

**For immediate release**

**15 February 2021**

### **Umalusi approves the release of the 2020 national examinations results**

After a long and strenuous academic year, Umalusi, the Quality Council in General and Further Education and Training, has approved the release of the 2020 national examinations results after successfully conducting the quality assurance of the management and administration of exit point examinations in the following qualifications per assessment body:

- Independent Examinations Board (IEB) – NSC and GETC: ABET
- South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) – NSC
- Benchmark Assessment Agency (BAA) – GETC: ABET
- Department of Basic Education (DBE) – NSC and SC(a)
- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) – GETC: ABET; NATED N2-N3 Programmes; NC(V)

In the words of the CEO of Umalusi, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, “the 2020 academic year will go down the annals of our history as probably the most difficult one since the dawn of democracy in South Africa.” He said this in light of the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had an unprecedented impact on the academic year, as well as the conduct, administration and management of the 2020 national examinations.

Dr Rakometsi further conveyed his condolences, on behalf of Umalusi Council, to “the teachers, learners, principals, and support staff at public schools, independent schools, public TVET colleges, private FET colleges, and ABET centres, as well as officials and staff members at District Offices and Provincial Education Departments who lost their friends, family members, relatives and colleagues due to COVID-19.”

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, Umalusi’s quality assurance process focused on the following aspects of its mandate: the external moderation of question papers for all subjects/learning areas/instructional offerings across all qualifications

and assessment bodies, verification of a sample of site-based assessment (SBA) marks, monitoring of the assessment bodies' state of readiness to conduct and manage the 2020 national examinations, monitoring the conduct of examinations, monitoring and verification of marking as well as standardisation of results.

**The class of 2020:** The class of 2020 was the seventh Grade 12 cohort to write final examinations under the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). Furthermore, due to COVID-19 lockdown regulations, assessment bodies were forced to postpone their mid-year examinations to the November end-of-year examinations. Consequently, this increased the number of learners who wrote national examinations in November 2020. As a result, the class of 2020 became the largest cohort in the recent past to sit for the November national examinations.

**Evidence-based reports:** Umalusi has taken note of the evidence-based reports on interventions and improvement strategies implemented by all assessment bodies including the Department of Basic Education and the positive impact of these on the overall assessment system as well as on teaching and learning.

**Improved quality of question papers:** The quality of question papers is a very important aspect of the integrity and credibility of the examination. It is therefore pleasing to see a marked improvement in the overall quality of question papers that were submitted by some of the assessment bodies as more papers are approved after first or second submission to external moderators.

**Irregularities:** Umalusi is deeply disappointed that the 2020 NSC examinations administered by DBE were marred by the leakage of Mathematics Paper 2 and Physical Sciences Paper 2 question papers. Once again, Umalusi appeals to all stakeholders involved in the examination process to refrain from engaging in such unscrupulous acts of dishonesty. Umalusi takes a dim view of paper leakages as they have the potential to compromise the integrity and credibility of the entire examination. It is also worth noting that there are serious consequences for those who are found guilty of such criminal activities, regardless of whether they are learners or officials.

Regarding the outcome of the investigation into the leakage of Mathematics Paper 2 and Physical Sciences Paper 2 question papers in the 2020 NSC examination, Umalusi has made the following observations:

The investigation into the leakage of Mathematics Paper 2 and Physical Sciences Paper 2 is not yet complete and is continuing. That said, according to section 21 of the General and Further Education Quality Assurance Act of 2001, as amended, “**21.** (1) The Council may refuse to issue a certificate if a substantial irregularity has occurred in relation to an external assessment. (2) The Council may cancel a certificate that has been issued to a learner if on investigation the Council found that the learner has not met the requirements for the qualification. (3) The Council may by notice in writing direct a learner whose certificate has been cancelled to return the certificate to the Council within three weeks after such notice.”

This means that Umalusi can still nullify the certificates of candidates who are found guilty of leaking the two papers even after receiving their results. About the case presented to the Pretoria High Court in December 2020 regarding the rewrite of examinations, Council has reiterated the statement issued in December last year that even though it was disappointed by the outcome of the case it respects the decision taken by the court. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the use of technology in the spread of leaked papers has added another challenge to the management of irregularities by assessment bodies. Therefore, Umalusi encourages all assessment bodies to strengthen their systems and do everything they can to avert the leakage of examination papers in future.

