	0	3	1	0	3	3	0	0	0

Table 6D indicates that none of the ten candidates in the sample obtained 70% and above; and none scored below 20%.

iii) Human and Social Sciences

Umalusi verified ten scripts for HSSC4. Candidates' performance in this subject was acceptable, with six of the ten candidates in the sample passing. The highest mark was 69% and the lowest, 26%. Figure 6C indicates the average performance per question based, on ten sampled scripts.

Figure 6C: Student performance per question – HSSC4

Candidates obtained the highest average performance, of 52%, in Question 1; and the lowest average, of 32%, in Question 3. Question 1 was comprised mainly of objective-type questions; multiple-choice; true or false; matching items; and fill-in-the-correct-answer questions. The question covered all four unit standards prescribed in the HSSC4. Candidates struggled with Question 3 and some did not attempt to answer it. The question was analytical and required candidates to deal with specific and relevant current topics such as drought, elections, sustainable development and human rights issues, among others. Table 6E shows the mark distribution of the sampled scripts.

Table 6E: Mark distribution as a percentage – HSSC4

MARK DISTRIBUTION (PERCENTAGE)									
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
0	0	3	0	1	5	1	0	0	0

Table 6E indicates that none of the ten candidates in the sample achieved below 20% and no candidate achieved 70% or above.

iv) Life Orientation

Verification of marking was conducted on a sample of ten scripts. The performance in LIFO4 was exceptional, since eight of the ten candidates in the moderated sample passed. The 80% pass rate indicated that a few problems were encountered in different questions by the candidates in the sampled scripts. The highest mark obtained was 83% and the lowest, 17%. The average performance, per question, is illustrated in Figure 6D below.
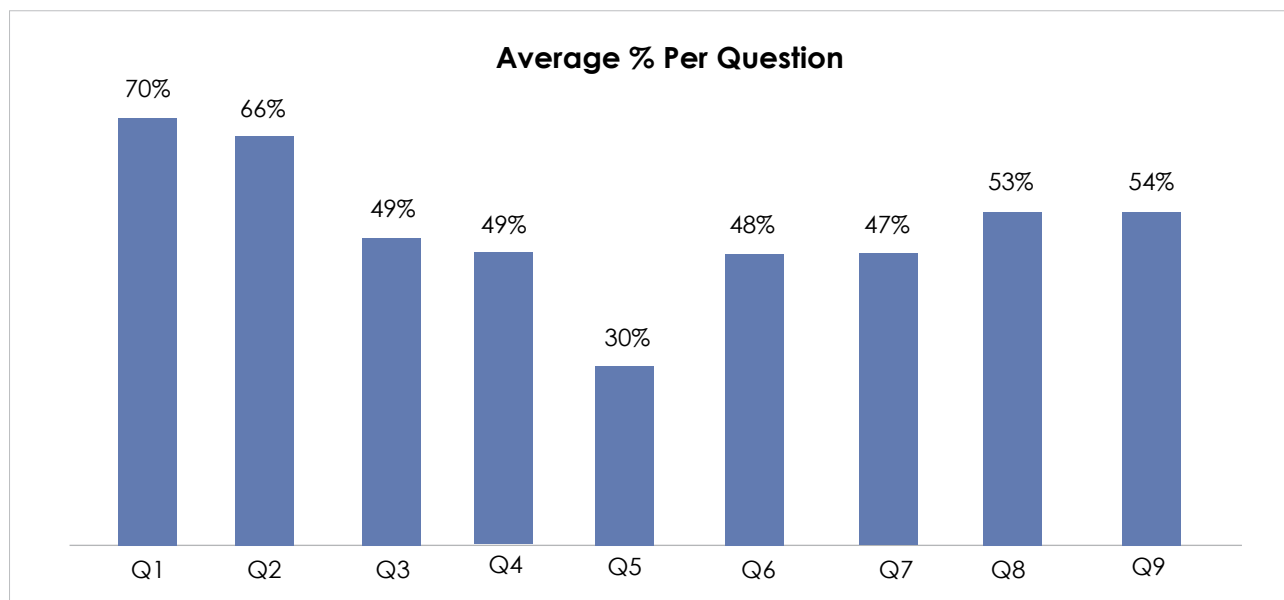
Figure 6D: Student performance per question – LIFO4

Students performed well in Question 1, which had the highest average performance at 70%. This question covered all unit standards. The lowest average performance, of 30%, was for Question 5, which assessed time management. Table 6F shows the mark distribution of the sampled scripts.

