



Report on the Quality Assurance of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) November 2024 GETC: ABET Examinations

**REPORT ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE INDEPENDENT
EXAMINATIONS BOARD NOVEMBER 2024 GETC: ABET
EXAMINATIONS**

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FOREWORD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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

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

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of assessment and examinations by determining the following:

- a. The level of adherence to policy in the implementation of examination and assessment processes;
- b. The quality and standard of examination question papers, their corresponding marking guidelines, and site based assessment (SBA) tasks;
- c. The efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes and procedures for monitoring the conduct, administration and management of examinations and assessment; and
- d. The quality of marking, as well as the quality and standard of quality assurance processes within the assessment body.

Furthermore, Umalusi established a professional working relationship with the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). As a result, there has been an improvement in the conduct, administration and management of the GETC: ABET examinations and their assessment. There is ample evidence to confirm that the assessment body and the examination centres continue to strive to improve systems and processes relating to the GETC: ABET examinations and assessment. Umalusi noticed an improvement in the implementation and assessment of SBA tasks.

The Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) and the Executive Committee (EXCO), which are Umalusi committees of the Council, met in December 2024 and January 2025, respectively, to scrutinise the evidence presented on the conduct of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.

Having studied all the evidence presented, the EXCO of Council concluded that the examinations were administered largely in accordance with applicable policies and guidelines. No systemic irregularities were reported that might have compromised the overall credibility and integrity of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations administered by the IEB.

The EXCO of Council approved the release of the IEB November 2024 GETC: ABET examination results.

The IEB was requested to address the directives for compliance and improvement highlighted in the Quality Assurance of Assessment report and submit an improvement plan by 14 March 2025. Furthermore, the EXCO expressed its concerns to the IEB regarding the management of irregularities and requested that the IEB submit the improvement plan by 31 March 2025.

The Executive Committee of Council commended the IEB for conducting a successful examination.

Umalusi will continue to ensure the quality, integrity, and credibility of the GETC: ABET examinations and assessments. It will also continue to endeavour towards an internationally comparable assessment system through research, benchmarking, continuous review, and the improvement of systems and processes.

Umalusi would like to thank all the relevant stakeholders who worked tirelessly to ensure the credibility of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.



Dr Mafu S Rakometsi
Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act no.67 of 2008, as amended, mandates Umalusi to develop and implement policy and criteria for the assessment of qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF).

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

The Act, in terms of these responsibilities, stipulates that Umalusi, as the quality council for general and further education and training:

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

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on the processes followed by Umalusi in quality assuring the November 2024 General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations. The report also reflects on the findings, areas of improvement and areas of non-compliance. It provides directives for compliance and improvement in the conduct, administration and management of the examinations and assessments. The findings are based on information obtained from Umalusi's moderation, monitoring, verification and standardisation processes and reports from the Independent Examinations Board (IEB). Where applicable, comparisons are made with the November 2022 and/or November 2023 examinations.

Umalusi undertakes the quality assurance of national qualifications through a rigorous reporting process on each assessment process and procedure. The quality assurance of the standard of assessment is based on the assessment body's ability to adhere to the policy and guidelines designed to address critical aspects of administering credible national examinations and assessments. In the adult education and training (AET) sector, Umalusi quality assures the GETC: ABET qualification examinations and assessments.

For the November 2024 examinations, the IEB assessed the GETC:ABET qualification in the following industries or sectors:

- a. Construction;
- b. Education, Training and Development;
- c. Food and Beverage;
- d. Local Government;
- e. Mining;
- f. Public Service; and
- g. Transport.

Umalusi's quality assurance processes made provision for a sample from each type of industry. In addition to the November examinations, examinations in this sector are also conducted in June annually. The IEB conducts examinations on request in March and September each year. The examinations on request are conducted in only two fundamental learning areas: Language, Literacy and Communication: English and Mathematical Literacy.

The IEB conducted the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations in seven learning areas. This report covers the following quality assurance of assessment processes conducted by Umalusi, for which a brief outline is given below:

- i. Moderation of question papers (Chapter 1);
- ii. Moderation of site based assessment (SBA) tasks (Chapter 2);
- iii. Moderation of site based assessment (SBA) portfolios (Chapter 3);
- iv. Monitoring the state of readiness to conduct, administer and manage examinations (Chapter 4);
- v. Audit of the appointed marking personnel (Chapter 5);
- vi. Monitoring of the writing and marking of examinations (Chapter 6);
- vii. Quality assurance of marking (Chapter 7); and
- viii. Standardisation and resulting (Chapter 8).

The findings from the above quality assurance of assessment processes enabled the Executive Committee (EXCO) of Council to decide whether to approve the release of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations or not.

The roles and responsibilities of the IEB are to do the following:

1. Develop and internally moderate examination question papers and their accompanying marking guidelines and submit them to Umalusi for external moderation and approval;
2. Manage the development, implementation and internal moderation of internal assessments;
3. Conduct, administer and manage the writing and marking of examinations;
4. Manage assessment and examination irregularities;
5. Report to Umalusi on the conduct, administration and management of examinations;
6. Have an information technology system that complies with the policies and regulations to be able to submit all candidate records according to the certification directives; and
7. Process and submit records of candidate achievements to Umalusi for certification.

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

The findings of the external moderation process at initial moderation indicated that the overall compliance of question papers and accompanying marking guidelines has steadily decreased from 66% in November 2022 to 64% in 2023 to 45% in 2024, representing a decline of 19%.

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

The external moderation of SBA tasks aims to ensure that common standards regarding the quality of SBA tasks are maintained. All candidates registered to write the GETC: ABET examinations through the IEB are required to complete SBA common assessment tasks (CAT). The findings of the external moderation process at initial moderation indicated that the overall compliance of SBA tasks and their corresponding marking guidelines improved significantly from 54% in November 2022 to 63% in November 2024.

The IEB provides all AET learning sites with the approved assessment tasks for implementation in all seven learning areas. The responses of students to the common assessment tasks (CAT) are filed in SBA portfolios of evidence (PoE) and are internally moderated by the IEB before they are presented to Umalusi for external moderation.

The purpose of the external moderation of SBA portfolios is to establish whether the requirements for the implementation and moderation of SBA, as prescribed by the IEB and Umalusi, were met. It is of utmost importance to moderate SBA portfolios since SBA carries the same weight (50%) as the external examinations. To ensure the consistency, validity and fairness of assessment, students' SBA portfolios must be quality assured at different levels. The IEB has shown improvement in the implementation and assessment of SBA tasks. There was also a noticeable improvement in the percentage of students' performance that were fully compliant in November 2024 (53%) compared with 49% in 2023 and 39% in 2022.

The purpose of verifying the state of readiness of the IEB to conduct the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations was largely to do the following:

- a. Gauge the level of preparedness of the IEB to conduct the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations;
- b. Track the progress made in addressing the directives for compliance and improvement issued after the November 2023 examinations;
- c. Verify that the IEB had systems in place to ensure the integrity of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations; and
- d. Report on any shortcomings identified during the evaluation and verification of the IEB's systems.

The audit of the state of readiness confirmed the readiness of the IEB to administer the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. Umalusi noted that the IEB did not submit a Self-Evaluation Report on its SoR within the prescribed timeframes for submission.

Umalusi deployed monitors while the examinations were being written to check that the examination centres complied with the policy and guidelines applicable to the conduct, administration and management of examinations. This monitoring was also important to identify any irregularities that might have occurred during the writing of the examinations. The irregularities identified by Umalusi monitors were submitted to the IEB for further investigation.

Umalusi monitors the level of preparedness of marking centres to conduct the marking process. The purpose of monitoring was to verify the following:

- i. Planning before conducting the marking process;
- ii. The adequacy of resources at the marking centre;
- iii. Security provided at the marking centre; and
- iv. The management of irregularities identified from marked scripts.

Umalusi also monitored the marking centre to ensure that marking was properly planned and managed, ensuring the credibility of the process and its outcomes. Proper management in the critical areas of planning, adequacy of the marking venues, and maintenance of tight security were evident at the marking centre. However, the security personnel did not search the Umalusi monitor's vehicle at the gate, nor did they ask if they had a laptop.

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

Umalusi verified marking to ensure it was conducted according to the agreed upon and established practices and standards. The verification of the marking process revealed that the IEB improved the quality of marking in all seven learning areas and complied with marking and moderation requirements.

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

The purpose of standardisation and the statistical moderation of results is to mitigate the effects of factors other than candidates' ability and knowledge on performance and to reduce the variability of marks from examination to examination. The standardisation process was conducted in a systematic, objective and transparent manner. The decisions on whether to accept the raw marks or to adjust the marks

upward or downward were based on sound educational, qualitative and statistical reasoning.

Based on the findings of the reports on the quality assurance processes undertaken during the November 2024 examinations, the EXCO of Council concluded that the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations were conducted in line with the policies and guidelines that govern the conduct of examinations and assessments. There were no systemic irregularities identified that could jeopardise the overall integrity of the examinations. The EXCO of Council approved the release of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examination results.

Umalusi trusts that this report will provide the assessment body and other stakeholders with a clear picture of the areas of improvement and non-compliance, and directives where improvements are required.

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

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AC	Assessment Criteria
AET	Adult Education and Training
AG	Assessment Guideline
ASC	Assessment Standards Committee
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
EIC	Examination Irregularity Committee
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
IT	Information Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PoA	Portfolio of Assessment
PoE	Portfolio of Evidence
SBA	Site-based Assessment
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
SO	Specific Outcome
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SoR	State of Readiness
US	Unit Standard

Learning areas

Code	Learning area
A4EMSC	Economic and Management Sciences
A4HSSC	Human and Social Sciences
A4CENG	Language, Literacy and Communication: English
A4LIFO	Life Orientation
A4MATH	Mathematical Literacy
A4NSCIE	Natural Sciences
A4SMME	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises

CHAPTER 1: MODERATION OF QUESTION PAPERS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Umalusi externally moderates the examination question papers and their marking guidelines for all General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations to ensure that they meet its own standards and those of the assessment body. To ensure that question papers are developed with sufficient rigour and to maintain public confidence in the national examination system, the question papers must be seen as:

- a. Fair;
- b. Reliable;
- c. Representative of an adequate sample of the curriculum;
- d. Representative of relevant conceptual domains; and
- e. Representative of relevant levels of cognitive challenge.

The purpose of external moderation is to evaluate whether the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) has the capacity to develop and internally moderate question papers and accompanying marking guidelines that meet the set standards and requirements.

1.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi receives question papers and marking guidelines for each examination cycle, which have been set and internally moderated by the IEB for external moderation. These documents are submitted to Umalusi together with a recorded history of their development. The IEB submitted seven question papers, corresponding marking guidelines and the internal moderators' reports for external moderation and approval by Umalusi in preparation for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. This is the same number of question papers submitted for external moderation in November 2022 and 2023.

Umalusi adopted an off-site model for moderating the November 2024 GETC: ABET question papers. Table 1A shows the seven learning areas assessed by the IEB for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.

Table 1A: Learning areas assessed by the IEB for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations

No.	Learning area	Learning area code
1.	Economic and Management Sciences	A4EMSC
2.	Human and Social Sciences	A4HSSC
3.	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	A4CENG
4.	Life Orientation	A4LIFO
5.	Mathematical Literacy	A4MATH
6.	Natural Sciences	A4NSCIE
7.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	A4SMME

The Umalusi Instrument for the Moderation of Question Papers was used to evaluate question papers according to the following eight criteria:

- a. Technical aspects;
- b. Internal moderation;
- c. Content coverage;
- d. Cognitive demand;
- e. Marking guidelines;
- f. Language and bias;
- g. Adherence to assessment guidelines; and
- h. Predictability.

Each criterion has a set of quality indicators against which the question papers and accompanying marking guidelines are evaluated. Umalusi makes a judgment regarding compliance with each criterion, considering four possible levels:

- i. No compliance (met less than 50% of the criteria);
- ii. Limited compliance (met 50% or more, but less than 80% of the criteria);
- iii. Compliance in most respects (met 80% or more, but less than 100% of the criteria); and
- iv. Compliance in all respects (met 100% of the criteria).

The external moderator evaluates the question paper and the accompanying marking guideline based on the overall impression and how the requirements of all eight criteria have been met. A decision is then taken on the quality and standard of the question paper, considering one of three possible outcomes:

1. **Approved:** If the question paper meets all the criteria;
2. **Conditionally approved and to be resubmitted:** If the question paper meets most of the criteria; and
3. **Rejected:** If the standard and quality of the question paper are entirely unacceptable.

1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Umalusi's moderators completed evaluation reports based on set moderation criteria, including quantitative and qualitative measures. The following section summarises the evidence observed by external moderators during the moderation of the question papers.

1.3.1 Overall compliance of question papers at initial moderation

Umalusi analysed the question papers and marking guidelines submitted by the IEB based on the criteria of the Umalusi Instrument for the Moderation of Question Papers. Table 1B summarises the findings of this analysis for each criterion at initial moderation.

Table 1B: Compliance of question papers per criterion at initial moderation

No.	Criterion	Compliance frequency (56 instances)			
		None	Limited	Most	All
1.	Technical aspects	0	1	2	4
2.	Language and bias	0	0	4	3
3.	Internal moderation	0	0	4	3
4.	Content coverage	0	1	5	1
5.	Cognitive demand	0	1	3	3
6.	Adherence to assessment guidelines	0	2	3	2
7.	Predictability	0	0	1	6
8.	Marking guidelines	0	2	2	3
Total		0	7	24	25
		31			25
Percentage		55%			45%

Table 1B indicates that 45% of question papers complied with all criteria at initial moderation in November 2024. This performance was lower than in 2022 (66%) and 2023 (64%), demonstrating a significant decrease in the quality and standard of question papers and a lack of consistency. Nevertheless, all question papers achieved at least limited compliance against each set of criteria.

Table 1C shows the percentage of question papers that were compliant in all respects with each criterion at initial moderation over three years.

Table 1C: Compliance in all respects of question papers per criterion over three years

No.	Criterion	Percentage compliance per criterion over three years		
		2022	2023	2024
1.	Technical aspects	57	100	57
2.	Language and bias	57	57	43
3.	Internal moderation	43	71	43
4.	Content coverage	57	43	14
5.	Cognitive demand	100	57	43
6.	Adherence to assessment guidelines	71	57	29
7.	Predictability	86	86	86
8.	Marking guidelines	57	43	43
Percentage overall compliance		66	64	45

Table 1C demonstrates that compliance declined in six criteria and was consistent in two criteria in November 2024 compared to November 2023. Of note is the 14% compliance rating in content coverage, down from 43% in 2023, and the commendable 86% compliance rating for predictability, which remained consistent over the three-year period. Only A4EMSC achieved compliance in all aspects. Further illustration of compliance is shown in **Annexure 1A**.

Figure 1A illustrates that the overall compliance of question papers has steadily decreased from 66% in November 2022 to 64% in 2023 and 45% in 2024, representing a decline of 19%.

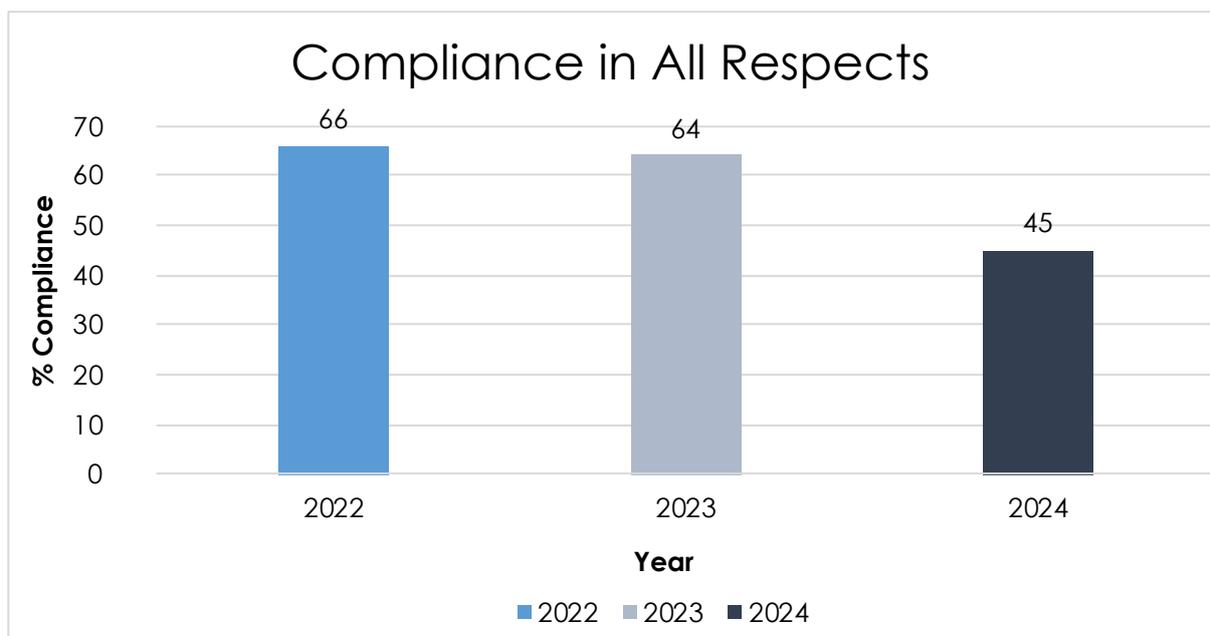


Figure 1A: Percentage of overall compliance of question papers over three years

1.3.2 Compliance of question papers with each criterion

The following comments relate to compliance with each criterion at the initial moderation level. Compliance is achieved when all quality indicators are satisfied within a criterion. All challenges identified during the initial moderation were addressed, ensuring that all question papers and their corresponding guidelines fully complied with each criterion prior to approval.

a) Technical aspects

The technical aspects criterion requires that all question papers and marking guidelines comply with the minimum standards, ensuring that they:

- i. Are complete, with an analysis grid, a marking guideline and an answer sheet, as well as addenda, where required;
- ii. Have a cover page containing all relevant details, such as the name of the learning area, time allocation and clear, unambiguous instructions to candidates;
- iii. Are reader-friendly and have the correct numbering system;
- iv. Have appropriate fonts which are used consistently;
- v. Have the mark allocation clearly indicated;
- vi. Can be completed in the time allocated;
- vii. Have similar mark allocations as per the marking guideline;
- viii. Have appropriate quality of illustrations, graphs, tables, figures, etc.; and
- ix. Adhere to the format requirements of the assessment guidelines.

In November 2024, only four question papers (A4CENG, A4EMSC, A4HSSC, and A4SMME) complied with this criterion in all respects at initial moderation. This was a 57% level of compliance, which was lower than the 100% achieved in 2023 and similar to the 57% achieved in 2022. The drop of 43% from the 2023 level of compliance was very significant and showed a decline in the quality and standard of question papers.

Two question papers (A4LIFO and A4NSCIE) complied with this criterion in most respects, with A4MATH achieving limited compliance.

The following challenges were identified for A4LIFO:

- a. The instructions stated that the question paper consisted of 24 pages; however, there were 25 pages;
- b. There were no bullets in the marking guideline for questions 5.3, 7.4, 8.4, and 9.4;
- c. Some bullets were not aligned properly with the marking guideline;
- d. Formatting was not correctly done in the marking guideline for questions 6.3 and 6.4; and
- e. There was a blank page 15 that needed to be removed.

The following challenges were identified for A4NSCIE:

- a. Some answers in the marking guideline did not have ticks; and
- b. Editing and formatting were not done, and, as a result, diagrams were not clear in questions 4.1.7 and 5.2.

The following challenges were identified for A4MATH:

- i. Questions 2(a), 2A(c), 3A(b), 3B(a)(ii), 3B(a)(iv), 3B(b)(ii), and 4A(c) had insufficient marks allocated and only tested two concepts, calculation and conversion;
- ii. Questions 2A(d), 3B(b), and 5C(b) were not phrased correctly, whilst the values and context in 2B(b) were incorrect;
- iii. The numbering system in 2B(b)(ii) was incorrect;
- iv. Editing was not done in 3B(a); and
- v. The graph in 4A was not clear.

The internal moderators addressed all challenges before the question papers were approved.

b) Language and bias

The language and bias criterion checks whether the language register used in the question paper is suitable for the level of the candidates, whether subtleties in grammar might create confusion, and whether elements of bias in terms of gender, race, culture, region and religion are present.

Three question papers (A4CENG, A4EMSC, and A4HSSC) complied with this criterion in all respects. The 2024 compliance rate (43%) was lower than the compliance rate for 2022 and 2023, which was consistently 57%. This decline was of significant concern as it compromised the quality and standard of the question papers. Four question papers (A4LIFO, A4MATH, A4NSCIE, and A4SMME) complied with this criterion in most respects.

The following challenges were identified for A4LIFO:

- i. No proper editing was done for questions 3.2, 5, 7.4, 9.3, and 10.3; and
- ii. The paragraph in question 9 was deemed to be too short.

The following challenges were identified for A4MATH:

1. Question 1A(e) was invalid;
2. One distractor was incorrect in 1B(g); and
3. No editing was done in 1B(d), 2A(d), 3B(b), 5C(b), 5C(c), 2B(b), 3A(b), 3B(a), 4A(a), 5A(b), and 5C.

In A4NSCIE, the six texts were too long and required much reading. In A4SMME, the grammar used in the question paper was incorrect. The internal moderators addressed all challenges before the question papers were approved.

c) Internal moderation

The internal moderation criterion evaluates whether the assessment body conducted internal moderation of the question papers and accompanying marking guidelines, as well as the quality, standard and relevance of the moderation. Furthermore, the criterion verifies whether the recommendations made by the internal moderator were implemented.

In November 2024, three question papers (A4CENG, A4HSSC, and A4LIFO) complied with this criterion in all respects. Overall, the question papers achieved a 43% level of compliance, compared to 71% in 2023 and 40% in 2022. This outcome raised concerns regarding the quality and standard of internal moderation.

Four question papers (A4EMSC, A4MATH, A4NSCIE, and A4SMME) complied with this criterion in most respects.

The following challenges were identified across the non-compliant papers:

- i. The A4EMSC question paper was inconsistent with the Assessment Guideline (AG) in terms of the cognitive demand, degree of difficulty, and the allocation of marks;
- ii. For A4MATH, solutions to questions 1A(d), 1A(e)(ii), and 5A(b) were not correct;
- iii. In A4NSCIE, the internal moderator was not sufficiently detailed and did not show the recommendations made and whether they were effected; and
- iv. In A4SMME, the cognitive demand, difficulty levels, grammar, and language were incorrect, making the internal moderator's report unsatisfactory.

The internal moderators addressed all challenges before the question papers were approved.

d) Content coverage

The content coverage criterion checks whether a sufficient sample of the prescribed content was covered in each question paper. The following aspects are verified:

- i. The coverage of unit standards;
- ii. The spread of specific outcomes (SO) and assessment criteria (AC);
- iii. Whether questions are within the broad scope of the assessment guidelines;
- iv. Whether the question paper reflects appropriate levels and depth of learning area knowledge;
- v. Whether examples and illustrations are suitable, appropriate, relevant and academically correct;
- vi. That there is an accurate correlation between mark allocation, level of difficulty and time allocation;
- vii. Whether the question paper allows for the testing of skills; and
- viii. The quality of the questions.

In November 2024, only one question paper (A4EMSC) complied with this criterion in all respects. This was a compliance level of 14%, a significant decline from 2022 (57%) and 2023 (43%), and a worrisome trend.

Five question papers (A4CENG, A4HSSC, A4LIFO, A4NSCIE and A4SMME) complied with the content coverage criterion in most respects, whilst one question paper, A4MATH, had limited compliance.

The following challenges were identified for A4LIFO:

- a. Question 2.3 contained unintentional clues to the correct response;
- b. It was deemed that not all candidates could identify with parks, beaches and rivers;
- c. Questions 6.1 and 6.2 had their responses swapped around;
- d. In question 8.4, the mark allocation was incorrect; and
- e. The theme in question 10 differed between the question paper and the marking guideline.

