2020-2024
STRATEGIC PLAN

END-TERM REPORT

UMALUSI

Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
APP	Annual Performance Plan
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ECC	Early Childhood Classroom
EE	Employment Equity
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
EXCO	Executive Committee of Council
F&SCM	Finance and Supply Chain Management
GEC	General Education Certificate
GENFET	General and Further Education and Training
GENFETQA	General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
MIS	Management Information Systems
MTDP	Medium-term Development Plan
MTSF	Medium-term Strategic Framework
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NATED	National Education Report 190/191
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NDP	National Development Plan
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NISC	National Inquiry Services Centre
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
QAA	Quality Assurance of Assessment
QCC	Qualifications, Curriculum and Certification
SACAI	South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute
SALALS	Southern African Linguistics and Applied Languages Society
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBA	School-Based Assessment
SC(a)	Senior Certificate (amended)
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SITA	State Information Technology Agency
SOR	State of Readiness

Executive Authority Statement

In accordance with the Revised Framework for the Development of Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans, Umalusi undertook an end-of-term review of its performance over the past five financial years. This review evaluated the organisation's contributions to the National Development Plan and Priority 3 of the Medium-term Strategic Framework 2019–2024, which focuses on "Education, Skills, and Health." It also assessed Umalusi's alignment with the Department of Basic Education's Sector Plan, *Towards Schooling 2024*, and other key government policies.

Umalusi has made notable progress in delivering on its priorities, although one intended outcome was not fully achieved. Despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic and financial constraints, I am pleased to report that the organisation has made substantial strides in strengthening educational standards during this reporting cycle. These achievements affirm that Umalusi is on the right path to ensuring that South Africans benefit from credible and relevant qualifications.

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Ms Siviwe Gwarube: MP

Minister of Basic Education

Accounting Authority Statement

I am pleased to present Umalusi's End-Term Report for the 2020–2024 Strategic Planning Cycle. This report highlights the organisation's progress in strengthening the credibility of qualifications, curricula, and assessments within the General and Further Education and Training sector, despite a dynamic and often challenging operating environment.

The 6th Umalusi Council took office in June 2022, having been appointed by the Minister of Basic Education to enhance organisational governance and fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities. This appointment occurred during a challenging time, as the country and the world were grappling with the COVID-19 outbreak.
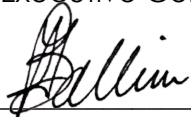
Umalusi responded effectively to external disruptions, including the COVID-19 pandemic, by accelerating digitisation efforts and adopting risk-based oversight models. Innovations such as the online accreditation site-visits, the online certificate replacement system and enhanced stakeholder engagement mechanisms have improved both efficiency and service delivery.

During this period, Umalusi conducted a benchmarking study comparing the National Senior Certificate (NSC) with selected international qualifications. The study affirmed that the NSC is comparable to its international counterparts, reinforcing its relevance and competitiveness. This finding assures our learners and fellow citizens that the NSC is not an inferior qualification when compared to more widely recognised global options, thereby strengthening its credibility.

Several internal programmes and policies were also evaluated. These included the General Education Certificate qualification policy and an analysis of the Department of Basic Education's NSC examination guidelines for 2021–2023 compared to those from 2018–2020. Umalusi also continued its annual Post Examination Analysis of the NSC end-of-year examinations, using data from the two preceding years. This research contributes to maintaining the integrity and consistency of assessment standards.

As we conclude this strategic cycle, we acknowledge ongoing challenges, particularly in the areas of funding and Information and Communication Technology capacity. Our responses to these challenges will guide the implementation of our 2025–2030 Strategic Plan as we strive to enhance a credible and responsive quality assurance system.

Council successfully fulfilled its oversight role in monitoring the achievement of the Strategic Plan targets. Council was pleased to note that most targets were met during the period under review, and that we concluded the term with an unqualified audit opinion with no material findings. Council also remained committed to acting with integrity, transparency, and in the best interest of the organisation, while upholding its fiduciary responsibilities. This included holding Umalusi's management accountable for the use of organisational resources through rigorous scrutiny of reports submitted by Umalusi's Executive Management, the Audit and Risk Committee, and the Executive Committee of Council.

Prof. Yunus Ballim

Umalusi Council Chairperson

Chief Executive Statement

It is with a deep sense of responsibility and commitment to accountability that I present Umalusi's End-Term Report for the 2020–2024 Strategic Planning Cycle. This report not only reflects our performance over the past five years but also highlights the resilience, adaptability, and professionalism with which Umalusi has fulfilled its constitutional and legislative mandate during a time of systemic transitions and global disruptions.

Guided by the National Development Plan and Medium-term Strategic Framework, and operating within the legislative framework of the National Qualifications Framework Act and the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, Umalusi has remained steadfast in executing its role as the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training. Over this period, the organisation made significant progress in delivering on its five strategic outcomes, including strengthening qualifications development, enhancing quality assurance processes, and modernising certification and verification systems. Despite fiscal constraints and operational disruptions, particularly those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020/21 financial year, Umalusi ensured continuity and integrity in its services through strategic agility and innovation, including accelerated digitisation and the adoption of risk-based oversight models.

Key achievements during this cycle include the moderation of over 4 000 question papers, the monitoring of more than 3 000 examination centres, and the issuance of over 5 million certificates. To maintain the quality of qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework at private education institutions, the Accreditation Committee of Council made more than 1 000 recommendations on applications from independent schools, as well as private Further Education and Training and Adult Education and Training colleges. These milestones reaffirm Umalusi's commitment to quality assurance, system integrity, and public trust.

Despite these commendable achievements, Umalusi did not fully meet the outcome related to developing efficient and effective administrative systems. This shortcoming was primarily due to material misstatements in the financial reports, particularly

regarding non-current assets, expenditures, and disclosure items. In response, the organisation implemented corrective measures, including the quarterly review of financial statements, resulting in an unqualified audit opinion with no material findings for the 2024/25 financial year.

From a human resources perspective, Umalusi introduced a range of staff retention strategies aimed at reducing turnover. These included amalgamating the AIPF to the GEPF, introducing the Government Employee Medical Scheme, and creating 12 new posts to manage workload more effectively. As a result of these efforts, the organisation maintained a vacancy rate below 10%.