Table 6F: Mark distribution as a percentage – LIFO4

MARK DISTRIBUTION (PERCENTAGE)									
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
0	1	1	0	1	2	2	1	2	0

Table 6F shows that most of the sampled students obtained between 40% and 69%. Only two candidates obtained above 80%; none below 10%.

v) Mathematical Literacy

The candidates' performance in MLMS4 was very poor. Ten scripts were moderated of which only one candidate passed. The highest mark obtained was 54% and the lowest was 11%. Figure 6E indicates the average performance, per question, based on ten sampled scripts.
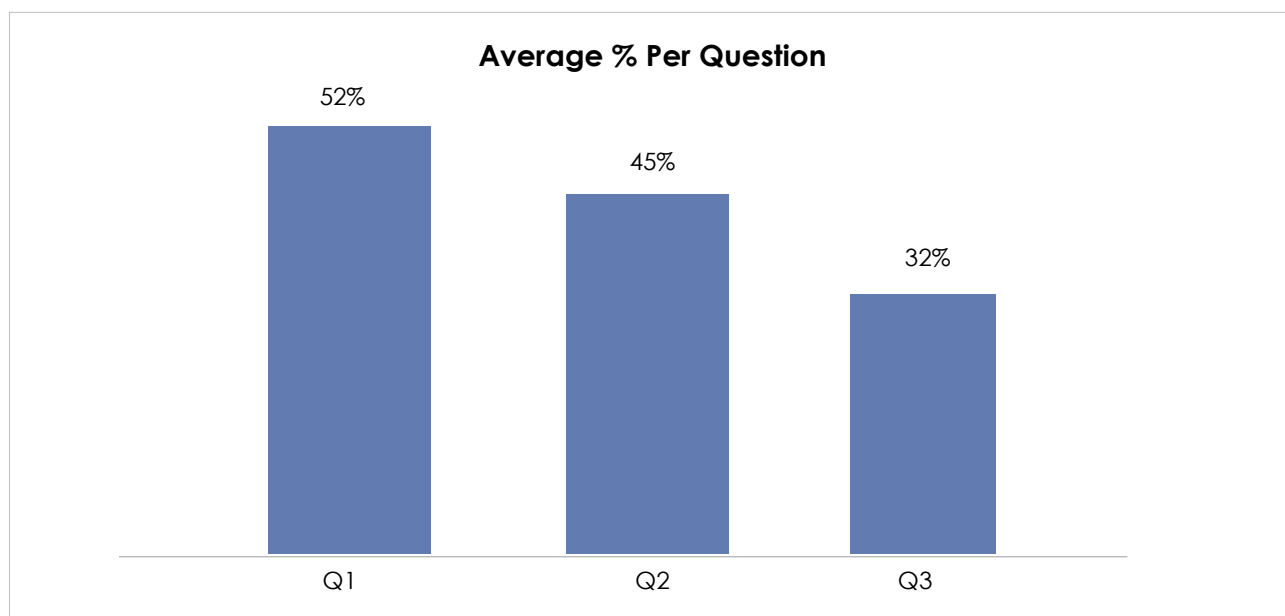
Figure 6E: Student performance per question – MLMS4

The highest average performance (67%) was in Question 8, which was about data handling. The lowest average performance (12%) was in Question 5, which was about measurements—2D shapes and map interpretation. Table 6G shows the mark distribution of the sampled scripts.

Table 6G: Mark distribution as a percentage – MLMS4

MARK DISTRIBUTION (PERCENTAGE)									
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
0	2	1	6	0	1	0	0	0	0

Table 6G shows that most sampled candidates obtained between 30% and 39%. No candidates in the sample achieved 60% or above; and none less than 10%.

VI) Natural Sciences

Of 12 sampled scripts verified, only two candidates passed. The performance was very poor, with the highest mark achieved being 52% and the lowest, 18%. Figure 6F indicates average performance, per question, based on 12 sampled scripts.

Figure 6F: Student performance per question – NATS4

Figure 6F indicates that Question 1 had the highest average performance, at 41%. The lowest average performance was 22%, in Question 5. Table 6H shows the mark distribution of the sampled scripts.

Table 6H: Mark distribution as a percentage – NATS4

MARK DISTRIBUTION (PERCENTAGE)									
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
0	1	3	6	1	1	0	0	0	0

Table 6H shows that no candidate achieved 60% and above. Only two candidates in the sample achieved 40% and above, indicating a pass rate of 17%.