The following challenges were identified for A4MATH:

1. Insufficient marks were awarded for only two skills that were tested in 2A(a), 2A(c), 3A(b), 3B(a)(iv), 3B(b)(ii), and 4A(c);
2. Questions 2A(d), 3B(b), 5C(b), and 5C(c) were not phrased correctly;
3. The heading in 3B(a) was not done properly;
4. The graph in 4A was not formatted correctly; and
5. Editing was not done in 5A(b).

The first two sentences of A4CENG question 1C could cause confusion. In A4HSSC, unit standard (US) 115477 was under-assessed by four marks; questions 2.3 and 2.5 were incorrectly phrased, and questions 3.2.2 and 4.1.4 were not phrased properly in A4NSCIE. The A4SMME question paper had vaguely defined instructions, ambiguous wording, irrelevant information, trivia, and unintentional clues to the correct answers. The internal moderators addressed all challenges before the question papers were approved.

e) Cognitive demand

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

In November 2024, three question papers (A4HSSC, A4LIFO, and A4MATH) complied with this criterion in all respects. The compliance level for 2024 was 43%, which represented a significant decline from the 57% compliance level achieved in 2023 and the 100% compliance achieved in 2022. This downward trend was of significant concern.

Three question papers (A4CENG, A4EMSC, and A4NSCIE) complied with this criterion in most respects, and only one (A4SMME) showed limited compliance with it at initial moderation.

The following challenges were identified across the non-compliant papers:

- i. In the A4CENG question paper, no questions assessed translation from verbal to symbolic or the ability to compare and contrast;
- ii. In A4EMSC, the unit standard (US) 13999 was over-assessed by four marks;

- iii. In A4NSCIE, questions 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 were not numbered correctly on the analysis grid, and question 3.2.2 was a comprehension question instead of an application one; and
- iv. For A4SMME, editing was not complete for questions 1 to 7.

The internal moderators addressed all challenges before the question papers were approved.

f) Adherence to assessment guidelines

The criterion for *adherence to assessment guidelines* evaluates whether question papers and their marking guidelines adhere to policy, whether the question papers are in line with the guidelines of the assessment body and the requirements set out by Umalusi, and whether the question papers reflect the prescribed outcomes and assessment criteria.

In November 2024, only two question papers (A4MATH and A4NSCIE) complied with this criterion in all respects at initial moderation. The level of compliance for 2024 was 29%, a significant decline from 57% in 2023 and 71% in 2022. This downward trend was a cause for concern.

Three question papers (A4EMSC, A4LIFO, and A4SMME) complied in most respects, and two (A4CENG and A4HSSC) showed limited compliance with this criterion.

The following challenges were identified across the non-compliant papers:

- i. In A4EMSC, several specific outcomes and assessment criteria were over-assessed;
- ii. In A4LIFO question 3.4, a unit standard (US) was incorrectly recorded as 14656 instead of 14659, and in question 12, a US was incorrectly recorded as 15902 instead of 15092;
- iii. The content in the A4SMME question paper was not fairly distributed across the question paper; and
- iv. For A4CENG, Section C, US 119635 was not meant to be assessed, US 115477 was under-assessed by four marks, and questions 2.3 and 2.5 were incorrectly phrased.

The internal moderator addressed all challenges prior to approval.

g) Predictability

The predictability criterion checks whether questions in the current examination question paper have been copied or repeated from previous question papers, thus making them predictable. Question papers are also checked to determine whether they contain an appropriate degree of innovation to eliminate the element of predictability.

In November 2024, six question papers (A4CENG, A4EMSC, A4HSSC, A4NSCIE, A4MATH, and A4SMME) complied with this criterion in all respects. This compliance level was consistent with 2023 (86%) and 2022 (86%), which is commendable.

Only A4LIFO complied with this criterion in most respects because questions 3.1 and 3.4 were repeated from previous examinations. The internal moderator addressed all challenges before the question papers were approved.

h) Marking guidelines

The question paper is approved together with its accompanying marking guideline. If the marking guideline is not compliant, both documents are rejected until they comply with the requirements. The *marking guidelines* criterion checks the correctness and accuracy of the marking guidelines, the clarity of the marking instructions, the allocation of marks and the correlation with the marks in the question paper. The criterion also ensures that the marking guidelines make allowance for relevant, alternative responses.

In November 2024, three question papers (A4CENG, A4EMSC, and A4HSSC) complied with this criterion in all respects. This represents a compliance level of 43%, which was consistent with 2023 (43%) but lower than 2022 (57%). This level of compliance was low and needed to be improved.

Two question papers (A4LIFO and A4SMME) complied with this criterion in most respects at initial moderation, while A4MATH and A4NSCIE achieved limited compliance.

The following challenges were identified for A4MATH:

- i. No calculations were shown in questions 1A(e), 1B(b) and 1B(c);
- ii. The solutions in 1A(d), 1A(e), and 1B(c) were not correct;
- iii. Questions 2A(c) and 2B(b)(ii) were not appropriately phrased; and
- iv. A follow-on from 2B(ii) was not indicated.

The following challenges were identified for A4NSCIE:

1. There was a mixing of terminology in question 2.2.1;
2. Questions 2.2.3, 3.2.3, and 4.1.4 were not appropriately phrased;
3. Mark distribution was not correct in questions 3.1.2 and 4.1.6;
4. Sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, and 5.2.4 had no editing or punctuation; and
5. The information provided in the case study for question 7 did not correspond with the question.

The following challenges were identified for A4LIFO:

- a. Question 2.3 provided a clue to its response; and
- b. Questions 5.1 to 12.4 were not properly edited and moderated internally.

The marking guideline for A4SMME had no ticks to show how marks were distributed.

The internal moderators addressed all challenges before the question papers and the accompanying marking guidelines were approved.

1.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

No area of improvement was noted during the moderation of November 2024 examination question papers.

1.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The following were noted as areas of concern:

- a. The downward trajectory in the overall compliance of question papers and accompanying marking guidelines, from 66% in 2022 to 64% in 2023 and 45% in 2024;
- b. The significant decline in the compliance of question papers across all criteria;
- c. Compliance with the *content coverage* criterion dropped from 57% in 2022 to 43% in 2023 and only 14% in 2024. This represents the lowest level of content coverage ever recorded, indicating that the quality and standard of question papers were deteriorating; and
- d. The question papers contained too many language and grammatical errors, indicating that they were not adequately moderated internally.

1.6 DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The IEB is required to:

- a. Strengthen the training of examiners and internal moderators and review the content coverage in all question papers to ensure adequate understanding and to improve the quality and overall compliance of question papers and the accompanying marking guidelines; and
- b. Submit the print-ready question papers and marking guidelines timeously for external moderation by Umalusi.

1.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter summarised the findings of the moderation of question papers for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. Umalusi moderators reported in detail on the question papers and corresponding marking guidelines submitted by the IEB for external moderation. The findings of the external moderation process indicated a significant decline in the quality and overall compliance of question papers submitted by the IEB at initial moderation. The overall compliance of question papers and accompanying marking guidelines declined from 66% in November 2022 to 64% in November 2023 and only 45% in November 2024. Only the predictability criterion was maintained at 86% over the three years. The IEB should strengthen the training of its examining panels to address compliance challenges effectively.

CHAPTER 2: MODERATION OF SITE-BASED ASSESSMENT TASKS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Site-Based Assessment (SBA) forms the basis of internal assessment in the Adult Education and Training (AET) sector. The main objective of the SBA is to guide and improve teaching and learning in a structured manner and assist students in mastering skills, knowledge and values for each learning area. SBA tasks are formative in design and developmental in nature.

All candidates registered to write the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations must complete common SBA tasks. These tasks contribute 50% towards the final mark for the GETC: ABET qualification.

The Independent Examinations Board (IEB) develops and internally moderates the SBA tasks and marking guidelines before submitting them to Umalusi for external moderation and approval. Once approved, the SBA tasks are implemented at AET centres during the following academic year.

External moderation by Umalusi is a critical part of the SBA quality assurance process. This process ensures that there is a common standard for SBA tasks and that they comply with Umalusi's assessment requirements and the guidelines set by assessment bodies.

Umalusi moderates SBA tasks and corresponding marking guidelines to ensure that SBA tasks are representative of:

- a. An adequate sample of the prescribed learning area content;
- b. Relevant conceptual domains; and
- c. Relevant levels of cognitive challenge.

2.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

The IEB is responsible for the development and internal moderation of SBA tasks, together with the accompanying marking guidelines for the GETC: ABET qualification. The SBA tasks consist of various assessment methods and forms, including research, tests, projects, assignments, data analysis, orals, comprehension tests, journal entries and worksheets. Each assessment guideline is learning area-specific and prescribes the number of activities, specific outcomes and assessment criteria.

The IEB's SBA tasks must be renewed every two years. The SBA tasks for three learning areas expired at the end of the November 2023 examination cycle. In response, the IEB developed and internally moderated the SBA tasks for these three learning areas in preparation for the 2024 and 2025 examination cycles, according to the assessment guidelines at each AET centre.

Table 2A indicates the learning areas for which the IEB submitted SBA tasks to Umalusi for external moderation.

Table 2A: SBA tasks submitted for external moderation

No.	Learning area	Learning area code
1.	Economic and Management Sciences	A4EMSC
2.	Natural Sciences	A4NSCIE
3.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	A4SMME

Umalusi adopted an off-site approach to the external moderation of SBA tasks and used the Instrument for the Moderation of SBA Tasks. This requires Umalusi to evaluate the quality of SBA tasks according to the following criteria:

- a. Adherence to subject and assessment guidelines;
- b. Content coverage;
- c. Cognitive demand;
- d. Language and bias;
- e. Formulation of instructions and questions;
- f. Quality and standard of tasks;
- g. Mark allocation and marking guidelines; and
- h. Internal moderation.

Each criterion has a set of quality indicators against which each SBA task and corresponding marking guideline is moderated. Umalusi judges compliance with each criterion according to four possible levels of compliance:

- i. No compliance (met less than 50% of the criteria);
- ii. Limited compliance (met 50% or more, but less than 80% of the criteria);
- iii. Compliance in most respects (met 80% or more, but less than 100% of the criteria); and
- iv. Compliance in all respects (met 100% of the criteria.)

Umalusi moderators then evaluated the SBA tasks and marking guidelines based on an overall impression of how all criteria were met. A decision is then made on the quality and standard of the SBA tasks and marking guidelines. This decision may be one of the following:

1. **Approved:** If the SBA tasks and accompanying marking guidelines meet all the criteria;
2. **Conditionally approved and to be resubmitted:** If the SBA tasks and their accompanying marking guidelines meet most of the criteria; and
3. **Rejected:** If the quality and standard of the SBA tasks and their accompanying marking guidelines are totally unacceptable.

2.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of findings from Umalusi's external moderation of SBA tasks and accompanying guidelines. The data underpinning these findings is derived from the initial external moderation of the 2024 SBA tasks. A comparative analysis was conducted, utilising the moderation data from the 2020 and 2022 SBA tasks for the same learning areas. The subsequent findings summarise the overall compliance status of the 2024 SBA tasks and delve into the specific compliance levels achieved for each criterion.

2.3.1 Overall compliance of SBA tasks at initial moderation

The IEB submitted the SBA tasks for three learning areas (A4EMSC, A4NSCIE and A4SMME) to Umalusi for external moderation. One learning area (A4EMSC) was approved at initial moderation, and the other two (A4NSCIE and A4SMME) were conditionally approved and required resubmission. Umalusi subsequently approved all SBA tasks and their corresponding marking guidelines following full compliance.

Table 2B provides an overview of the initial moderation compliance for each SBA task criterion.

Table 2B: Overall compliance of SBA tasks per criterion at initial moderation

No.	Criterion	Compliance frequency (32 instances)			
		None	Limited	Most	All
1.	Adherence to assessment guidelines	0	0	1	2
2.	Content coverage	0	0	0	3
3.	Cognitive demand	0	0	1	2
4.	Language and bias	0	0	0	3
5.	Formulation of instructions and questions	0	0	2	1
6.	Quality and standard of SBA tasks	0	1	1	1
7.	Mark allocation and marking guideline	0	1	0	2
8.	Internal moderation	0	1	1	1
Total		0	3	6	15
		9			15
Percentage		37%			63%

Table 2B indicates that the overall compliance rate for the 2024 SBA tasks and their corresponding marking guidelines at the initial moderation stage was 63% (15 out of 24 instances across all eight criteria) in the three learning areas. Furthermore, a non-compliance rate of 37% (nine out of 24 instances) was observed. Notably, all three learning areas fully complied with the content coverage and language bias criteria.

Table 2C compares overall compliance in all respects at initial moderation in 2020, 2022, and 2024.

Table 2C: Comparison of compliance in all respects of SBA tasks per criterion at initial moderation over three years

No.	Criterion	November 2020	November 2022	November 2024
1.	Adherence to assessment guidelines	67	67	67
2.	Content coverage	67	67	100
3.	Cognitive demand	67	67	67
4.	Language and bias	67	67	100
5.	Formulation of instructions and questions	33	33	33
6.	Quality and standard of SBA tasks	100	33	33
7.	Mark allocation and marking guidelines	67	67	67
8.	Internal moderation	33	34	33
Average overall compliance		63%	54%	63%

As shown in Table 2C, compliance improved significantly in two criteria (content coverage and language and bias) in 2024 compared to 2020 and 2022. Umalusi identified low levels of compliance with the quality and standard of the SBA tasks, the formulation of instructions and questions, and internal moderation.

Figure 2A compares overall compliance in 2020, 2022, and 2024, illustrating a notable 9% improvement in overall compliance between 2022 and 2024, the same as in 2020.

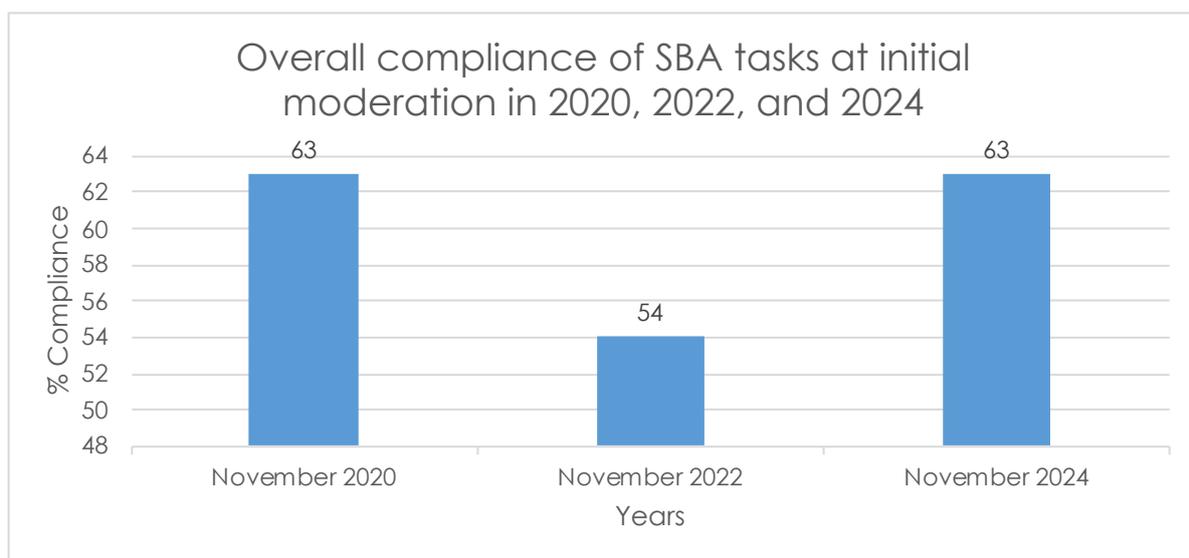


Figure 2A: Comparison of overall compliance in 2020, 2022, and 2024

2.3.2 Compliance of SBA tasks with each criterion

Sub-paragraphs a - h provide the compliance of SBA tasks with each criterion for all learning areas. Each section includes a comparative figure (Figure 2B to Figure 2I) showing the differences per criterion between 2020, 2022, and 2024.

a) Adherence to assessment guidelines

This criterion verifies whether the assessment body adhered to the assessment guidelines (AG). These guidelines are specific to each learning area and stipulate the number of activities, weighting, specific outcomes, and assessment standards to be assessed.

At initial moderation in 2024, two of the three SBA tasks (A4EMSC and A4SMME) fully complied with this criterion. These tasks were submitted along with their accompanying marking guidelines and a detailed history of their development. The remaining learning area (A4NSCIE) demonstrated compliance in most, but not all, aspects due to the non-submission of the internal moderator comments/reports. It is, however, important to note that the internal moderator addressed all identified challenges before the final approval of the SBA tasks and their accompanying marking guidelines.

Figure 2B compares compliance with adherence to the assessment guidelines criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024.

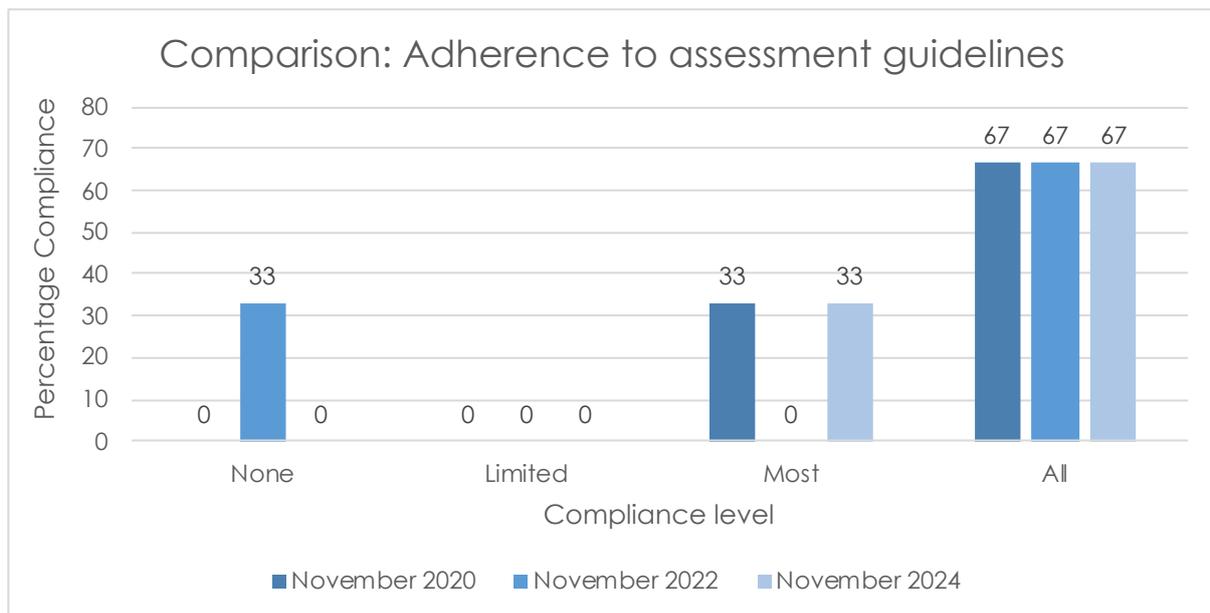


Figure 2B: Comparison of compliance with the adherence to assessment guidelines criterion over three years

As shown in Figure 2B, 67% of the SBA tasks fully complied with this criterion at initial moderation in 2024. Notably, this compliance rate has remained constant at 67% over three years (2020, 2022, and 2024). Furthermore, a consistent 33% compliance rate in most respects was observed in both 2020 and 2024.

b) Content coverage

Umalusi evaluated whether all SBA tasks covered the content as prescribed by the IEB's assessment guidelines for each learning area, including core knowledge, skills, and values.

At initial moderation in 2024, all three learning areas' SBA tasks fully complied with the content coverage criterion (100% compliance). These tasks adhered to the prescribed weightings of the Unit Standard (US), ensuring a balanced assessment of Specific Outcomes (SO) and Assessment Criteria (AC). Figure 2C provides a comparative analysis of compliance with the content coverage criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024.

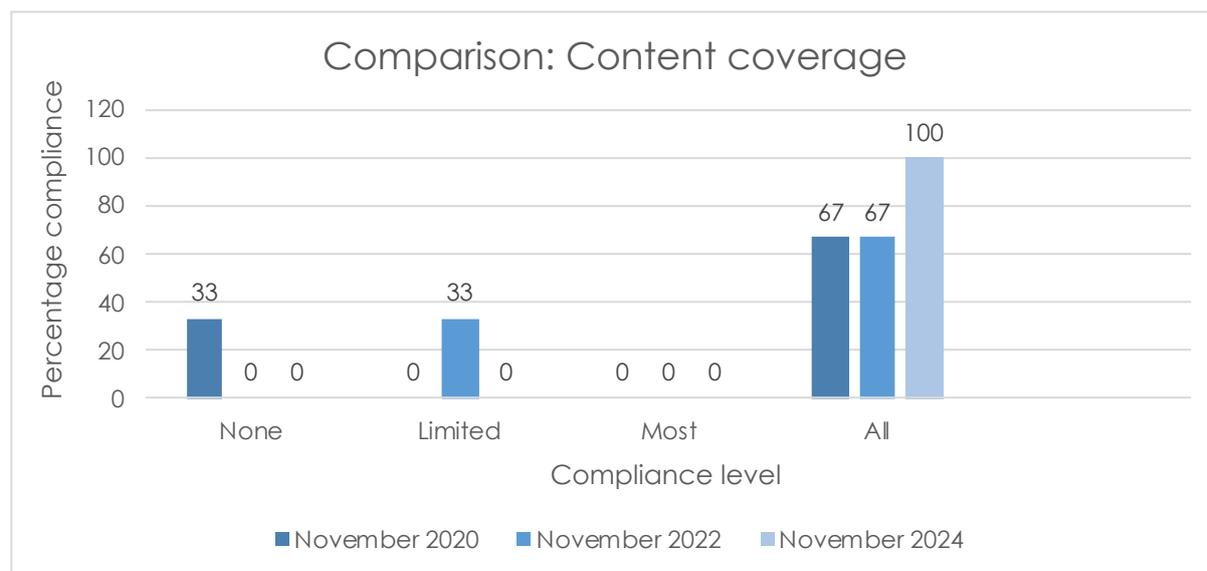


Figure 2C: Comparison of compliance with the content coverage criterion over three years

Figure 2C illustrates the SBA tasks' full compliance with the content coverage criterion at initial moderation in 2024, with a significant 33% improvement in 2024 compared to the previous two periods.

c) Cognitive demand

This criterion evaluates whether all SBA tasks assess a range of cognitive skills through lower, middle, and higher-order questions, as prescribed in the assessment guidelines. Furthermore, it evaluates whether the SBA tasks provided multiple opportunities to assess various skills that cannot be assessed in summative assessments.

At initial moderation in 2024, two-thirds (67%) of the SBA tasks fully complied with this criterion. For two learning areas (A4EMSC and A4NSCIE), the cognitive levels of the SBA tasks were appropriately distributed in alignment with the assessment guidelines. These tasks effectively encouraged creativity and innovation while assessing the application of knowledge and various skills. However, in one learning area (A4SMME), Umalusi noted an uneven distribution of cognitive levels and question difficulty. The internal moderator addressed all identified challenges prior to the final approval of the SBA tasks. Figure 2D compares the level of compliance with this criterion for 2020, 2022, and 2024.