**Standardisation of results:** To mitigate the sources of variability that impact learner performance from one year to another. (e.g., cognitive demand and difficulty levels of questions, interpretation of questions and marking guidelines, curriculum changes, etc.) standardisation is employed as an important ‘quality assurance process used the world over.’

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

We can expect that when standards of examinations are equivalent certain statistical mark distributions should correspond. It is this principle of ‘correlation’ that forms the basis for comparing distributions with norms/historical averages that are developed over 5 years. This comparison includes qualitative data, medians, means, pass/failure

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

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

## **STANDARDISATION DECISIONS AND APPROVAL STATEMENTS – NSC EXAMINATIONS**

### **INDEPENDENT EXAMINATIONS BOARD (IEB)**

<b>Description</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of subjects presented	66	
Raw marks	46	70%
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	8	12%
Adjusted (mainly downwards)	12	18%
<b>Number of subjects standardised:</b>	<b>66</b>	

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council noted the isolated irregularities reported during the writing and marking of examinations.

However, EXCO is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported which might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the **November 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC)** examinations administered by the **Independent Examinations Board (IEB)**.

The Executive Committee of Council approves the release of the IEB results of the **November 2020 NSC** examinations based on the following:

The November 2020 NSC examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and regulations.

The IEB is required to:

- Block the results of candidates implicated in irregularities pending the outcome of further IEB investigations and Umalusi verification.
- Ensure that Umalusi is informed before new examination centres including examination centres outside the borders of South Africa are established; and

- Address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report and submit an improvement plan by 26 March 2021.

The Executive Committee of Council commends the IEB for conducting a successful and credible examination despite challenges faced during 2020 including COVID-19.

#### **SOUTH AFRICAN COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT INSTITUTE (SACAI)**

<b>Description</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>%</b>
Number of subjects presented	25	
Raw marks	14	56%
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	5	20%
Adjusted (mainly downwards)	6	24%
<b>Number of subjects standardised:</b>	<b>25</b>	

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO) noted the isolated irregularities reported during the writing and marking of examinations.

However, EXCO is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported which might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the **November 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC)** examinations administered by the **South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI)**.

The Executive Committee of Council approves the release of the SACAI results of the **November 2020 NSC** examinations based on the following:

The November 2020 NSC examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and regulations.

The SACAI is required to:

- Ensure compliance with the conditions for its provisional accreditation as an Assessment Body including not assisting unaccredited examination centres to bypass the registration and accreditation requirements; and
- Address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report and submit an improvement plan by 26 March 2021.

The Executive Committee of Council commends the SACAI for conducting a successful examination despite challenges presented by COVID-19.

## DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION (DBE): NSC

Description	2020	%
Number of subjects presented	65	
Raw marks	48	74%
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	9	14%
Adjusted (mainly downwards)	8	12%
<b>Number of subjects standardised:</b>	<b>65</b>	

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council noted the isolated irregularities reported during the writing and marking of examinations as well as the group copying cases reported in 4 provinces involving 893 candidates.

In addition, Umalusi has noted with concern the serious irregularities regarding the leakage of Mathematics Paper 2 and Physical Sciences Paper 2 question papers.

However, EXCO is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported, which might have compromised the overall credibility and integrity of the **November 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC)** examinations administered by the **Department of Basic Education (DBE)**.

The Executive Committee of Council approves the release of the DBE results of the **November 2020 NSC** examinations based on available evidence that the examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and regulations.

In respect of the generally identified irregularities, the DBE is required to:

- block the results of candidates implicated in irregularities including the candidates involved in group copying pending the outcome of further DBE investigations and Umalusi verification; and
- tighten the security at all levels to ensure that there are no leakages of question papers.

In light of the unprecedented circumstances regarding the leakages of Mathematics Paper 2 and Physical Sciences Paper 2 question papers, EXCO resolved as follows:

- Where there has been unauthorized access to question papers and where there is evidence beyond being a passive recipient of the papers, the results of the implicated candidates should be blocked pending further investigation.

- In all other cases, the results should be released.

The DBE is required to address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report and submit an improvement plan by 26 March 2021.