vi) Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises

Umalusi verified 14 scripts for SMME4, a learning area in which candidates performed badly. Only four of 14 candidates in the sample passed. Ten candidates achieved below 40%, the minimum pass mark. The highest mark obtained was 51% and the lowest, 16%. Figure 6G indicates the average performance, per question, based on 14 sampled scripts.
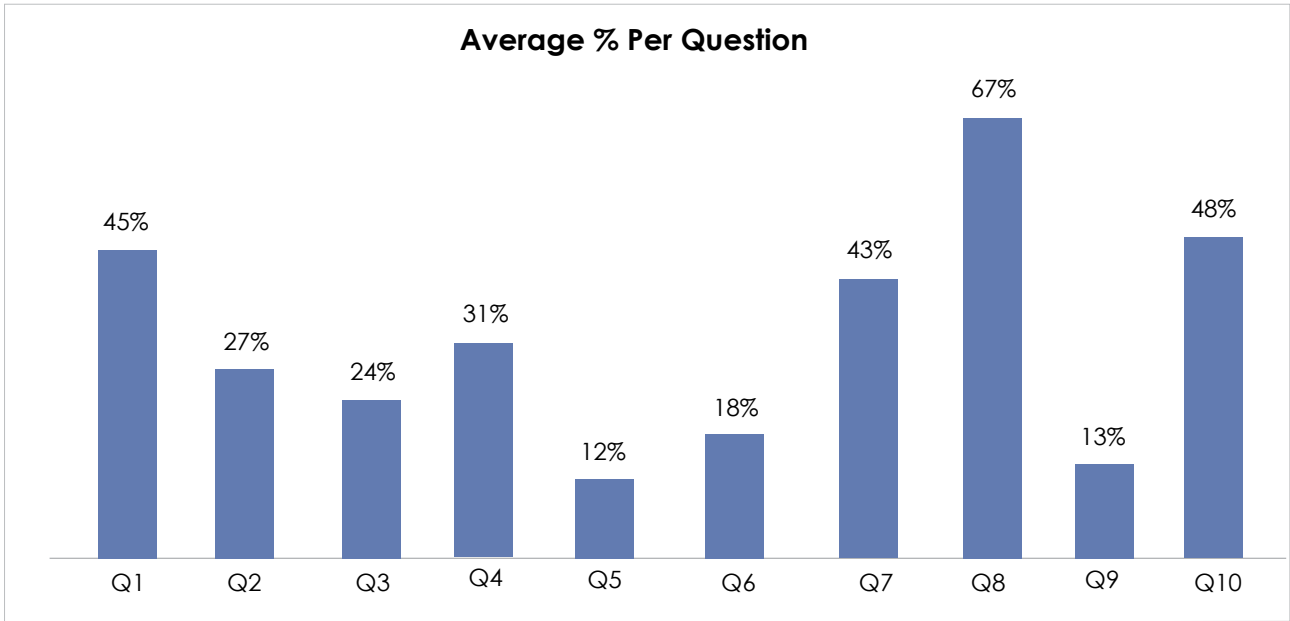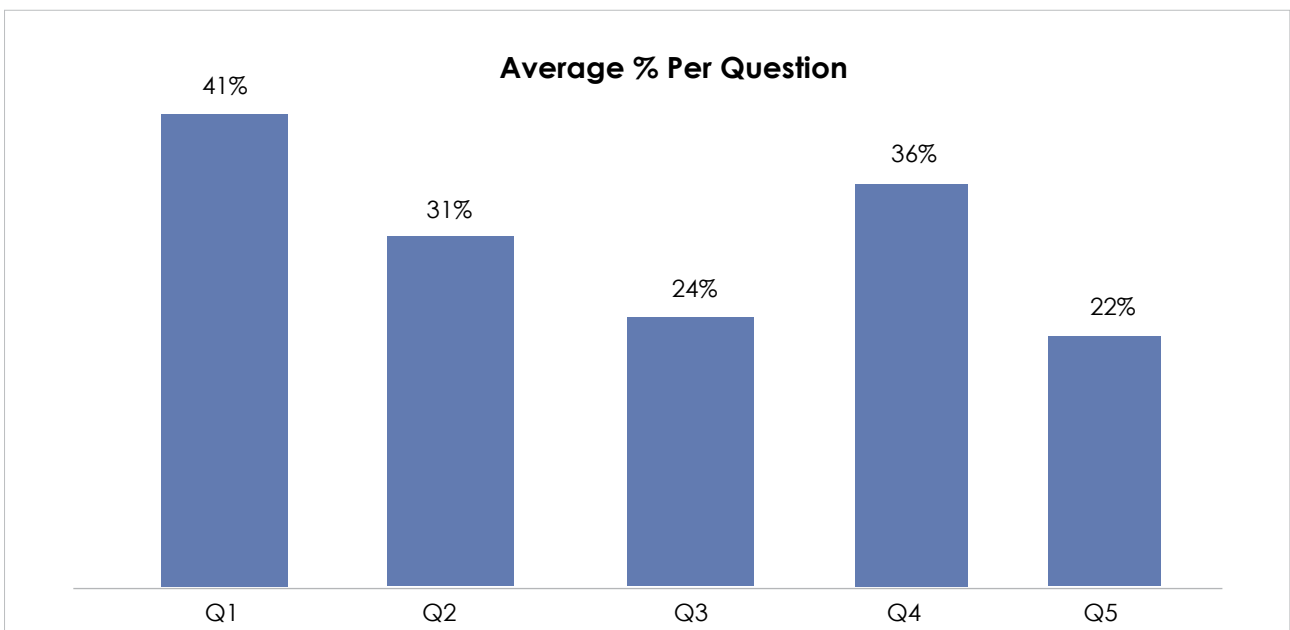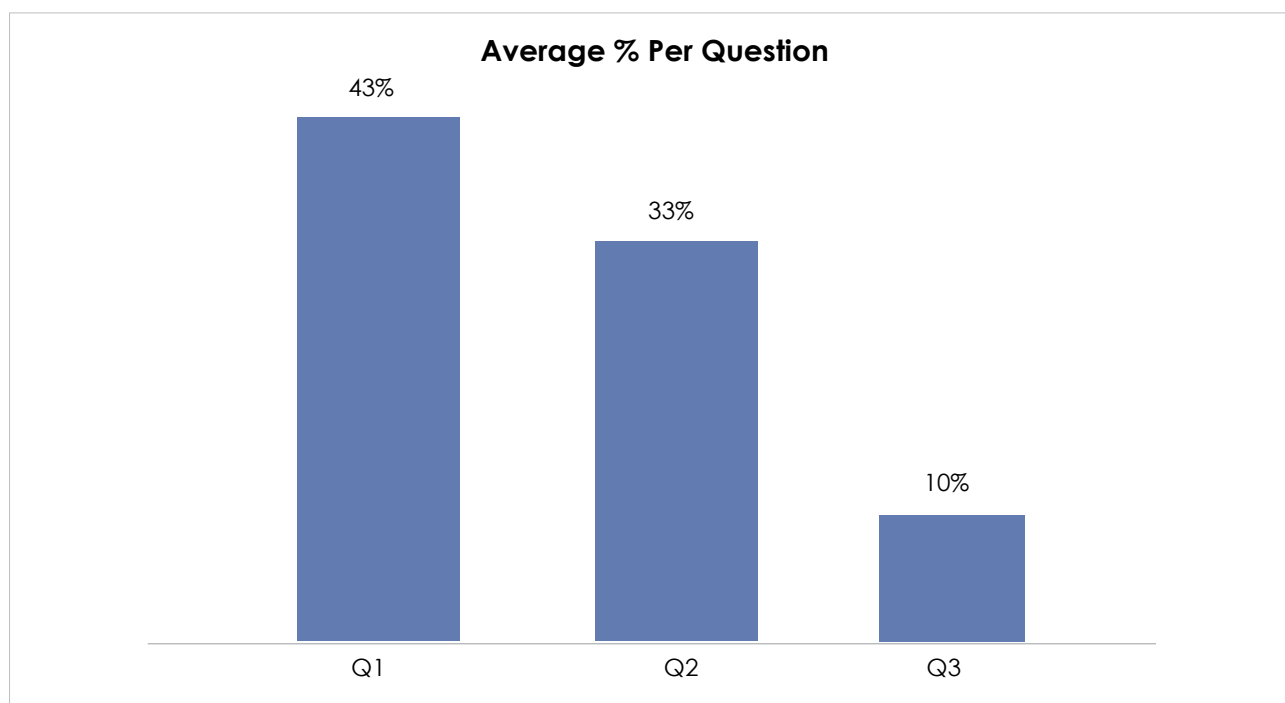