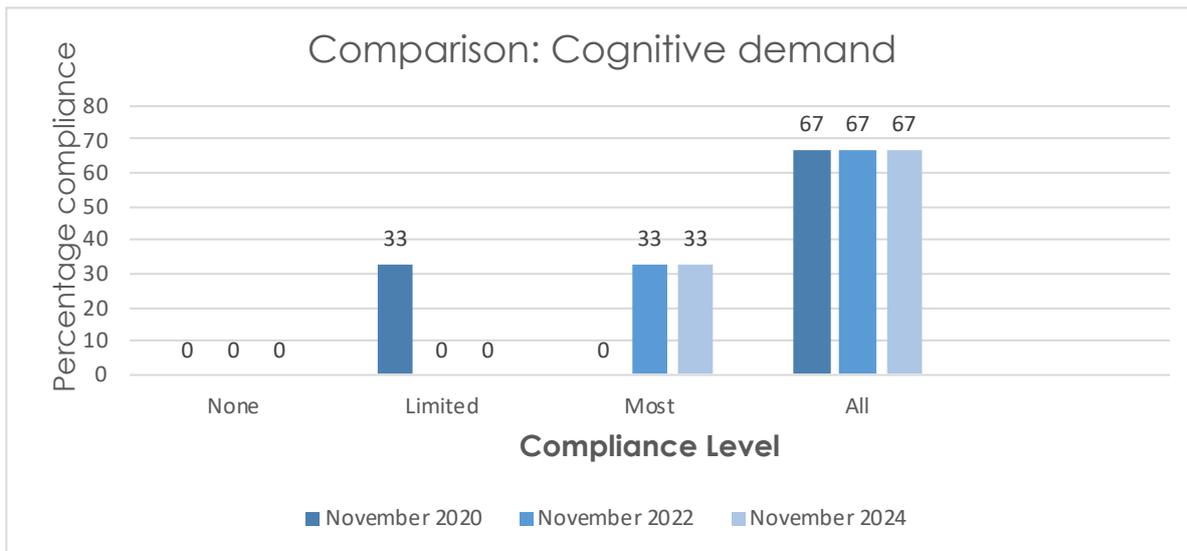


Figure 2D: Comparison of compliance with the cognitive demand criterion over three years

As illustrated in Figure 2D, 67% of the SBA tasks fully complied with this criterion at initial moderation over three years. Notably, a consistent 33% compliance rate in most respects was observed in 2022 and 2024. No SBA task showed limited or non-compliance in 2024.

d) Language and bias

This criterion evaluates whether appropriate language is used in the SBA tasks, including confirmation that the language used is not offensive, free from bias, and suitable for National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 1 students. All SBA tasks are expected to comply with this criterion in all respects.

In 2024, the SBA tasks of all three learning areas adhered fully to the language and bias criterion at initial moderation. No grammatical or language errors were identified within the SBA tasks and the marking guidelines. Furthermore, the correct utilisation of learning area terminologies was evident across all three learning areas. This indicates that the SBA tasks and their corresponding marking guidelines underwent thorough editing and proofreading prior to the Umalusi moderation process. Figure 2E compares compliance with this criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024.

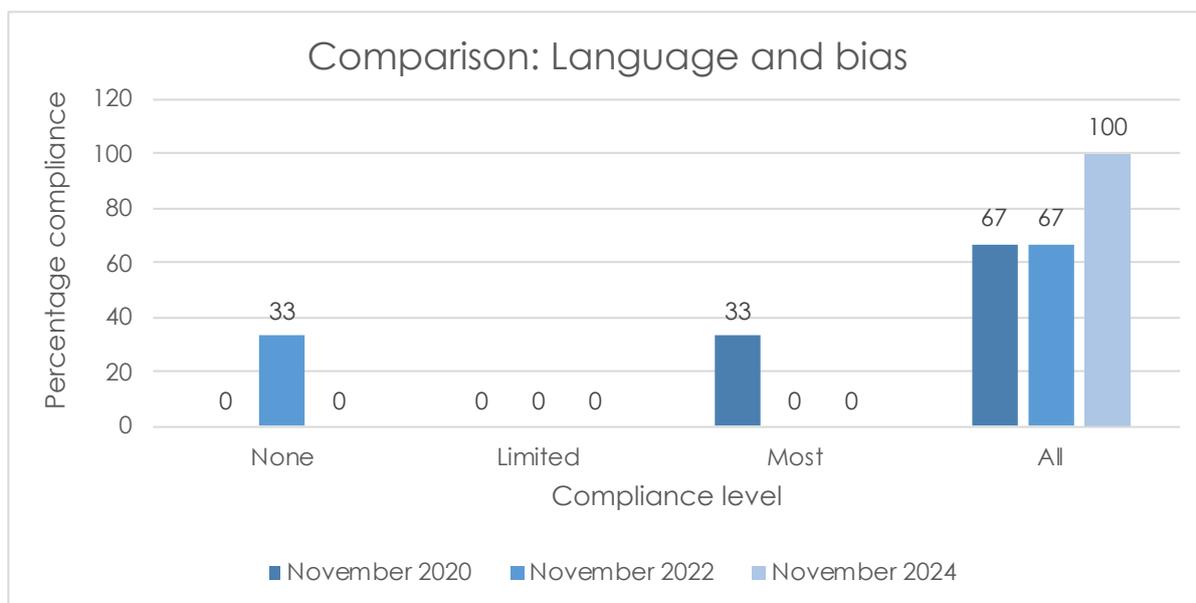


Figure 2E: Comparison of overall compliance with the language and bias criterion over three years

Figure 2E illustrates the substantial 33% increase in compliance in all respects, from 67% in 2020 and 2022 to 100% in 2024. There was a 33% non-compliance rate across the three learning areas in 2022 and no instances of limited compliance over the three years.

e) Formulation of instructions and questions

To meet this criterion, questions must be clearly formulated, free of ambiguity and grammatically correct to elicit appropriate responses and avoid confusion.

At the initial moderation in November 2024, one learning area (A4EMSC) adhered fully to this criterion, while two (A4NSCIE and A4SMME) met this criterion in most respects. The failure of these learning areas to fully comply was attributed to the following:

- i. The questions and instructions provided were not clearly formulated (A4SMME);
- ii. Some tasks did not provide the necessary information required to carry out the experiments (A4NSCIE); and
- iii. Some rubrics were too general and did not provide specific criteria for assessing the tasks (A4NSCIE).

The internal moderators addressed all the challenges identified before the SBA tasks and marking guidelines were submitted for final approval. Figure 2F compares compliance of the SBA tasks with this criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024.

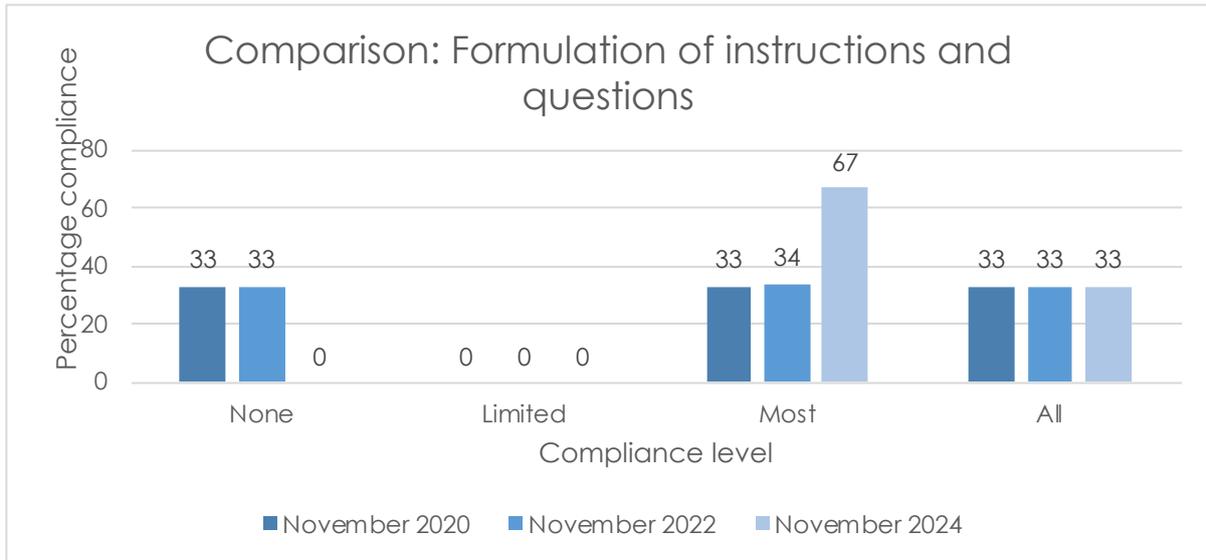


Figure 2F: Comparison of compliance with the formulation of instructions and questions criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024

Figure 2F shows consistent 33% compliance over three years. Notably, in most respects, the compliance rate improved significantly in 2024 compared to 2022.

f) Quality and standard of SBA tasks

This criterion checks whether SBA tasks are of good quality and an appropriate standard. The SBA tasks are expected to be innovative, and technical aspects such as diagrams, pictures, and figures should be clear. The layout must avoid clutter. Furthermore, SBA tasks must comply with all aspects of the assessment guidelines.

At the initial moderation in 2024, only one of the three SBA tasks (A4EMSC) fully complied with this criterion. Another SBA task (A4SMME) met this criterion in most respects but did not fully comply due to the excessive use of cognitive verbs in the task instructions. The SBA tasks of A4NSCIE showed limited compliance with this criterion for the following reasons:

- i. No time allocation was stipulated for all SBA tasks;
- ii. The diagrams were not clear and, therefore, not print-ready; and
- iii. Learners were not provided with adequate guidance on task completion.

The internal moderators addressed all the identified challenges before the SBA tasks and their marking guidelines were approved. Figure 2G compares compliance with this criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024.

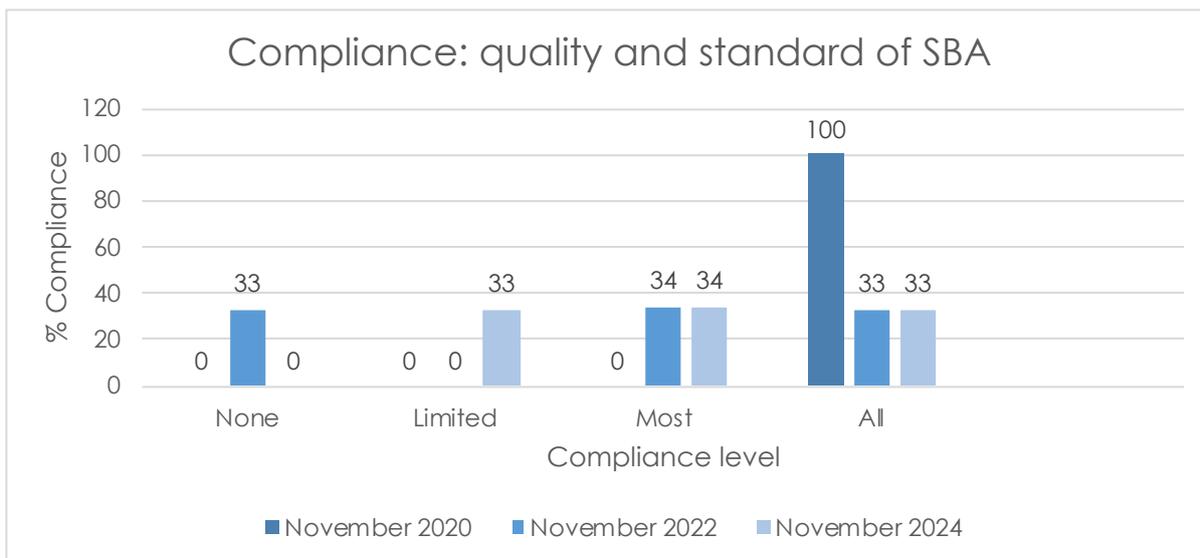


Figure 2G: Comparison of compliance with the quality and standard of SBA tasks criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024

As illustrated in Figure 2G, compliance across all tasks declined from 100% in 2020 to 33% in 2022 and 2024. However, compliance remained consistent at 34% in most respects in 2022 and 2024. Additionally, limited compliance increased from 0% in 2022 to 33% in 2024, while non-compliance fell from 33% to 0% over this same period.

g) Mark allocation and marking guidelines

This criterion verifies that the mark allocation is accurate, aligned with the marking guidelines, and error-free. Examiners are expected to provide an analysis grid showing a mark breakdown for each question. For SBA tasks to be approved, all tasks must meet this criterion in all respects.

At the initial moderation in 2024, 67% of the SBA tasks were compliant in all respects, and 33% showed limited compliance. The following challenges were identified for the A4NSCIE learning area:

- i. Marks were awarded for the same responses;
- ii. The rubric was not clearly laid out and would not allow for consistent marking;
- iii. Another rubric was generic and not specific for the task and could contribute to subjective marking; and
- iv. The rubric lacked relevant information for students to complete the task.

The internal moderator addressed all challenges before approving the SBA tasks and their marking guidelines.

Figure 2H compares compliance with this criterion in 2020, 2022 and 2024. It shows a 67% compliance rate in all aspects for all three years.

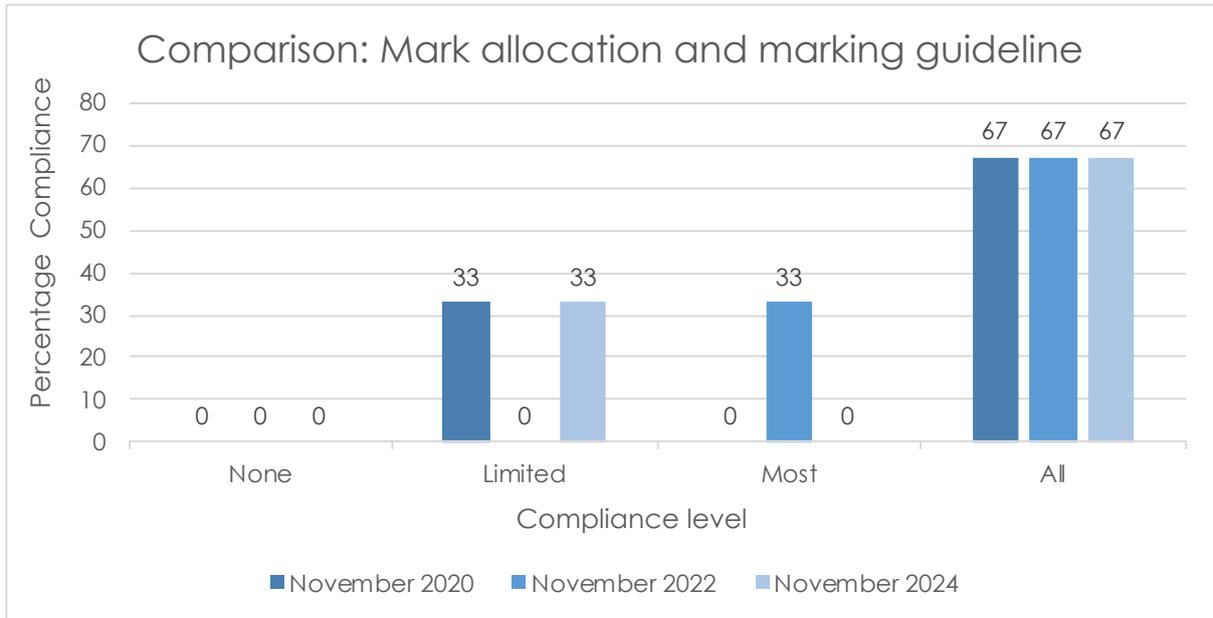


Figure 2H: Comparison of compliance with the mark allocation and marking guidelines criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024

Figure 2H indicates that compliance across all tasks remained steady at 67% over the three years. However, limited compliance increased from 0% in 2022 to 33% in 2024. Additionally, no SBA task showed most or non-compliance in 2024.

h) Internal moderation

To ensure that this criterion is met, Umalusi verifies that internal moderation has been conducted at the assessment body level. The internal moderation of SBA is a rigorous process similar to the moderation of the question papers. The history of the development of the SBA tasks and all internal moderation reports and documents should be provided to Umalusi, and there should be evidence that examiners implemented recommendations made by the internal moderators. The expectation is that internal moderators will provide constructive feedback that is appropriate and developmental.

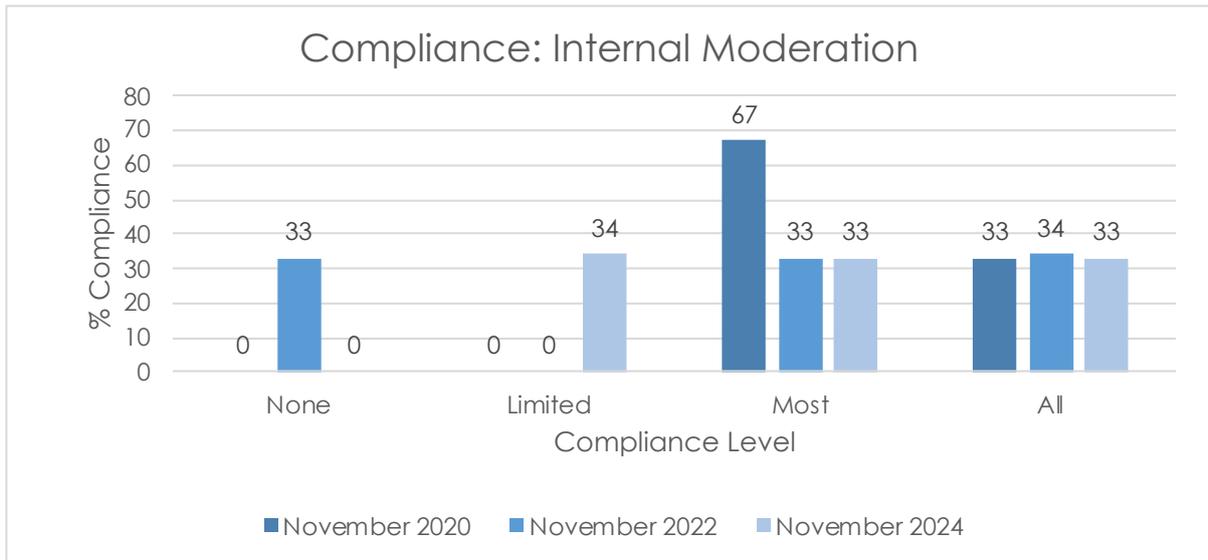


Figure 21: Comparison of compliance with the internal moderation criterion in 2020, 2022, and 2024

As depicted in Figure 21, 33% compliance was observed in all respects in 2020 and 2024, a decline from 34% in 2022. Although Umalusi continuously assists examining panels with detailed feedback during external moderation, there has been no significant improvement in the overall level of compliance with the internal moderation criterion, which remains a major concern.

2.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The following areas of improvement were noted:

- a. A significant degree of innovation and creativity was evident in the development of most SBA tasks;
- b. The SBA tasks assessed the application of knowledge and a diverse range of skills;
- c. The selection of passages in certain tasks or learning areas demonstrated thorough preparation and innovative thinking;
- d. The sources of information used were current, useful and relevant; and
- e. SBA tasks adhered to the prescribed assessment guidelines during external moderation.

2.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The following were noted as areas of concern:

- a. Instructions provided to students were unclear and incomplete;
- b. An excessive use of verbs was observed in the activities;
- c. Rubrics were generic and lacked specificity to the task;
- d. While the SBA tasks adhered to most aspects of the assessment guidelines (AG), the distribution of cognitive levels was not equitable;
- e. Task titles did not conform to the requirements of the AG;
- f. Tasks were structured as a single assessment comprising multiple activities without a clear indication of the assessment term; and

- g. Source-based questions (case studies) were excessively long, with irrelevant information that hindered student responses and consumed excessive time.

2.6 DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The IEB is required to:

- a. Scaffold the cognitive levels of tasks in accordance with Bloom's taxonomy;
- b. Provide clear and pertinent instructions for the completion of tasks;
- c. Strengthen and enhance internal moderation processes;
- d. Avoid including excessive and time-consuming information in case studies; and
- e. Rename tasks in conformity with the assessment guidelines.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The setting and moderating of SBA tasks are focused on ensuring that all tasks address the different unit standards, related SO and AC, and cognitive weighting, as prescribed in the assessment guideline of the respective learning area. Umalusi moderated the SBA tasks of three learning areas using a moderation instrument with prescribed criteria and quality indicators.

The overall compliance of the SBA tasks with the accompanying marking guidelines was 63% in 2024, an improvement from 2022 (54%) but lower than in 2020 (63%). The improvement in the quality of SBA tasks was noticed in the overall compliance with the content coverage and the language and bias criteria (from 67% in 2020 and 2022 to 100% in 2024), respectively.

The IEB must seek to improve compliance across all aspects and address all challenges identified by Umalusi during the external moderation process.

CHAPTER 3: MODERATION OF SITE-BASED ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIOS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Site Based Assessment (SBA) is a compulsory component of the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) qualification, contributing 50% towards the final mark.

Students present their responses to SBA tasks in a portfolio of evidence (PoE). The internal moderation of SBA portfolios is a quality assurance process that should be conducted at the centre and assessment body levels. Umalusi also conducts rigorous external moderation of the SBA portfolios to evaluate the quality and standard of work done by the students and facilitators in line with the assessment guidelines and Umalusi's criteria.

The purpose of the external moderation of SBA portfolios is, among others, to:

- a. Establish the scope, extent and reliability of SBA across all assessment bodies;
- b. Ensure that SBA portfolios comply with the requirements of the assessment guidelines;
- c. Verify whether the assessment body conducted the internal moderation of SBA portfolios at different levels;
- d. Check on the quality of the internal moderation of SBA portfolios; and
- e. Report on the overall quality of SBA portfolios.

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

3.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi externally moderated the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) SBA portfolios on-site at the IEB's marking and moderation centre, the Holy Family College in Parktown, Johannesburg. This process was conducted from 23 to 24 November 2024. The IEB submitted SBA portfolios for the seven learning areas assessed for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.

Umalusi's moderators used the Quality Assurance of Assessment Instrument for the Moderation of SBA Portfolios. The SBA portfolios were evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a. Adherence to assessment guidelines;
- b. Internal moderation;
- c. Structure and content of SBA portfolios;
- d. Implementation of SBA assessment tasks;
- e. Student performance;
- f. Quality of marking; and
- g. Overall qualitative evaluation of the sample.

Umalusi's moderators evaluated the SBA portfolios based on how the quality indicators of each criterion were met and on the overall impression of the SBA portfolios. The compliance decision was one of the following:

- a. No compliance;
- b. Limited compliance;
- c. Compliance in most respects; and
- d. Compliance in all respects.

Umalusi sampled and moderated one student's PoE and one facilitator's Portfolio of Assessment (PoA) for each Adult Education and Training (AET) Centre, indicating the centre's compliance with the requirements of SBA implementation. The summary of AET learning sites and the number of SBA portfolios moderated are shown in Table 3A.

3.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section summarises the Umalusi moderators' findings. The moderators' findings and conclusions were obtained from the sample of SBA portfolios selected for moderation at each AET centre.

3.3.1 Moderated samples

Table 3A shows the number and percentage of SBA portfolios externally moderated per learning area and AET centre.

