

Makoya

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10

Address by the Minister of Basic Education during the opening of the 40th AEAA Annual Conference

09

Umalusi hosts a world-class 40th AEAA Annual Conference

14

Umalusi assumes the Presidency of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa



UMALUSI



Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training





IN THIS ISSUE

- 03** From the Editor's Pen
- 04** Umalusi hands over books to primary schools to mark Nelson Mandela International Day
- 06** Umalusi approves the release of 2024 mid-year examination results
- 08** Umalusi CEO engages academics at the University of the Western Cape
- 09** Umalusi hosts a world-class 40th AEAA Annual Conference
- 10** Address by the Minister of Basic Education during the opening of the 40th AEAA Annual Conference
- 14** Umalusi assumes the Presidency of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa
- 16** Umalusi briefs Parliament on the DBE's readiness for the end of year national examinations
- 17** The involvement of independent evaluators and subject specialists in the accreditation processes of Umalusi
- 22** Exhibitions as a lever to deepen stakeholders' understanding of Umalusi

From the Editor's Pen

Biki Lepota, Senior Manager Public Relations and Communications



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the third edition of the 2024 Makoya themed around assessment matters.

Although not directly linked to assessment, the first couple of pages are dedicated to reporting about the contribution that Umalusi made to the Nelson Mandela International Day on 18 July.

Between the months of July and September, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council met to approve different sets of mid-year examination results of different assessment bodies. The relevance of this message is so that stakeholders get to understand that Umalusi is not only busy between the months of December and January, but that the organisation is working throughout the year.

One of the central messages that this edition brings you are the highlights of the 40th AEAA Conference which was hosted by Umalusi on 19-23 August in Cape Town. The story of the conference is carried on pages 9-15. That the conference was aesthetically pleasing is depicted on the cover picture.

To provide proper context to Umalusi's quality assurance approaches and processes, with specific reference to standardisation of examination results, the CEO of Umalusi, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, took his Roadshow to the University of the Western Cape in August.

As is always the case, it emerged that the engagement succeeded in changing the perspective of the attendees on the concept 'standardisation of results'.

The last quarter of the academic year is always the busiest period for Umalusi and assessment bodies. It is the period during which assessment bodies apply finishing touch ups to their systems in readiness for the end of year exams. After conducting its quality assurance processes, Umalusi went to Parliament in September to brief the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education on the preparedness of the system.

The edition ends with an article detailing the requirements that Umalusi looks for in appointing independent contractors to perform some of its quality assurance work.

Enjoy!

Umalusi hands over books to primary schools to mark **Nelson Mandela International Day**

Shirley Ledwaba, Receptionist

On 18 July 2024, Umalusi marked the Nelson Mandela International Day by spending 67 minutes talking to primary school learners at four different schools in four provinces about the importance of reading for meaning in home languages. To heed the call by the United Nations to mark the day by making a difference in communities, Umalusi put together this campaign in 2023 to respond to the low literacy levels amongst primary school learners as revealed by the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results. The study revealed that 81% of our primary school pupils are unable to read for meaning in their home languages by the time they turn 10 years of age.

Acknowledging that one of the key factors that affect learners' literacy levels is limited exposure to

age-appropriate reading materials particularly in home languages, Umalusi successfully negotiated with Macmillan Education South Africa, CopyCat Communications and Publishing, Agang ka Dithaka Language Practitioners, and Ithuta Books to contribute to the campaign by donating readers and books in different home languages. The over 5 700 reading materials received from these publishers were distributed to learners at the following four primary schools:

- Kopanelang Thuto Primary, Sasolburg in the Free State,
- Madika Primary School, Zebediela in Limpopo,
- Komane Primary, Maboloka (Brits) in the Northwest, and
- Nobuhle Primary, Kwaggafontein in Mpumalanga.

The 2024 Umalusi campaign benefitted over 3 600 learners and 110 teachers associated with the four primary schools. Umalusi officials encouraged teachers and learners at these schools to spend a minimum of 67 minutes daily reading the books and discussing their content in their reading corners and reading clubs.

Appreciating the generosity of the donors, the CEO of Umalusi, Dr Mafu S. Rakometsi, said to the four publishers:

"Your efforts in giving effect to the call by the United Nations leave us in your debt."