Figure 6G: Student performance per question – SMME4

Figure 6G indicates that the highest average performance, of 43%, was in Question 1 and the lowest, of 20%, was in Question 3. Table 6I shows the mark distribution of the sampled scripts.

Table 6I: Mark distribution as a percentage – SMME4

MARK DISTRIBUTION (PERCENTAGE)									
0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-100
0	2	3	5	3	1	0	0	0	0

Table 6I indicates that from the 14 sampled scripts, one candidate achieved between 50% and 59%; no candidate achieved 80% and above, or below 10%.

6.4   Areas of Improvement

The following was noted as good practice:
- two sets of dummy scripts were used in all seven learning areas, one before and one after the discussions, to train markers;
- thorough internal moderation led to improved marking in all learning areas;
- there was thorough checking of answer scripts for possible irregularities; and
- consistent marking and accurate totalling and transfer of marks, with minimal deviations in marking and moderation were evident.

6.5   Areas of Non-compliance

None.

6.6   Directives for Compliance and Improvement

None.

6.7   Conclusion

The marking guideline discussions were intended to improve the quality of the marking guidelines for the seven learning areas. The purpose was also to ensure that all possible alternative responses were included so that candidates would not be unfairly disadvantaged by rigidity in the marking. All appointed marking personnel attended the meetings, were prepared and participated fully in the discussions. The process served its intended purpose.

