

2025/26

OPEN LETTER TO APPLICANTS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Dear prospective applicant for accreditation

1. Application Process

Umalusi accepts applications for accreditation from registered independent schools offering the National Curriculum Statement in Grades 1 to 12, leading to the National Senior Certificate.

The accreditation process is as follows for a new applicant:

	Step in Process	Explanation
1.1	Letter of intent to apply for accreditation	<p>a. An Independent School completes an online "Letter of Intent to apply for accreditation" (LOI) found on the Umalusi website: www.umalusi.org.za "Apply for Accreditation";</p> <p>b. An invoice for processing the LOI is generated on the online system and can be printed from the system;</p> <p>c. Once payment is verified, Umalusi screens the applicant's expression of intent and approves or rejects it or requests further information.</p>
1.2	Attendance of a Quality Promotion (QP) Meeting	<p>a. All applicants must attend a compulsory online Quality Promotion (QP) meeting before completing their self-evaluation report (application). These meetings are meant to ensure that applicants are fully aware of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How to complete the self-evaluation (which constitutes an application); The evidence required; An overview of what to expect for the site visit (a pre-site visit meeting will be held closer to the time of the site visit); Fees applicable and payment methods. <p>b. Attendance of these meetings will be per invitation only. Applicants will be informed of the date and will be sent a link to join the online meeting once confirmation of attendance has been received. Only the applicants who have submitted their online intent to apply for accreditation and whose letter of intent has been accepted will be invited.</p> <p>c. After attending the QP meeting, the applicant will be granted access to the online self-evaluation instrument and will be invoiced to submit the self-evaluation report.</p>

	Step in Process	Explanation
		d. Applicants will also be granted access to the application guideline document that explains in detail what is expected, particularly regarding the evidence required.
1.3	Submission of online Self-Evaluation report (E&A IS 5A) and Portfolio of Evidence	<p>a. Once the self-evaluation invoice has been paid and payment verified, applicants will be able to submit their self-evaluation report and the required evidence on Umalusi's online system.</p> <p>b. If the evidence submitted is insufficient or does not meet the requirements, the self-evaluation report will be returned to the applicant to rework and resubmit with the correct evidence. An additional fee is payable on each resubmission.</p> <p>c. Only two resubmissions will be permitted.</p> <p>d. If there is no improvement after the second resubmission, the entire submission will be rejected. The applicant will then be required to make a new application and pay for the new application from the beginning of the process. On reapplication, there will be no access to the documents previously uploaded.</p> <p>e. A school is considered to have made an application for accreditation once a self-evaluation report meeting the requirements has been submitted.</p> <p>f. Schools compliant with Umalusi's processes as at 30 June each year will be reported to the provincial education departments and private assessment bodies. The assessment bodies consult these lists in considering applications for registration as examination centres for the following year.</p>
1.4	Site verification visit	<p>a. When the self-evaluation report meets the minimum requirements, the applicant will receive an invoice for the next phase of the accreditation process, the site visit. The site visit may be online or a physical site visit.</p> <p>b. A site visit will only take place once the requisite site visit fee has been paid.</p> <p>c. An unannounced confirmation physical site visit may take place after an online site visit.</p> <p>d. Applicants who request a delay of the site visit will retain the status of "unaccredited" until they are found to be compliant with the accreditation criteria.</p> <p>e. A delay in the site visit (caused by the school) of more than six months will lead to the lapse of the application, with no refund of costs and no access to the documents previously submitted.</p>