Table 3A: SBA portfolio samples submitted and moderated

Learning area	AET centre	Sample submitted		Sample moderated		Percentage moderated
		PoA	PoE	PoA	PoE	
Communication in English (A4CEN)	Transnet	0	4	0	1	20%
	Bokamoso	1	4	1	1	40%
	SGX Logistics	1	2	1	1	67%
	Northam Platinum Mine Ltd	1	4	1	1	40%
	New Concept Mining	0	5	0	1	20%
	Dyna Training Engen	1	5	1	1	33%
	Imana SG Logistics	1	2	1	1	67%
	Climamark Pty Ltd	0	5	0	1	20%
	Betachem Driemanskap	1	3	1	1	50%

Learning area	AET centre	Sample submitted		Sample moderated		Percentage moderated
		PoA	PoE	PoA	PoE	
Economic and Management Sciences (A4EMSC)	Kriel Collier-Greenside	1	5	1	1	33%
	St. George's Life	1	3	1	1	50%
	Kriel Collier-Isibonelo	1	3	1	1	50%
	Palabora Learning Centre	1	2	1	1	67%
	S&F Management Services	1	1	1	1	100%
	Kriel Collier	1	5	1	1	33%
	The Diepsloot Foundation	1	5	1	1	33%
	Mokweng Training	0	3	0	1	33%
	Black Moon Mine	0	3	0	1	33%
Human and Social Sciences (A4HSSC)	Kriel Collier	1	5	1	1	33%
	Sizanani Sasolburg	1	5	1	1	33%
	The Diepsloot Foundation	1	5	1	1	33%
	Black Rock Mine MW NC	1	3	1	1	50%
	Kriel Collier-Secunda	1	5	1	1	33%
	Kriel Collier-Sasolburg	1	2	1	1	67%
	St. George's Life Campus	1	2	1	1	67%
	South Deep Mine-Project Literacy	2	5	1	1	29%
	The Professionals	1	4	1	1	40%
Sizanani Sasolburg	1	5	1	1	33%	
Life Orientation (A4LIFO)	Kriel Collier-Greenside	1	4	1	1	40%
	Palabora Learning Centre	1	1	1	1	100%
	Kriel Collier	1	2	1	1	67%
	Kriel Collier-Isibonelo	1	3	1	1	50%
	Kriel Collier-Zibulo	1	5	1	1	33%
	The Diepsloot Foundation	1	5	1	1	33%
	Sizanani-Secunda	1	4	1	1	40%
	Ergo Business Development Academic NPC	0	5	0	1	20%
	Saldanha Bay Municipality-Siphakame	1	4	1	1	40%
Impala Platinum Mine	1	5	1	1	33%	

Learning area	AET centre	Sample submitted		Sample moderated		Percentage moderated
		PoA	PoE	PoA	PoE	
Mathematical Literacy (A4MATH)	Sizanani Secunda	1	5	1	1	33%
	Saldanha Bay Municipality-Siphakame	1	1	1	1	100%
	Palabora Learning Centre	1	2	1	1	67%
	SGX Logistics Jetpark Boksburg	1	1	1	1	100%
	Kriel Collier-Zibulo	1	5	1	1	33%
	Impala Platinum Mine	1	5	1	1	33%
	Afrimat SA Block Meyerton	1	4	1	1	40%
	Mogolo Academy ABET and Skills Provider	1	5	1	1	33%
	South Deep Mine	1	5	1	1	33%
	Impala Platinum Mine	1	5	1	1	33%
Natural Sciences (A4NSCIE)	Sizanani Secunda	1	6	1	1	29%
	Mogolo Academy ABET and Skills Provider	1	6	1	1	29%
	Sizanani Sasolburg	1	4	1	1	40%
	Kriel Collier	1	3	1	1	50%
	Kriel Collier-Isibonelo	1	4	1	1	40%
	The Training Professionals	1	2	1	1	67%
	Cape Town Flats	1	6	1	1	29%
	Impala Platinum Ltd	1	6	1	1	29%
	St. Georges Life Campus	1	4	1	1	40%
	Saldanha Bay Municipality	1	2	1	1	67%
Small Medium and Micro Enterprises (A4SMME)	The Diepsloot Foundation	1	5	1	1	33%
	Kriel Collier-Zibulo	1	5	1	1	33%
	Saldanha Bay Municipality	1	2	1	1	67%
	S&F Management Services	1	4	1	1	40%
	Cape Town Skills Facilitators	1	5	1	1	33%
	Mogolo Academy ABET and Skills Provider	1	8	1	1	22%
	Sizanani Secunda	1	4	1	1	40%
	South Deep Mine	1	5	1	1	33%
Total		61	262	60	66	39%

Table 3A indicates that the AET centres submitted 323 SBA portfolios (61 PoA and 262 PoE) for moderation in November 2024. Umalusi moderated a sample of 126 SBA portfolios (60 PoA and 66 PoE), representing 39% of the portfolios submitted.

Figure 3A compares the number of PoE and PoA samples moderated over three years.

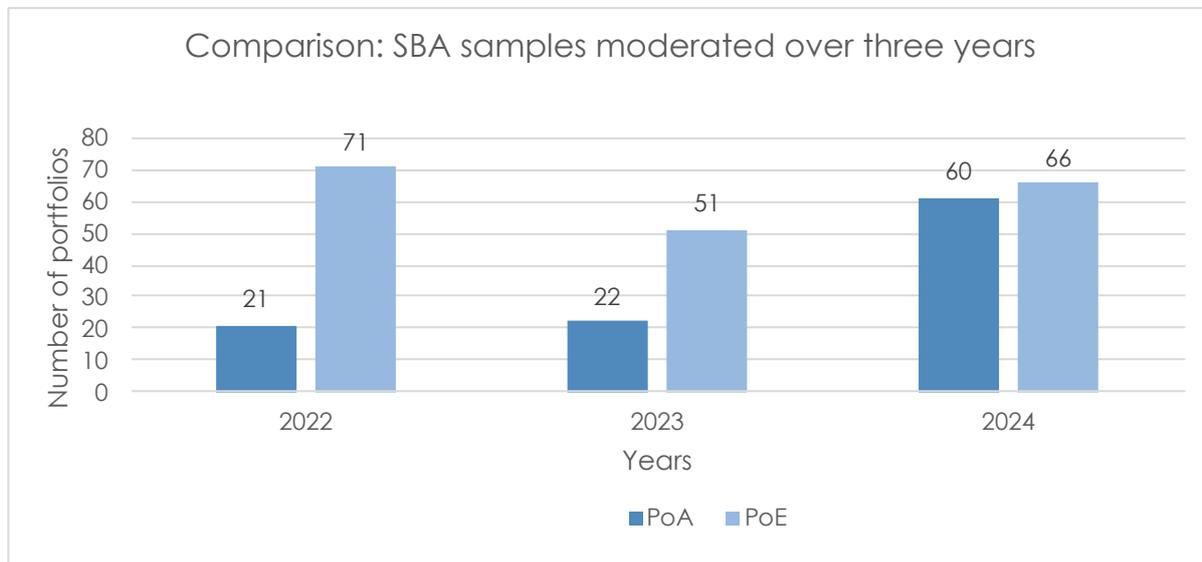


Figure 3A: Comparison of the moderated sample of SBA portfolios over three years

Figure 3A illustrates that the number of students' PoE sampled for moderation increased by 15% in the last year, from 51% in 2023 to 66% in 2024. Similarly, the number of facilitators' PoA increased by 38%, from 22% in 2023 to 60% in 2024. However, the PoA sample size slightly decreased in 2024 compared to 2022.

3.3.2 Overall compliance of AET centres with each criterion

Umalusi made provision for the moderation of one facilitator's portfolio and two student portfolios per learning area per AET centre. Table 3B summarises the overall compliance of the sample with the six criteria against which the moderation of portfolios was conducted in November 2024.

Table 3B: Overall compliance of AET centres per criterion

No.	Criterion	Compliance frequency (204 instances)			
		No	Limited	Most	All
1.	Adherence to assessment guidelines	2	15	28	21
2.	Internal moderation	3	6	24	33
3.	Structure and content of SBA portfolios	1	2	37	26
4.	Implementation and assessment of SBA tasks	2	11	0	53
5.	Performance of students	2	7	12	45
6.	Quality of marking	2	7	24	33
Total		12	48	125	211
Percentage		3%	12%	32%	53%

Figure 3B compares the overall compliance of the sample with each criterion in November 2024 with that of November 2023 and 2022.

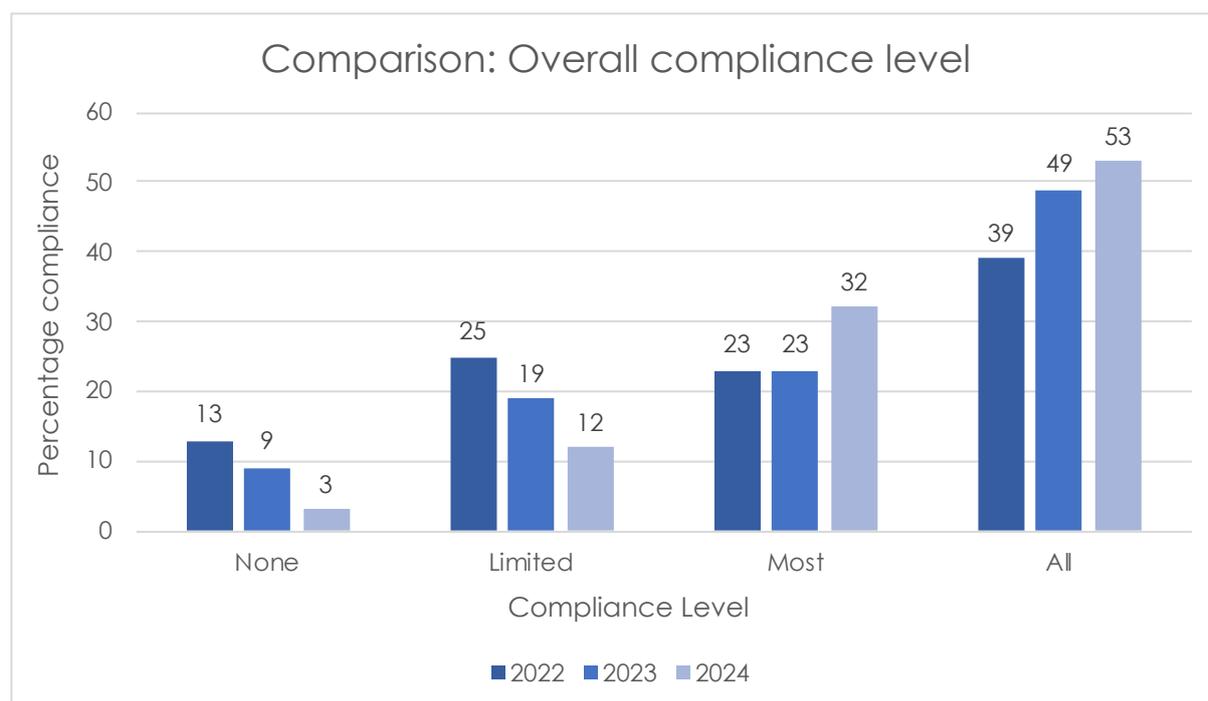


Figure 3B: Comparison of overall compliance over three years

Figure 3B shows a steady increase in the number of compliant SBA portfolios in all respects, from 39% in 2022 to 49% in 2023 and 53% in 2024.

3.3.3 Compliance of AET centres with each criterion

The level of compliance per criterion varied per learning area and learning site, as discussed below. The findings are based on information observed from the SBA portfolios submitted for external moderation by the IEB. Compliance refers to the learning site's ability to satisfy all the requirements (compliance in all respects) stipulated in the Umalusi moderation instrument.

a) Adherence to assessment guidelines

This criterion checks the students' PoE and facilitators' PoA to ensure that the content adheres to the assessment guidelines of the assessment body. The assessment guidelines prescribe the policies and the assessment and planning documents that should be included in all facilitators' PoA, as well as the documents required in the students' PoE, which includes the assessment plan. Facilitators are expected to comply with the assessment guidelines for the content of the SBA portfolios and the implementation of the SBA tasks.

In 2024, 32% of AET centres were compliant in all respects, 42% were compliant in most respects, and 23% met this criterion in limited respects. The remaining 3% showed no compliance at all. Notably, facilitators' PoA in the A4LIFO learning area were neatly labelled, well-organised and impressive.

Umalusi identified the following challenges associated with non-adherence to assessment guidelines:

- i. Non-submission of the PoA (A4EMSC: Mokweneng Training and Black Moon Mine and A4CENG: Transnet, New Concept Mining and Climamark PTY LTD);
- ii. No facilitators' information was provided (A4EMSC, A4HSSC and A4NSCIE);
- iii. No SBA tasks and marking guidelines (A4EMSC and A4LIFO);
- iv. Marking sheets were incomplete or not submitted (A4EMSC, A4NSCIE and A4LIFO);
- v. No Assessment Plan with dates (A4EMSC, A4NSCIE and A4SMME); and
- vi. No contents page (A4HSSC and A4LIFO).

Figure 3C compares adherence to the assessment guidelines criterion over three years.

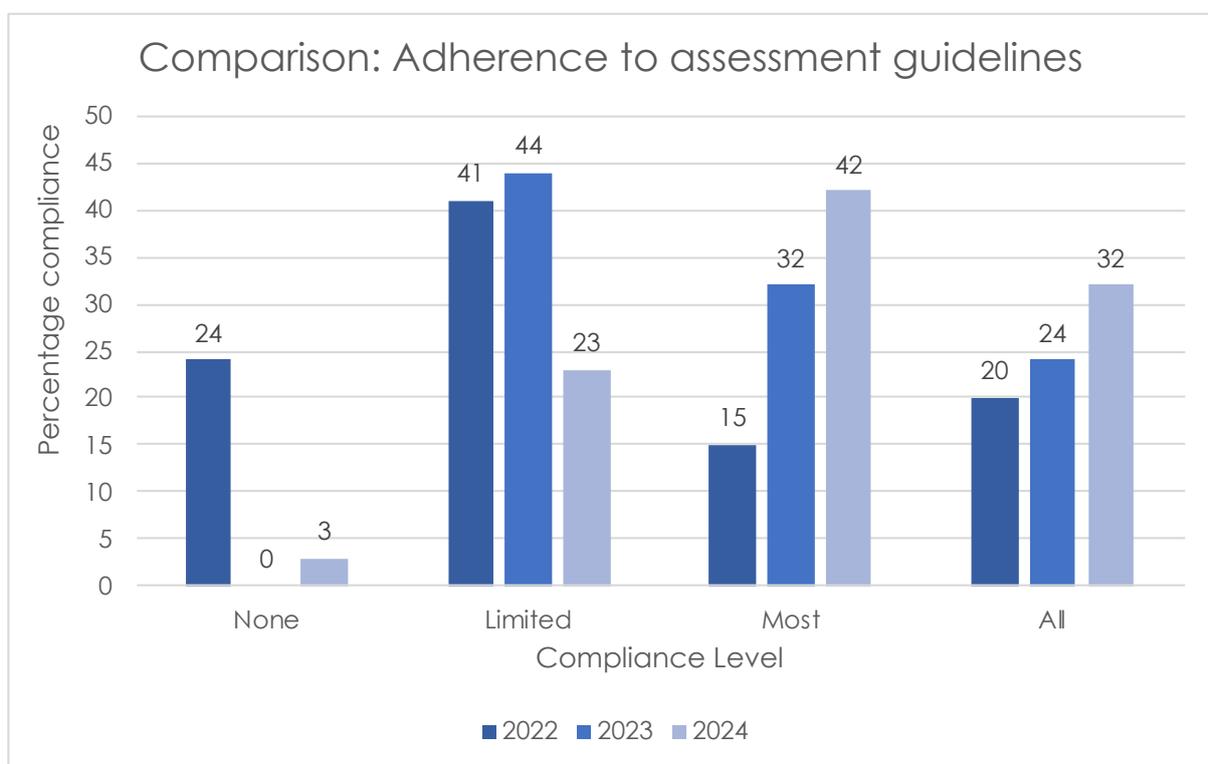


Figure 3C: Comparison of compliance with the adherence to assessment guidelines criterion over three years

Figure 3C indicates an increase in the number of AET centres that were fully compliant, reaching 32% in 2024, up from 24% in 2023 and 20% in 2022.

b) Internal moderation

This criterion verifies the evidence of internal moderation of SBA portfolios and the quality of such internal moderation by the assessment body. The expectation is that internal moderation reports would provide facilitators and students with constructive and relevant feedback.

In 2024, 50% of the sampled AET centres were compliant with this criterion in all respects, 36% were compliant in most respects, 9% showed limited compliance, and 5% were not compliant. The quality and standard of internal moderation were deemed appropriate. Constructive feedback was given at some AET centres, particularly for A4EMSC, A4LIFO, A4MATH, A4HSSC and A4SMME. For the A4CENG learning area, internal moderation was conducted using a checklist.

The SBA portfolios that were not fully compliant had the following challenges:

- i. No internal moderation at the centre level (A4NSCIE, A4HSSC and A4LIFO);
- ii. AET centres in the A4NSCIE learning area did not have the working mark sheets;
- iii. Superficial internal moderation reports were produced (A4HSSC);
- iv. Although there was some evidence of internal moderation, moderation reports were not always submitted; and
- v. There was no evidence of feedback given to students and facilitators (A4NSCIE).

Figure 3D compares compliance with the internal moderation criterion over three years.

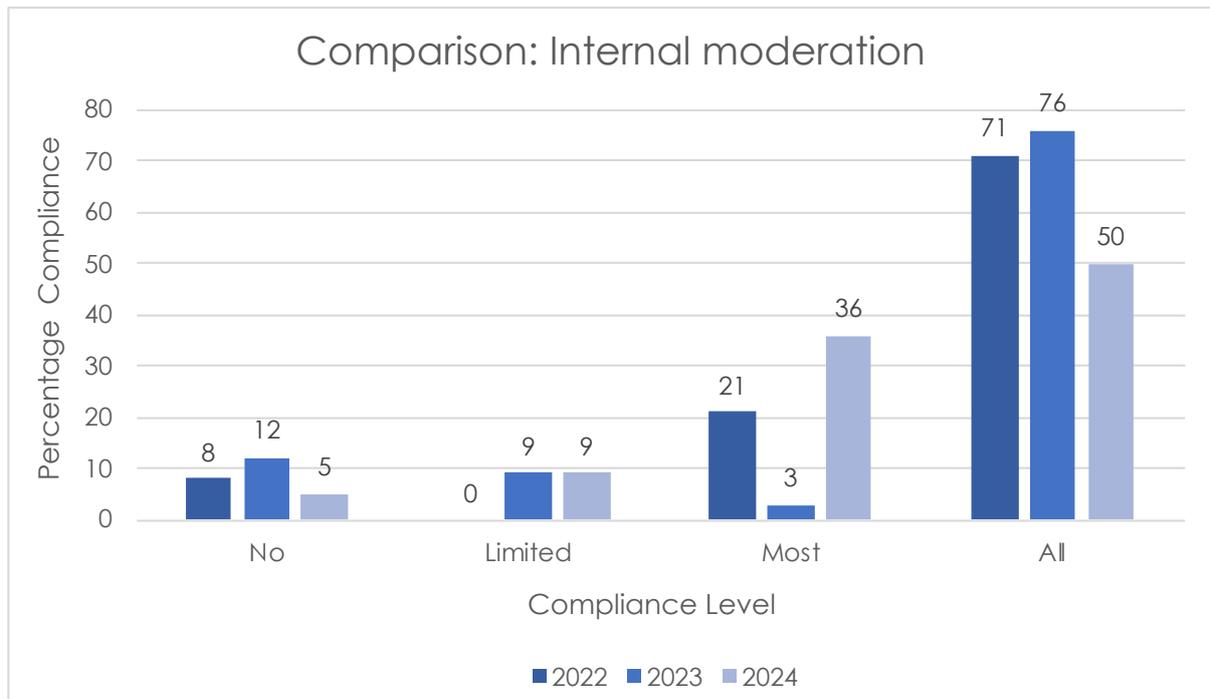


Figure 3D: Comparison of compliance with the internal moderation criterion over three years

Figure 3D shows a decline in the number of AET centres that met the criteria in all respects in 2024, with a decrease of 21% in 2022 and 26% in 2023. Furthermore, although there was an increase in limited compliance from 0% in 2022 to 9% in 2023, this level of compliance remained constant at 9% between 2023 and 2024. On a positive note, there was a decrease in the number of AET centres that did not at all comply with the criterion. In 2022, non-compliance was 8%, increasing to 12% in 2023, before dropping significantly to 5% in 2024.

c) Structure and content of SBA portfolios

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

In 2024, 39% of the sampled AET centres were compliant with this criterion in all respects, 56% of AET centres were compliant in most respects, 3% of AET centres showed limited compliance, and 2% were non-compliant. The main challenges in students' PoE were:

- i. The non-submission of the Assessment Plan with dates (A4HSSC, A4EMSC and A4NSCIE);
- ii. No contents page (A4EMSC and A4SMME);
- iii. No student information (A4SMME and A4EMSC);
- iv. No declaration form (A4LIFO, A4NSCIE and A4HSSC);
- v. Non-submission of certified identity documents (A4MATH, A4EMSC and A4CENG);
- vi. Untidy and disorganised SBA portfolios (A4LIFO and A4SMME); and
- vii. Some SBA portfolios were not internally moderated (A4NSCIE).

Figure 3E compares the compliance of the sampled AET centres with the structure and content of the SBA portfolio criterion over three years.

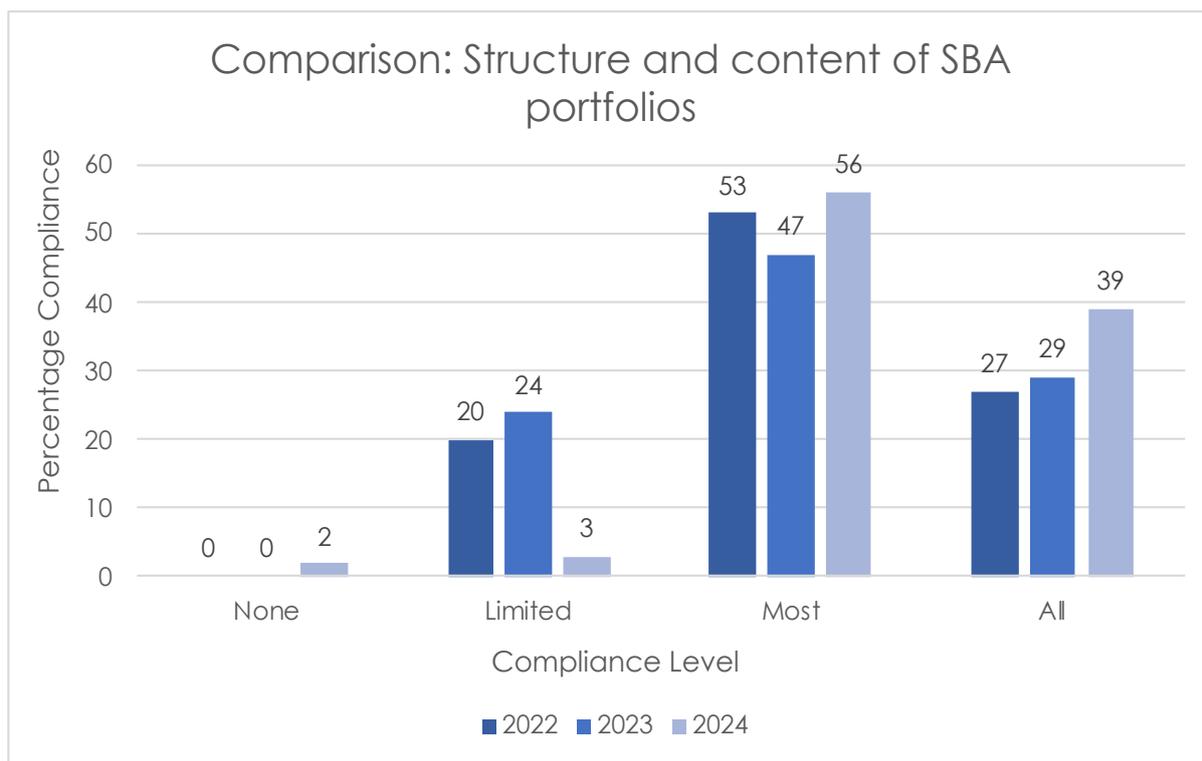


Figure 3E: Comparison of compliance with the structure and content of SBA portfolios criterion over three years

Figure 3E illustrates a 12% and 10% increase in the number of AET centres that fully complied with the structure and contents of the SBA portfolios criterion in 2024 compared to 2022 and 2023, respectively. A significant decrease of 21% was observed in the number of AET centres showing limited compliance between 2023 and 2024, and a 17% decrease was noted between 2022 and 2024.

d) Implementation and assessment of SBA tasks

This criterion checks whether all prescribed tasks have been completed and assessed according to the assessment plan contained in the student portfolio. The SBA tasks are expected to be completed and assessed according to the assessment plan.

A significant percentage of AET centres (80%) fully complied with the criteria. A further 17% exhibited limited compliance, while only 3% were non-compliant. Non-compliance was particularly evident in the A4LIFO and A4SMME learning areas. Umalusi observed the following challenges regarding the limited and non-compliant implementation of SBA tasks:

- i. Submitted outdated SBA tasks for moderation (one AET Centre for each A4EMSC and A4SMME);
- ii. Students' PoE did not contain a detailed assessment plan with actual dates of assessment (A4LIFO, A4MATH and A4NSCIE);
- iii. Some tasks were not included in the students' PoE (A4LIFO); and
- iv. No facilitator POA was submitted (A4LIFO: one AET centre)

Figure 3F compares the implementation and assessment of the SBA tasks criterion over three years.