The verification of marking conducted by Umalusi concluded that marking was done fairly and that internal moderation was conducted thoroughly. The standard of marking was good in all seven learning areas. Marking personnel were vigilant in checking for irregularities. There were no alleged irregularities reported during the marking process.

CHAPTER 7 STANDARDISATION AND RESULTING

7.1   Introduction

Standardisation is a process that is informed by evidence presented in the form of qualitative and quantitative reports. Its primary aim is to achieve an optimum degree of uniformity in a given context, by considering possible sources of variability other than candidates' ability and knowledge. In general, variability may occur because of the standard of question papers, quality of marking and many other related factors. It is for this reason that examination results are standardised: to control their variability from one examination sitting to the next.

Section 17A (4) of the GENFETQA Act of 2001, as amended in 2008, states that the Council may adjust raw marks during the standardisation process.

In broad terms, standardisation involves verification of subject structures, mark capturing and the computer system used by an assessment body. It also involves the development and verification of norms, as well as the production and verification of standardisation booklets in preparation for the standardisation meetings. Standardisation decision are informed by, among others, principles of standardisation, qualitative inputs compiled by internal moderators, external moderators and examination monitors, and intervention reports presented by assessment bodies. The process is concluded with the approval of mark adjustments per learning area, statistical moderation and the resulting process.

7.2   Scope and Approach

The Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) presented seven learning areas for the November 2019 examinations associated with the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) for standardisation purposes. These were Mathematical Literacy; Life Orientation; Human and Social Sciences; Economic and Management Sciences; Natural Sciences; Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises; and Language, Literacy and Communication: English. In turn, Umalusi performed verification of the historical averages, monitoring of mark capturing and verification of standardisation, adjustments, statistical moderation and the resulting datasets.

7.2.1 Development of the Historical Averages

Historical averages for GETC: ABET examinations were developed using average marks obtained from the previous five examination sittings. Once that has been done in accordance with policy requirements, BAA submitted to Umalusi historical averages, or norms, for verification purposes. Where a distribution contained outliers, the historical average was calculated with the exclusion of data from the outlying examination sitting.

7.2.2 Capturing of Marks

Umalusi verified the capturing of examination marks during its visit to the capturing centre, the BAA head office. During the verification process, Umalusi observed the process followed to capture marks, the systems used to verify the marks captured and the mechanisms used to secure the process of mark capturing, among others.

7.2.3 Verification of Datasets and Standardisation Booklets

The BAA submitted standardisation datasets and electronic booklets as per the Umalusi management plan. The datasets were verified and approved, because of which final standardisation booklets were printed.

7.2.4 Pre-Standardisation and Standardisation

The pre-standardisation and standardisation meetings for the GETC: ABET examinations were held on 17 and 18 December 2019. Umalusi was guided by many factors, including qualitative and quantitative information, in reaching its standardisation decisions. Qualitative inputs included evidence-based reports presented by the BAA and reports from Umalusi's external moderators and monitors on the conduct, administration and management of the examinations. As far as quantitative information was concerned, Umalusi considered historical averages and pairs analysis in connection with standardisation principles.

7.2.5 Post-Standardisation

Beyond standardisation meetings, the BAA submits to Umalusi the final adjusted marks and candidates' resulting files for verification and eventual approval.

7.3   Summary of Findings

7.3.1 Development of Historical Averages

The historical averages for Mathematical Literacy and Language, Literacy and Communication: English examinations were developed using the previous five examination sittings. The BAA submitted the historical averages for verification, in accordance with the Umalusi management plan. Since Life Orientation, Human and Social Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Natural Sciences and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises were presented for the second time in the 2019 academic year, fictitious or interim norms were utilised. Therefore, the standardisation decisions were informed largely by the pairs analysis. There were no outliers identified in relation to the Language, Literacy and Communication: English and Mathematical Literacy learning areas.

7.3.2 Capturing of Marks

The capturing of marks was conducted in accordance with the BAA's management plan. Due to the unavailability of guidelines or a procedural manual, the marks were captured in accordance with the guidelines narrated by the BAA Manager for Resulting.

The capturing of marks was performed by two permanently employed data-capturers who had been trained by the developer of the BAA's electronic examination system to use the system. The system end-user manual was provided as evidence of such training. The data-capturers signed non-disclosure agreements in January 2019 for the calendar year.

The BAA employed a double-capturing method to verify the accuracy of the marks captured. BAA's electronic examination management system has built-in mechanisms/measures to ensure that the captured marks are verified prior to being processed and submitted to Umalusi for standardisation. The capturing system has built-in controls to ensure a user does not capture and verify the same mark sheets or scripts.

The capturing facility was under 24-hour security surveillance and access was controlled by the use of access cards. However, the centre had no generator on standby to mitigate any possible power failures.