	Step in Process	Explanation
		f. An online pre-site visit meeting will be held before an online site visit. The programme for the site visit and all logistical requirements will be explained during the pre-site visit meeting.
1.5	Accreditation report submitted to the Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC)	<p>a. After a site visit, a consolidated report will be presented to the Accreditation Committee of Council (ACC) for consideration of the outcome of the application. This ensures that the accreditation process is fair and that the decisions are consistent with the evidence presented and evaluated.</p> <p>b. The decisions which can be made are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation • Two years provisional accreditation • Does not meet the requirements – “window period” to improve • No accreditation (after provisional accreditation or a window period to improve) <p>c. The criteria for accreditation are indicated in Annexure A (page 6).</p>
1.6	Correspondence sent to schools for which the ACC recommends "a window period to improve" or provisional accreditation for the initial application	<p>a. Schools that do not meet the minimum requirements for accreditation will be notified of the areas found not meeting the requirements and the time that the school is granted to meet the minimum requirements for accreditation. At the point of re-evaluation, the school must meet the minimum standards in all criteria, not only those listed in the feedback report.</p> <p>b. An additional fee is payable for the evaluation of evidence following provisional accreditation or a window period to improve.</p> <p>c. An unannounced or online follow-up site visit may be conducted to verify the new evidence submitted.</p> <p>d. An unannounced confirmation site visit may follow an online site visit.</p> <p>e. Non-submission of the required evidence or non-payment of the required fee within the specified period will lead to a final "no accreditation" decision.</p> <p>f. After verification of the evidence submitted, the report will again be presented to the ACC for consideration.</p> <p>g. Note that all accreditation criteria must be met at the time of review. That means, if criteria were met at the first presentation of the report to the ACC and were therefore not stated as areas needing attention, but the standards drop and the school no longer meets the criteria at the point of review, the school will be</p>

	Step in Process	Explanation
		considered not compliant in those areas when deciding on the outcome of the application for accreditation.
1.7	The decision by the CEO	<p>a. Once the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has approved the recommendation of the ACC, the outcome will be communicated through a letter emailed to the institution.</p> <p>b. An appeal process is in place should the applicant wish to appeal a "no accreditation" decision. It must be noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An appeal must be lodged within the specified dates that are indicated on the letter sent to the institution notifying of the outcome of the accreditation application. ➤ The appeal fee must be paid within the specified dates. ➤ The appeal will be considered based on evidence available at the time of the application, not measures put in place subsequent to the evaluation.
1.8	Monitoring	<p>Umalusi will monitor accredited independent schools.</p> <p>Monitoring may be through the submission of a report and supporting evidence, or through a site visit (announced or unannounced).</p>

2. Payment of Invoices

- a. The fees for the accreditation process are indicated in Annexure B (page 9) of this letter.
- b. Payment must be made in advance per step of the accreditation process. This means that payment for each step must be made before the step can take place.
- c. No step will be executed before all amounts the applicant is invoiced for are settled. This includes invoices for other services provided by Umalusi.
- d. Umalusi will not refund any payments made towards an executed step. Should an institution wish to cancel their application, there will be no refund. We, therefore, appeal to institutions to be sure about their application.
- e. Invoices issued for any process step must be settled within 30 days. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of the application, irrespective of the step at which the applicant is.
- f. Applicants whose invoices were not settled and their applications rejected will be required to re-apply for accreditation at full cost to the applicant. There will be no transfer of funds from previous applications that have been rejected. The applicant will not have access to documents already submitted in the case of the rejection of an application.

3. Reporting of accreditation status

- a. In line with the requirements for registration of schools as examination centres, Umalusi reports the accreditation status of schools to the Provincial Education Departments and the private assessment bodies. To this end, Umalusi will submit a list of schools that have made sufficient progress in their application for accreditation to the assessment bodies. The stage reported will remain as such for the purposes of the Provincial Education Departments and private assessment bodies for the following academic year.
- b. Schools that received an outcome of "no accreditation" and are reapplying for accreditation will only be included on the list once they receive an outcome of accreditation or provisional accreditation.
- c. Accredited independent schools will receive a letter of accreditation and an Accreditation certificate.
- d. Accredited independent schools will be indicated on Umalusi's website, www.umalusi.org.za.

4. Additional information

Additional information on this accreditation process can be obtained from the Standard Operating Procedure documents found on the Umalusi website and during attendance of the Quality Promotion meetings. You are also free to contact our offices in this regard.