This End-Term report also acknowledges areas that require further strengthening, particularly the need for a sustainable funding model and the retention of critical technical skills. These insights have informed the development of the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan, which will guide Umalusi's continued efforts to support quality education and systemic transformation in the years ahead.

In conclusion, I extend my sincere appreciation to the Umalusi Council, Executive Management, and all staff members for their unwavering dedication to educational excellence. I also thank our partners in the education sector, oversight bodies, and the broader public for their continued trust and collaboration. Umalusi remains committed to fulfilling its mandate with integrity, efficiency, and a clear focus on building a credible, equitable, and quality-assured education system for all.

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Dr Mafu S Rakometsi

Chief Executive Officer

PART A: OUR MANDATE

1. Constitutional mandate

Umalusi serves as the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (GENFET) and is required to uphold the principles outlined in Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. In terms of section 29(1), everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education and further education and training. Aligned with this provision, Umalusi is mandated to ensure the quality assurance of education delivered within the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF). This mandate also supports the fulfilment of section 29(3), which promotes the establishment of independent educational institutions that:

a) Do not discriminate on the basis of race;
b) Are registered with the state; and
c) Maintain standards that are equal to or superior to those at comparable public education institutions.

2. Legislative and policy mandates

2.1 Legislative mandates

2.1.1 National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (Act No. 67 of 2008, as amended)

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (Act No. 67 of 2008, as amended) provides for the establishment of Umalusi as a Quality Council responsible for the development and management of a sub-framework of qualifications at Levels 1–4 of the NQF. In accordance with paragraph 27 of the NQF Act, Umalusi is mandated to perform the following functions in relation to quality assurance within its sub-framework:

a) Develop and implement policy for quality assurance;
b) Ensure the integrity and credibility of quality assurance;
c) Ensure that any quality assurance necessary for the sub-framework is undertaken; and
d) Conduct or commission research on issues of importance to the development and implementation of its sub-framework.

2.1.2 The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act (Act No. 58 of 2001, as amended)

The General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act (Act No. 58 of 2001, as amended in 2008) mandates Umalusi to oversee quality assurance within the GENFET. This responsibility includes the regulation of curriculum

and assessment norms and standards, as well as the issuing of learner certificates at exit points. Umalusi's mandate is, therefore, outlined as follows:

a) Quality assurance of assessments at exit points of qualifications;
b) Certification of learner achievements;
c) Quality assurance of private education institutions; and
d) Accreditation of private assessment bodies to assess qualifications on the GFETQSF.

With respect to private provision, Umalusi is mandated to carry out the following accreditation responsibilities:

i. Develop policy, subject to regulation by the Minister, for the accreditation of assessment bodies other than the Departments of Education, and accredit such bodies accordingly;
ii. Develop policy and criteria for the quality assurance of private education institutions, including independent schools, private colleges, and private Adult Education and Training (AET) centres; and
iii. Ensure that any institution required to register as an independent school, private college, or private AET centre complies with Umalusi's quality assurance policy and criteria; and confirm or withdraw the accreditation status of the private education institution concerned.

2.2   Other legislations

a) National Education Policy Act (NEPA) (Act No. 27 of 1996);
b) The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act No. 84 of 1996), with all subsequent amendments; and
c) Continuing Education and Training Act (Act No. 16 of 2006, as amended).

3. Institutional policies and strategies over the five-year period

Umalusi's qualifications sub-framework must be read in conjunction with the following policy documents:

a) *Guidelines on Strategy and Priorities for the NQF 2011/2012* (issued by the Minister of Higher Education and Training);
b) *National policies governing existing qualifications and their assessment*, which are currently certificated by Umalusi;
c) *The General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF) Policy,* 2014;
d) *Policy documents and guidelines pertaining to the National Senior Certificate (NSC), Senior Certificate (amended) [SC(a)], General Education and Training Certificate (GETC), National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)], National Education Report 190/191 (NATED)*, and any other qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF), where applicable;

e) *Umalusi Council policies and directives on the conduct, administration, and management of examinations and assessments* for qualifications registered on the *General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)*;

f) *Regulations pertaining to qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)*, developed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and gazetted by the Minister, including those promulgated by provincial legislatures, with regard to assessment and certification; and

g) *Treasury Regulations and any other applicable legislation* relevant to the education and training sectors in which Umalusi operates.

PART B: OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS

Umalusi is a Schedule 3A public entity listed in terms of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (Act No. 1 of 1999, as amended). In its Strategic Plan, the organisation positions itself as a thought leader in the GENFET sector through the execution of its mandate and achievement of defined outcomes. The Strategic Plan outlines the impact, outcomes, indicators, and targets to be achieved over the five-year period. It is also aligned with the government's educational priorities as articulated in the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Medium-term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019–2024.

1. Vision

A trusted authority in fostering high education standards in General and Further Education and Training.

2. Mission

We are the quality council that assures education standards in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.

3. Values

Table 1: Umalusi values

Value	Value Statement
Transparency	Umalusi ensures that its processes are open and accessible for public scrutiny.
Professionalism	Umalusi staff engage with stakeholders respectfully and deliver services with competence and courtesy.
Integrity	Umalusi conducts all operations honestly and ethically.
Reliability	Umalusi applies consistent procedures in all quality assurance processes.
Impartiality	Umalusi upholds fairness by applying standards equally to all stakeholders without bias.

PART C: MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

1. Umalusi's logic framework

Figure 1 presents the organisation's logic framework, aligned with the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan. This framework has guided service delivery to ensure a consistent focus on achieving the intended results.

