

Umalusi CEO Speaking Notes
Joint Media Briefing of the NQF Partners
12 February 2024, GCIS Studios, Hatfield, Pretoria

Introduction

1. Let me pass my greetings to everybody.
2. As the Programme Director has indicated, we meet here this morning to inform the public about the individual and collective roles of the four entities present here.

Umalusi mandate

3. Umalusi draws its mandate from both the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act 58 of 2001 and the National Qualifications Framework Act No. 67 of 2008. In carrying out its mandate, Umalusi uses a standard setting framework which involves five aspects.
 - a. Firstly, Umalusi ensures that qualifications and curricula are developed for its sub-framework of qualifications, namely NQF Levels 1-4. Currently, the sub-framework consists of the NSC, NC(V), GETC: ABET and N2-N3.
 - i. Concerning the N1-N3 programmes, I wish to inform the public that N1-N3 programmes are being phase out as from 1 January 2024. The last date of registration on the programmes was 31 December 2023. Further details on this phase-out process are available from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

- b. The second area of Umalusi's legislative responsibility involves accreditation of private education institutions to offer the qualifications on the sub-framework [NSC, NC(V) or GETC: ABET]. Upon their accreditation, the institutions are monitored periodically by Umalusi to ensure maintenance of standards.
- c. Thirdly, Umalusi accredits and monitors private assessment bodies to assess the NSC, NC(V) or GETC: ABET. The bodies that are currently accredited by Umalusi are the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) and South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI). Both the IEB and SACAI assess the NSC and GETC: ABET.
- d. The fourth area of work for Umalusi is the quality assurance of exams for the NSC, NC(V), GETC: ABET (and N1-N3, until completely phased out).
- e. Finally, Umalusi conducts research to inform decision making.

Misconceptions about NSC and IEB

- 4. It is at this point where I find it necessary to clear the misconceptions about the IEB and NSC. It is a concern to Umalusi that some in the media, including news editors, are reporting about the IEB as if it is a qualification that is in competition with the NSC. That is not factual. The IEB is not a qualification, but a body accredited by Umalusi to assess the NSC and GETC: ABET. The learners in the IEB system

receive the NSC certificate that is quality assured and issued by Umalusi. The same is true of SACAI and DBE learners.

5. Let me explain that by painting a scenario. Here are three learners, one each from the DBE, IEB and SACAI, and they present their 2023 NSC certificate to University X in application for admission into a degree programme. The university will not be able to differentiate which of the three learners wrote their NSC under DBE, IEB or SACAI.
6. Hopefully, the media will work with us to clear the public misconception about the NSC and IEB.

Accreditation and verification of institutions

7. As already explained, Umalusi accredits registered independent schools and registered private colleges to offer either the NSC, NCV, or GETC. In this regard, Umalusi remains concerned about unaccredited private institutions that continue to register candidate, fully aware that they are operating unlawfully.
8. To curb this practice, we urge the public to verify if an independent school or a private college is accredited by Umalusi by visiting the Umalusi website (www.umalusi.org.za) and clicking on “Accredited Institutions” icon. If an institution is accredited by Umalusi, you will see its details such as the:
 - a) name,
 - b) accreditation number,
 - c) period of accreditation (check whether the accreditation dates are still valid),
 - d) address,
 - e) contact details,

- f) email address,
- g) owner / principal, and
- h) information on grades / subjects accredited to offer.

Dealing with institution operating illegally

9. Should you discover that an institution is operating illegally, advise the relevant education department of the unregistered institution. In addition, send an email to Umalusi (accreditation@umalusi.org.za) to report the institution.

Verification of certificates

10. The mandate of Umalusi includes issuing and verification of certificates. Umalusi issues certificates to candidates who meet the requirements for either the NSC; SC(a); NC(V); N2-N3; or GETC: ABET.
11. Because of the increase in the reported cases of fake certificates, fraudulent and misrepresentation of qualifications, Umalusi continues to urge employers in the public and private sectors as well as institutions of higher learning to periodically verify the qualifications of their employees and learners.
12. That can be done through the verification agencies whose contact details are available on the website of Umalusi (www.umalusi.org.za). On the landing page, you simply click on the **Certification & Verification** icon.
13. When verifying certificates, Umalusi checks whether the:

- a) certificate was awarded to the individual concerned,
and
- b) information on the certificate corresponds with the
information on the Umalusi certification database.

Security features of Umalusi certificates

14. Umalusi would like to reassure the public that its certificates have robust safeguards to protect their authenticity and credibility. Let me make it crystal clear: the mandate of Umalusi is to issue **authentic certificates** to qualifying candidates. Umalusi has got not business with fake certificates.

15. Fake certificates are issued by scammers or fraudsters who are not employees of Umalusi. I would like to warn members of the public to desists from buying fake certificates. Such certificates have no currency because they do not appear in the certification databases of Umalusi and the National Learners` Records Database (NLRD) which is managed by SAQA. So, those who buy fake certificates are wasting their time and money.

Update on fake certificates

16. Programme Director, I find it necessary to provide the public with an update on the progress made in connection with the problem of selling and buying of fake certificates, something which was covered widely in the media over the last seven months.

17. Between October and December 2023, eleven (11) suspects were arrested by the South African Police Service (SAPS) on different dates. The first two (2) suspects were arrested in Burgersfort in Limpopo on 27 October, one suspect was arrested in Pretoria in November, the next three (3) were arrested on 20 November, and the last five (5) were

nabbed on 13 December 2023 again in Burgersfort, Limpopo. On the other hand, the Hawks arrested an employee of the Department of Higher Education on 11 December 2023 for fraudulently issuing a diploma certificate for cash.

18. Police investigations are ongoing and Umalusi will continue to work closely with the law enforcement agencies in whatever way possible to ensure that the scammers or fraudsters are made to face the full might of the law.

What Umalusi does in conjunction with other QCs

19. While Umalusi has its own areas of focus and responsibilities, it works with the QCTO, CHE and SAQA on various matters to ensure that the qualifications offered across the sub-frameworks are of high quality, relevant to the needs of the country, and aligned with the broader objectives of the NQF.
20. With respect to approved qualifications, Umalusi send them to SAQA for uploading on the sub-framework.
21. In connection with learner results, Umalusi send them to SAQA for uploading on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD).
22. Umalusi works collaboratively with the other QCs on other matters such as the credit accumulation and transfer within and across qualifications.



23. Thank you for your attention.