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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: PRIVATE ASSESSMENT BODIES

This document is intended to contribute to a better understanding of Umalusi's quality assurance mandate, scope and initiatives, as they apply to private assessment bodies.

1. Quality assurance mandate and scope

1.1 Who may establish a private assessment body?

A juristic body that has the capacity to conduct national external examinations and quality assure internal assessment in respect of a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF). A private assessment body must be accredited by Umalusi to assess a qualification registered on the GFETQSF.

1.2 Must a private assessment body be accredited?

Private assessment bodies are required to seek accreditation with Umalusi to assess a qualification that is registered on the GFETQSF. Accreditation is a legal requirement for assessment bodies in terms of:

1. the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act, 2001 (as amended);
2. the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008 as amended;
3. the Policy and Criteria for the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Monitoring of Independent Schools and Private Assessment Bodies, as promulgated by the Minister of Basic Education on 29 October 2012 (Government Gazette 35830), as amended;
4. the Regulations regarding the criteria for the quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of independent schools and private assessment bodies (Government Gazette 41206 of 27 October 2017); and
5. the Policy for the Quality Assurance of Private Colleges for Continuing Education and Training, offering Qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, and the Accreditation of Private Assessment Bodies (Government Gazette 41887 of 7 September 2018).

1.3 What is accreditation?

Accreditation means the outcome of a quality assurance process of evaluating a private assessment body to determine whether its capacity, systems, processes and products are of the appropriate quality to deliver valid, reliable, fair and credible assessments.

Accreditation attests to the capacity of the assessment body to assess qualifications that are registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF).

- 1.4 Does every institution that wants to administer assessment have to be accredited by Umalusi?

Every private institution that wants to administer national examinations for exit level qualifications registered on the GFETQSF must be accredited by Umalusi.

- 1.5 We assess a foreign/international qualification. Are we expected to apply for accreditation with Umalusi?

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

- 1.6 How do I apply for accreditation as an assessment body?

The body wishing to become an Umalusi-accredited assessment body is required to submit a letter of intent (LOI) indicating the intent to assess one or more of the qualifications that are registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, together with a sworn declaration. A template for the LOI and the sworn declaration is available on request from Umalusi. (Such a request can be sent to Vani.Chatty@umalusi.org.za or accreditation@umalusi.org.za). Completed documents must be emailed or sent by courier to Umalusi, Attention: The Manager: Assessment Bodies, Evaluation and Accreditation Unit.

- 1.7 When must an assessment body submit an application for accreditation?

An application for accreditation as an assessment body must be made at least twenty-four (24) months before the first examination is envisaged.

- 1.8 What steps must be followed in the process of application for full accreditation?

The accreditation process comprises a number of steps which can be summarised as follows. An assessment body will only move to the next step of the process once they have successfully demonstrated compliance with the minimum criteria of each step.

1. completion of the letter of intent (LOI) to apply for accreditation as an assessment body;
2. presentation before a committee on the justifiable need for the establishment of the assessment body, addressing issues of sustainability and professional expertise available;
3. submission of a self-evaluation report and portfolio of evidence against specific criteria by the assessment body;
4. desktop evaluation of the self-evaluation report and portfolio of evidence by Umalusi;
5. site verification visit by experts in assessment, quality assurance, accreditation, certification and monitoring, etc. to verify implementation of the evidence submitted in the self-evaluation report;
6. permission to conduct a pilot examination;
7. provisional accreditation for a period of 3 years during which time the administration of the examinations will be monitored;
8. permission to apply for full accreditation, which involves submission and evaluation of another self-evaluation report and site verification of the evidence submitted;

9. monitoring the state of readiness to conduct the examination;
10. monitoring the conduct of a full scale examination;
11. approval of the final accreditation decision;
12. annual post accreditation monitoring.

1.9 What are the criteria used by Umalusi to evaluate an assessment body?

Private assessment bodies are evaluated against the accreditation criteria of:

1. Leadership, Planning and Management;
2. Assessment Standards;
3. Research and Development;
4. The Conduct and Administration of Examinations and/or Assessment; and
5. Resulting Systems and Processes.

1.10 Is the accreditation of private assessment bodies optional or compulsory?

Accreditation is compulsory for private assessment bodies that assess qualifications that are registered on the GFETQSF.

1.11 Where can one view a list of accredited private assessment bodies?

Accredited private assessment bodies are listed on Umalusi's website. This information can be accessed at www.umalusi.org.za under "Units – Evaluation and Accreditation (E&A)". www.umalusi.org.za/units/evaluation-and-accreditation-unit-ea/

1.20 How much does an assessment body pay for the accreditation application?

A full schedule of fees is available on request from Umalusi. (Vani.Chatty@umalusi.org.za).

1.21 Who is involved in the evaluation process of an assessment body?

Senior officials of Umalusi and qualified and experienced evaluators who are appointed and trained by Umalusi for the purpose of conducting the evaluation of private assessment bodies.

2. Monitoring

2.1 How will Umalusi monitor the compliance of private assessment bodies that are accredited?

All examinations (pilot or otherwise) must be quality assured by Umalusi. Umalusi quality assures the various stages of the assessment process to ensure the continued meeting of the accreditation criteria and also to ensure that the standards of assessment and examinations are maintained. These quality assurance measures roll out for every examination and for all assessment bodies, whether private or public.

Annual quality assurance is conducted for two main purposes, namely:

1. External moderation of the standards of examination question papers, quality assurance of internal assessment, and marking; and
2. Monitoring for compliance with the accreditation criteria, which includes monitoring the "state of readiness" to administer examinations undertaken before each examination is administered, and the monitoring of the conduct of examinations.

The monitoring process informs the Assessment Standards Committee's (ASC) recommendations for approval of examination results by Umalusi's Executive Council (EXCO) on behalf of Council.

3. General

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

In terms of the Umalusi appeal process, a request for an appeal must be submitted to the office the Umalusi Chief Executive Officer within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the accreditation application, indicating in detail the reason(s) for the appeal. Appeals must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and emailed to accreditation.appeals@umalusi.org.za.

Payment of the required fee must be made before an appeal is considered. The cost of the appeal will be determined by the nature of the appeal. Should the finding of the appeal be in favour of the appellant, the fee paid will be refunded to the appellant.

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