Figure 1: Umalusi's logic framework
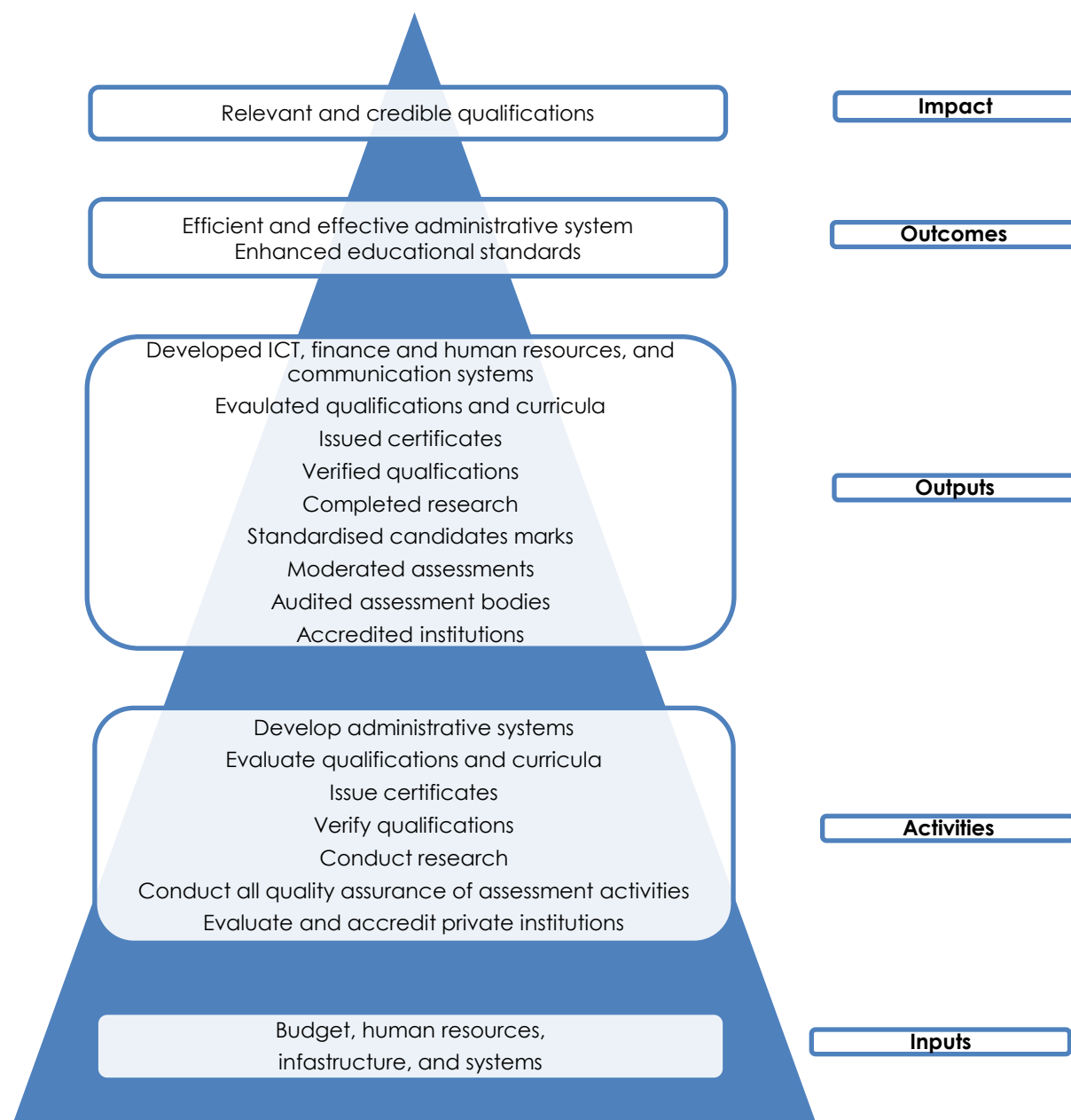
NB: Figure 1 does not represent all outputs and activities.

2. Impact statement

During the development of the five-year strategic plan, the organisation formulated the impact statement outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Umalusi's impact statement

Impact statement	Relevant and credible qualifications.

The attainment of the impact statement is demonstrated by the achievements detailed in Sections 5 and 6, which present the evaluations and research conducted and their contribution to achieving the intended impact.

3. Progress on the achievement of outcomes

3.1 Progress made towards the achievement of the five-year targets for the outcome indicators

Table 3 presents the MTSF achievements in relation to the two outcome statements, measuring progress made toward the set targets.

Table 3: Outcomes, indicators, and targets

Outcomes	Outcomes indicator	2019/20 baseline	2024/25 target	Actual achievement as at 31 March 2025	Reasons for deviation	Corrective action to be taken in the next planning cycle
Efficient and effective administrative systems	Improved audit outcomes	Unqualified audit opinions	Unqualified audit opinions with no material findings	2020/21: Unqualified audit opinion with no material findings 2021/22: Unqualified audit opinion with no material findings 2022/23: Unqualified audit opinion with adjustments 2023/24: Unqualified audit opinion with adjustments 2024/25: Unqualified audit opinion with no material findings	The organisation obtained an unqualified audit report with adjustments to the annual financial statements for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years, respectively.	To continue strengthening performance and financial control measures in the Medium-term Development Plan (MTDP) 2024-2029.
Enhanced educational standards	Percentage compliance with prescribed requirements to deliver and assess qualifications in the GFETQSF	-	95%	2020/21: 100% 2021/22: 100% 2022/23: 100% 2023/24: 100% 2024/25: 100%	None	None

3.2 Achieved performance over the five-year period

The achievement of outcome targets is explained in two parts:

a) The achievement of outputs aligned with Outcome 1, followed by an explanation of how these outputs contribute to the outcome; and
b) The achievement of outputs aligned with Outcome 2, followed by an explanation of their contribution to that output.

3.2.1 Progress towards the achievement of outputs aligned to Outcome 1: Efficient and Effective Administrative Systems

The outputs listed in Table 4 contribute to the achievement of Outcome 1: Efficient and Effective Administrative Systems, which focuses on the organisation's administrative processes.