The Executive Committee of Council commends the DBE for conducting a successful and credible examination despite challenges presented by COVID-19 and the leakage of question papers through social media.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION (DBE): SENIOR CERTIFICATE (amended)**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of subjects presented	35
Raw marks	33
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	2
Adjusted (downwards)	0
<b>Number of subjects standardised:</b>	<b>35</b>

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council noted the isolated irregularities reported during the writing and marking of examinations.

However, EXCO is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported which might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the **November 2020 Senior Certificate (Amended) [SC (a)]** examinations administered by the **Department of Basic Education (DBE)**.

The Executive Committee of Council approves the release of the DBE results of the **November 2020 SC (a)** examinations based on the following:

The **November 2020 SC (a)** examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and regulations.

The DBE is required to:

- block the results of centres/candidates implicated in irregularities pending the outcome of further DBE investigations and Umalusi verification; and
- address the high absenteeism of the candidates.

In light of the unprecedented circumstances pertaining to the leakages of the Mathematics Paper 2 and Physical Sciences Paper 2 question papers, EXCO resolved as follows:

- Where there has been unauthorised access to question papers and where there is evidence beyond being a passive recipient of the papers, the results of the implicated candidates should be blocked pending further investigation
- In all other cases, the results should be released.

The DBE is required to address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report and submit an improvement plan by 26 March 2021.

The Executive Committee of Council commends the DBE for conducting a successful and credible examination despite challenges faced during 2020 including COVID-19.

#### **STANDARDISATION DECISIONS AND APPROVAL STATEMENTS – NATED and NC(V) EXAMINATIONS ADMINISTERED BY DHET**

##### **NATED N2 – N3**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of instructional offerings presented	60
Raw marks	28
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	17
Adjusted (downwards)	15
<b>Number of instructional offerings standardised:</b>	<b>60</b>

##### **BUSINESS LANGUAGES N3**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of subjects presented	4
Raw marks	1
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	0
Adjusted (downwards)	3
<b>Number of subjects standardised:</b>	<b>4</b>

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO noted the reported challenges of non-submission of ICASS evidence by some centres and alleged isolated irregularities noted during monitoring of writing and marking of examinations that were deemed to be non-systematic.



Umalusi is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported, which might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the November 2020 NATED Report 190/191 Engineering Studies N2-N3 and Business Languages N3 examinations administered by the DHET. The Executive Committee of Council approves the release of the DHET results of the November 2020 Report 190/191 Engineering Studies N2-N3 and Business Languages N3 examinations based on the following:

- a. The November 2020 Report 190/191 Engineering Studies N2-N3 and Business Languages N3 examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and guidelines.

The DHET is required to:

- a. Block the results of seven centres that failed to comply with internal continuous assessment (ICASS) instructions pending the outcome of further investigations by the DHET and verification by Umalusi,
- b. Block the results of candidates and instructional offerings of centres implicated in irregularities pending the outcome of further DHET investigations and decisions by the National Examinations Irregularities Committee (NEIC) and submitted to Umalusi for resulting,
- c. Address the high incidents of irregularities at private colleges, and
- d. Address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report, develop and submit an improvement plan to Umalusi by **26 March 2020**.

EXCO commends the DHET for conducting a successful and credible November 2020 NATED Report 190/191 Engineering Studies N2-N3 and Business Languages N3 examination despite challenges presented by Covid-19.

#### **NC (V) LEVEL 2-4**

<b>Description</b>	<b>L2</b>	<b>L3</b>	<b>L4</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of instructional offerings presented	86	86	88	260
Raw marks	41	45	46	132
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	42	33	27	102
Adjusted (downwards)	3	8	15	26

<b>Number of instructional offerings standardised:</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>260</b>
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Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO) noted the reported non-submission of ICASS evidence by some centres and alleged isolated irregularities during the monitoring of writing and marking of examinations that were deemed to be non-systemic.

Therefore, EXCO is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities which might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the November 2020 National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)] Level 2-4 examinations administered by the DHET.

The Executive Committee of Council approves the release of the DHET results of the November 2020 NC(V) Level 2-4 examinations based on the following:

a. The November 2020 NC(V) Level 2-4 examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and guidelines.

The DHET is required to:

a. Block the results of five centres that failed to comply with internal continuous assessment (ICASS) instructions pending the outcome of further investigations by the DHET and verification by Umalusi,

b. Block the results of candidates and subjects of centres implicated in irregularities pending the outcome of further DHET investigations and decisions by the National Examinations Irregularities Committee (NEIC) and submitted to Umalusi for resulting, and

c. Address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report, develop and submit an improvement plan to Umalusi by **26 March 2020**.