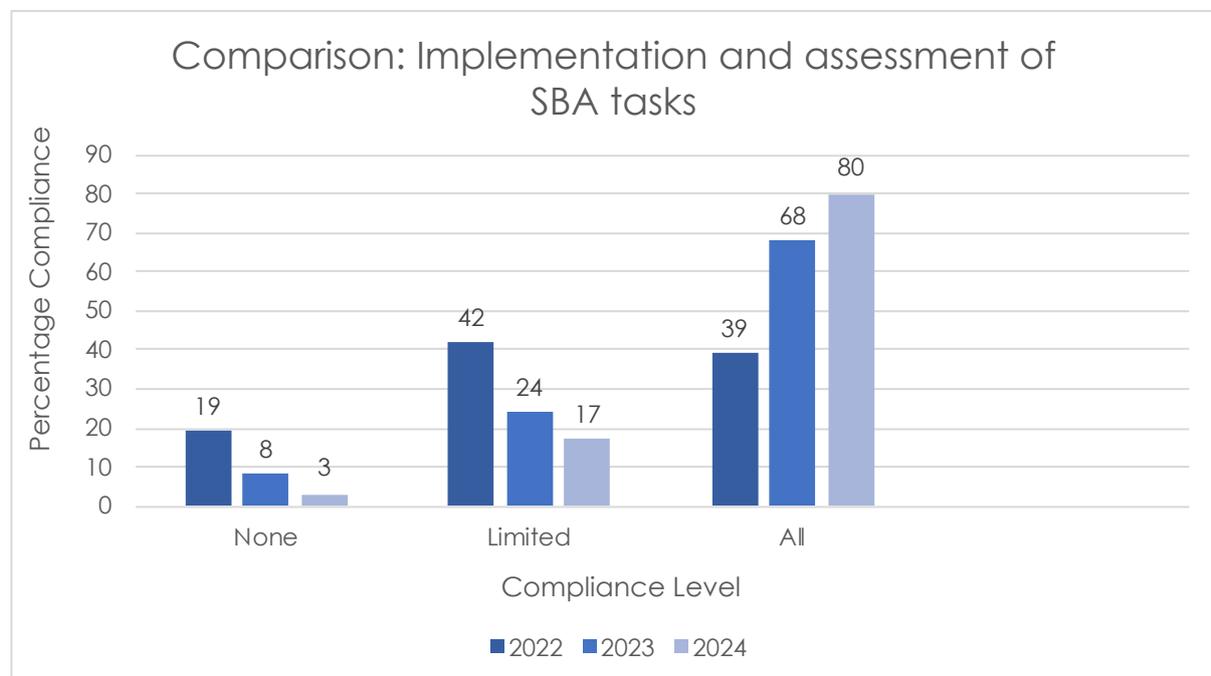


Figure 3F: Comparison of compliance with the implementation and assessment of SBA tasks criterion over three years

Figure 3F highlights a significant increase in the number of sampled AET centres that achieved full compliance in 2024 compared to the previous years (39% in 2022 and 68% in 2023). Umalusi noted a decline in the number of AET centres demonstrating limited compliance (from 42% in 2022 to 24% in 2023 and 17% in 2024) and no compliance (from 19% in 2022 to 8% in 2023 and 3% in 2024).

e) Performance of students

This criterion evaluates the performance of students against the following three quality indicators:

- i. The student interprets the assessment task correctly;
- ii. The student's responses meet the expectations and demands of the assessment task; and
- iii. The student can respond to all the questions (at different levels of difficulty) as set in the task.

In 2024, a significant number of AET centres (68%) demonstrated full compliance with the student performance criterion. A further 18% showed compliance in most respects, while 11% displayed limited compliance. Only 3% of AET centres were non-compliant with this criterion.

Students performed exceptionally well in the A4SMME (except at one AET centre) and A4EMSC learning areas. Nevertheless, the following challenges were identified:

- i. Questions were misunderstood and misinterpreted (A4LIFO, A4SMME and A4MATH);
- ii. Students lacked adequate preparation (A4CENG - one AET centre);
- iii. Students struggled with questions of varying difficulty (A4CENG, A4LIFO, A4NSCIE and A4HSSC);
- iv. Insufficient evidence of PoE tasks (A4LIFO);
- v. Tasks were not attempted or completed (A4LIFO and A4NSCIE); and
- vi. Incomplete tasks were submitted (A4LIFO and A4NSCIE).

Figure 3G compares compliance with the student performance criterion over three years.

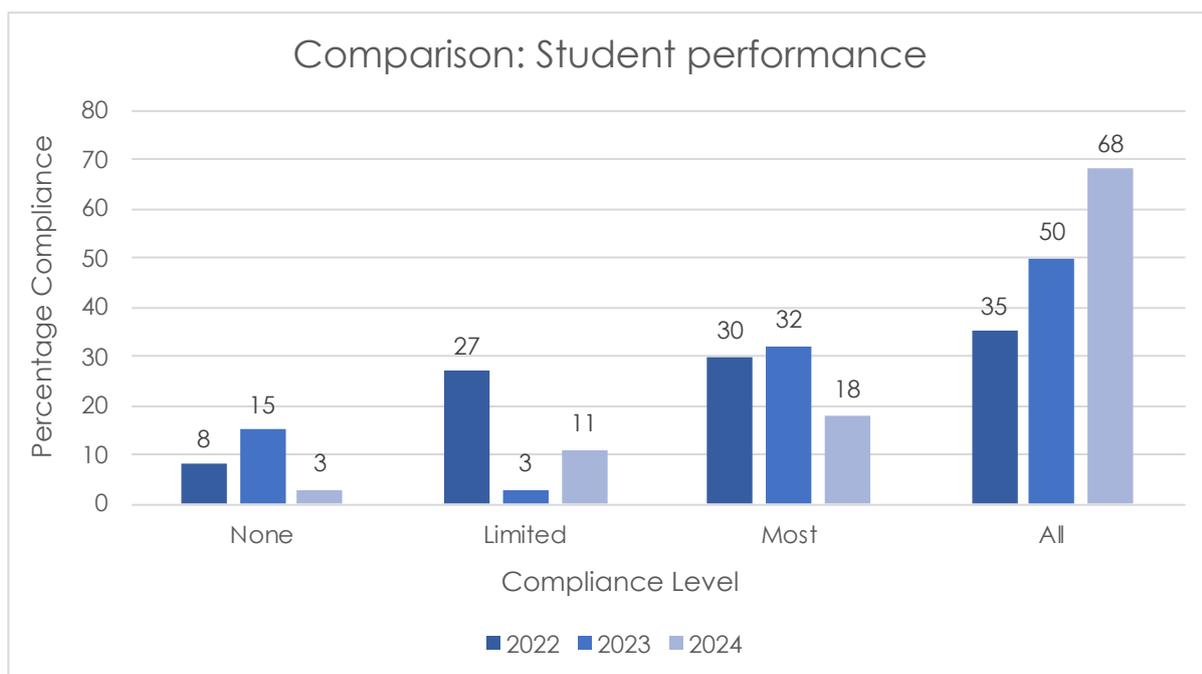


Figure 3G: Comparison of compliance with the student performance criterion over three years

As depicted in Figure 3G, compliance rates improved significantly from 2022 to 2024. The number of fully compliant AET centres increased, while the number of non-compliant AET centres significantly decreased in 2024.

f) Quality of marking

This criterion checks whether marking was accurate and consistent with the marking guidelines, whether the totalling, recording, and transfer of marks to the mark sheet are accurate, and whether the final mark allocated aligns with the student's performance.

In 2024, 50% of AET centres fully complied with the criterion, while 36% complied in most respects, resulting in an overall compliance rating of 86%. Only 11% of AET centres showed limited compliance, and 3% were non-compliant. Poor marking quality was observed in six learning areas: A4MATH (two AET centres), A4NSCIE (2 AET centres), A4SMME (3 AET centres), A4LIFO (1 AET centre), and A4HSSC (1 AET centre).

The following shortcomings were identified:

- i. The marking process deviated from the stipulated guidelines, resulting in upward or downward adjustments to student marks (A4SMME, A4NSCIE and A4LIFO);
- ii. Marks were inflated beyond the prescribed standards (A4NSCIE and A4CENG);
- iii. There was evidence of shadow marking in the A4HSSC learning area;
- iv. Marks were not allocated in accordance with the marking guidelines (A4LIFO and A4HSSC);
- v. The accuracy of mark totalling, transfer, and recording could not be verified due to the non-submission of the mark sheets (A4NSCIE, A4EMSC and A4LIFO);
- vi. Facilitators had difficulty interpreting and applying the marking rubric accurately (A4NSCIE); and
- vii. A substantial disparity was observed between the initial marks assigned to students and those subsequently determined by Umalusi (A4NSCIE).

Figure 3H compares the compliance with the quality of marking criterion over three years.

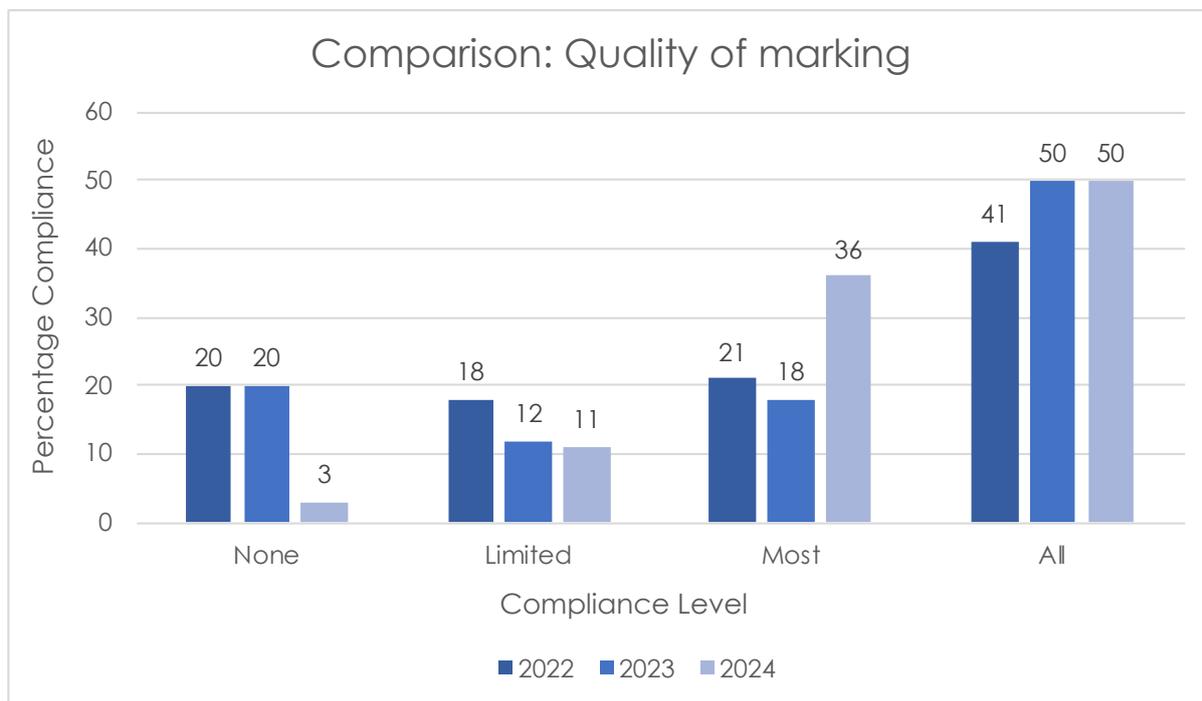


Figure 3H: Comparison of compliance with the quality of marking criterion over three years

Figure 3H shows that the number of fully compliant AET centres increased from 41% in 2022 to 50% in 2023, remaining unchanged at 50% in 2024.

3.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The following areas of improvement were identified during the moderation of SBA portfolios:

- a. Submission of facilitators' PoA increased slightly;
- b. The implementation and assessment of SBA tasks improved;
- c. The students' performance improved; and
- d. A significant improvement was noted in the quality of students' PoE and facilitators' PoA presented for external moderation.

3.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The following areas of concern were identified:

- a. Internal moderation reports were not always submitted;
- b. Some internal moderation reports that were submitted were below standard, not developmental, and served no relevance to the intended target;
- c. The submission of internal moderation reports appears to be regarded as a checklist and/or as compliance and does not serve its purpose due to its timing;
- d. The marking was of poor quality and standard, and rubrics were not used to assess tasks, which resulted in the inflation of marks or students being disadvantaged;

- e. Some PoE were untidy, unpresentable and disorganized, and incomplete;
- f. There was evidence of incorrect totalling and transfer of marks; and
- g. Outdated SBA tasks were submitted (A4EMSC - Kriel Colliery-Greenside and A4SMME - South Deep Mine).

3.6 DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The IEB is required to:

- a. Ensure that PoA are submitted with all relevant documents;
- b. Strengthen the quality of internal moderation at all levels and execute moderation at a time when feedback given can assist learners;
- c. Train facilitators on the interpretation and implementation of rubrics;
- d. Improve on the quality and standard of work presented for assessment;
- e. Conduct thorough quality assurance to ensure accuracy in the awarding of marks and the transfer of marks onto the mark sheets; and
- f. Ensure that all learning centres administer current SBA Tasks.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter reported on the findings of the external moderation of SBA portfolios. A comparison of the level of compliance in 2024 was made with that of the 2022 and 2023 examinations to check for any improvement in the implementation and moderation of SBA portfolios. Although the IEB has shown improvement in most areas, shortcomings remain in some learning areas and centres.

More could still be done to improve the quality of the implementation of SBA. Any non-compliance poses a risk regarding the credibility of the SBA mark, which contributes 50% towards the final mark per learning area.

The IEB must ensure that all AET sites registered to write the examinations with the assessment body meet the SBA implementation and moderation requirements. It is recommended that the IEB implement measures to address the areas of non-compliance mentioned in this report.

CHAPTER 4: MONITORING THE STATE OF READINESS TO CONDUCT EXAMINATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Umalusi is mandated to evaluate the level of preparedness of assessment bodies to conduct the national examinations. In keeping with this mandate, Umalusi undertook an external risk management-based audit to determine the state of readiness (SoR) of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) to conduct the November 2024 General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations.

The main objectives of the audit verification of the SoR were to:

- a. Evaluate the level of preparedness of the IEB to conduct the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations;
- b. Verify whether the IEB had systems in place to conduct credible examinations;
- c. Report on areas that might compromise the conduct, administration and management of examinations prior to the commencement of the examination cycle; and
- d. Track the progress made in addressing the directives for compliance and improvement, if any, that were issued in respect of the previous examination session.

The findings presented in this chapter are based on the desktop information received from the IEB, which informed the Umalusi announcement of the IEB's SoR to conduct, administer, and manage the November 2024 examinations on 11 October 2024.

4.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

In determining the IEB readiness to conduct a credible November 2024 GETC: ABET examination, Umalusi followed a phased-in approach comprising of:

Phase 1: Desktop evaluation of documents submitted (Annexure A1 and B1)

Umalusi audited and evaluated the progress made by the IEB in implementing the improvement plan and the Self-Evaluation Report.

Phase 2: Risk Analysis and Feedback

Umalusi gave feedback on potential risks that could negatively impact the integrity and credibility of the examinations.

Phase 3: Conduct of Evidence-based Verification Audits

Umalusi conducted a verification audit with the following SoR focus areas:

- i. Registration of candidates and examination centres;
- ii. Printing, packaging, storage and distribution of question papers;
- iii. Appointment and training of markers and internal moderators;
- iv. Auditing of storage and distribution points;
- v. Conduct of examinations;
- vi. Appointment and training of invigilators and monitors;
- vii. Appointment of markers and other related marking processes;
- viii. Management and reporting of irregularities; and
- ix. Systems for the capturing of marks.

The audit findings informed Umalusi's 11 October 2024 announcement on the IEB's SoR to conduct, administer, and manage the November 2024 examinations.

4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

4.3.1 PHASE 1: DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR DESKTOP EVALUATION

Umalusi provided the IEB with **Annexure A1** and **Annexure B1** to guide their reporting on the SoR to conduct, administer, and manage credible GETC: ABET examinations.

Annexure A1 required that the IEB report on the progress made in addressing the implementation of the improvement plan, the directives for compliance, and areas of non-compliance reported in 2023 to curb the recurrence of the identified areas of concern.

Table 4A summarises the findings on the actioning of the November 2023 improvement plans, the directives as well as the progress as at 31 July 2024.

Table 4A: Progress made in addressing the improvement plan on the November 2023 issued directives for compliance and improvement

Focus area	2023 directives issued to the IEB	Progress made April -July 2024	Umalusi comment(s)
Moderation of Question Papers	Strengthen the training of examiners and internal moderators to improve the quality and overall compliance of question papers and the accompanying marking guidelines.	Training is continuous, as errors are picked up on question papers with frequent monitoring.	There was a decline in the compliance of question papers across all criteria, with Content Coverage achieving the lowest level of compliance at 14%, down from 43% in 2023 and 57% in 2022.

Focus area	2023 directives issued to the IEB	Progress made April - July 2024	Umalusi comment(s)
			Compliance is at its lowest level overall, indicating that the quality and standard of question papers is declining. Umalusi recommends that the IEB intensify the training of the examiners and internal moderators.
Moderation of Site Based Assessment Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop and provide students with guidelines for the length of a reading passage; and b. Strengthen and improve internal moderation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. No SBAs were developed this year. This will be considered when the next SBAs are developed; and b. Feedback will be given to both teachers and candidates during moderation. 	A significant decrease was observed in the number of AET centres that showed no compliance with the criterion from 2023 to 2024.
Moderation of Site-Based Assessment Portfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure that PoA is submitted with all relevant documents; b. Improve the quality and standard of marking; and c. Support facilitators in improving the quality of marking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The submission of PoA is emphasised during the user forum meetings that are held at the beginning of the year; b. Marking is done at centre level, and the feedback report will be sent to centres after moderation; and c. During moderation, the use of rubrics in SBA tasks will be checked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Significant improvement was noted in the quality of students' PoE and facilitators' PoA presented for external moderation; and b. The marking process of some learning areas deviated from the stipulated guidelines.

Focus area	2023 directives issued to the IEB	Progress made April - July 2024	Umalusi comment(s)
Audit of Appointed Markers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All applicants possess the requisite qualifications to be appointed as marking personnel; b. Individuals appointed to mark different learning areas have some form of qualification related to the learning area; and c. Learning area specialisation is included as a criterion in appointing marking personnel. 	The Online Application Form required the markers to provide the requested information and to submit copies of qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All individuals appointed as markers were facilitators of the same learning area they had applied for as their first choice; and b. Those without learning area facilitation experience had marking experience.
Monitoring of the Writing and Marking of the Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All personnel responsible for the management and administration of the examinations are trained to improve their level of compliance; and b. All assessment materials are stored safely in line with the security measures prescribed by the assessment body. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training of invigilators was conducted for June 2024 and on 24 October 2024 for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations; and b. Examination materials were stored in lockable cabinets and safes after delivery and before collection by the courier company.

Focus area	2023 directives issued to the IEB	Progress made April -July 2024	Umalusi comment(s)
Quality Assurance of Marking	Ensure that the same number of dummy scripts is used per learning area during the training of markers.	The IEB monitored the implementation of this directive in the May/June marking session.	The training process, which involved the practical application of the marking guidelines through the marking of dummy scripts, significantly enhanced the markers' confidence in their ability to apply the guidelines accurately and consistently.

When Umalusi received the progress report (Annexure A1) from the IEB, it did not indicate progress in implementing the directives regarding the writing and marking of GETC: ABET examinations. However, Umalusi did observe the training of invigilators on 24 October 2024 to improve the level of compliance.

Annexure B1: Self-Evaluation Instrument

The IEB was required to submit a Self-Evaluation Report with supporting documents on the IEB's SoR to conduct the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. However, the IEB did not submit the Self-Evaluation Report in accordance with Umalusi's requirements. Information on key focus areas of the Self-Evaluation Instrument was submitted in an e-mail and was not in the required template.

4.3.2 PHASE 2: RISK ANALYSIS AND FEEDBACK

All IEB AET centres were required to complete a desktop audit. The reports were evaluated, and a risk profile was developed. The IEB categorised the AET centres as high-risk, as most centres are workplaces and do not function as regular schools.

4.3.3 PHASE 3: CONDUCT OF EVIDENCE-BASED VERIFICATION AUDIT

Document analysis processes provide information that is instrumental in helping Umalusi decide the IEB's SoR to conduct, administer, and manage the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. Umalusi did not, however, conduct an evidence-based verification audit because the IEB failed to provide the required supporting documents. Below are the findings from the key focus areas that the IEB emailed to Umalusi.

a) Registration of Candidates and Centres

i. Registration of candidates

The IEB successfully finalised the capture of the registration data into its systems on 26 September 2024. For the November 2024 GETC: ABET examination, the total number of candidates registered by the IEB was 378. This represented a drop in enrolment, down from 585 candidates in 2023.

ii. Registration of examination centres

IEB registered 53 centres in 2024, compared to 68 in 2023. Furthermore, 873 learning area entries were registered.

iii. Marking centres

The IEB established one marking centre that was suitable and conducive for marking sessions. Umalusi audited and monitored the marking during the November 2023 and 2024 examination cycles to determine the level of compliance with the issued examination instructions.

The findings from the monitoring of the marking centre found that all markers were suitably accommodated, and that the marking management plan was in place and adhered to. Furthermore, the IEB ensured that the marking venue complied with a set of standards for an effective marking session. The following resources were found to be in place:

1. Enough lighting and ventilation in the marking venues;
2. Suitable furniture for effective marking;
3. Electricity, running water and ablution facilities;
4. Communication facilities;
5. Internet access provided by the marking centre; and
6. Tight security to safeguard both the question papers and the marking personnel.

The marking centre met the above requirements, except for security at the gate. In both 2023 and 2024, security was weaker than expected. Those entering were neither required to sign a register nor subjected to searching of at least the vehicle. The centre was also found not to be in possession of a marking centre file with relevant documentation. According to the marking centre manager, the file was at the IEB offices.

b) Management of internal assessment/site-based assessment (SBA)

Guidelines for the implementation and moderation of the Internal Assessment were submitted and verified by Umalusi, and the implementation plan was developed by the IEB. Umalusi conducted the SBA moderation of the seven learning areas during the marking phase of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. The sampling strategy for the moderation of SBA portfolios was submitted in accordance with the Umalusi sample. The moderation of the portfolios was carried out on the first day of marking, 23 November 2024. All seven learning areas were internally and externally moderated.

c) Printing, packaging, distribution, and storage

i. Printing

The IEB entered into a contractual agreement with a reputable external service provider (Colourtech Printers) for the printing of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examination material. The IEB reported that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) was submitted and verified by Umalusi. Moreover, a plan outlining the safety and precautions procedures to observe during printing was submitted and verified. This included the declaration and conflict of interest forms, which were completed by staff involved in the handling of the question papers.

Before printing, question papers were moderated and approved, and all met Umalusi approval requirements. Furthermore, a management plan detailing relevant procedures to be adhered to during the printing phase of the question papers was also verified. Umalusi was satisfied that the question papers would be protected and secured during the printing phase based on the strict measures which the IEB has set out for printing. In addition, the printing of question papers was closely monitored from a central control point by the IEB. The audit outcomes also revealed the various roles and responsibilities of the examination panels as outlined in the Service Level Agreement (SLA). A technician for the printing machines was available 24 hours a day. The printing of the question papers was scheduled to be completed by 14 October 2024.

Umalusi could not verify the submission of the Service Level Standard because the IEB did not submit supporting documentation in line with Umalusi's requirements. During the monitoring of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations, Umalusi verified that the printing of question papers was on schedule. No late delivery of question papers or errors in the question papers were reported during the writing phase or the standardisation of marking guidelines.

ii. Packaging

Packaging was carried out in the basement of the IEB offices from 14 to 19 October 2024. Maximum security measures were put in place for packaging question papers. Once packaged, access to the area where question papers were stored was strictly reserved for materials handling staff. Moreover, the control room had 24-hour camera surveillance and 24-hour security personnel to ensure the safekeeping of question papers.

During the writing session, the question papers were sealed in black secured bags with combination locks and dispatched to various writing centres through contracted courier service companies, RAM and DSV. On the day of each subject's writing, IEB sent a code to open the combination lock one hour before the writing session. Umalusi verified these security measures during the monitoring of writing at the 15 sampled examination centres.

iii. Distribution

The Management Plan, which stipulated the delivery and collection dates of the question papers, was in place and approved. According to the IEB, the Standard Operation Procedures for the distribution of question papers were also submitted and verified by Umalusi. Question papers were delivered to the various examination centres as consignments through a courier service, using door-to-door service prior to the commencement of the examination.