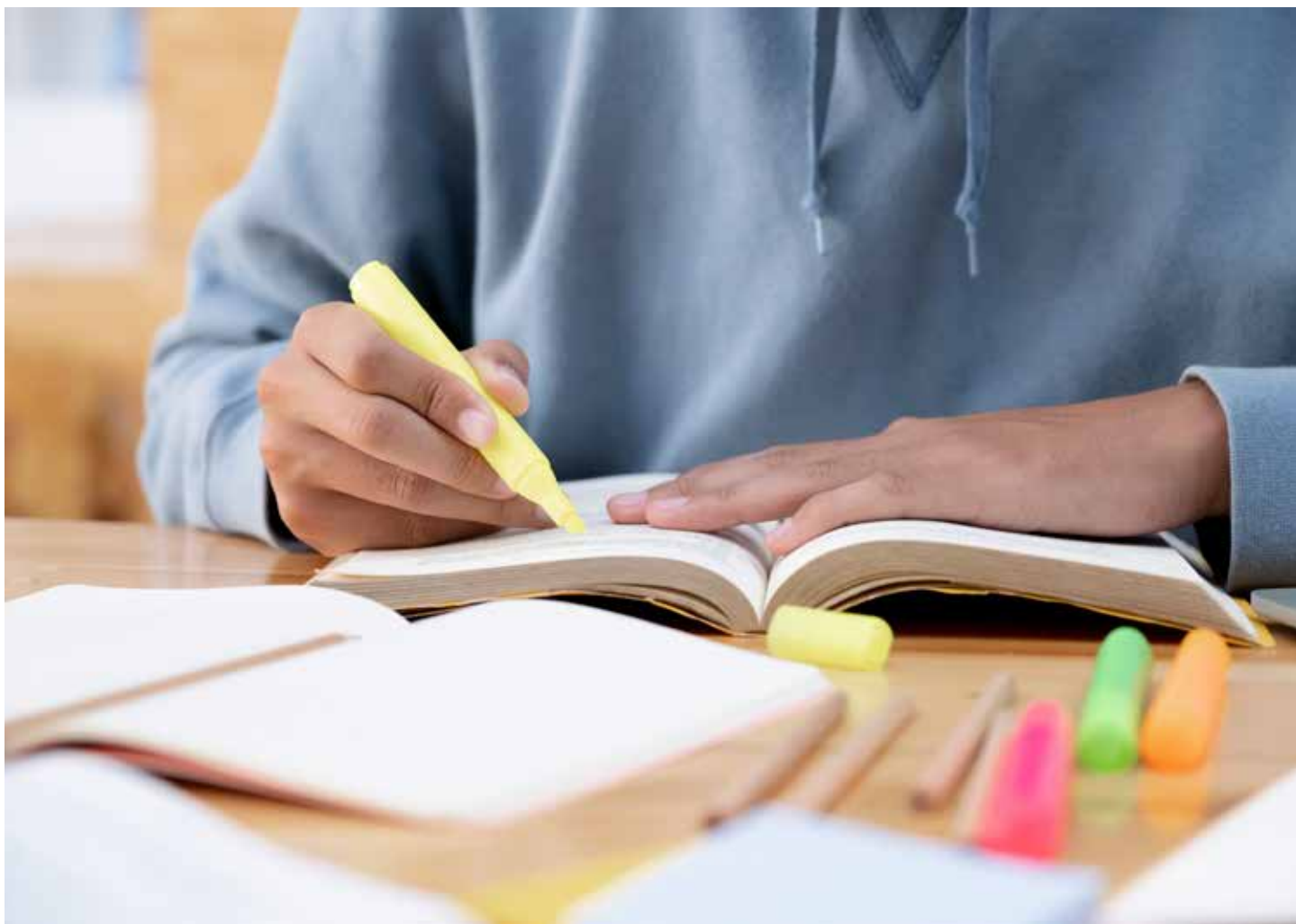
Umalusi official, Mr Thato Boleke, encouraging pupils to read at Kopanang Primary School in the Free State.



A learner from Nobuhle Primary School in Mpumalanga showing his reading skills.



Umalusi officials and Nobuhle Primary School teachers.



Umalusi approves the release of 2024 mid-year examination results

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (GENFETQA), 58 of 2001, as amended in 2008, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council met between July and September to approve several sets of mid-year examination results.

The May/June examinations: Three sets of mid-year examinations are administered annually in the country. These are the National Senior Certificate (NSC), Senior Certificate (Amended), and General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic

Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations.

NSC and SC(a) examinations: Since the year 2019, the NSC learners are offered the opportunity to write the May/June NSC examination to improve their results obtained in the previous November examination period. Previously, the exams, commonly known as supplementary exams, were written in March. The rationale behind moving the exams from March to June is to allow learners adequate time for revision and an opportunity to rewrite as many subjects as they wish. The opportunity is also extended to adult learners to write Senior Certificate (SC) examination. Whereas the June

NSC examinations are assessed by three assessment bodies, namely the Department of Basic Education (DBE), South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI), and Independent Examinations Board (IEB), the SC(a) ones are administered by only the DBE.

GETC: ABET examinations: Aside from the NSC examination, the GETC: ABET examinations are administered during the month of June. In addition to the IEB and SACAI, the June GETC: ABET examinations are administered by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which is a public assessment body.

WHY APPROVE THE RELEASE OF RESULTS?

Section 17A(5)(b) of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (GENFETQA) Act No. 58 of 2001, obliges the Council (Umalusi), with the concurrence of the Director - General and after consultation with the relevant assessment body or education institution to approve the publication of the results of learners if the Council is satisfied that the assessment body or educational institution has:

- (i) conducted the assessment free from any irregularity that may jeopardise the integrity of the assessment or its outcomes;
- (ii) complied with requirements prescribed by the Council for conducting assessments;
- (iii) applied the standards prescribed by the Council with which a learner is required to comply with in order to obtain a certificate; and
- (iv) complied with every other condition determined by the Council.

In accordance with that, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council met in July to consider reports from Umalusi and assessment

bodies in terms of how the May/June 2024 National Senior Certificate (NSC), Senior Certificate (Amended), and General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) Examinations were conducted and managed in order to make a pronouncement on the approval of the release of the results of these examinations. The approval of release of results is always preceded by standardisation of learner results.

STANDARDISATION OF LEARNER RESULTS

Before the results can be approved by EXCO of Council, they must be subjected to the standardisation processes which are conducted by the Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) of Umalusi Council. The ASC standardises results by conducting careful analysis of the results for each subject to arrive at standardisation decisions. The process is quite involved and rigorous; and it is guided by standardisation principles, which are backed up by statistical and narrative reports. The final standardisation decisions were presented for the consideration of the Executive

Committee of Council (EXCO) during its meetings held on 09 and 12 January 2024 to approve the release of the results.

Prior to getting into the approval statements, it is necessary to speak briefly about the quality assurance processes under which Umalusi subjected these examinations.