Table 4: Progress made in achieving outputs related to Outcome 1: Effective Administrative Systems

Outcomes	Outputs	Outputs Indicator	2020/21 target	2020/21 output	2021/22 target	2021/22 output	2022/23 target	2022/23 output	2023/24 target	2023/24 output	2024/25 target	2024/25 output
Efficient and effective administrative systems	Advocacy initiatives	Number of advocacy exhibitions conducted	*0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		**Number of advocacy webinars conducted	4	4	4	5	8	8	-	-	-	-
		**Number of advocacy initiatives conducted	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	14	8	12
	Achieved (ICT) network health score	ICT network health score maintained at ≥95%	≥95%	98%	≥95%	97%	≥95%	97%	-	-	-	-
		**ICT network health score maintained at ≥97%	-	-	-	-	-	-	≥97%	98%	≥97%	98%
	Minimised vacancy rate	Vacancy rate maintained at ≤10%	≤10%	5%								

Outcomes	Outputs	Outputs Indicator	2020/21 target	2020/21 output	2021/22 target	2021/22 output	2022/23 target	2022/23 output	2023/24 target	2023/24 output	2024/25 target	2024/25 output
		**Average vacancy rate maintained at ≤10%	-	-	≤10%	6%	≤10%	8%	≤10%	10%	≤10%	5%
	Paid invoices	Percentage of valid invoices of creditors and suppliers paid within 30 days	99%	92%	99%	100% (2 395)	-	-	-	-	-	-
		**Average number of days for payment of creditors and suppliers	-	-	-	-	30	7	30	9	-	-
	***Suppliers' invoices paid within 30 days	**Percentage of valid invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100%	99% (833/839)

*Re-tabled target

**New indicator

***New output

3.2.1.1 Explanation of how the outputs contribute to Outcome 1: Efficient and Effective Administrative Systems

Strategy and Governance (S&G)

During the 2019–2024 MTSF period, Umalusi ensured compliance with legislative requirements and facilitated the development and timely submission of Annual Performance Plans (APPs), quarterly reports, and annual reports to oversight bodies. Notably, Umalusi re-tabled its 2020/21 APP after 53% of its key performance indicators were affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

Throughout this period, Management remained committed to strengthening controls for managing pre-determined objectives across all levels of the organisation. Performance information controls were further institutionalised through mechanisms such as the Performance Information Verification Committee (PIVC) and quarterly performance reviews, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of reporting. Portfolios of evidence were managed on a monthly and quarterly basis to reduce the risk of inaccurate reporting. As a result, Umalusi achieved clean audit outcomes for performance information throughout this period.

To support sound administration and governance, the Council approved several operational and legislative policies during the MTSF period. Among these was the review of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Executive Committee of Council (EXCO), aimed at addressing the gap created by the absence of a Remuneration Committee as a formal structure of the Council. In addition, to promote good governance, a Council evaluation was conducted during the 2024/25 financial year to assess its effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate. The evaluation produced positive results. Furthermore, all statutory reports were reviewed by the Council and its relevant committees before submission to the Minister of Basic Education.

To strengthen risk management, the Council approved the establishment of the newly created position of Chief Risk Officer. This role has enhanced the organisation's capacity to mitigate both existing and emerging risks within the organisation. Key documents, including the Risk Management Framework, Risk Management Committee Charter, and Risk Management Policy, were developed and approved. Risk Champions were appointed across all units and received appropriate training to reinforce the organisation's risk management culture. Umalusi effectively assessed and managed both internal and external risks, with risk performance reports monitored quarterly by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and presented to the Council. Additionally, Umalusi held its inaugural Fraud Prevention and Corruption Awareness session on 1 October 2024, which was the first of its kind within the organisation.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The 2020/21 financial year was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and Umalusi, like many organisations, faced numerous challenges. Despite this, the organisation demonstrated resilience and ensured business continuity. The ICT Unit played a critical role in supporting effective service delivery and safeguarding organisational information.

To strengthen cybersecurity, the ICT unit implemented a Vulnerability Management System, which enabled the detection of network vulnerabilities and improved Umalusi's overall security posture. In addition, a web traffic filtering solution was introduced to monitor and block malicious web traffic both on and off-site.

As part of its digital transformation and infrastructure refurbishment, Umalusi migrated to Microsoft 365 in the second quarter of 2020/21. This migration enhanced the organisation's ICT capabilities and operational efficiency.

In the years that followed under the MTSF, several ICT governance policies and procedures were developed to ensure effective ICT management. These included:

- The ICT Change Management Policy and Procedure, which ensured that all system changes were authorised and controlled.
- The Information Security Incident Management Procedure, which provided clear guidance on responding to security breaches.
- A revised ICT Service Continuity Plan, enabling proactive measures to ensure that critical ICT services are prioritised and restored during potential disruptions.
- A Backup Procedure, which supported the continuous availability of systems.
- The ICT Digital Transformation Strategy, which promoted the efficient use and reuse of data and information.

ICT has continued to play an instrumental role in streamlining the organisational processes. Notably, the development and implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system has automated supply chain and finance functions. Additionally, the implementation of an online system for certificate replacement has improved service delivery. Since its implementation, Umalusi has ensured that candidates requiring replacement of certificates no longer travel long distances to provincial and district offices of the Department to receive assistance; instead, they can apply from the comfort of their homes with the assistance of technology.

During the MTSF period, Umalusi consistently maintained a **network health score of 97% or higher**, reflecting strong system uptime and a stable ICT infrastructure that supports the organisation's mandate. Furthermore, Umalusi successfully implemented a faster internet connection, resulting in an 83% reduction in internet costs.

Human Capital Management (HCM)

Umalusi reviewed its Employment Equity (EE) Plan to address barriers identified during the EE consultation process. This was done to create a conducive working environment and promote diversity within the organisation. Many human capital

management policies were reviewed and approved by the Council to guide Management in its administration processes involving employees. These include, among others, the Recruitment Policy, Leave Policy, Performance Management Development System Policy, Policy on Study Assistance, Long Service Awards Policy, and others. In line with the communication policy, the developed policies were shared with staff.

To support informed decision-making, several surveys were conducted, including exit interviews, the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) feedback, and the Wellness Day satisfaction survey. The recommendations were considered by Management to address issues raised by staff and to create a conducive work environment for employees.

The Council approved 12 positions during the 2022/23 financial year. The approved positions brought the total staff complement to 151. The Council further approved improvements to the conditions of service for employees. These included the housing allowance increment, which was implemented in August 2023 for employees on salary Levels 1–10. As of 1 April 2024, staff members received a two-notch increase as part of the remuneration and retention strategy. Additionally, the Government Employee Medical Scheme (GEMS) was launched and implemented, along with the introduction of maximum employer contributions for employees who are principal members of GEMS. These improvements contributed to maintaining the vacancy rate below 10%.

Continuous training and development programmes were implemented to enhance the skills and knowledge of employees, enabling them to be efficient and effective in executing their duties. These included retirement workshops that focused on the financial, psychological, and health aspects of retirement, aiming to ensure that employees had a clear understanding of the benefits of starting to save for retirement at a young age.