7.3.3 Verification of Datasets and Standardisation Booklets

The submitted standardisation datasets and electronic booklets for the October/November GETC: ABET examinations conformed to the Requirements and Specification for Standardisation, Statistical Moderation and Resulting Policy. Submission of standardisation datasets and electronic booklets was done in line with the Umalusi management plan. The datasets were verified and approved at the third submission stage, after BAA had informed Umalusi of computing errors that had occurred during the first and second submission stages. The errors had resulted in a sizeable portion of candidates obtaining zero marks.

The following subjects were affected by computing errors: Economic Management Sciences (13), Life Orientation (24), Language, Literacy, and Communication: English (57), Mathematical Literacy (40), Human and Social Sciences (12), Natural Sciences (1) and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise (40). The numbers in brackets shows the number of candidates that were affected. It was only after the detected errors were rectified that re-submitted standardisation datasets were considered for standardisation purposes.

7.3.4 Pre-Standardisation and Standardisation

The pre-standardisation and standardisation meetings for the GETC: ABET examinations were initially held on 17 December 2019. After deliberation by both BAA and Umalusi and the re-submission of the standardisation datasets to Umalusi, pre-standardisation was rescheduled for 18 December 2019. Umalusi was guided by many factors, including qualitative and quantitative information, to reach its provisional standardisation decisions, pending the quality assurance of assessment verification. Qualitative inputs included evidence-based reports presented by the BAA and reports from the Umalusi external moderators and monitors on the conduct, administration and management of the examinations. As far as quantitative information was concerned, Umalusi considered historical averages and pairs analysis in conjunction with standardisation principles.

After Umalusi satisfied itself on the reliability of the information, all learning areas presented were standardised. Table 7A below presents a summary of the standardisation decisions made.

Table 7A: Standardisation decisions for GETC: ABET examination results

Description	Total
Number of learning areas presented	7
Raw marks accepted	6
Adjustments (mainly upwards)	1
Adjustments (mainly downwards)	0
Provisionally standardised	0
Not standardised	0
Number of learning areas standardised	7

8.3.5 Post-Standardisation

The adjustments were approved during the first submission. The statistical moderation and resulting datasets were rejected at first submission and were awaiting correction before approval can be granted. Approval was done after the second submission.

7.4   Areas of Improvement

The following areas of compliance were observed:
- the BAA submitted the standardisation datasets and booklets timeously, albeit with incorrect information at first submission.

7.5   Area of Non-compliance

The following areas of non-compliance were observed:
- the policy/guideline for the capturing of marks was not available; and
- no submission of datasets for dry runs.

7.6   Directives for Improvement and Compliance

The BAA must:
- ensure that the systems for capturing results are robust and able either to extract credible standardisation data at first hand or able to alert the user should something unusual occur; and
- submit the datasets for dry runs, as directed for compliance, and to improve the IT systems used to capture process standardisation datasets.

7.7   Conclusion

The standardisation process was conducted and a decision was provisionally accepted, subject to the Umalusi Quality Assurance of Assessment (QAA) Unit verifying the data submitted by BAA at third submission. The decisions taken on whether to accept the raw marks or to perform slight upward or downward adjustments were based on sound educational reasoning.

CHAPTER 8 CERTIFICATION

8.1   Introduction

Umalusi upholds the certification mandate by ensuring that assessment bodies adhere to policies and regulations promulgated by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) as registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Umalusi, as the quality council, quality assures, verifies and checks the results before a certificate is issued.

The quality assurance processes instituted by Umalusi in terms of certification ensure that the qualification awarded to a candidate complies with all the requirements for the qualification as stipulated in the regulations. The specifications and requirements for requesting certification are encapsulated in the form of directives for certification to which all assessment bodies must adhere.

In order to ensure that the data for certification is valid, reliable and in the correct format, all assessment bodies must ensure that they adhere to Umalusi's directives when they submit candidate data for the certification of a specific qualification. All records of candidates who are registered for the GETC: ABET examinations, including those who qualify only for a learning area certificate in a particular examination cycle, are submitted to Umalusi for certification.

This chapter focuses on the overall certification processes and the compliance of the Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) to the directives for certification as specified in the regulations for certification. This report also focuses on the shortfalls in terms of compliance to the certification directives by the BAA and how this can affect the quality assurance processes and the certification of candidate achievements.

The period covered in this report is from 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2019. All requests for certification received during this period that were finalised and had feedback provided to BAA by Umalusi are included. The main examinations covered are the November 2018 and June 2019 GETC: ABET examinations.

8.2   Scope and Approach

Certification of candidate achievements cannot be pinned to a single period in the year because it is a continuous process and certificates are issued throughout the year. The bulk of the certification usually happens within three months of the release of the results. Certificates are requested throughout the year, either as first issues, duplicates, replacements due to changes in status, or are re-issues.