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

The examinations were subjected to the standard quality assurance processes of Umalusi, which involved, amongst others, moderation of questions papers, monitoring and verification of marking and standardisation of examination results. All these functions are performed by subject matter experts who are not full-time employees of Umalusi. At the heart of their role is the need to ensure that the question papers meet the set standard, and that the results are comparable from one year-to the other. These quality assurance processes together with standardisation and approval processes are conducted to safeguard the integrity and credibility of all the results.

GENERIC APPROVAL STATEMENT

Having studied all the evidence presented, the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Umalusi Council concluded that all the above sets of examinations were administered in accordance with the relevant assessment body's policy on the conduct, administration and management of examinations. There were no systemic irregularities reported, that might have compromised the overall credibility and integrity of the examinations. For that reason, EXCO of Council approved the release of all the mid-year examination results. In respect of identified irregularities, the EXCO directed the relevant assessment body to block the results of all the implicated candidates, including the candidates who are implicated in the alleged acts of dishonesty, pending the outcome of further investigations by the relevant assessment body and verification by Umalusi. The assessment bodies were further required to address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report.





Umalusi CEO engages academics at the University of the Western Cape

Nthabiseng Khotlele, Manager: Public Relations and Communications

As part of his advocacy work the CEO, Dr Rakometsi, and his management team visited the University of the Western Cape (UWC) on 12 August 2024 to interact with senior academics about aspects of Umalusi's legislative mandate, with specific reference to standardisation of examination results.

In attendance were the UWC's members of admissions committee, lecturers, Heads of Departments/schools, Faculty Deans, Registrar, Deputy Vice Chancellors. The engagement happened by way of a three hours' meeting during which the CEO of Umalusi, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, delivered a presentation and thereafter members of the audience were allowed to ask questions, make comments and offer suggestions in terms of how Umalusi can strengthen its quality assurance processes.

Just like other similar engagements, the visit was occasioned by, amongst others, the sometimes 'inaccurate' public comments about the end of the year matric results. Closer scrutiny such commentary reveals that some of the commentators imply that the upwards or even downward shifts in pass rates may be a function of manipulation of figures during Umalusi's standardisation processes. The truth is that such claims are made without evidence and speculation is made to appear as fact.

The positive thing about the advocacy initiative is that it provides context to Umalusi's quality assurance approaches and processes. It is for that reason that the theme that always emerges from such meetings is: "Now I have a different perspective on standardisation".



Umalusi hosts a world-class 40th AEAA Annual Conference

Nthabiseng Khotlele, Manager: Public Relations and Communications

Umalusi hosted a successful 40th Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA) Annual Conference themed "Reimagining educational assessment in the age of multiple dimensions of learning in a global society" on 19-22 August 2024 in Cape Town.

Participating in the conference were about 310 delegates made up of education leaders, researchers, policy makers, educationists, assessment and curriculum practitioners, scholars, heads of assessment bodies and examination councils and private agencies from all parts of the African continent, Europe, India, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America and other parts of the world. The Minister of Basic Education, Honourable Siviwe Gwarube, officially opened the conference on 19 August.

The Minister of Basic Education, Honourable Siviwe Gwarube, officially opened the conference on 19 August. She congratulated Umalusi for returning the AEAA Family to South Africa, 21 years after staging a successful 13th AEAA Conference in 2003 during Umalusi's formative years. Further, she appreciated the fact that the theme aligns with two of the five key priorities identified for

South Africa's 7th Administration: (a) increasing efforts to improve access to and the quality of inclusive education for learners in our most vulnerable communities and for learners with special education needs; and (b) improving literacy and numeracy skills across all phases of schooling. For that reason, the Minister challenged Umalusi to use the conference as an invaluable opportunity (a) to reimagine its quality assurance framework so as to focus on the foundational levels of the education system and (b) for all delegates to re-think how best to build an inclusive, safe and quality education systems in Africa and the world over.

In his welcoming remarks, the President of the AEAA, Dr David Njengere, called on all delegates to "contextualise global issues to the African experience and concretise assessment experiences that bring out our strengths while presenting globally competitive qualifications". Around 100 papers were presented by a mixture of keynote speakers, lead speakers, panel speakers, workshop and paper presenters. The papers generated interest in new areas of research to deepen the dialogue on thinking differently.

The conference made the following recommendations:

- Member countries should develop teaching, learning and assessment practices that are inclusive and responsive to learners with disabilities, diverse environments, and cultures.
- Member countries to engage in collaborative research in the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education and assessments.
- Member countries should collaborate in developing forward-looking, inclusive, and responsive national and higher education policies tailored towards the unique challenges of countries.
- There is need for collaborative capacity building of teachers in interpreting competency-based curricula, and the use of AI and ICTs in education and assessments.
- Member institutions to preserve African languages through assessments and language-driven technologies.
- Member countries to develop a common assessment framework and tools to facilitate the generation and use of data for continental decision making.

Address by the Minister of Basic Education during the opening of the 40th AEAA Annual Conference

Ms Siviwe Gwarube: Minister of Basic Education

It is a distinct honour and privilege to stand before you today on this auspicious occasion, the official opening of the 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Education Assessment in Africa (AEAA) hosted by Umalusi in the mother city, Cape Town. I am grateful to Umalusi for inviting me to open this conference.

I would like to congratulate Umalusi, the caretaker of one of the nation's most treasured assets - the standards of general and further education and training - by ensuring that this continental conference is hosted successfully for the third time on South African soil. This is after the 13th Annual Conference was hosted in 1995, one year into South Africa's democratic dispensation while the 21st Annual Conference was hosted by Umalusi in 2003, two years after the establishment of the Umalusi Council. To Umalusi Council, management and staff, I say you have done us proud!