Dispatch documents were signed by Chief Invigilators upon receipt of the examination material, detailing the proof of delivery, name, date, and time. The IEB put in place procedures for the delivery and collection dates, as well as instructions for returning the answer scripts. To ensure the safety and security of examination material, it was mandatory for all examination centres to have a strong room or safe.

Umalusi observed that all question papers were delivered to the examination centres at the scheduled time, with no centres reporting late delivery. However, Umalusi could not verify the Standard Operation Procedure because the IEB did not submit the required documents.

d) Monitoring of examinations

The findings of the audit for the monitoring of examinations revealed that stringent measures were put in place by the IEB to ensure that the November GETC: ABET examinations were monitored in line with regulations governing the management, conduct and administration of examinations. The examination centres were profiled according to the level of risk, categorised by the IEB, and it was found that some centres were not easily accessible.

A criterion for the recruitment and appointment of monitors and a manual for the training of invigilators was submitted to, and verified by, Umalusi. Training sessions for chief invigilators, invigilators, and assistant invigilators were conducted on 24 October 2024. The IEB ensured that all prior directives were also addressed in the training sessions.

Umalusi ensured that close monitoring of the level of compliance was conducted through the deployment of external monitors for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. It was also found that most IEB AET centres were workplaces, not schools and, as such, they were found to be of higher risk in terms of adherence to examination requirements. Notably, one of the Centres had a candidate with accommodation, which is the first-time accommodation had been applied for and approved for the 2024 examinations.

e) Marker audit and appointments

The criteria for the appointment of marking personnel were submitted to Umalusi for verification. The marker selection and appointments were done in line with the IEB policy for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of markers. The appointment of marking personnel was finalised, and no risks were identified.

The IEB selected and appointed 79 marking personnel, comprising examiners, internal moderators, markers, and examination assistants from the pool of applicants. The IEB marking personnel were qualified to mark all learning areas, and only one novice marker was appointed in one learning area. No marker shortages were recorded during the marking phase for the GETC: ABET examinations, held on 23 and 24 November 2024.

f) Systems for capturing examination and assessment marks

Umalusi was satisfied with the level of readiness demonstrated by the IEB for capturing marks. Management plans were made available detailing the mark capturing process. The IEB made use of the same venues used in the previous marks capturing, as these were well-resourced and compatible with the process. Umalusi conducted an independent verification process in November 2024, prior to the commencement of marking. IEB used a double-capturing method to capture results, and the capturing took place at the IEB offices on 25 November 2024.

g) Management of examination irregularities

The IEB policy for handling and management of examination irregularities was developed and submitted to Umalusi. Furthermore, measures to deal with identified irregularities were put in place, and the management of examination irregularities was covered during the training and standardisation process. An awareness strategy to combat irregularities was developed and submitted.

Chief invigilators and invigilators were trained in the identification, handling and management of irregularities on 24 October 2024. The chief invigilators were assigned the responsibility of managing the irregularities, culminating in reports being compiled and submitted to the IEB.

Irregularities recognised during marking were assessed and duly reported to the IEB. The Irregularity Committee then conducted further investigations, leading to sanctions being implemented on the offending candidates. IEB provided detailed reports on such irregularities to Umalusi. It was further noted that candidates found to have engaged in irregularities had their results blocked while investigations were in progress, and once irregularities were confirmed, their results were nullified.

4.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The following area of good practice was noted:

- a. Invigilators' training for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examination session was scheduled closer to the commencement of the examination session to ensure that the credibility of the examination was not compromised. The training was conducted on 24 October 2024 on Microsoft Teams.

4.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The following area of non-compliance was noted:

- a. The IEB did not submit a Self-Evaluation Report on its SoR within the prescribed timeframes for submission.

4.6 DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The IEB must ensure that:

- a. The Dates for submission of Self-Evaluation Reports are adhered to; and
- b. Supporting documentation for the Self-Evaluation Reports is submitted in line with Umalusi requirements.

4.7 CONCLUSION

One of the key objectives of the SoR was to audit and verify the examination system and business processes set out by the assessment body, to ensure that credible examinations were conducted. Unfortunately, because the IEB failed to submit supporting documentation and adhere to the submission dates of Annexures A1 and B1, Umalusi was unable to analyse these documents to verify key information.

The desktop findings of the SoR audit did reveal, however, that the IEB was adequately prepared to conduct, administer, and manage the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. The findings on the SoR also revealed that the stringent measures and systems put in place ensured that the integrity and credibility of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examination were not compromised.

CHAPTER 5: AUDIT OF APPOINTED MARKING PERSONNEL

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Umalusi audits appointed marking personnel to ensure that the quality and standard of marking scripts for the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) examinations are maintained. Inconsistency in the marking of the GETC: ABET scripts compromise the fairness and reliability of marks awarded to candidates, threatening the credibility of these examinations and the qualification. Appointing qualified and competent marking personnel is imperative for assessment bodies and Umalusi.

The purpose of this process is to ascertain whether suitably qualified and experienced marking personnel were appointed to mark the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations and to assess plans for training personnel for marking and moderation of the examinations.

5.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi requested the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) to submit information on the recruitment, selection and appointment of marking personnel for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. Umalusi provided the IEB with an Excel spreadsheet as a template. Then, Umalusi conducted a desktop audit of the appointed marking personnel.

The following information was requested from the IEB:

- a. Invitation to marking personnel with application form and appointment criteria;
- b. Lists of appointed marking personnel and reserve lists; and
- c. Summary of appointed marking personnel per category, indicating the registered candidates.

In conducting the audit, Umalusi verified the following IEB documents:

- i. Criteria for the appointment of different categories of marking personnel;
- ii. Appointed marking personnel;
- iii. Qualification of applicants;
- iv. Teaching or facilitation experience of applicants;
- v. Marking experience of applicants; and
- vi. Plans for training the marking personnel.

Umalusi also verified whether novice markers were included in the list of appointed marking personnel.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following section discusses the findings based on the information provided by the IEB.

5.3.1 Criteria for the appointment of marking personnel

The IEB required the following from applicants to be considered for appointment:

- a. Hold an academic qualification in the relevant learning area or related learning area or proof of proficiency through additional courses of study;
- b. Be familiar with the IEB's assessment systems;
- c. Have experience in teaching at pre-NQF levels and NQF Level 1;
- d. Have teaching experience in the learning area and at the level they wish to mark or be strongly recommended by their training manager/centre coordinator. Such recommendations or motivation should be made in writing; and
- e. Be willing to share knowledge and experience gained during marking with colleagues in their organisation.

The criteria did not specify the minimum qualifications required for applicants to be considered for appointment, and the appointment term was not mentioned.

5.3.2 Appointed marking personnel

The IEB has a pool of examiners and internal moderators contracted to develop and moderate the AET question papers, Site Based Assessment tasks, and portfolios. In preparation for the marking process, the IEB sends invitations and application forms to prospective marking personnel. In most instances, if earmarked individuals from the pool apply, they are automatically appointed.

The number of marking personnel appointed per learning area was determined by the number of candidates who registered to write the examinations in each learning area.

The IEB selected and appointed 79 marking personnel from the pool of applicants, including examiners, internal moderators, markers, and examination assistants. Table 5A shows the number of marking personnel appointed by the IEB per learning area to mark the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.

Table 5A: Appointed marking personnel per learning area

Learning area	Number of registered candidates	Examiners	Internal moderators	Markers	Examination assistants	Total marking personnel
Communication in English - A4CENG	217	1	1	9	2	13
Economic and Management Sciences - A4EMSC	54	1	1	3	2	7
Human and Social Sciences - A4HSSC	134	1	1	4	2	8
Life Orientation - A4LIFO	103	1	1	7	2	11
Mathematical Literacy - A4MATH	170	2	2	12	2	18
Natural Sciences - A4NSCIE	98	2	1	7	2	12
Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises - A4SMME	95	1	1	6	2	10
Total	871	9	8	48	14	79

Table 5A shows that A4MATH, A4NSCIE, and A4CENG had the highest number of appointed marking personnel, while A4EMSC and A4HSSC had the lowest number.

5.3.3 Completion of application form

Umalusi conducted a desktop verification of the IEB application forms to recruit markers in the seven learning areas assessed in the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. This process showed that the IEB application form required applicants to indicate their first and second choice for the learning areas they preferred to mark. All 46 markers were appointed according to their first choice.

5.3.4 Qualifications and learning area specialisation

This section outlines the findings regarding the verification of qualifications and specialisations for markers, examiners, and internal moderators in specific learning areas.

Applicants were expected to facilitate the learning area and have an academic qualification relevant to their chosen learning area, among other things, to be considered for appointment. Examiners and Internal Moderators were appointed earlier in the year in preparation for the June 2024 examinations. These personnel were, therefore, not included in the Excel spreadsheet Umalusi gave to the IEB to populate, which contained information exclusively about markers. Table 5B presents the minimum and maximum qualifications of appointed markers for each learning area.

Table 5B: Qualifications of appointed marking personnel

No.	Learning area	Qualification		Learning area specialisation
		Lowest	Highest	
1.	Communication in English	Matric-Grade 12	Bachelor of Arts	Not indicated
2.	Economic and Management Sciences	Matric-Grade 12	BA Public Management	Not indicated
3.	Human and Social Sciences	Diploma in AET	Bachelor of Theology	Not indicated
4.	Life Orientation	Matric-Grade 12	BEd	Not indicated
5.	Mathematical Literacy	Matric-Grade 12	BSc (Statistics) 2 nd year	Not indicated
6.	Natural Sciences	Matric-Grade 12	BSc in Applied Chemistry	Not indicated
7.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	Matric-Grade 12	Master's in Education	Not indicated

None of the applicants appointed as markers indicated their learning area specialisation. It was also noted that the markers for A4CENG and A4HSSC possessed irrelevant qualifications, namely a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Theology, respectively.

5.3.5 Teaching or facilitation experience

The following findings relate to the teaching and facilitation experience of the marking personnel, including markers, examiners, and internal moderators. Table 5C indicates the lowest and highest teaching and facilitation experience of appointed markers per learning area.

Table 5C: Teaching/facilitation experience of appointed markers

No.	Learning area	Teaching/facilitation experience		Currently teaching NQF 1
		Lowest	Highest	
1.	Communication in English	7 years	20 years	8/9
2.	Economic and Management Sciences	4 years	10 years	3/3
3.	Human and Social Sciences	3 years	7 years	4/4
4.	Life Orientation	0 years	27 years	7/7
5.	Mathematical Literacy	4 years	16 years	10/12
6.	Natural Sciences	6 months	20 years	6/7
7.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	5 years	20 years	6/6

All applicants appointed as markers were facilitators of the same learning area they had applied for as their first choice; however, one of the appointed markers for A4LIFO was not currently facilitating the learning area. This marker was appointed because they have four years of facilitation experience and five years of marking experience. An A4LIFO marker had the highest facilitation experience, totalling 27 years.

5.3.6 Marking experience

This section presents the findings of the assessment of marking experience. Table 5D shows the lowest and highest marking experience of appointed markers per learning area.

Table 5D: Marking experience of appointed markers

No.	Learning area	Marking experience		Comments
		Lowest	Highest	
1.	Communication in English	3 years	25 years	No novice markers
2.	Economic and Management Sciences	4 years	6 years	No novice markers
3.	Human and Social Sciences	1 year	6 years	No novice markers
4.	Life Orientation	1 year	15 years	No novice markers
5.	Mathematical Literacy	3 years	14 years	No novice markers
6.	Natural Sciences	0 years	15 years	1 novice marker
7.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	1 year	11 years	No novice markers

Table 5D shows that A4NSCIE appointed a novice marker. The marker has facilitated the learning area for the last two years and holds a Bachelor of Science in Applied Chemistry. In all other learning areas, the appointed marking personnel had several years of experience in marking examination scripts in their respective learning areas.

As indicated in Table 5D, the minimum experience was one year, and the most experienced marker had 25 years of marking experience.

5.3.7 Plans for the training of marking personnel

The Event Unit of the IEB used its office-based staff to train examiners and internal moderators appointed for each learning area, who, in turn, trained the appointed markers. The training of markers took place on the first day of the marking process at the designated marking venue, making it the initial activity for all learning areas. This training was also provided to the examination assistants and occurred during the standardisation of the marking guidelines in preparation for the actual marking of candidates' scripts.

The purpose of the training is, among others, to equip the marking personnel with information relating to:

- a. Principles of marking;
- b. Moderation of marking;
- c. Controlling the flow of scripts;
- d. Identification and management of irregularities;
- e. Moderation of SBA portfolios; and
- f. Transfer of marks.

5.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The following were noted as areas of improvement:

- a. The IEB marking personnel were qualified to mark all learning areas; and
- b. There was one novice marker that was appointed in one learning area (A4NSCIE).

5.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The following were noted as areas of concern:

- a. The information provided by the IEB was not updated. The spreadsheet submitted to Umalusi by the IEB lacked details about internal moderators;
- b. In some instances, the IEB did not specify the units of measure, and therefore, it was unclear whether the markers' experience or length of service was provided in years or months;
- c. The learning area specialisation was not indicated on the Excel spreadsheet but is one of the IEB criteria for selecting GETC markers; and
- d. Markers for A4CENG and A4HSSC possessed Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Theology qualifications, respectively, which are not aligned with the learning area.

5.6 DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The IEB must ensure that:

- a. The Excel spreadsheet provided to Umalusi contains the necessary details of all marking personnel, including the internal moderators and examiners, for Umalusi to verify their qualifications;
- b. All numbers provided by the applicants indicate the actual time unit, for example, months or years;
- c. The Excel spreadsheet contains the details of the specialisations for all marking personnel in the learning area; and
- d. The IEB appoints qualified markers who specialise in the learning area.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Umalusi conducted a desktop audit of the personnel appointed to mark the IEB's November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations. The audit found that the information sought from applicants and supplied by the IEB to Umalusi ought to be as detailed as possible. This will enable Umalusi to draw necessary conclusions regarding the IEB's compliance. The IEB is, therefore, required to study the findings and act on the directives for compliance to improve on the shortcomings identified.

CHAPTER 6: MONITORING THE WRITING AND MARKING OF EXAMINATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The writing of the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) November 2024 General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) Examinations commenced on 6 November 2024 and concluded on 14 November 2024. Umalusi monitored the writing and marking of examinations throughout this period. The monitoring aimed to establish how the IEB conducted, administered and managed the writing and marking of the examinations, as indicated in the IEB policy on the conduct, administration, and management of examinations.

The purpose of the monitoring was to verify that the sampled examination centres effectively and efficiently adhered to the policy and requirements for conducting credible, reliable, and transparent examinations for the GETC: ABET qualification.

The findings gathered from monitoring the sampled examination centres and one marking centre highlight areas of improvement, non-compliance, and directives for compliance and improvement.

6.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi monitored 15 examination centres during the November 2024 examination cycle, a decrease from the 20 examination centres observed in the November 2023 cycle. The monitoring took place from 6 to 14 November 2024.

Data was collected using the revised 2024 GETC: ABET Instruments for Monitoring the Marking and for Monitoring the Writing of GETC: ABET Examinations. Further evidence was gathered on-site at the sampled examination centres and the one marking centre through:

- a. Direct observation;
- b. Consultation with chief invigilators and marking centre managers;
- c. Discussions with key personnel; and
- d. Analysis of the examination files.

Table 6A: Sampled examination centres monitored for the writing of the IEB GETC: ABET examinations

No.	Name of Centre	Province	Learning Area	Number registered	Number wrote
1.	Saldanha Bay Municipality	Western Cape	Human & Social Sciences	07	07
2.	Kriel Colliery Greenside	Mpumalanga	Human and Social Sciences	05	05
3.	Kitso Transnet	KZN	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	04	04
4.	National Skills Centre	Mpumalanga	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	06	06
5.	DYNA Engen	KZN	Language, Literacy and Communication: English	33	33
6.	Diepsloot Foundation	Gauteng	Economic and Management Sciences	19	19
7.	ZEST Education Maitland	Western Cape	Mathematical Literacy	03	03
8.	Northam Platinum	Limpopo	Mathematical Literacy	15	08
9.	AECI Infigro Olifantsfontein	Gauteng	Mathematical Literacy	02	02
10.	Circleway Bethal	Mpumalanga	Mathematical Literacy	27	15
11.	Training Professionals	Gauteng	Life Orientation	06	06
12.	Cape Town Skills Facilitators	Western Cape	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise	31	31
13.	Ergo Business Dev Academy	Gauteng	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprise	06	03
14.	Phalaborwa Learning Centre	Limpopo	Economic Management Sciences	02	02
15.	Sizanani ABET Solutions Sasolburg	Gauteng	Natural Science NQF1	03	03
Total				169	147

6.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Section A analyses various reports from monitoring the writing of IEB examinations in November 2024. **Section B** analyses the findings observed during marking at the one IEB marking centre. In both sections, the assessment focuses on the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.

SECTION A: MONITORING THE WRITING OF EXAMINATIONS

Section A summarises the findings as per the criteria determined for monitoring the writing of the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.

6.3.1 Preparing the examination

Umalusi verified evidence that the IEB had inspected examination centres prior to the start of the examinations. Umalusi found that out of the 15 sampled examination centres, the IEB verified 12 centres. The other three centres were either not verified or proof could not be produced. The centres that were not verified were Circleway Training Centre, Dyna Engen Centre and Kitso Transnet Academy.

The following issues were identified at the sampled examination centres:

- a. At the Northam Platinum Centre, the ablution facilities and water were in a different office block, approximately 10 meters from the examination room;
- b. At the AECI Centre, the ablution facilities were situated about 20 meters away from the examination room; and
- c. The AECI centre was determined to be a business hub and, therefore, learning and examinations were not its core business. On the day of the examination and monitoring by Umalusi, the room identified for the examination was used for other work-related activities. The examination was moved to a nearby smaller office, compromising seating arrangements, as candidates could not be seated 1 meter apart.

6.3.2 Invigilators and the training

a) Training of chief invigilators and invigilators

The assessment body trained all invigilators, including the chief invigilators, via Microsoft Teams. However, at Circleway Centre, the chief invigilator and the invigilators could not provide evidence of participation in this training, suggesting that they did not attend when it took place. At Sizanani, both the chief invigilator and an invigilator participated in training earlier in the year (January 2024) and were, therefore, not adequately trained for the November 2024 examinations.

b) Appointment of chief invigilators and invigilators

The chief invigilators and invigilators possessed appointment letters at all 15 sampled examination centres.

6.3.3 Preparations for writing this examination session

a) Identity documents (IDs) and admission letters

At Northam Platinum and AECI centres, candidates were allowed into the examination room without verification of their IDs and admission letters. Additionally, candidates at Northam Platinum Centre did not possess their admission letters.

b) Relief invigilation timetable

The relief invigilation timetables at 11 centres were in place and functional. However, the following centres were non-compliant: Phalaborwa, Northam Platinum, Kitso Transnet, and AECI. These centres reported that the chief invigilators also acted as relief invigilators. While it is permissible for chief invigilators to take on relief duties in certain circumstances, this arrangement must be documented in writing and be readily available for verification when required.

c) Invigilation attendance register

Non-compliance was found only at Cape Town Skills Facilitators, where the invigilators had not signed the invigilation attendance register.

d) Seating plan

The monitors found that seating plans were in place in 14 out of 15 centres, and candidates were seated according to the plans. However, at AECI, there was no seating plan; subsequently, the candidates were sitting in an undefined pattern.

e) Clock or time displaying devices

Thirteen centres had clocks or other devices for displaying time. Umalusi monitors reported that there were no wall clocks or time displays at the National Skills and Tech Centre and Training Professionals. Nevertheless, the information board indicated the passage of time during the writing period.

6.3.4 Time management before and during the examination

a) Time management

Time management was effectively observed in 12 examination centres, ensuring that the necessary activities were completed according to a defined schedule. At the AECI centre, the invigilator arrived late, which delayed all essential activities in the examination room before the writing period. Consequently, the candidates began their examinations after the scheduled start time. At Cape Town Skills Facilitators Centre, the candidates were admitted to the examination room only 25 minutes before the writing period, not 30 minutes as prescribed. The reading time at Kitso and Sizanani Centres was affected by poor time management.

b) Examination rules

To prevent students from participating in prohibited practices during examinations, the chief invigilator and the invigilator must read the examination rules to the candidates in the examination room before the writing period begins. In Northam Platinum, the invigilator recited the rules from memory, focusing only on select regulations. At the Kitso and AECL centres, invigilators failed to read the rules. As a result, only 12 out of 15 centres complied with these requirements.

c) Cover page information verification

The information on the cover page must be verified with the candidates. The best practice is to assist candidates step by step in completing the cover page. All 15 centres provided this guidance for candidates appropriately.

6.3.5 Activities during writing

In all sampled examination centres, the invigilators were vigilant and monitored the writing of the examinations as expected. The invigilators moved around the examination venue without disturbing the candidates throughout the exam. They did not provide any explanation on the question paper other than the number of questions to be answered. No one was allowed to leave the examination room during the last 15 minutes of the exam in all the centres sampled.

6.3.6 Handling, packaging, and transporting of scripts

In most centres, the scripts were collected from the candidates, sorted, packaged numerically according to the accompanying mark sheets, and sealed in the presence of Umalusi monitors. The satchels that were used were supplied by the assessment body. The sealed satchels were securely locked in a strongroom and collected by the contracted courier company according to the assessment body's collection schedule. However, at Northam Platinum, the chief invigilator faced a challenge when opening the question paper, which caused the seal to malfunction. It was further explained that the opened question paper satchel was to be reused, as it was designed to serve a dual purpose (to carry the question papers to the examination venue and to send the answer scripts to the assessment body). The scripts could, therefore, not be resealed and were subsequently sent back to the assessment body unsealed.

6.3.7 Incidents with a possible impact on the credibility of the examination sessions

In all the centres where Umalusi monitors were present, there were no incidents that could impact on the credibility of the examinations.

SECTION B: MONITORING OF THE MARKING OF EXAMINATIONS

The IEB GETC: ABET marking session was conducted from 23 to 24 November 2024 at the Holy Family College, located across from the IEB offices in Parktown, Johannesburg. Umalusi monitored the marking session to enforce compliance.

6.3.8 Preparations and planning for marking

a) Availability of marking management plans

The Marking Centre Manager produced a marking management plan upon request, reflecting all the activities related to marking from the first day to the second and final day, should two days of marking be required.

b) Appointment of marking personnel

The Marking Centre Manager produced an audited list of markers appointed by the IEB. The marking personnel comprised the centre manager, seven chief markers, seven internal moderators, 49 markers, and 13 examination assistants.

Table 6B: Total number of marking personnel, the learning areas and the number of scripts received

PERSONNEL APPOINTED FOR MARKING					
Learning Area Code	Number of scripts received	Number of Chief Markers	Internal Moderators	Number of Markers	Number of Examination Assistants
A4CENG	195	1	1	9	2
A4MATH	138	1	1	12	2
A4LIFO	95	1	1	7	2
A4NSCIE	95	1	1	7	2
A4SMME	94	1	1	6	2
A4HSSC	125	1	1	4	2
A4EMSC	48	1	1	4	1
Total	790	7	7	49	13

c) Availability of scripts and marking guidelines

The IEB dispatch team is responsible for collecting and delivering examination scripts. On 22 November 2024, the dispatch team delivered the scripts and marking guidelines to the Holy Family College marking centre. The Centre Manager received these materials on that date. In total, 790 scripts were delivered and stored safely.

However, there was a lack of documentation to confirm the specific date of receipt and the identity of the official who received and stored the scripts. The issue of the missing paper trail was discussed, and IEB indicated that this matter would be addressed in due course.

d) Quality and standard of training sessions across learning areas

Markers in all the learning areas were trained in handling scripts in the marking venues, marking, recording marks, capturing totals, and protocols for dealing with suspected irregularities. Days before the marking process commenced, the marking personnel were provided with question papers to answer and made notes at home. On the first day of marking (23 November 2024), the marking personnel marked each other's work and discussed their notes using the marking guideline.

e) Adherence to norm time

On 23 November 2024, the Centre Manager arrived at 06:30. According to the marking management plan, the marking personnel were scheduled to be on duty by 08:00, and thus, this was achieved. The marking plan indicated that marking would end at 17:00.