Umalusi implemented and monitored the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) to ensure that all employees meet the organisation's strategic objectives within the set timeframe. To date, the organisation has not received any internal audit findings on non-compliance with legislation, a cognisant progress towards achieving a clean audit.

Finance and Supply Chain Management (F&SCM)

In the case of Finance and Supply Chain Management (F&SCM), Umalusi continued to enforce compliance with legislation pertaining to the procurement of goods and services. At the same time, sound financial management was maintained through the effective and efficient use of allocated resources. The F&SCM policies have been revised to ensure compliance with any issued circulars that call for reviews of specific aspects of financial and Supply Chain Management (SCM) prescripts. The training of SCM officials added impetus to the management of the entity's limited financial

resources. These efforts positively contributed to the attainment of two clean audits in the first two years of the 2019–2024 term.

Umalusi has procured an advanced cloud-based financial management solution (Sage Intacct) to enhance its financial management processes and reporting to improve audit outcomes. In addition, the organisation prepared the quarterly interim financial statements (interim financials) as a precursor towards the compilation of the annual financial statements and to ensure that misstatements are identified and corrected early in the financial year. This intervention was designed to improve the audit outcomes.

F&SCM policies, which are primarily regulated by the PFMA, were reviewed and approved to align with developments in the public sector and relevant court rulings. Umalusi continually improved its financial management systems and processes to enhance performance and compliance with applicable legislative requirements.

3.2.1.2 Challenges that affected performance in achieving effective administrative systems

Financial Management

The organisation did not achieve a clean audit opinion for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years due to material findings. In the 2023/24 financial year, the financial statements submitted for auditing were not fully compliant with the requirements of the PFMA. Furthermore, the auditors identified material misstatements concerning non-current assets, expenditures, and disclosure items.

The issues in the 2023/24 financial year were attributed to material misstatements in the financial statements. These misstatements were caused by a lack of monitoring controls to ensure that the financial statements supported the underlying records and complied with the requirements of relevant GRAP standards.

The budget

Umalusi's budget primarily depended on the grant received from the DBE. In 2020/21, the first year of the 2019–2024 MTSF period, Umalusi received R136 million from the DBE. However, this allocation was reduced by R2.7 million due to budget cuts implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to address other national priorities. Additionally, only 58% of the projected revenue was realised, as the services that generate this income were significantly impacted by the lockdown. As a result, the organisation was compelled to prioritise its functions and allocate resources accordingly.

In 2021/22, Management raised concerns with the Minister regarding the inadequacy of the budget and its effect on service delivery. In response, the DBE increased Umalusi's baseline allocation by R20 million to address critical needs, including ICT infrastructure and the establishment of essential positions.

Despite this additional support, the current budget remains insufficient to fully fund all of Umalusi's mandated functions. Consequently, Management has initiated the development of an alternative funding model. This initiative arose from the growing recognition of the structural funding shortfall and is currently still in progress.

High staff turnover

The 2022/23 financial year recorded the highest staff turnover, which not only impacted institutional functionality but also led to a loss of institutional memory. Departures included semi-skilled, professionals, and senior management personnel. The primary reasons cited for resignations were the high workload and non-competitive financial benefits. In response, Management prioritised the swift filling of vacant positions to mitigate further strain on existing staff and prevent a cycle of increased workload. Additionally, the HCM unit developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for appointments in temporarily vacated positions.

The organisation also faced challenges in attracting suitably qualified and experienced candidates from designated groups, such as people living with disabilities and coloured individuals. This difficulty is largely attributed to the limited availability of such candidates in both the labour market and the economically active population. Although Management engaged recruitment agencies to address this gap, these efforts did not result in the successful placement of qualified candidates.

3.2.1.3 Corrective measures where the five-year targets have not been achieved by 2024/25

Based on the risk profile of the organisation, the challenges in Table 5 were identified as barriers to obtaining a clean audit.

Table 5: Corrective measures for Outcome: Effective Administrative Systems

Area of operation	Challenge	Corrective measures
Financial management	• Non-compliance with applicable financial and SCM legislation and prescripts may lead to irregular, fruitless, and wasteful expenditures, resulting in adverse audit findings • Manual compilation of monthly management accounts led to errors due to manual transaction capture. This increased the risk of incorrect financial reporting	• SCM policies and all financial delegations must be reviewed regularly and approved by the Council. • Ensure that Bid committees are functional and effective. • Approving contracts in accordance with policy and utilising checklists to manage them effectively. • Monitoring of service providers and taking steps to address non-performance. • Ongoing training of SCM officials on policies and practices. • The organisation implemented SAGE Intacct as part of its ERP solution to enhance the F&SCM processes. These two solutions will streamline the organisation's processes and improve efficiency. • Umalusi procured the intelligence reporting module, which enhanced the reporting features of the current accounting software.
ICT infrastructure and systems	• Ageing ICT infrastructure or server failure causing network connectivity extended downtime • Access to the Management Information System (MIS) impacts all business units	• The Sage 300 Cloud project was successfully implemented in January 2025. Regular backups are in place. • The organisation upgraded and migrated the processes on the MIS to reduce reliance on the system. • The internet web filtering solution was deployed successfully in January 2025 to enhance ICT security for Umalusi. The solution filters malicious

Area of operation	Challenge	Corrective measures
	• Vulnerability to cyber threats that may lead to information loss	web traffic for Umalusi on and off-premises, ensuring safe browsing at all times.
Organisation's records	• Lack of a proper electronic management system may lead to loss of organisational information • High staff turnover may lead to non-achievement of deliverables, and failure to fulfil the mandate of Umalusi	• Centralisation of the electronic management system is critical. The file plan must be reviewed to ensure it aligns with the most current processes and systems. A secure filing room should be established in the newly refurbished building. • Umalusi has implemented several improvements to the conditions of service throughout the MTSF as part of its retention strategy.
Pre-determined objectives	• Inaccurate reporting of pre-determined objectives	• This challenge is being managed by verifying evidence of specific labour-intensive indicators on a monthly basis. This enables the identification of incomplete documents early enough to advise the relevant business units to implement systems that ensure proper record-keeping. • A systems description for each indicator is established to guide the implementation of key deliverables in relation to the APP indicators. This facilitates a systematic process for auditors to follow when seeking audit information. • Reporting on quarterly milestones for the annual targets will help the organisation eliminate the risk of inaccurate reporting at the end of the financial year.