The South African schooling system is extremely diverse and complex, with 13.4 million learners, 460 thousand teachers 24 836 schools, with twelve official languages. At the level of Grade 12, in terms of learners attaining the National Senior Certificate (NSC), we are performing extremely well. In the 2023 NSC examination 82.7% of our learners, who wrote the examination achieved the National Senior Certificate, with 40.8% of the learners obtaining admission to Bachelor Studies at Higher Education Institutions. This output has been stable even in the COVID years. However, our greater concern is ensuring quality outcomes throughout the thirteen years of schooling. Hence, we have implemented for the first time an evaluation of learners at Grade 3, 6

and 9, which is coupled with school functionality and district and provincial support. This report will be released shortly and will allow us to monitor quality across the whole system.

The South African Education system is also being evaluated in terms of the six social justice indicators, given our historical past, and these include access, equity, quality, efficiency, redress and inclusivity. As a system we have made significant progress in all areas since the democratic dispensation, but there is much more work required in the area of quality and efficiency. It is therefore my hope and express desire to see conferences of this nature not only providing pointers for improvement to the South African education system but to Africa as a whole.

I have noted with keen interest the theme of this conference - Reimagining educational assessment in the age of multiple dimensions of learning in a global society. The theme of this conference is in keeping with the international discourse where teaching and learning are being reviewed to ensure greater relevance, quality, and inclusivity. In the South African schooling sector, we are currently embarking on a curriculum strengthening process and curriculum in this context is viewed broadly as the content of what gets taught, the teaching and learning pedagogy, the assessment and the professional support provided to classroom practitioners.

Our curriculum has, to a large degree, been dominated by knowledge acquisition and little focus was given to skills and competencies, attitudes and values and character development. It is for this reason that the current review process will focus



Minister Gwarule officially opening the 40th AEAA Conference.

on the holistic development of the learner and we are committed to developing ethical citizens, creative thinkers, problem solvers, learners who can communicate effectively and are digitally literate. Assessment must be aligned to these curriculum changes and research has shown that assessment is a powerful force in driving curriculum change.

As a system we are currently piloting the assessment of multiple dimensions of learning through an innovative assessment programme known as the General Education Certificate (GEC). The goal of the GEC is to facilitate teaching and learning of an expanded breadth of skills that includes standardised subject knowledge, general 21st century capabilities and personal inclinations and talents. When these skills are assessed holistically, there is great potential not only to re-imagine educational assessment

practice but foregrounds the added value of insulating learners from dropout and disappointment. Instead, it can advance their education pathway towards employability with appropriate and relevant skills for a fast-changing world. It is therefore imperative we move with speed towards analysing and embracing alternative models of assessment that are fit for a re-imagined purpose.

At a macro-level, the theme aligns with two of the five key priorities identified for South Africa's 7th Administration that will inform our decision making in the Basic Education Department. Specifically, the two priorities focus on (a) increasing efforts to improve access to and the quality of inclusive education for learners in our most vulnerable communities and learners with special education needs and (b) improving literacy and numeracy skills across all phases of schooling.

The other key priorities are:

- to intensify efforts to improve access to and quality of early childhood development,
- to intensify efforts to improve access to and the quality of training and professional development opportunities available to our school management teams and teachers, and
- to improve the safety and quality of schooling environments for our learners and teachers.

There is a wealth of scholarship to prove that quality passes at the higher levels of the basic education system should be supported by a solid foundation of Early Childhood Development (ECD). Therefore, this conference is an invaluable opportunity for Umalusi to reimagine its quality assurance framework so as to focus on the foundational levels of the education system.

The building of an inclusive, safe and quality education system should be what occupies the attention and energy of every stakeholder in the basic, further and higher education and training sectors. This conference

is therefore an invaluable opportunity for all of us to reimagine our ways of doing business in our respective areas of work within the education sector. I also believe that the diversity of our delegates will add value to our discussions, enabling us to share knowledge and good practice in an open dialogue. I am aware that amongst the people participating in this conference are educators, scholars and policy makers from all parts of the African continent, Europe, India, United Kingdom, and other parts of the world. It is exciting to have such a mix of delegates and speakers who come from countries with different histories, and demographics.

I have a firm view that the conference provides us with a forum to explore and debate the issues at hand, focussing on the need to rethink not only educational assessment, but also how to set equitable standards for education and training not just within South Africa but also standards that are benchmarked internationally while at the same time sustaining diversity. Judging by the quality of

the almost 130 abstracts published in the conference booklet, dealing with different aspects of the conference theme, I am confident that significant insights will be gained from the discussions, and that the conclusions and resolutions that will emerge from the conference will propel us towards attainment of the identified priorities.

The attendance of this conference by over 300 delegates from 30 countries, most of which are based on the African continent, gives us invaluable opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest and forge strong cooperation and partnerships between our country, South Africa, and countries from the continent, something which will go a long way in the realisation of the ideals of Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want, which is characterised by amongst others, unity, inter-connectedness and interdependence.

I wish you successful discussions and debates over the next four days, and I keenly look forward to the thoughts and conclusions that will emerge from the conference.



Minister Gwarule taking questions from a journalist.