6.3.9 Marking centre resources

a) Suitability of the infrastructure and equipment required for the facilitation of marking

The marking centre had security officials at the access gate, and everyone entering was asked about the purpose of their visit. However, visitors were not asked to produce their name tags or IDs. The learners' desks served as individual working tables for the markers in the marking venues. These desks were appropriate for the marking process.

b) Conduciveness of the marking centre and marking rooms (including accommodation for markers)

The marking centre was well-suited for the task at hand. It was spacious and well-lit, with adequate ventilation and free from distractions, ensuring a focused environment for the markers. Access to the marking centre was strictly monitored, allowing entry only to people with proper identification tags. Since the markers were local to Johannesburg and the marking was scheduled for just one day, they were not provided with accommodation at the centre. Only the chief markers were given safe and appropriate overnight accommodation.

c) Compliance with Occupational Health and Safety requirements

The marking centre fully complied with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) requirements. It offered clean ablution facilities, easy access to clean water, and reliable electricity. Additionally, there were fire extinguishers, clearly marked assembly points and visible safety signage. Access to the centre was controlled, featuring ramps and wider doors to accommodate people with disabilities.

6.3.10 Provision of security measures

a) Access control into the marking centre

The assessment body employed the services of the security company contracted to the college to control access. Security personnel were on duty for 24 hours and stationed only at the access gate. The security officials at the gate demanded that all who seek entry produce their IDs and/or name tags reflecting their names and the names of the institutions they represent. Furthermore, all visitors signed the register with security officials. However, when the Umalusi monitor arrived at the access gate, he was not searched, and his laptop was also not registered in the visitor's register.

b) Movement of scripts within the centre

The marking Centre Manager assigned examination assistants to deliver the scripts to the marking venues. Chief markers checked these scripts and distributed them among the markers. Once the marking was completed, the scripts were sorted and verified before being returned to the control room. There was, however, no register to track the movement of scripts from the IEB offices to the marking centre boardroom or control room, then to the various marking rooms, back to the control room, and finally back to the IEB offices.

c) Storage and safekeeping of scripts

The Centre Manager stored the scripts in a safe located in the boardroom, specifically designated for their use. The room was equipped with cameras that recorded all movements in and out. The centre manager controlled the keys to the boardroom and the safe.

6.3.11 Management and handling of detected irregularities

During the training of markers, the Centre Manager discussed the protocols for addressing suspected irregularities. When suspected examination irregularities were reported, the Centre Manager forwarded these reports to the Irregularities Committee for further action. Any script identified as irregular was marked, isolated, and then submitted to the Irregularities Committee. Eventually, Umalusi received the information and the decisions made by the Irregularities Committee.

6.3.12 Monitoring by Assessment Bodies

The assessment body arrived at 10:15 to monitor the marking centre on the day the Umalusi monitor was present.

6.3.13 Quality Assurance Procedures

The internal moderator ensured that each script was thoroughly marked and the totals accurately recorded on the cover page. After the moderation process, the controllers verified that all scripts were marked correctly and that the markers had accurately recorded the totals. Once the marking process was complete, the scripts were transported to the IEB offices for the capturing and verifying of marks by IEB personnel. The IEB employed a double-entry system for this process.

6.3.14 Reporting on qualitative reports

According to the Centre Manager, the following processes were put into action:

- a. Upon completion of marking, the Chief Marker completed a qualitative report;
- b. The qualitative report was completed and finalised after an engagement with the markers;
- c. The report was then handed over to the internal moderator for further consideration and fine-tuning. Once it was found to be correct and reliable, the internal moderator sent it to the assessment body;
- d. At the assessment body, the report was submitted to the assessment specialists for further quality assurance on the qualitative reports; and
- e. The assessment body thereafter submitted the report to Umalusi.

6.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

There was evidence that the assessment body verified the readiness of most of the examination centres to administer the examinations.

6.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The following were noted as areas of concern:

- a. There was insufficient evidence to demonstrate when the scripts were received and the identity of the official who received and stored them;
- b. The examination was not administered at 09:00 but at 15:00 at CICIT AET Centre Stanwest Sakhile; and
- c. The non-compliance issues listed below were noted at some examination centres during the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations as well as in the two previous examination cycles:
 - i. The invigilation timetable, including the relief timetable, was unavailable;
 - ii. Three of the sampled examination centres were not verified by the IEB to conduct the GETC: ABET examinations;
 - iii. The attendance register signed by the invigilators was unavailable;
 - iv. Seating plans were unavailable;
 - v. No clock or time displayed on the information board;
 - vi. The invigilators did not verify the admission letters or the IDs of candidates;
 - vii. Examination rules were not read to candidates, and question papers were not checked for technical accuracy;
 - viii. The examination time regulations were not adhered to;
 - ix. Most examination centres did not have a stock control register; and
 - x. The security personnel at the gate did not search the Umalusi monitor's boot, nor did they ask if they had a laptop.

6.6 DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The IEB is required to ensure that:

- a. All examination centres are verified for their readiness to administer the GETC: ABET examinations;
- b. Monitors from the assessment body leave reports detailing their findings during monitoring visits at the marking and examination centres;
- c. The marking and examination centres keep a stock control register;
- d. The training of invigilators is intensified and includes all personnel who will be involved in the writing of examinations; and
- e. Security officers at the access gate conduct the same security checks on everyone who seeks entry into the marking centre.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The sampled centres were generally compliant, meaning that the examinations conducted by these centres were not compromised. However, in several centres, some crucial guidelines were not adequately followed. Therefore, IEB is urged to ensure full compliance in all examination and marking centres.

CHAPTER 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE OF MARKING

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The quality assurance of marking conducted for the IEB comprises two processes: the standardisation and approval of the final marking guidelines and the verification of the marking of candidates' scripts.

The standardisation of marking guidelines is conducted through a series of meetings, which provide markers, internal moderators, and Umalusi moderators with a platform to discuss the expected responses to each question. The meetings ensure that all personnel involved in the marking process have a common understanding and interpretation of the marking guidelines. Furthermore, this process aims to ensure that all possible alternative responses are included, that responses are corrected and that marking instructions are clarified in the final marking guidelines. Before approving the final marking guidelines, participants must discuss and agree on the expected responses.

The verification of marking is a quality assurance process carried out by Umalusi to ensure that marking is performed fairly and that the marking guidelines are consistently applied across all learning areas. The verification process evaluates adherence to the standardised marking guidelines approved by Umalusi during the standardisation of marking guideline meetings.

The purpose of verifying the marking of scripts is to:

- a. Determine whether the approved marking guidelines are adhered to and applied consistently;
- b. Determine the accuracy and consistency of mark allocation and calculations;
- c. Ascertain that internal moderation is conducted during marking;
- d. Identify possible irregularities; and
- e. Confirm that marking is fair, credible, reliable and valid.

7.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

The IEB conducted the standardisation of marking guidelines for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations on 23 November 2024 in preparation for the marking process. The marking guidelines of seven learning areas were standardised and approved. The process occurred at the IEB's marking centre, at the Holy Family College in Parktown, Johannesburg.

Umalusi deployed one moderator for each learning area to ensure comprehensive oversight at the meeting. Umalusi moderators presented their findings using the Quality Assurance Instrument for Monitoring the Standardisation of Marking Guidelines, an instrument designed to assess the quality and consistency of the marking process.

This instrument requires moderators to report their findings based on the following criteria:

- a. Attendance of internal moderators, examiners and markers at the meetings;
- b. Verification of question papers;
- c. Preparation for the standardisation of marking guideline meetings;
- d. Standardisation of the marking guidelines process;
- e. Training during the standardisation of marking guideline meetings;
- f. Verification of the quality of the final marking guidelines; and
- g. Approval of the final marking guidelines.

Umalusi moderators attended the standardisation of marking guideline meetings to monitor the proceedings, provide guidance where needed, take final decisions and approve the final marking guidelines to be used during actual marking. After the standardisation of marking guideline meetings, Umalusi verified marking in all seven learning areas.

Verification of the marking was conducted shortly after the final marking guidelines were finalised and approved. Umalusi selected samples of scripts for verification on-site while the marking was in progress. The selected samples were representative of candidates' different levels of achievement. This approach enabled the marking personnel to implement the recommendations by Umalusi moderators immediately while marking was underway.

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

- i. Adherence to marking guidelines;
- ii. Quality and standard of marking;
- iii. Irregularities; and
- iv. Performance of candidates.

7.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

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

7.3.1 Standardisation of marking guidelines

To measure the success of the standardisation meetings, Umalusi assessed several factors, including attendance, preparation, and the rigour with which the meetings were conducted. This section presents the findings of Umalusi's assessment, evaluating compliance with each criterion to determine the overall effectiveness of the standardisation process.

a) Attendance of marking personnel

This criterion checks the attendance of markers, examiners, and internal moderators at the standardisation meetings. Anyone involved in the marking and quality assurance of marked scripts must attend these meetings.

The marking personnel included internal moderators, examiners and markers in the seven learning areas. Table 7A summarises the personnel who attended the standardisation meetings per learning area.

Table 7A: Number of marking personnel per learning area

No.	Learning area	Examiner	Internal moderator	Marker	Total
1.	Communication in English (A4CENG)	1	1	8	10
2.	Economic and Management Sciences (A4EMSC)	1	1	3	5
3.	Life Orientation (A4LIFO)	1	1	6	8
4.	Human and Social Sciences (A4HSSC)	1	1	4	6
5.	Mathematics (A4MATH)	1	1	11	13
6.	Natural Sciences (A4NSCIE)	-	1	7	8
7.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (A4SMME)	1	1	5	7
Total		6	7	44	57

Two learning areas, A4CENG and A4MATH, had high levels of participation in the standardisation meetings due to high registration numbers. The IEB deployed examination assistants to verify the marking process to enhance the quality assurance of marking. These assistants ensured that all responses on the examination scripts were marked, that additions were correct, and that the transfer of marks to the mark sheet was accurate. Internal moderators led discussions in A4CENG, A4HSSC, A4NSCIE, and A4MATH to foster a collaborative approach to marking. In contrast, examiners chaired sessions in A4EMSC, A4SMME, and A4LIFO, taking a more directive approach to the marking process.

b) Verification of question papers and marking guidelines

This criterion verifies that the question papers and accompanying marking guidelines to be discussed are those approved by Umalusi during external moderation.

During the November 2024 examinations, Umalusi thoroughly verified the question papers across all seven learning areas. External moderators subsequently confirmed the authenticity of the administered question papers and their corresponding marking guidelines, verifying that they were indeed the final versions approved by Umalusi. This process was complete for all question papers except for A4EMSC, for which Umalusi suggested minor adjustments, necessitating subsequent changes to the marking guideline before printing the A4EMSC question paper. These adjustments were not, however, implemented.

c) Preparation for the standardisation of marking guideline meetings

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

Marking personnel received question papers one week before the meeting dates, enabling them to prepare for the standardisation process. Notably, markers in six learning areas, excluding A4EMSC, developed draft marking guidelines. These draft marking guidelines served as a foundation for the standardisation meetings, facilitating the preparation of potential alternative responses and the identification of necessary corrections to strengthen the marking guidelines. Importantly, no script marking was conducted before the meetings in any learning area, ensuring that pre-existing biases did not influence the standardisation of the marking guidelines.

d) Standardisation of marking guidelines process

This criterion checks the process of standardising marking guidelines in each learning area, the quality and rigour of discussions per group, and the decisions made during these discussions.

In all learning areas, excluding A4EMSC, the marking personnel demonstrated readiness by developing draft marking guidelines. The discussions, led by designated chairpersons, were collaborative and followed a structured approach, focusing on one question at a time to clarify expectations and potential responses. These discussions facilitated amendments to the marking guidelines, including adding alternative responses, marking instructions, and error corrections. Figure 7A provides a detailed summary of the amendments made in each learning area.

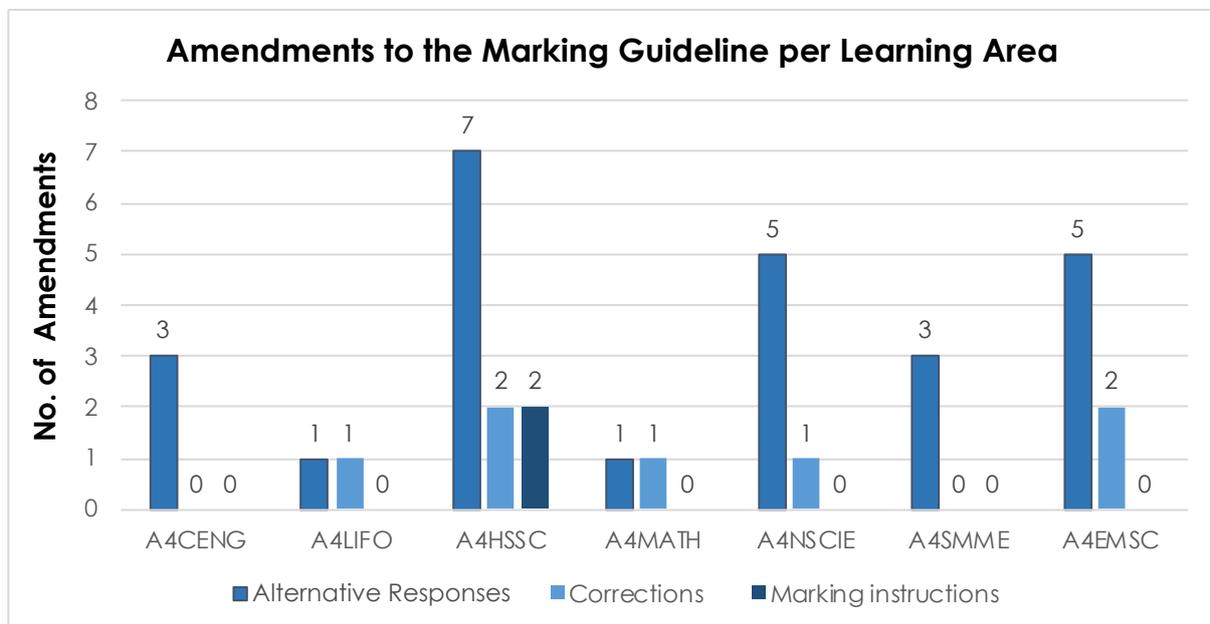


Figure 7A: Amendments to the marking guidelines per learning area

The following is a summary of the amendments made to the marking guidelines per learning area:

- i. There were corrections made in five of the seven learning areas, with the A4CENG and A4SMME having no corrections.
- ii. An average of three alternative responses were added to improve clarity and comprehensiveness. A4MATH and A4LIFO had the lowest (one) alternative responses added.
- iii. A4HSSC had the highest alternative responses added, amounting to seven.
- iv. A4HSSC was the only learning area where marking instructions were added due to some questions demanding higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis and evaluation; and
- v. Two corrections were made to the marking guidelines for A4HSSC and A4EMSC, and one was made to the guidelines for A4NSCIE and A4MATH.

Umalusi approved all amendments to the marking guidelines across all seven learning areas.

e) Training during the standardisation of marking guidelines

This criterion checks whether training was conducted in using the amended guidelines and confirms that there is a common understanding and interpretation of the marking process.

The assessment body conducted a comprehensive training program for the marking personnel, which involved marking dummy scripts prior to attending the marking guideline meetings. Three dummy scripts were provided for all learning areas; however, two were used for A4SMME, A4EMSC, and A4MATH. This hands-on training equipped the markers with the skills and knowledge to apply the marking guidelines accurately and consistently.

During the discussions, marking personnel scrutinised and deliberated each member's marking decisions. Markers were alerted to the potential pitfalls of both rigid and lenient marking practices, particularly in the context of demanding questions. Deviations from the marking guidelines during the marking of dummy scripts fell within an acceptable range across all learning areas, necessitating only minor discussions to resolve disparities. No further alterations were made to the marking guidelines during the training process.

Umalusi oversaw this process and approved all relevant amendments.

f) Quality of the final marking guidelines

This criterion assesses the accuracy and correctness of the responses, including the acceptance of alternative answers, which promotes consistency and accuracy in the marking process. Umalusi evaluates the marking guidelines to determine whether they contain general marking instructions, highlighting the importance of unambiguous instructions to ensure reliable marking. Furthermore, marking personnel are encouraged to consider the candidates' own wording in their responses.

The training process, which involved the practical application of the marking guidelines through the marking of dummy scripts, significantly boosted the markers' confidence in their ability to apply the guidelines accurately and consistently.

Umalusi expressed confidence in the fairness, validity, and reliability of the marking process.

g) Approval of the final marking guidelines

This criterion verifies whether Umalusi approved the amendments and final marking guidelines.

The marking personnel developed clear, error-free, and unambiguous marking guidelines in all seven learning areas. These guidelines encompassed precise instructions and various alternative responses to ensure consistent and accurate marking. Before starting the actual marking process, markers were required to incorporate approved amendments directly onto the marking guidelines, which the Umalusi moderators then approved.

7.3.2 Verification of marking

This section presents the findings from the verification of marking, which involved an examination of 75 sample scripts across seven learning areas. The verification process focused on the four key moderation criteria outlined in section 7.2, providing a comprehensive summary of the main qualitative findings for each criterion.

a) Adherence to the marking guideline

This criterion assesses the consistency of the markers' application of the approved marking guidelines and verifies whether candidates' responses received credit based on merit.

Marking personnel in A4MATH and A4SMME consistently applied the approved marking guidelines, keeping variations within an acceptable range. However, there were inconsistencies in applying the approved marking guidelines for A4HSSC, A4EMSC, A4LIFO, A4CENG, and A4NSCIE. For A4LIFO, markers adopted a strict approach, potentially disadvantaging candidates, while markers in the other four learning areas were overly lenient, potentially benefiting candidates unfairly.

The above inconsistencies were detected early in the marking process. To address these issues, examiners and internal moderators conducted coaching sessions with individual markers and the entire marking team. As a result, adherence to the marking guidelines improved.

During the marking session, the marking guidelines for several sub-questions in A4MATH and questions 9, 10, and 11 in A4CENG were added to enhance their clarity and consistency, which Umalusi subsequently approved. Markers were instructed to incorporate these additions into their marking practices.

b) Quality and standard of marking

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

Umalusi observed accurate mark allocation in three learning areas: A4MATH, A4NSCIE, and A4SMME. However, deviations were noted in the four other learning areas. In A4CENG, A4LIFO, and A4EMSC, markers either scored too low or too high on free-response questions, such as essays or paragraphs, in three out of ten samples. A similar issue was found in A4HSSC, but only in one out of ten samples. Internal and external moderation processes addressed these discrepancies, ensuring standardised marking across the board. Marks were accurately totalled and transferred to the mark sheet, with examination assistants correcting any calculation errors. After internal and Umalusi moderation, the marking process for all seven learning areas was deemed fair, valid, and reliable.

c) Alleged irregularities

This criterion verifies whether the marking personnel were trained to identify and manage suspected irregularities.

Umalusi observed proper examination conduct during the marking of six learning areas. However, potential irregularities were identified in A4MATH, where six candidates from one centre submitted identical incorrect responses for questions 3B, 4B, and 5B. These suspected irregularities were reported to the IEB for further investigation.

d) Performance of candidates

This criterion analyses candidates' overall performance as well as their performance per question. The Umalusi moderators verified candidate performance per learning area on a sample of scripts. The results, summarised in the figures and tables below, highlight both high- and low-average performance questions. This information will assist the assessment body in advising curriculum providers on effective teaching and learning strategies.

i. Economic and Management Sciences (A4EMSC)

The marking for A4EMSC was verified on a sample of 11 scripts. The question paper comprised ten questions. Figure 7B illustrates the average performance of sampled candidates per question.

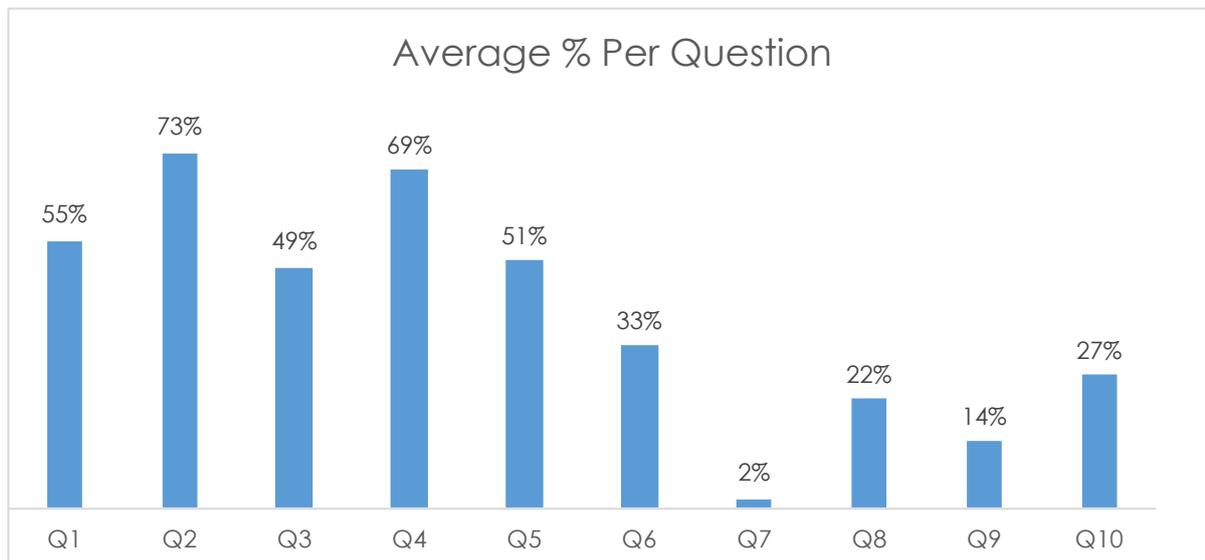


Figure 7B: Candidates' performance in A4EMSC per question - 11 scripts

Figure 7B demonstrates that candidates achieved the highest average score (73%) on question 2. This question required candidates to select the correct answers from columns A and B, covering content from all unit standards within the learning area. In contrast, question 7, which assessed the candidates' understanding of different forms of ownership, was the most challenging, resulting in an average score of only 2%.

Table 7B: Mark distribution as a percentage – A4EMSC

Mark distribution									
0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
0	0	3	3	2	2	1	0	0	0

Table 7B shows the mark distribution of a sample of 11 candidates in the A4EMSC learning area. The highest-performing candidate scored 61%, while the lowest-performing candidate scored 21%. Five of the 11 candidates passed the examination, while six did not. None of the sample candidates scored above 70% or below 10%. This performance is considerably lower than that of November 2023, which included one candidate who achieved a distinction with a score of 80%.

ii. Human and Social Sciences (A4HSSC)

The marking for A4HSSC was verified on a sample of 10 scripts. The question paper consisted of nine questions. Figure 7C illustrates the average performance of sampled candidates per question.