Contact details are as follows:

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ANNEXURE A

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS		
Criteria	Description in Policy ¹ and Regulations ²	Core Indicators for Accreditation
Criterion 1 Leadership, Management and Communication	<p>(a) The school's leadership is instructive and provides strategic direction and governance oversight based on acceptable practices.</p> <p>(b) The school is sufficiently resourced and sustainable.</p> <p>(c) The management strategies, policies and processes are effective in facilitating the achievement of the school's stated objectives and national objectives, and in raising school performance.</p> <p>(d) The management leads, monitors and continuously improves the capacity of the school as well as the quality and standard of the implementation and delivery of the curriculum/programme.</p> <p>(e) School resource, financial and management records, as well as learner records, are comprehensive, authentic and reliable.</p> <p>(f) The school leadership and management consult and communicate effectively with all stakeholders in respect of strategic and management related matters.</p>	<p>i. The school leadership and its governance structure provide strategic direction and consult and communicate with all relevant stakeholders;</p> <p>ii. The Head of the school (principal) has a professional teaching qualification and current registration with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) for employment purposes.</p> <p>iii. The offering of the school is in line with the registration of the school in terms of the name, physical address and the grades offered.</p> <p>iv. There is evidence that the school is financially sustainable and can meet its financial obligations as they fall due.</p> <p>v. The management strategies, policies and processes are effective in facilitating the achievement of the school's and national objectives, and raising school performance;</p> <p>vi. The management of learner records is comprehensive, authentic and reliable;</p> <p>vii. There is a valid, current Health and Safety Certificate (not older than two years) for the school AND hostel.</p> <p>viii. There is adequate serviced fire equipment (serviced within 12</p>

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Criteria	Description in Policy ¹ and Regulations ²	Core Indicators for Accreditation
		<p>months).</p> <p>ix. The Health and Safety Committee is active and ensures the implementation of policy.</p> <p>x. There are suitable, safe and sufficient facilities (school and hostel where applicable) to discharge education as envisaged in the school's vision and mission statement.</p> <p>xi. There is a valid Certificate of Acceptability as Food Premises if food or snacks are prepared or sold on the premises.</p>
Criterion 2 School ethos	The school gives expression to an ethos that promotes and is not in conflict with the values of the South African Constitution and displays values that reflect the specific character of the school, as articulated in the school's vision and mission statement, with specific attention to safety and discipline as required in the <i>South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)</i>.	<p>i. The vision and mission of the school promote an ethos that is not in conflict with the South African constitution.</p> <p>ii. In the application/execution of its ethos, the school expresses an ethos that promotes and does not conflict with the values of the South African Constitution, applicable legislation and the principles of the NQF.</p> <p>iii. There is no form of unfair discrimination evident in the school.</p>
Criterion 3 Teaching and learning	<p>(a) The school is professionally staffed to support the qualifications it offers.</p> <p>(b) The school implements the curriculum/programme and assessment requirements at the required standard and in accordance with the policy requirements of the qualifications registered on the General and</p>	<p>i. At least 80% of the teachers hold a professional teaching qualification.</p> <p>ii. All teachers have current registration with SACE for employment purposes.</p> <p>iii. The principal and teachers have valid employment contracts.</p> <p>iv. The school demonstrates the capacity to develop and implement learning programmes,</p>

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Criteria	Description in Policy ¹ and Regulations ²	Core Indicators for Accreditation
	<p>Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.</p> <p>(c) The school provides appropriate learner support.</p> <p>(d) The school manages and conducts internal continuous assessment of an acceptable standard and provides developmental feedback to learners.</p> <p>(e) Where appropriate, the school is registered as an examination centre that undertakes external assessment in compliance with the directives of the national policy that governs the qualification, policies and directives of Umalusi Council and the relevant assessment body.</p> <p>(f) An appropriate and developmental extra-curricular programme is implemented.</p>	<p>lesson plans and assessment programmes that are in line with the minimum outcomes of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).</p> <p>v. The school has a suitably qualified, functional academic board.</p> <p>vi. The school is sufficiently resourced and sustainable and has adequate teaching and learning resources, suitable facilities, premises and financial resources to manage the programmes offered and enhance the quality of teaching and learning;</p> <p>vii. The school demonstrates the capacity to administer quality assessment at the required standard and in line with the minimum requirements of the CAPS and the regulations pertaining to the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination, and provides developmental feedback to learners;</p> <p>viii. The teachers demonstrate capacity in conducting internal assessment and developing School Based Assessment tasks that are of acceptable standards.</p> <p>ix. The school demonstrates alignment of the outcomes of the curriculum with the learning outcomes of the National Curriculum Statement at the exit grades of grades 3, 6, 9 and 12.</p> <p>x. The school demonstrates alignment</p>