Matrix of Umalusi Quality Assured and Certified Qualifications

Qualification	NQF level	Equivalent School Grade	Type of qualification	Qualifying criteria/ Who can study for the qualification?	Duration	Minimum subjects required	Pass requirements	Where is it offered
National Senior Certificate (NSC)	4	Grade 12	Academic Qualification.	School learners between the ages of 16 and 19 years who have passed Grade 11.	Minimum of 1 year	Minimum of 7 subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Language • 1 Official language at First Additional Language level • Mathematics/ Mathematical Literacy • Life Orientation • 3 Subjects from the list of approved NSC subjects. 	40% - Minimum in 3 subjects including Home Language 30% - Minimum in 3 subjects. Note: the failed subject must have a School Based assessment (SBA).	Public schools or independent schools accredited by Umalusi.
Senior Certificate as amended (SC(a))	4	Grade 12	Academic Qualification.	Adult learners over the age of 21 who have: A GETC: ABET or passed Grade 9 or an equivalent NQF level 1 qualification including two official languages. An incomplete NSC and an expired School-Based assessment component Out of school youth: 18-21 years old who could not complete their school education and, due to special circumstances, could not be accommodated longer in the school system, as verified by the Head of the Department.	Minimum of 1 year	Register for a minimum of 6 subjects: New SC application: 2 Official Languages (One language at HL; and the other language at least at FAL) 4 Subjects selected from the list of newly approved SC subjects Learners with SC credits obtained before July 2014: Select the remaining subject from list of approved SC subjects.	Pass 6 subjects; 3 subjects at 40% one of which should be an official language at HL level; and 3 subjects at 30%. Candidate can fail one subject. The failed subject must have an SBA mark.	Public Schools or Independent schools accredited by Umalusi.



Matrix of Umalusi Quality Assured and Certified Qualifications

Qualification	NQF level	Equivalent School Grade	Type of qualification	Qualifying criteria/ Who can study for the qualification?	Duration	Minimum subjects required	Pass requirements	Where is it offered
National Certificate (Vocational) – NC(V) Level 4	4	Grade 12	Vocational Qualification	<p>School learners who have passed Grade 9 or, an equivalent NQF level 1 qualification.</p> <p>Learners who have completed an approved bridging programme or Prevocational Learning Programme (PLP) designed for the specific purpose to access NQF L2.</p> <p>Learners who completed a recognition of prior learning (RPL) assessment programme which meets the basic requirements for access to L2.</p>	<p>Minimum 3 years to obtain three L2-L4 qualifications.</p> <p>Each NC(V) level takes a minimum of 1 year to complete the certificate. every NC(V) level is an exit level.</p> <p>The candidate requires a minimum of level 3 certificate to qualify to register for a trade test.</p>	<p>Register for 7 subjects per level: Three fundamentals' subjects: Mathematics/ Mathematical literacy English First Additional language</p> <p>Four vocational subjects for a specific field of study.</p> <p>Furthermore, the vocational subjects integrate practical and theory at all levels.</p>	<p>Minimum 40% in English First Additional language.</p> <p>Minimum 40% in Life skills and computer literacy.</p> <p>Minimum 30% in Maths/Mathematical Literacy 50% in each of 4 vocational subjects.</p>	Public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges or Umalusi accredited private TVET colleges
General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET)	1	Grade 9	General Qualification with academic and vocational Learning Areas	General Qualification with academic and vocational Learning Areas	School report card or a letter from school confirming that you complete grade 7 or 8 or ABET Level 3 report from an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) ET centre/ assessment body.	<p>One official Language Mathematical literacy or Mathematical Sciences Core – compulsory Life Orientation Electives</p> <p>Minimum of 2 electives from Academic or Vocational Specialisation</p>	<p>Minimum 40% in English First Additional language.</p> <p>Minimum 40% in Life skills and computer literacy.</p> <p>Minimum 30% in Maths/Mathematical Literacy 50% in each of 4 vocational subjects.</p>	<p>Public institutions like the Community Learning Centres (previously called ABET Centres) in each province.</p> <p>Some private companies/ industries offer the qualification in their training centres or through private providers.</p> <p>Employees are then registered to write examinations through the private assessment bodies (IEB or SACAI)</p>

Umalusi assumes the **Presidency of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA)**

Dr Mafu Rakometsi, CEO of Umalusi

In line with the constitution of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA), Umalusi assumed the Presidency of the AEAA at the conclusion of the 40th AEAA Conference on 22 August 2024. By virtue of being the CEO of Umalusi, the immediate past President, Dr David Njengere, handed the baton over to me. For that reason, I would like to thank the Executive Committee (EXCO) and the entire membership of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA) from the bottom of my heart for the honour of being elected to be the President of this continental association. Below is the short acceptance speech that I delivered:



Dr. David Njengere (Right), the outgoing President of the AEAA, officially handing over the reins to the incoming President Dr. Mafu Rakometsi (Left).

I hereby declare that I accept the responsibility with pleasure. I humbly accept the responsibility on behalf of all the role players within the general and further education and training sector in South Africa (and across the continent). Equally important, I pledge to work with all examinations councils and assessment bodies to serve all the family members of the AEAA from all the corners of the African continent.

Because its vision is to “harmonise educational assessment across the African continent”, the AEAA needs to come up with strategic ways of working with examination councils and assessment associations within the 55 countries that make up the African Continent. We must stay true to the mission of the AEAA, which is to promote cooperation amongst examining and assessment bodies in Africa. Employing a pyramidal approach to building the AEAA, we will ensure that no African country is left behind. As you are aware, the structure of a pyramid acknowledges that to get the whole organisation work, it is critically important to get the foundational components right.

To use architectural metaphor, the base, which in our case are the regional assessment associations, must be solid for the AEAA, the layer on top, to stand firmly. If we succeed in doing that, we will be like the ancient masonry structures located in Egypt, one of the African countries that should be brought into the AEAA fold. After



CEO of Umalusi, Dr. Mafu Rakometsi, handing over the responsibility of hosting the AEAA Conference to Dr. Eshetu Kebede, the CEO of Educational Assessment and Examination Services of Ethiopia.

listening carefully to the conference
communique and particularly the
resolutions, I commit that working with
the entire EXCO I will ensure that the
conference resolutions underpin the
programme of the AEAA between
now and August 2025 when we will be
hosting the 41st AEAA Conference in
Ethiopia.