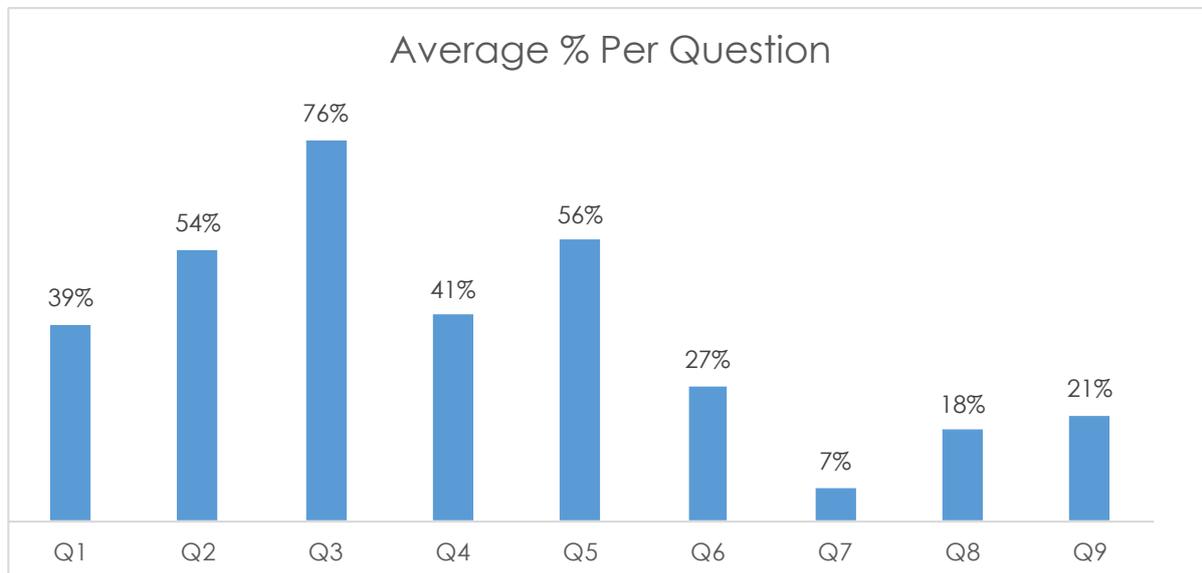


Figure 7C: Candidates' performance in A4HSSC per question - 10 scripts

Figure 7C illustrates that candidates achieved their highest average performance in question 3, scoring 76%. This question assessed the ability to accurately match statements and terminology between columns A and B, covering content from all unit standards within the learning area. In contrast, question 7, which evaluated visual analysis skills related to earthquakes, resulted in a low average performance of just 7%, with only four out of the ten candidates attempting to answer it.

Table 7C: Mark distribution as a percentage – A4HSSC

Mark distribution									
0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
0	1	2	1	2	2	0	2	0	0

Table 7C shows that 60% of the sample candidates passed the examination, while 40% failed. The overall pass rate is similar to that of November 2023. However, there has been a decline in performance quality, as no candidates achieved a distinction in the current sample, compared to six distinctions in November 2023. The highest-performing candidate scored 75%, while the lowest-performing candidate scored 17.5%. Notably, no candidate scored below 10%.

iii. Communication in English (A4CENG)

The marking was verified on a sample of 10 scripts. The question paper consisted of three questions. Figure 7D illustrates the average performance of sampled candidates per question.

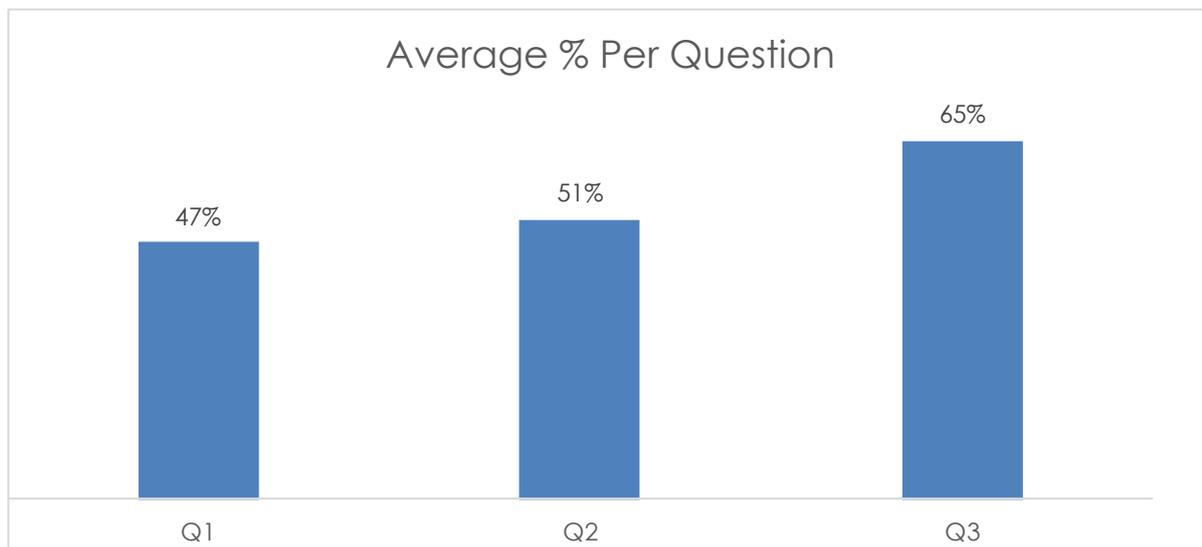


Figure 7D: Candidates' performance in A4CENG per question - 10 scripts

Figure 7D shows that question 3, which assessed knowledge and skills related to unit standards ID 119636 and 119640, achieved the highest average performance at 65%. In contrast, question 1, which focused on unit standard ID 119640, had the lowest average performance at 47%.

Table 7D: Mark distribution as a percentage – A4CENG

Mark distribution									
0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
0	0	0	1	3	1	3	1	1	0

Table 7D shows that all sampled candidates performed satisfactorily, with no one scoring below 10%. One candidate stood out by achieving a distinction with a score of 84%. The lowest mark among the candidates was 36%. Nine of the ten candidates passed the examination, while one did not. This indicates a notable improvement in the pass rate (90%) compared to November 2023 (70%).

iv. Life Orientation (A4LIFO)

The marking was verified on a sample of 10 scripts. The question paper comprised 13 questions. Figure 7E illustrates the average performance of sampled candidates per question.

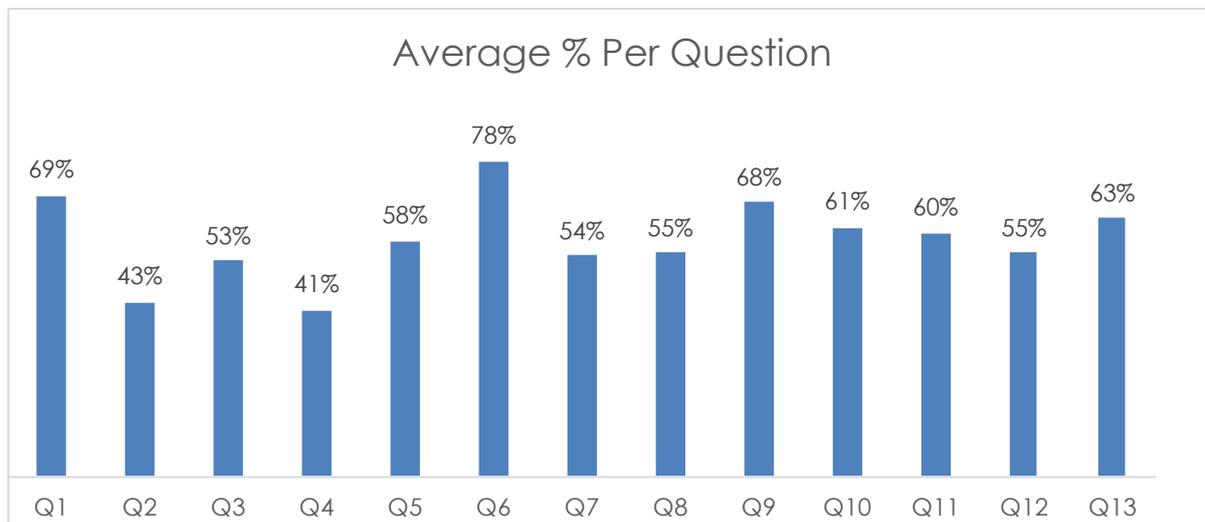


Figure 7E: Candidates' performance in A4LIFO per question - 10 scripts

Figure 7E shows that question 6, which assessed candidates' understanding of healthy relationships (US ID 14664) based on an extract, achieved the highest performance with an average score of 78%. In contrast, question 4, which required an infographic analysis about sexually transmitted infections (US ID 14656), was the most challenging, resulting in an average score of just 41%.

Table 7E: Mark distribution as a percentage – A4LIFO

Mark distribution									
0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
0	0	1	1	1	3	2	0	2	0

Table 7E shows that 80% of candidates passed the examination, while 20% failed. This pass rate is consistent with that observed in November 2023. The top-performing candidates achieved distinctions with a score of 89%. All candidates scored above 10%, with the lowest-performing candidate scoring 29%.

v. Mathematical Literacy (A4MATH)

The marking was verified on a sample of 10 scripts. The question paper consisted of 11 questions. Figure 7F illustrates the average performance of sampled candidates per question.

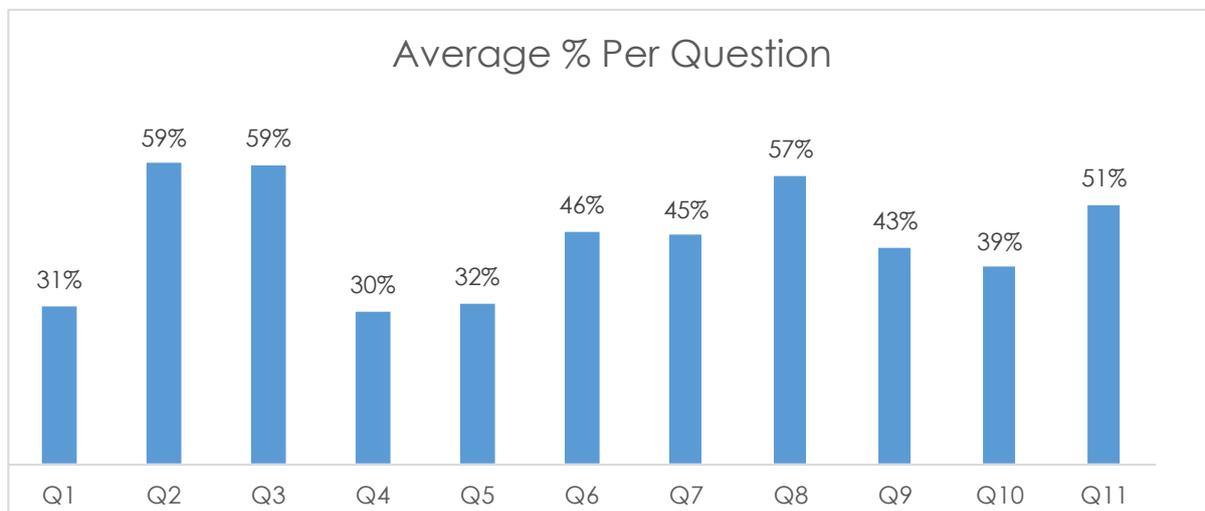


Figure 7F: Candidates' performance in A4MATH per question - 10 scripts

Figure 7F shows that questions 2 and 3 were the strongest areas for candidates, each achieving an average score of 59%. Question 2 tested candidates' ability to perform calculations in a context-free environment, while question 3 focused on real-life problem-solving skills. In contrast, question 4, which required candidates to apply number patterns to a real-life scenario involving a water utility bill, was the most challenging, with an average score of only 30%.

Table 7F: Mark distribution as a percentage – A4MATH

Mark distribution									
0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
0	0	0	3	4	2	1	0	0	0

Table 7F shows that 70% of the sampled candidates passed the examination, while 30% did not. This marks a slight decrease of 5% from the pass rate observed in November 2023. Notably, no candidate scored below 10%, and no distinctions were awarded. The highest score achieved by a candidate was 63%, while the lowest score was 33%. This suggests a decline in the overall performance and quality of mark distribution compared to November 2023.

vi. Natural Sciences (A4NSCIE)

The marking was verified on 14 scripts. The question paper consisted of eight questions. Figure 7G illustrates the average performance of sampled candidates per question.

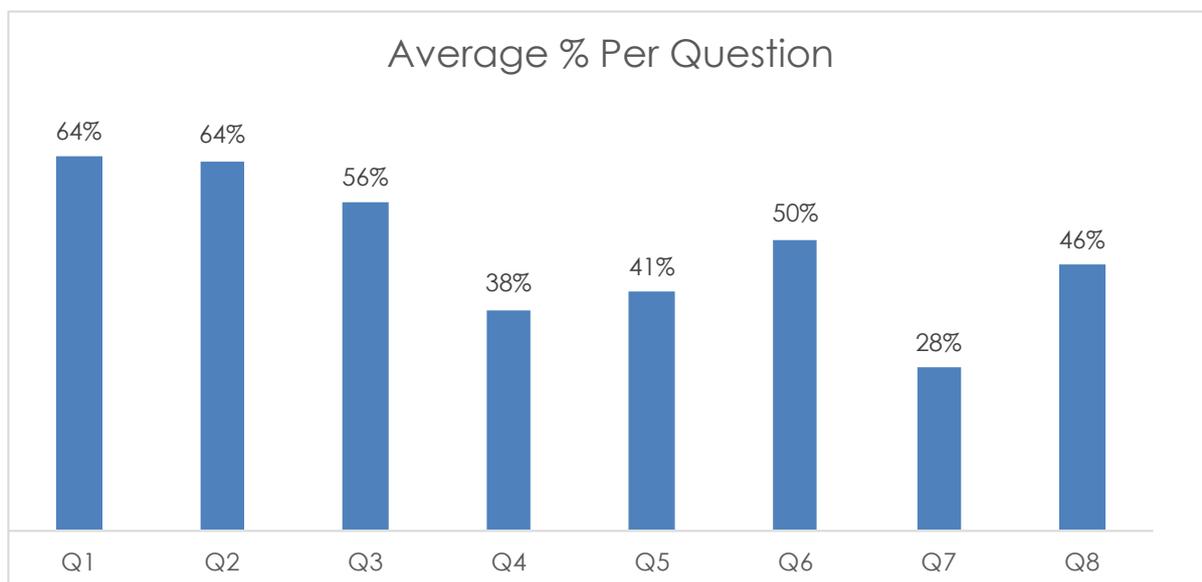


Figure 7G: Candidates' performance in A4NSCIE per question - 14 scripts

Figure 7G shows that questions 1 and 2 were the strongest areas for candidates, each achieving an average score of 64%. Question 1 assessed knowledge across all unit standards using a multiple-choice format, while question 2 focused on true or false statements regarding the same unit standards. Both questions were clearly well understood by the candidates. In contrast, question 7, which tested the understanding of density, proved to be the most challenging, with an average score of only 28%.

Table 7G: Mark distribution as a percentage – A4NSCIE

Mark distribution									
0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
0	3	2	0	2	3	2	1	1	0

Table 7G shows that 64% of the 14 sampled candidates passed the examination, while 36% failed. This marks a notable 17.6% increase compared to the pass rate in November 2023. Notably, no candidate scored a mark below 10%. The top candidate achieved a distinction with the highest score of 82%.

vii. Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (A4SMME)

The marking was verified on ten scripts. The question paper consisted of seven questions. Figure 7H illustrates the average performance of sampled candidates per question.

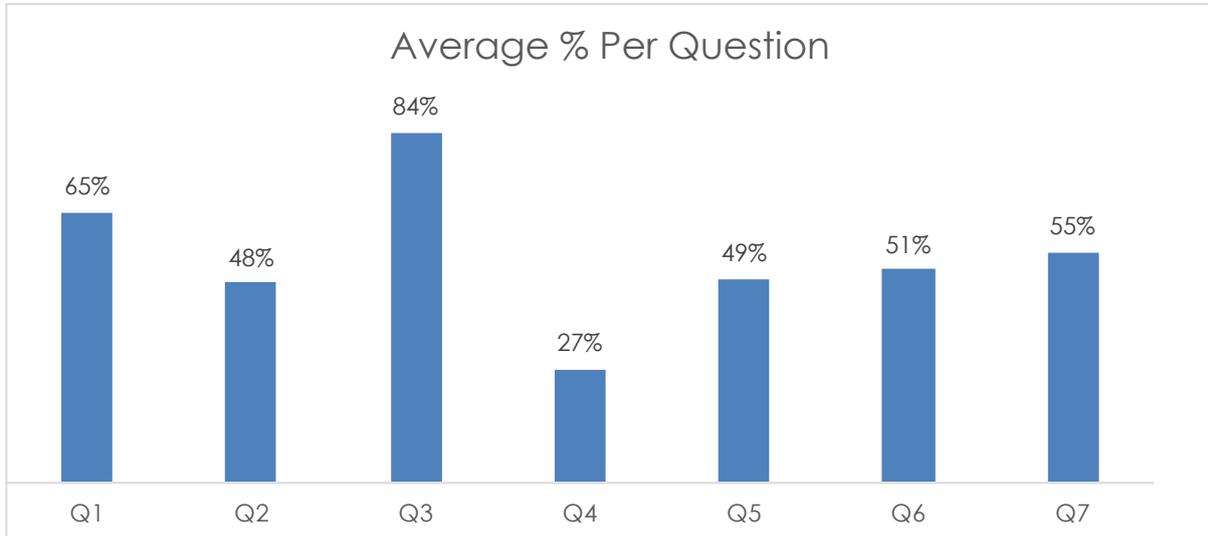


Figure 7H: Candidates’ performance in A4SMME per question – 10 scripts

Figure 7H reveals that question 3 was the strongest area for candidates, with an average score of 84%. This question assessed knowledge across all unit standards in the learning area through a multiple-choice format. In contrast, question 4, which required an understanding of market research, proved to be the most challenging, with an average score of 27%.

Table 7H: Mark distribution as a percentage – A4SMME

Mark distribution									
0-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-59%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
0	0	0	2	1	3	2	2	0	0

Table 7H shows that 80% of the sampled candidates passed the examination, while 20% failed. The pass rate was notable, 15% lower than in November 2023. Notably, no candidate scored below 10%, and no distinctions were awarded. The highest mark achieved by a candidate was 73%, while the lowest was 33%.

7.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

The following areas of improvement were noted:

- a. The marking guidelines demonstrated quality from the start, requiring only a few amendments compared to previous years; and
- b. There was a notable improvement in the quality of marking.

7.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

The following were noted as concerns:

- a. The suggested minor adjustments necessitating subsequent changes to the A4EMSC marking guideline were not implemented before printing the examination question paper;
- b. The marking personnel for all learning areas except for A4EMSC compiled their own draft marking guidelines as part of the preparations for the marking guideline discussions; and
- c. There was inconsistency in the number of dummy scripts used to train markers for each learning area.

7.6 DIRECTIVE FOR COMPLIANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

The IEB is required to ensure that:

- a. Umalusi's recommendations for the adjustment of the marking guidelines are implemented before the final printing is done to minimise changes during verification of marking (A4EMSC);
- b. There is consistency in all learning areas in preparation for the marking guideline discussions; and
- c. The same number of dummy scripts are used per learning area during the training of markers.

7.7 CONCLUSION

Umalusi monitored the attendance, preparation, and thoroughness of the standardisation meetings to ensure the effective standardisation of the marking guidelines. Amendments and additions were approved based on discussions and the marking of dummy scripts. The approved marking guidelines were deemed comprehensive and included clear instructions for marking.

Umalusi expressed confidence in the quality and appropriateness of the marking guidelines. Marking personnel consistently adhered to the approved marking guidelines, and internal moderation played a crucial role in ensuring standardisation across the learning areas. The quality and standard of marking showed improvement, with accurate allocation and totalling of marks. The performance of candidates varied across different learning areas, and varying average scores were observed for different questions.

CHAPTER 8: STANDARDISATION AND RESULTING

8.1 INTRODUCTION

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

In broad terms, standardisation involves the verification of learning area structures, monitoring of the capturing of marks, dry run testing for system alignment, developing and verifying norms, and verifying the standardisation booklets in preparation for standardisation meetings. Standardisation decisions are informed by various factors, including Umalusi principles of standardisation, qualitative inputs compiled by internal and external moderators, and examination monitors and intervention reports presented by assessment bodies. The process concludes with the approval of mark adjustments per learning area, statistical moderation, and the resulting process.

8.2 SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi quality assured the results of seven General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET) learning areas for the November 2024 examinations, administered by the Independent Examinations Board (IEB), through the standardisation and resulting processes. In preparation for the standardisation meeting, Umalusi verified the historical averages (norms) after checking for outlier years, conducted dry-run testing, and processed and verified the standardisation datasets and the e-booklet. During the pre-standardisation meeting, the Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) considered quantitative data and qualitative inputs to reach standardisation decisions per learning area. After the standardisation meeting, Umalusi verified the correctness of the adjustments applied to each learning area and subsequently verified and approved the resulting files on the learning area level.

8.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following section presents the most important results and decisions before, during, and after the standardisation meetings.

8.3.1 Development of norms

The November 2024 GETC: ABET examination norms were developed from the previous five examination sittings. Once the norms were established, per policy requirements, the IEB submitted the norms to Umalusi for verification and approval. Analysis of the norms' datasets showed no learning areas with outlier years for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations.

8.3.2 Dry runs and verification of the GETC: ABET system

In preparation for the November 2024 standardisation processes, Umalusi and the IEB verified the systems through dry-run testing. The purpose of the dry run testing was to ensure the alignment and readiness of the mainframe system for the November 2024 data processing. The dry run testing focused on ensuring that:

- i. Formulae used for data processing were compatible;
- ii. The historical data on both systems were accurate; and
- iii. The systems could verify whether an SBA mark exists for each repeater candidate.

8.3.3 Electronic datasets and standardisation booklets

The IEB submitted the standardisation datasets to Umalusi for verification purposes. The standardisation datasets and booklet for the GETC: ABET examinations adhered to the Requirements and Specification for Standardisation, Statistical Moderation, and Resulting Guideline document. The standardisation datasets and booklet were verified and eventually approved.

8.3.4 Pre-standardisation and standardisation

Umalusi held the pre-standardisation and standardisation meetings for the GETC: ABET examinations on 21 and 22 December 2024. Many factors, including qualitative and quantitative data, guided the ASC in making adjustment decisions. The qualitative input included matters emanating from the moderation of question papers and marking guideline discussions on issues that might unfairly advantage or disadvantage candidates and Evidence-Based Reporting (EBR). Quantitative inputs included guiding norms and pairs analysis. All evidence was considered based on the established standardisation principles. The GETC: ABET November 2024 standardisation adjustment decisions are listed in Table 8A.

Table 8A: List of standardisation decisions for the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations

Description	Total
Number of learning areas represented	07
Raw marks	02
Adjusted (mainly upwards)	02
Adjusted (downwards)	03
Unstandardised	00
Number of learning areas standardised:	07

Once the ASC was satisfied with the reliability of the information provided, seven of the learning areas presented were standardised. For the November 2024 GETC: ABET examinations, the ASC accepted the raw marks for two out of seven learning areas. The marks for two learning areas were adjusted upwards, and the marks for three were adjusted mainly downwards. Considering the factors discussed during the standardisation meeting, the ASC recommended that the IEB closely monitor subjects with high variability.

8.3.5 Post-standardisation

Umalusi conducted the approval of the adjustment of marks and the verification of the statistical moderation and resulting processes after the standardisation meeting. Umalusi verified the correctness of the adjustments applied to each learning area and subsequently verified and approved the resulting files on the learning area level.

8.4 AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

None.

8.5 AREAS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

None.

8.6 DIRECTIVES FOR COMPLIANCE

None.

8.7 CONCLUSION

The standardisation decisions taken were based on sound educational reasoning. Therefore, Umalusi can conclude that the standardisation process was conducted in a fair, transparent and reliable manner.

ANNEXURE

Annexure 1A: Compliance of question papers with each criterion at initial moderation

No.	SUBJECT (QUESTION PAPER)	COMPLIANCE PER CRITERIA AT INITIAL MODERATION									
		TA	LB	IM	CC	CD	AAG	PRE	MG	TOTAL: (A)	%: (A)
1.	Economic and Management Sciences	A	A	M	A	M	M	A	A	5	62.5%
2.	Human and Social Sciences	A	A	A	M	A	L	A	A	6	75%
3.	LLC: English	A	A	A	M	M	L	A	A	5	62.5%
4.	Life Orientation	M	M	A	M	A	M	M	M	2	25%
5.	Mathematical Literacy	L	M	M	L	A	A	A	L	3	37.5%
6.	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises	A	M	M	M	L	M	A	M	2	25%
7.	Natural Science	M	M	A	M	M	A	A	L	2	25%

KEY:

TA = Technical Aspects

LB = Language and Bias

IM = Internal Moderation

CC = Content Coverage

CD = Cognitive Demand

AAG = Adherence to Assessment Guideline

PRE = Predictability

MG = Marking Guideline

A = compliance in ALL respects

M = compliance in MOST respects

L = LIMITED compliance

N = NO compliance

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