3.2.2 Progress towards the achievement of outputs aligned to Outcome 2: Enhanced Educational Standards

The outputs presented in Table 6 contribute to the achievement of Outcome 2, which pertains to the organisation's core business operations.

Table 6: Progress made in achieving outputs related to Outcome 2: Enhanced educational standards

Outcome	Outputs	Indicators	2020/21 target	2020/21 output	2021/22 target	2021/22 output	2022/23 target	2022/23 output	2023/24 target	2023/24 output	2024/25 target	2024/25 output
Enhanced educational standards	Reports on the management of qualifications	Number of reports produced on the management of qualifications on the sub-framework	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Printed certificates	Percentage of error-free learner records for which a certificate is printed	100%	100% (703 175)	100%	100% (1 515 793)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	***Reports on the certification of learner achievements	**Number of reports produced on the certification of learner achievements for qualifications in	-	-	-	-	4	4	4	4	4	4

Outcome	Outputs	Indicators	2020/21 target	2020/21 output	2021/22 target	2021/22 output	2022/23 target	2022/23 output	2023/24 target	2023/24 output	2024/25 target	2024/25 output
		the sub-framework										
	Completed verification requests	Percentage of verification requests received that are completed in terms of the service level agreement: two working days	*90%	92.1% (15 772/ 17 132)	96%	96.84% (23 000/ 23 750)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	***Reports on the verification of certificates issued	**Number of reports produced on the verification of qualifications (certificates) in the sub-framework	-	-	-	-	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Completed research reports	Number of research reports completed in various formats	*4	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6

Outcome	Outputs	Indicators	2020/21 target	2020/21 output	2021/22 target	2021/22 output	2022/23 target	2022/23 output	2023/24 target	2023/24 output	2024/25 target	2024/25 output
	Published Quality Assurance of Assessment (QAA) reports	Number of quality assurance of assessment reports published for qualifications registered on the GFETQSF	*8	8	10	10	10	9	9	9	9	9
	Approved question papers	Percentage of question papers approved per qualification	100%	100% (844)	100%	100% (982)	100%	100% (1 014)	100%	100% (1 079)	100%	100% (1 086)
	Audited assessment bodies for the State of Readiness (SOR)	Number of assessment bodies audited for their state of readiness to conduct examinations	*12	13	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Verified subjects	Number of subjects for which verification of	70	85	88	93	90	92	92	92	95	95

Outcome	Outputs	Indicators	2020/21 target	2020/21 output	2021/22 target	2021/22 output	2022/23 target	2022/23 output	2023/24 target	2023/24 output	2024/25 target	2024/25 output
		marking is conducted										
	Moderated subjects	Number of subjects for which moderation of internal assessment is conducted	*85	180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	***Moderated internal assessment	**Number of subjects for which moderation of internal assessment is conducted	-	-	125	198	190	190	195	195	200	207
	Accreditation outcomes for private education institutions	Percentage of accreditation outcomes for private education institutions finalised within 12 months of the site visit	82%	94.8% (110/116)	85%	100% (176)	86%	99.26% (270/272)	87%	98.16% (213/217)	92%	98.83% (169/171)
	Monitored private	Percentage of identified	70%	87.4% (228/261)	90%	90.1% (336/373)	90%	94.67% (142/150)	90%	97.09% (200/206)	91%	97.11% (269/277)

Outcome	Outputs	Indicators	2020/21 target	2020/21 output	2021/22 target	2021/22 output	2022/23 target	2022/23 output	2023/24 target	2023/24 output	2024/25 target	2024/25 output
	education institutions	private education institutions monitored after being granted accreditation										

*Re-tabled target
**New indicator
***New output

3.2.2.1 Explanation of how these outputs contributed to the achievement of Outcome 2: Enhanced Educational Standards

Umalusi has a legislative mandate to develop and manage the GFETQSF of the NQF at Levels 1–4. In line with this mandate, Umalusi has reached several significant milestones that underscore its commitment to complying with the NQF Act and enhancing educational standards. Key achievements under Outcome 2 of the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan are outlined below.

Policies

To support the development and effective management of the GFETQSF, Umalusi has developed and reviewed several key policies and regulatory instruments:

- ***Policy for the Quality Assurance of Assessment (QAA) of Qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)***. This policy outlines the integrated operational framework to standardise the management of QAAs across assessment bodies for qualifications registered on the GFETQSF. It also identifies the quality assurance processes across the three educational sectors under Umalusi's responsibilities.

- The internal policies, namely the *Policy on the Management of Qualifications for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and the Policy on the Management of Curricula for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, have been reviewed, resulting in the combination of these policies into a single external policy: the* ***Policy and Criteria for the Development, Registration, and Publication of Qualifications for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)***. This policy provides direction to Umalusi and its stakeholders on the responsibilities associated with the development, registration, and publication of qualifications for the GFETQSF. The policy has been gazetted for implementation.

- ***Policy and Criteria for Credit Accumulation and Transfer (as amended, 2022), commonly referred to as the CAT Policy.*** This review ensures alignment with the South African Qualifications Authority's (SAQA) National Policy for CAT.

- ***Articulation Policy for Qualifications in the General and Further Education and Training (GENFET)*** to provide clear guidelines for the articulation of its qualifications within the GFETQSF and across the other sub-frameworks. This is also to ensure that institutions collaborate to develop learning pathways and that the learning they offer is aligned with broader pathways.

- ***Policy for the Re-issue of National Certificates***. This policy provides guidelines for re-issuing a certificate when the information on the original certificate requires amendment. Umalusi conducted certification workshops on the implementation of this policy.

- ***Policy for the Certification of Candidates' Records on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)***. Previously an

internal policy, it has since been converted into an external policy. It outlines the responsibilities related to the certification of both existing qualifications and new qualifications developed under the GFETQSF, as managed by Umalusi.