In conclusion let me, on behalf of
the AEAA EXCO, wish the Ethiopian
Educational Assessment and
Examinations Service (EAES), under
the leadership of Dr Eshetu Kebede
Gichoro, the best as you prepare to
host the 41st AEAA Conference in
August 2025. As EXCO, we pledge to
support and work with you every step
of the way for the benefit of the entire
membership of the association.



The New AEAA President Dr. Mafu Rakometsi delivering his acceptance speech.

Umalusi briefs Parliament on the DBE's readiness for the end of year national examinations

On 17 September Umalusi briefed the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education (PCBE) on the State of Readiness of the Department of Basic Education to conduct, administer and manage the 2024 end of year National Senior Certificate examinations. The briefing was based on the outcomes of the audit process that Umalusi had concluded in respect of the DBE.

The framework that Umalusi uses to audit the readiness of the system is made up of various aspects including: (a) the adequacy of the appointed personnel to manage the examinations, (b) the registration of candidates, examination centres, and marking centres, (c) the moderation of internal assessments, (d) the adequacy of security measures in relation to printing, packaging, storage and distribution of question papers, (e) the functionality of the systems used to capture learner marks, and (f) the functionality of the

structures established to deal with and handle examination irregularities. The overall goal of the audit is to determine whether the measures put in place by assessment bodies are sufficient to ensure the credibility and reliability of the examination outcomes.

In terms of registrations, Umalusi reported that the DBE had registered approximately 882 000 learners for the 2024 examinations who were due to sit the examination at about 6 900 examination centres across the country.

The overall conclusion of the report of Umalusi was that while the audit process flagged some weaknesses within the DBE examination system, the weaknesses were not of such a magnitude that they could put the overall credibility of the exam at risk. The risks identified had been brought to the attention of the Director-General of the DBE and the relevant Heads of

Provincial Education Department so that corrective steps can be taken to remedy the situation before the start of exams.

Umalusi committed to monitoring the running of the examination to ensure that their conduct, administration and management is in full compliance with the relevant regulations.

Finally, Umalusi wished the class of 2024 well in the examinations.



Dr Eva Sujee, Executive Manager, briefing Parliament on the DBE's readiness to conduct exams.

The involvement of independent evaluators and subject specialists in the accreditation processes of Umalusi

Thomas Magadze: Manager – Evaluation and Accreditation



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act of 2001, as amended, mandates the quality assurance of private colleges and independent schools that offer qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF) of the National Qualifications Framework. Umalusi is responsible for the quality assurance of private education institutions through a rigorous accreditation process for independent schools and private colleges that offer qualifications under the GFETQSF.

According to the 2023 School Realities report published by the Department of Basic Education, there are 2 325 registered independent schools in South Africa. Additionally, the Department of Higher Education and Training Register of Private Colleges (13 May 2024) lists 140 registered private colleges. Managing accreditation applications and monitoring these institutions necessitates up-to-date specialist knowledge of the curricula and standards relevant to independent schools and private colleges.

To ensure accurate and effective evaluations, Umalusi engages independent contractors as Evaluators and Subject Specialists. Evaluators assess institutional management indicators, while Subject Specialists evaluate curriculum implementation and assessment within their areas of expertise. This approach guarantees that the evaluations are conducted by suitably qualified professionals and that there are enough evaluators to handle the evaluations, which occur during academic terms.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE POSITIONS

Evaluator and Subject Specialist positions require a high standard of qualifications and experience, and the recruitment process is thorough and rigorous. Candidates must meet the following criteria:

UNDERSTANDING OF THE FRAMEWORK AND QUALITY ASSURANCE:

- Evaluators and Subject Specialists must possess a strong understanding of the South African legislative framework for independent schools or private colleges and the specific quality assurance requirements. They should be well-versed in the unique aspects of these institutions.

- Subject Specialists must be familiar with regulations pertaining to the assessment of learner achievement relevant to the qualifications being evaluated.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT KNOWLEDGE:

- Candidates must be knowledgeable about current curriculum and assessment trends.
- They should have a proven track record of implementing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for independent schools, the National Certificate (Vocational) for Further Education and Training (FET) private colleges, and the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education

and Training (ABET) for Adult Education and Training private colleges.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS:

- Strong verbal and written English communication skills are essential, including effective report-writing abilities.

TECHNICAL AND LOGISTICAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Candidates must have current registration with the South African Council for Educators (SACE).
- Excellent computer literacy is required. Candidates must own a computer with reliable internet access, as most site visits are conducted online, and all reports are electronically generated.

- A valid driver's licence and availability for travel to conduct site visits, where necessary, are also required.

EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

- **Evaluators:** A minimum of a four-year qualification in an education field is required. A postgraduate degree in Education Management or Education Policy is an advantage. Additionally, candidates must have at least seven years of experience in school or college management, including roles such as Deputy Principal or head of a school offering the relevant curriculum.
- **Subject Specialists:** A minimum of a four-year qualification in an education field with specialisation in the subjects to be evaluated is required. A postgraduate degree in education or a related field is advantageous. Candidates must have at least five years of teaching experience in the subject being evaluated, with experience as a Head of Department, Academic Head, or Subject Advisor in the relevant subject.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Umalusi's recruitment process for Evaluators and Subject Specialists is tailored to address the unique and specialised nature of their roles in the accreditation process.

Initially, the general recruitment process involves shortlisting candidates who meet the basic qualifications and experience criteria. These candidates then undergo a competency test designed to assess their understanding of the position's requirements. This is followed by an interview before appointing the successful candidate.

However, given that the work of Evaluators and Subject Specialists is specialised, with specific requirements related to Umalusi's processes, the standard competency test posed challenges.