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS		
Criteria	Description in Policy ¹ and Regulations ²	Core Indicators for Accreditation
		<p>of records of learner achievement in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12.</p> <p>xi. The school provides appropriate learner support</p> <p>xii. The school provides adequate opportunities to learners for co- and / or extra-curricular participation in line with its vision and mission.</p>
Criterion 4 School Results	The quality of school performance is evaluated and used to inform continuous improvement in the quality of provision with specific reference to the quality of learner achievements and assessment outcomes, and stakeholder satisfaction levels.	<p>Taking into consideration the profile of the learners enrolled:</p> <p>i. The school's Grade 12 results are comparable with and demonstrate improvement towards the national average.</p> <p>ii. Learner results are analysed in all grades.</p> <p>iii. The analysis of results is used to inform school performance.</p> <p>iv. A plan is in place and implemented to inform continuous improvement in the quality of provision and quality of learner achievements and assessment outcomes.</p> <p>v. Annual stakeholder surveys are conducted with parents, learners, and educators, and are used to improve school performance.</p> <p>vi. The school provides appropriate and effective learner support.</p>

¹ Policy and Criteria for the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Monitoring of Independent Schools and Private Assessment Bodies (Government Gazette 35830 of 29 October 2012, as amended).

² Regulations regarding the Criteria for the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Monitoring of Independent Schools and Private Assessment Bodies (Government Gazette 41206 of 27 October 2017).

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
ACCREDITATION FEES
EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 2025 – 31 MARCH 2026**

		Foundation Phase	Primary School	High School	Combined School	Combined School
		Grades 1 - 3	Grades 1 - 7	Grades 8 - 12	Grades 1 - 9	Grades 1 - 12
Step 1	Letter of Intent (LOI)	R 1 238	R 1 238	R 1 238	R 1 238	R 1 238
Step 2	Attendance of online Quality Promotion Meeting	-	-	-	-	-
Step 3	Self-evaluation	R 6 583	R 10 913	R 13 079	R 15 238	R 19 566
Step 4	Site Visit	R 30 570	R 36 709	R 36 709	R 48 992	R 48 992
Step 5	Biennial Accreditation Fee	R 5 445	R 5 445	R 5 445	R 5 445	R 5 445

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ACCREDITATION FEES: EFFECTIVE 1 APRIL 2024

		College	Intermediate Phase	Senior Phase	Combined School	Combined School
		Grades 10 – 12	Grades 4 – 6	Grades 7 - 9	Grades 4 - 12	Grades 4 – 9
Step 1	Letter of Intent (LOI)	R 1 238	R 1 238	R 1 238	R 1 238	R 1 238
Step 2	Attendance of online Quality Promotion Meeting	-	-	-	-	-
Step 3	Self-evaluation	R 8 746	R 8 746	R 8 746	R 17 408	R 13 079
Step 4	Site Visit	R 36 709	R 36 709	R 36 709	R 48 992	R 48 992
Step 5	Biennial Accreditation Fee	R 5 445	R 5 445	R 5 445	R 5 445	R 5 445

Re-evaluation of self-evaluation report (per event)	R 9 065
Evaluation of evidence submitted after a "window period" or outcome of provisional accreditation	R 9 065
Follow up monitoring process for institutions which fail to maintain the required accreditation standard (notice or final notice of intent to withdraw accreditation) or failure to submit the required monitoring report)	R 9 065 (per monitoring cycle)
Extension of Scope (Letter of Intent)	R 1 238
Extension of Scope (per one additional phase or High School / Primary School)	R 36 640
Extension of Scope (per additional phase over and above one phase for extension of scope at the same time – in addition to the amount indicated above).	R 14 500
Change of site	R 9 065
Consideration of an appeal	R 9 065

All fees are subject to annual increase.