- *Guideline for the Implementation of the Policy and Criteria for the Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Monitoring of Independent Schools in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)*. These guidelines outline the processes for accrediting and monitoring independent schools that offer GFETQSF qualifications.
- *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Policy for the Quality Assurance of Private Colleges for Continuing Education and Training Offering Qualifications in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GFETQSF)*. These guidelines define the procedures for accrediting private colleges offering qualifications on the GFETQSF.

Qualifications

Umalusi aligned its qualifications with the NQF and phased out legacy (pre-2009) qualifications to ensure compliance with the Ministerial Determination of the Sub-Frameworks that constitute the NQF. Additionally, a comprehensive audit of qualifications was conducted to ensure that Umalusi's qualifications, along with their underpinning curricula and policies, align with Umalusi' policies and the SAQA Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and Part-Qualifications.

a) **The National Senior Certificate (NSC)**: The NSC has undergone several developments that were not previously incorporated into its qualification policy. In collaboration with the DBE, Umalusi updated and successfully re-registered the NSC with SAQA. The process of aligning all related policies with the revised qualification is ongoing and remains a joint effort between Umalusi and the DBE.

b) **The Senior Certificate (SC):** Initially offered prior to the implementation of the NSC, the SC has evolved to accommodate out-of-school learners who need to complete outstanding subjects to obtain an NQF Level 4 qualification. Currently offered alongside the NSC, this qualification is now referred to as the *Senior Certificate Amended* to distinguish it from the NSC. The SC is scheduled to be phased out upon the implementation of the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA).

c) **National Accredited Technical Education Diploma (NATED) REPORT 191 N1–N3 Programmes:** In accordance with Government Gazette No. 49518, the NATED N1–N3 programmes are being phased out. The final examination for N1 was held in the second trimester of 2024, for N2 it will be in the second trimester of 2025, and for N3, in the third trimester of 2025.

d) **General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC: ABET):** The GETC: ABET is a unit standards-based qualification that no longer meets the current requirements of qualifications on the GFETQSF. It was retained through a ministerial concession, pending the readiness of its

replacement—the General Education and Training Certificate for Adults (GETCA), which is not yet ready for implementation.

e) **National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)]:** To ensure the relevance of the NC(V), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) introduced new programmes and revised existing ones. The DHET has also approved a position paper aimed at reconfiguring the NC(V) into a three-year, single qualification with a terminal exit point at Level 4.

Umalusi has successfully re-registered all existing GFETQSF qualifications for the current cycle, including legacy qualifications retained through Ministerial Concession. These qualifications meet the requirements of the GFETQSF, and the DHET has been informed of their alignment. As part of the alignment process, and in accordance with the Ministerial Determination of the Sub-Frameworks, the German Abitur (NQF Level 5) qualifications have been deregistered from the NQF, as they fall outside Umalusi's quality assurance mandate.

Umalusi also undertook consultations to explore the legal jurisdiction, regulatory implications, and policy considerations regarding the delivery of GFETQSF-registered qualifications outside South Africa. This includes the **offering of NSC and the NATED 1– 3 programmes outside the borders of South Africa**. Two task teams comprising key GFETQSF stakeholders were established to deliberate on these matters. Based on the recommendations of the task teams, the Umalusi Council resolved that the NSC may no longer be offered outside the borders of South Africa. Accordingly, 2022 marked the final year in which the NSC was examined internationally. As previously noted, the NATED programmes are currently being phased out.

To address the **unregulated offering of foreign qualifications within South Africa**, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and the Cambridge International Education (CIE), a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Committee task team was established. The task team reviewed relevant legislation and proposed a unified approach to regulating these qualifications. Their findings were documented in a comprehensive report with recommendations for further action. In response to the continued unregulated offering of foreign qualifications, Umalusi hosted an internal workshop aimed at deepening institutional understanding of these programmes. The workshop reinforced the position that all foreign qualifications offered in South Africa must be subjected to Umalusi's full suite of quality assurance processes. Further stakeholder engagement has been prioritised to address this issue.

Certification

Umalusi is responsible for the ongoing certification and verification of certificates. This process begins with the receipt of datasets from assessment bodies, followed by data cleaning and analysis to ensure the accuracy of the information. Once verified, Umalusi proceeds with the printing of candidates' certificates. The accuracy of information on certificates is critical, particularly for candidates applying to tertiary institutions. Similarly, this data plays a vital role in the verification of qualifications, a

service Umalusi provides to various clients seeking to authenticate the credentials of prospective employees.

To enhance service delivery, Umalusi has developed an online system for the replacement of certificates. Since its launch, the system has significantly improved access by allowing candidates to apply for replacements from the comfort of their homes, eliminating the need to travel to provincial or district Department of Education offices. This innovation has been widely praised as a game-changer. It has not only reduced the number of walk-in applicants at Umalusi's offices but has also led to faster turnaround times and more efficient service delivery. Although the company initially faced some teething challenges, ongoing enhancements are being implemented to improve its functionality and meet the demands of modern technology.

Quality Assurance of Assessments (QAA)

The QAA units, School Qualifications (QAA: SQ) unit, and Post School Qualifications (QAA: PSQ) unit set standards for the assessment of qualifications on the GFETQSF and ensure that assessment for certification in schools, TVET colleges, and AET Centres is of the required standard. As part of its quality assurance function, the QAA: PSQ and QAA: SQ units monitor the level of compliance of assessment bodies with Umalusi's criteria for the moderation of question papers. The external moderation of question papers and accompanying marking guidelines is conducted to ensure that quality and standards are maintained in all qualifications registered on the GFETQSF. Therefore, there have been notable improvements in the quality and standard of question papers externally moderated by Umalusi. The improvement is reflected in the low number of question papers returned to assessment bodies for improvement after initial moderation. This suggests that assessment bodies are adhering to Umalusi directives of ensuring that question papers submitted for external moderation are of an acceptable standard.

Umalusi also audits assessment bodies to assess their readiness to conduct, administer, and manage examinations and to verify that they have systems in place to ensure the credibility of examinations. In recent cycles, improvements have been noted in the security of examination materials across all four assessment bodies, indicating enhanced compliance with Umalusi's directives.

Umalusi is dedicated to maintaining its standards; thus, the organisation has embarked on measures to enhance the moderators' skills and expertise through training. In its efforts to advance quality assurance processes, Umalusi reviewed moderation instruments to enhance the moderation of the School-Based Assessment (SBA). To do this, Umalusi appointed a team of five experienced external moderators to lead the review process. A team of five experienced external moderators led the review, and the revised instrument was finalised and mediated in 2024, with piloting scheduled for 2025.