Despite having relevant academic qualifications and experience, candidates often lacked familiarity with Umalusi's specific procedures, which affected their performance on these tests.

To address this, Umalusi has implemented a revised recruitment model. The updated process includes:

INITIAL TRAINING SESSION:

- Candidates who meet the minimum qualifications and experience are invited to participate in an online training session. This training covers Umalusi's legislative mandate, the accreditation process, and the approach to evaluating private educational institutions. It also includes instruction on evaluation techniques and report-writing skills.

ASSESSMENT FOLLOWING TRAINING:

- After the training, candidates are required to complete an assessment electronically. This assessment evaluates their computer skills, comprehension of Umalusi's processes and procedures, and adherence to deadlines. It also tests their ability to communicate effectively on an online platform. Candidates who do not meet the assessment requirements may withdraw from the process.

SECOND PHASE TRAINING AND EVALUATION:

- Candidates who pass the initial assessment are invited to a second training session at Umalusi. This phase includes additional training on evaluation processes and involves role-playing activities to simulate real-world scenarios. This training also functions as an interview process.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION:

- Successful candidates from the second phase are recommended to the Chief Executive Officer for appointment as Independent Contract Workers (ICWs), either as Evaluators or Subject Specialists.

This revised process ensures that candidates not only meet the basic qualifications, but also have a thorough understanding of Umalusi's specific requirements and are well-prepared for their roles.

DUTIES OF INDEPENDENT CONTRACT WORKERS

EVALUATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Conducting online and electronic evaluations of Self-Evaluation Reports and portfolios of evidence submitted by independent schools or private colleges applying for accreditation.
- Performing site verification visits to assess institutions according to Umalusi's standards.
- Developing detailed reports that adhere to Umalusi's quality standards and timelines.

SUBJECT SPECIALISTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Evaluating the effectiveness of planning, teaching, and assessment processes at institutions seeking accreditation.
- Assessing the institution's internal capacity to implement Site-Based Assessment (SBA) and evaluating the quality of SBA implementation.

BOTH EVALUATORS AND SUBJECT SPECIALISTS ARE REQUIRED TO:

- Attend relevant training workshops as mandated by Umalusi.
- Undergo annual performance evaluations conducted by Umalusi.

RECRUITMENT OF EVALUATORS AND SUBJECT SPECIALISTS FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

The latest recruitment process for Evaluators and Subject Specialists for Independent Schools commenced with an advertisement seeking applications for these roles. Following this, a number of applications were received and reviewed. From these, 60 candidates were shortlisted and invited to participate in a three-day online training session.

ONLINE TRAINING:

- **Content:** The training provided rigorous instruction on the Umalusi accreditation process, the specifics of independent schools, and the roles and responsibilities of Evaluators and Subject Specialists. Key topics included confidentiality, conflict of interest, the self-evaluation instrument, the desktop evaluation instrument, and practical activities.
- **Assessment:** On the third day, candidates completed an assessment based on the training content. The results of this assessment were used to determine the candidates' suitability for the next phase.

SELECTION PROCESS:

- **Initial phase:** Approximately half of the candidates who performed well in the online training and assessment were selected to proceed to the next phase of the recruitment process.

IN-PERSON TRAINING:

- **Content:** Selected candidates attended a final in-person training session at Umalusi. This session included a review of the online training and assessment results, an introduction to the code of ethics for Evaluators and Subject Specialists, and detailed guidelines for conducting site visits.

- Topics covered included:
 - Site visit guidelines and logistics
 - Reporting requirements and contents of site visit booklets
 - Evaluation of institutional premises
 - Focus group interviews and role-playing exercises

The in-person training was deemed successful, leading to the recommendation of the successful candidates for appointment.

CONCLUSION

The revised recruitment process for Evaluators and Subject Specialists has been highly effective, allowing Umalusi to attract and appoint qualified and experienced professionals. This process has significantly enhanced Umalusi's ability to evaluate the compliance of independent schools and private colleges with accreditation criteria.



DIFFERENCES: GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE: ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GETC: ABET LEVEL 4) & NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE (NSC)

GETC: ABET		NSC
NQF Level & Credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQF Level 1 (Comparable to Grade 9) 120 credits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NQF Level 4 (Grade 12) 130 credits
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To equip learner with foundational learning by acquiring knowledge, skills and values in specified learning area. To enable learners to access further education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable learners to acquire and apply knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. To prepare learners for entry to higher education institutions and the world of work.
Target Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who dropped out of school or could not finish school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School going candidates between the ages of 16-19
Entry Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A school report card or a letter confirming that you completed Grade 7/8 ABET Level 3 report from AET Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 11
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 years (1 year each in Grades 10, 11 and 12).
Subjects	A minimum of 5 learning areas (subjects): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Fundamentals (compulsory): 1 Official Language Mathematical Literacy OR Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences 1 Core (compulsory): Life Orientation 2, 3 or 4 Learning Areas from the Electives (depending on the number of credits) 	A minimum of 7 subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Home Language 1 official language at First Additional Language (FAL) level Mathematics OR Mathematical Literacy Life Orientation 3 Subjects from the list of approved NSC subjects.
Pass Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of 40% in each of the learning areas 	A minimum of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40% in 3 subjects, including Home Language 30% in 3 subjects
Who offers it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Adult Education and Training Colleges Private Adult Education and Training Colleges accredited by Umalusi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Schools OR Independent Schools accredited by Umalusi
More Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Higher Education and Training (012 312 5772) Community Education and training Colleges in each province 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Basic Education (012 357 3000 / 0800 202 933) Provincial Education Department

Replacement Certificate - Lost/Damaged Certificate



Umalusi is responsible for the replacement of the Senior Certificate, National Senior Certificate (NSC), National Certificate (Vocational) - NC(V), National Certificate (N3), General and Further Education Certificate, Amended Senior Certificate, and ABET Level 4.