Every examination cycle starts with the registration of candidates for the academic year. Registration must be done according to an approved qualification structure that lists the required learning areas, learning area components, pass percentages, combination of learning areas and the like. The specification of the qualifications is a very important aspect because it lays the foundations for a credible qualification.

After BAA has conducted the examinations, all results are submitted to Umalusi for the standardisation, statistical moderation and the resulting of candidate achievements. Al candidate records must be submitted to Umalusi for approval before the results can be released. Umalusi approves the results for release to the candidates after several quality assurance processes.

Several layers of quality assurance have been instituted over the last few years. This has been done to ensure that the correct results are released to the candidates, that all results are approved by Umalusi before release and that the certification of the candidate achievements are done in accordance with the approved results.

Umalusi verifies all the data received from BAA. The certification data must correspond with the quality-assured results, keeping in mind that all changes to marks must be approved before they may be released to candidates. Where discrepancies are detected, BAA is obliged to provide supporting documentation and explanations for such discrepancies. This process serves to ensure that the candidate is not inadvertently advantaged or disadvantaged as a result of possible programme and/or human error; it also limits later requests for the re-issue of an incorrectly issued certificate.

The general principles that must be adhered to are that all results must be approved before release and the request for certification must be submitted to Umalusi. Any changes to marks must also be submitted for approval. Once a certificate has been issued marks cannot be corrected by submitting a mop-up dataset. A re-issue must be requested to correct marks on a certificate already issued.

Statistics are compiled on the number of requests received, in the form of datasets, with an indication of the percentage of rejections in the applications owing to non-compliance with the directives. The number and type of certificates issued for this period are also compiled.

In processing requests for certification during the period of reporting, a number of findings were made. These are highlighted and expanded on, but should not be regarded as a comprehensive list of findings. These should be seen as key points that need to be addressed.

8.3   Summary of Findings

The certification of candidate achievements improved and the candidate information submitted for certification was correct. The certification data was aligned to the approved results and certification could, therefore, be performed without problem. Learning area certificates were issued to successful candidates. Table 8A provides a summary of certificates issued for the period 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2019.

Table 8A: Certificates issued during the period 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2019

Description	Number of certificates
First issue: learning area statement	350
First issue: GETC: ABET	16
Total	**366**

Table 8B reflects the number of certificates produced for the November 2018 examination period.

Table 8B: Certificates issued for the examination period: November 2018

Description	Number of certificates
First issue: learning area statement	202
Withdrawn	49
Failed all subjects	50
First issue: GETC: ABET	16
Total	**317**

Table 8C indicates the number of transactions, including datasets, received in the period covered by this report.

Table 8C: Datasets and transactions received during the period 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2019

Datasets received	Datasets accepted	Percentage accepted	Records submitted	Records accepted	Percentage accepted	Number rejected
6	6	100	858	552	64.3	306

8.4   Areas of Improvement

Umalusi observed improved quality and correctness in the following processes:
- the electronic submission of requests for certification, as prescribed in the directives for certification;
- the dedication of the unit that processes the system administration and certification of candidate achievements. They submitted a certification request to Umalusi only after the standardisation and resulting of all candidate achievements had been processed and completed; and
- the requests for certification to Umalusi were closely monitored and a concerted effort was made to certificate all candidates who were due to be certified.

8.5   Areas of Non-compliance

No areas of non-compliance were noted. However, the percentage of records accepted with the first submission was too low.

8.6   Directives for Compliance and Improvement

The BAA should take care to ensure that records submitted to Umalusi are correct. The target should be 100%. The combination of learning area certificates for possible GETC: ABET certificates must be attended to.

8.7   Conclusion

The BAA has improved their certification processes substantially. This was evident in the accuracy of the certification data that was submitted.

ANNEXURE A-COHORT PROFILE

Learning Area 1: Communication in English

SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY/OCCUPATION DETAILS

Industry/Occupation	F	M	Total	% of Cohort
Agriculture	14	2	16	7%
Community Project	24	7	31	13%
Education	16	18	34	14%
Infrastructure Development	32	18	50	21%
Health	2	0	2	0.9%
Automotive	0	1	1	0.4%
Mining	41	29	70	30%
Forestry	1	2	3	0.6%
Services	0	1	1	0.4%
Retail	3	1	4	1.7%
Manufacturing	3	9	12	5.7%
Plastic Products	0	1	1	0.4%
Lifestyle	6	0	6	3.9%
Production/Management	2	2	4	1.7%
TOTAL	**144**	**91**	**235**	**100%**
PERCENTAGE	**61%**	**39%**	**100%**	

Learning Area 2: Mathematical Literacy

SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY/OCCUPATION DETAILS:

Industry/Occupation	F	M	Total	% of Cohort
Community Project	42	18	60	27%
Education	8	10	18	8%
Infrastructure Development	21	6	27	12%
Health	10	3	13	6%
Mining	42	52	94	43%
Forestry	1	3	4	2%
Local Government	1	0	1	0.4%
Manufacturing	0	1	1	0.4%
Production/Management	1	2	3	1.4%
TOTAL	**126**	**95**	**221**	**100%**
PERCENTAGE	**61%**	**39%**	**100%**	

Learning Area 3: Life Orientation

SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY/OCCUPATION DETAILS

Industry/Occupation	F	M	Total	% of Cohort
Community Project	11	6	17	52%
Mining	9	7	16	48%
TOTAL	**20**	**13**	**33**	**100%**
PERCENTAGE	**61%**	**39%**	**100%**	

Learning Area 5: Small Medium and Micro Enterprises

SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY/OCCUPATION DETAILS

Industry/Occupation	F	M	Total	% of Cohort
Community Project	13	6	19	45%
Mining	11	12	23	55%
TOTAL	**24**	**18**	**42**	**100%**
PERCENTAGE	**57%**	**43%**	**100%**	

Learning Area 6: Natural Sciences

SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY/OCCUPATION DETAILS:

Industry/Occupation	F	M	Total	% of Cohort
Mining	1	3	4	31%
Community Project	0	1	1	8%
Education	1	7	8	61%
TOTAL	**2**	**11**	**13**	**100%**
PERCENTAGE	**15%**	**85%**	**100%**	

Learning Area 7: Human and Social Sciences

SUMMARY OF INDUSTRY/OCCUPATION DETAILS:

Industry/Occupation	F	M	Total	% of Cohort
Community Project	12	6	18	69%
Education	1	7	8	31%
TOTAL	**13**	**13**	**26**	**100%**
PERCENTAGE	**50%**	**50%**	**100%**	

ANNEXURE B-SUMMARY OF NON-COMPLIANCE DURING THE WRITING OF EXAMINATIONS

Criteria	Nature of non-compliance	Examination centre implicated
Preparation for the examination	There was no pre-examination audit report.	MMTI and West End Claybrick
	The space between candidates' desks was not adequate (desks were less than one metre apart).	Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre)
	It was noisy outside the examination venue.	West End Claybrick
Invigilators and their training	Invigilators were not trained for the current examination.	Matthew Goniwe (GCRA), Samancor (Khuphuka Training Centre) and MMTI
	Invigilators were not appointed in writing.	Matthew Goniwe (GCRA)
Preparations for writing	No attendance register for invigilators.	MMTI
	No invigilation timetable.	West End Claybrick
	No relief timetable.	MMTI and West End Claybrick
	No absentee forms.	MMTI and West End Claybrick
	No monitoring reports or records by assessment body.	Omnico, West End Claybrick and MMTI
	No seating plan, no irregularity forms, no copy of dispatch form.	West End Claybrick
Time Management of activities during the examination	Candidates were not admitted into the examination room at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the examination.	MMTI and West End Claybrick
	Invigilators did not check question papers for technical accuracy.	West End Claybrick
Packaging and transmission of scripts after writing	The chief invigilators completed no situational reports.	Tharisa Mine, Matthew Goniwe (GCRA), Nchafatso Training Centre and West End Claybrick.

ANNEXURE C-AMENDMENTS TO MARKING GUIDELINES

EMSC4

Question	Amendments	Mark allocation	Percentage
1.4.3	Correction of response	1	1
1.5.5	Clarity to marking instruction	1	1
3.2	Clarity to marking instruction	4	4

HSSC4

Question	Amendments	Mark allocation	Percentage
1	Clarity to marking instruction	10	10
5	Clarity to marking instruction	1	1
6	Alternative responses	4	4
7	Clarity to marking instruction	16	16
8	Clarity to marking instruction	20	20

LCEN4

Question No.	Amendments	Mark allocation	Percentage
3.2	Alternative response	1	1
4.5	Alternative response	1	1

MLMS4

Question No.	Amendments	Mark allocation	Percentage
1.5	Clarity to marking instruction	2	2
2.2	Clarity to marking instruction	3	3
2.3 (b)	Clarity to marking instruction	2	2
3.2(a)	Clarity to marking instruction	2	2
3.2 b – d	Clarity to marking instruction	6	6
4.1	Clarity to marking instruction	2	2
4.2 (a)	Clarity to marking instruction	2	2
6(b)(i)	Clarity to marking instruction	2	2
6(b)(ii)	Clarity to marking instruction	3	2

NATS4

Question No.	Amendments	Mark allocation	Percentage
4.3.1	Correction of response	1	1
4.3.2	Correction of response	1	1

SMME4

Question	Amendments	Mark allocation	Percentage
Q2.2	Alternative response	4	4
2.4	Alternative response	2	2
2.5.1	Alternative response	2	2
2.6	Alternative response	2	2
2.9	Alternative response	2	2

UMALUSI

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