The EXCO commends the DHET for conducting a successful and credible November 2020 National Certificate (Vocational) Level 2-4 examination despite challenges presented by Covid-19.

**STANDARDISATION DECISIONS AND APPROVAL STATEMENTS – GETC ABET EXAMINATIONS ADMINISTERED BY IEB, DHET AND BAA**

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINATIONS BOARD - GETC: ABET

Description	Total
Number of learning areas presented	7
Raw marks	2
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	3
Adjusted (downwards)	2
Not standardised	0
<b>Number of learning areas standardised:</b>	<b>7</b>

Having studied all the evidence presented, Umalusi is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported that might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the November 2020 GETC: ABET examinations administered by the IEB.

The Executive Committee of Council (EXCO) approves the release of the IEB November 2020 GETC: ABET examinations results based on the following:

- The November 2020 examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and guidelines, except for areas where there was non-compliance; and
- The evidence presented to Umalusi suggests that no systemic irregularities were reported, as a result, none of the incidents reported might have jeopardised the credibility and integrity of the examinations.

The IEB is required to:

- Block the results of one centre that failed to comply with site-based assessment (SBA) instructions pending the outcome of further investigations by the IEB and verification by Umalusi;
- Block the results of candidates/ centres/ and Learning Areas of three centres implicated in irregularities, which occurred during the writing of examinations, pending the outcome of further IEB investigations and verification by Umalusi; and
- Address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report develop and submit an improvement plan to Umalusi by 26 February 2021.

The EXCO commends the IEB for conducting a successful and credible November 2020 GETC: ABET examination. EXCO urges the IEB to pay attention to areas of non-compliance.

## DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING – GETC: ABET

Description	Total
Number of learning areas presented	26
Raw marks	8
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	9
Adjusted (downwards)	9
<b>Number of learning areas standardised:</b>	<b>26</b>

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO) noted with concern the reported isolated irregularities regarding non-compliance to site-based assessment (SBA) instructions at 15 centres, as well as other areas of the administration of the examination and the irregularities identified during the writing and marking of examinations.

However, EXCO is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported, which might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the November 2020 General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations administered by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The Executive Committee of Council approves the release of the DHET results of the November 2020 GETC: ABET examinations based on the following:

The **November 2020 GETC: ABET** examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and guidelines;

The DHET is required to:

- Block the results of 15 centres that failed to comply with site-based assessment (SBA) instructions pending the outcome of further investigations by the DHET and verification by Umalusi;
- Block the results of the centres/candidates that were found to be irregular during the writing and marking of examinations pending the outcome of further investigations by the DHET and verification by Umalusi; and
- Address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report.

The Executive Committee of Council commends the effort of the DHET in conducting a successful and credible examination.

## BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT AGENCY – GETC: ABET

Description	Total
Number of Learning areas presented	6
Raw marks	4
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	1
Adjusted (downwards)	1
<b>Number of learning areas standardised:</b>	<b>6</b>

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee of Council noted the reported irregularities regarding non-compliance to site-based assessment (SBA) instructions at 3 centres and the irregularities identified at 2 centres during the writing of examinations that were deemed to be non-systematic.

Therefore EXCO is satisfied that there were no systemic irregularities reported, which might have compromised the credibility and integrity of the November 2020 General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations administered by the BAA.

The Executive Committee of Council (EXCO) approves the release of the BAA results of the November 2020 GETC: ABET examinations based on the following:

a. The November 2020 GETC: ABET examinations were administered in accordance with the examination policies and guidelines.

The BAA is required to:

a. Block the results of 3 centres that failed to comply with site-based assessment (SBA) instructions pending the outcome of further investigations by the BAA and verification by Umalusi;

b. Block the results of the 2 centres that were found to be irregular during the writing of examinations pending the outcome of further investigations by the BAA and verification by Umalusi, and

c. Address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report, develop and submit an improvement plan to Umalusi by **15 March 2021**. The Executive Committee of Council commends the BAA for conducting a successful and credible examination.

Lucky Ditaunyane  
Senior Manager: PR and Communications

[Lucky.Ditaunyane@umalusi.org.za](mailto:Lucky.Ditaunyane@umalusi.org.za)

083 227 6074