Step 1: Register an account

Create an account, track and manage your request

Step 2: Create a request

Create a request, select the qualification you are applying for replacement

- NC(V), N3, NSC, Senior Certificate, General and Further Education Certificate, Amended Senior Certificate, ABET Level 4
- An affidavit – All online application must include signed affidavit from a police station stating the status of the original certificate e.g. stolen; lost in a move.
- A certified copy of the candidate's identity document is required. (This copy must be certified by a commissioner of oaths).
- Choose delivery method – choose collection from the Umalusi Pretoria Office or receive the certificate via courier service

Step 3: Collection

Collect your replacement certificate or receive the certificate via courier service (Courier delivery method is available at an additional fee)

Important Information:

A certificate **cannot** be issued on the same day that the application is submitted. The processing time is 1 – 6 weeks under normal circumstances.

A request for a replacement certificate obtained before **November 1992** can be made from any of the Departments of Education and the same procedure followed. However, it should be noted that this certificate will be printed by the relevant Assessment Body and not Umalusi. The processing time is 1 to 3 weeks under normal circumstances.

It should be noted that the previous certificate is cancelled when a replacement certificate is issued. Should it happen that a candidate find a certificate that was lost/replaced, then the candidate should know that the certificate is invalid.

Exhibitions as a lever to **deepen stakeholders' understanding** of Umalusi

*Robert Skhosana, Assistant Manager: Public Relations and Communications; and
Siphiwe Mtshali, Stakeholder Relations Officer*

The Acts that established Umalusi assign the organisation the mandate to carry out advocacy work on the legislated areas of work. One of the strategies used to educate stakeholders about the work of Umalusi is to participate in exhibitions throughout the country. For example, between April and October, Umalusi exhibited its services at four events in four different provinces.

The first event was a week-long career exhibition organised by the Eastern Cape Provincial Education Department on 13-17 May 2024. Attended by learners from different high schools, the exhibition moved from one venue to the next on daily basis.



Learners from schools around OR Tambo District attending the Career Exhibition organised by the Eastern Cape Department of Higher Education.

Umalusi then moved to the Western Cape to exhibit its services at the 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA) at the Century City Conference Centre and Hotel in Cape Town on 19 to 22 August 2024. The conference was physically attended by over 300 delegates from various parts of the continent and other parts of the world.



Umalusi officials exhibiting Umalusi's services during the 40th AEAA Conference in Cape Town.

The Umalusi exhibition stall returned to Gauteng Province on 25 -27 September 2024 during which Umalusi interacted with teachers, principals, lecturers from Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and education officials who were attending the 10th National Congress of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) held at the Birchwood Hotel and Conference Centre in Boksburg. The three-day event attracted about 2 000 delegates and was honoured by the presence of the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Mr Paul Mashatile, who delivered the keynote address.

The fourth event was the exhibition that took place at the National Tourism Career Expo (NTCE) on 8-10 October at the Peter Mokaba Stadium in Limpopo Province. The event was attended by over 6 000 learners and educators who came from all the provinces.

One of the key messages that Umalusi shares with stakeholders during exhibitions includes, amongst others, the place of Umalusi on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the qualifications on the NQF, and how the National Senior Certificate (NSC) compares with the National Certificate (Vocational) NC(V) Level 4.

About the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) Level 4 qualification, one of the positives of the exhibitions is that they help clear any confusion in the minds of some of the stakeholders. Anecdotally, there are still some members of the public who seem to think that GETC: ABET Level 4 is equivalent to NSC. That is not the case. The NSC is on NQF Level 4 whereas GETC: ABET is on NQF Level 1 (equivalent to Grade 9).

To debunk the myth that the NSC is inferior to qualifications from other jurisdictions, Umalusi officials shared with exhibition participants the research report which benchmarked the NSC against school-leaving qualifications from Zimbabwe, England, Australia, Kenya and New Zealand. The overall finding of the study



Umalusi Official, Ms Rachel Masisi, educating educators during the 10th National Congress of SADTU at Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg.

is that the NSC provides its holders with an internationally comparable level of education.

The other key aspect of Umalusi mandate clarified is the accreditation and monitoring of independent providers of education (independent schools, private FET colleges and private Adult Education and Training (AET) colleges) as well as private assessment bodies. In short, Umalusi teams clarified that for any private education institution to operate legally in the country in respect of the Umalusi qualifications, it must have been accredited by Umalusi. It is for that reason that Umalusi is the only regulatory body that is empowered to issue certificates of learner achievements.

One of the areas of confusion in the minds of some members of the public is the distinction between Umalusi and the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The Umalusi teams did clarify that Umalusi is a regulatory

body mandated to quality assure the work of the DBE, including that of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, Independent Examinations Board (IEB) and the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI). Crucially important, Umalusi officials emphasised that Umalusi performs its quality assurance duties by the use of external experts, who are some of the finest minds in our country, free from any external interference, political or otherwise.

Concerning the teachers, they asked that Umalusi intensify its advocacy work in this area of exhibitions as it provides them with the opportunity to receive immediate answers to questions asked. That Umalusi benefited immensely from participating in these exhibitions is borne out by the tremendous increase in the number of stakeholders to whom the Umalusi messages reached in May. The messages received widespread coverage on social media platforms.



Umalusi official, Mr Robert Skhosana, informing learners about the number of subjects needed to obtain the National Senior Certificate (NSC) at Peter Mokaba Stadium in Polokwane during the National Tourism Career Expo.



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