Umalusi has reconfigured its SBA quality assurance strategy. A revised, problem-oriented approach now focuses on schools and centres with previously rejected SBA marks. Rejection of SBA marks often reflects broader concerns with the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. To address this, Umalusi has sampled affected schools for further moderation, with the goal of strengthening their internal systems. This revised strategy includes two phases of SBA moderation: Phase 1 evaluates the quality, fairness, validity, and standard of assessment tasks. Phase 2 focuses on the reliability and fairness of assessment scores by moderating the actual marking of learner evidence to ensure consistency and correct application of marking guidelines.

Encouragingly, the number of schools/centres with rejected SBA marks has declined, with zero SBA rejections recorded in 2024 for the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI).

Similarly, moderation of Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) remains a core component of Umalusi's assurance mandate. ICASS results are documented in a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE), which must align with the requirements set out in the Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG) and ICASS guidelines for the NC(V) qualification.

Umalusi adopted a four-pronged approach to monitor and moderate ICASS:

a) Monitoring and moderation of ICASS were conducted at the learning sites to assess the overall resources required to offer a programme/subject, as well as the moderation of the students' PoA and the lecturers' PoE. Through this level, Umalusi confirmed the readiness of the college to implement ICASS.
b) Centralised moderation involved moderating the PoA and PoE at designated central venues. Umalusi confirmed consistent and standardised moderation practices across different campuses.
c) Virtual moderation of oral assessments ensured the submission of electronic PoE, marksheets, and videos of candidates performing oral assessments. This process encouraged the use of technology in assessing oral language assessments.
d) Moderation of the internal moderator involved verifying assessment portfolios moderated by DHET internal moderators. The objective aimed to ascertain whether internal moderation is conducted according to established criteria and that the required level of quality assurance is maintained.

To enhance efficiency and keep pace with technological advancements, Umalusi has automated parts of its quality assurance processes. In 2024, the organisation conducted virtual moderation of the Integrated Summative Tasks for the NC(V) qualification. This approach proved both cost-effective and responsive, enabling immediate feedback to sites.

Throughout the MTSF period, Umalusi successfully standardised and approved results for all qualifications within its mandate.

Accreditation of Private Education Institutions

Umalusi continuously accredits and monitors private institutions offering education and training for qualifications within the GFETQSF. However, during the national lockdown in 2020/21, Umalusi was unable to conduct on-site verification visits, which delayed the finalisation of accreditation applications for schools. To ensure business continuity, Umalusi developed an online site verification process for qualifying schools. This approach, however, necessitated that Umalusi adjust the initial arrangement with schools accordingly, without altering the accreditation criteria or the quality of evaluation.

A pilot study was conducted with three schools that were in the improvement phase to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the online verification model. The pilot was deemed successful, and online verification was recommended for implementation. The schools were duly informed of the revised process.

The online verification process has yielded numerous benefits, enhancing communication with institutions. This process has proven to be cost- and time-effective while maintaining high standards. The online visit process is recorded, and the recordings serve as a reference in cases of dispute. Although verification site visits are no longer conducted in person, the standards and level of verification remain rigorous and intense.

Umalusi continues to conduct in-person site verification visits where necessary, particularly for institutions in remote areas without reliable internet access. Additionally, Umalusi conducts confirmation site visits for institutions recommended for accreditation following an online verification.

Advocacy initiatives

Umalusi is committed to informing stakeholders and the public about the GFETQSF through a variety of channels. These include media statements, briefings, newsletters, the *Makoya* publication, exhibitions, the CEO's stakeholder visits, the Umalusi website, and social media platforms. These initiatives serve not only as communication tools but also as advocacy efforts aimed at building public understanding, maintaining trust, and promoting a clear, consistent narrative about Umalusi's role in ensuring quality education.

In response to the growing digital world, and in line with Umalusi's commitment to transparency and public engagement, Umalusi has strengthened its social media presence. These platforms have proven instrumental in increasing public awareness of Umalusi's quality assurance mandate within the GENFET. They have also played a

key role in addressing misinformation and clarifying issues related to quality assurance processes, qualifications, certification, and accreditation processes.

Umalusi cultivates a culture of research and knowledge dissemination through capacity-building initiatives, workshops, seminars, webinars, colloquia, and conferences. These activities serve a dual purpose: a) To foster stakeholder engagement and provide platforms for sharing best practices; and b) To support staff development in academic reading and writing, enabling them to contribute to the broader discourse on quality assurance in education.

Over the years, Umalusi has hosted several knowledge-sharing events to promote research and dialogue on the GENFET. These include:

- **31 August 2020:** A webinar titled "*Conducting Quality Assurance of Assessment under COVID-19: Implications for the 2020 National Exams and 2020 Cohort*" addressed the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on quality assurance processes.
- **18 March 2022:** A webinar titled "*The Meaning of the Minimum Pass Mark: Local and International Perspectives*" aimed to provide clarity on this widely misunderstood topic. Two presenters from the DBE and the Examinations Council of Zambia presented local and international perspectives.
- **24 June 2022:** In the webinar "*How Umalusi Ensures the Credibility of Standardised Marks,*" Umalusi demystified the processes used to verify data captured for resulting, ensuring transparency and public trust.
- **9 December 2022:** The webinar "*What to Look for in Choosing an Independent School or Private College*" clarified Umalusi's accreditation process and the difference between institutional registration and accreditation. The webinar aimed to educate the public on the differences between the two processes and the implications of these processes when choosing an independent school or private college.
- **2 March 2023:** The webinar "*Bridging the Gaps: How Umalusi Deals with Problematic Questions and Missing Scripts during Exams*" continued the public dialogue on how Umalusi protects learners' interests.
- **4 October 2023:** The webinar "*Online Teaching and Learning: Benefits, Challenges and Possible Solutions*" examined the evolving landscape of digital education, highlighting its impact, opportunities, and ongoing challenges.
- **3 October 2024:** A webinar titled "*The Possible Effect of Online Provision on the Correlation between School-Based Assessment and Final Examination Marks*" aimed to clarify Umalusi's role in standardisation and to correct the misconception that high School-Based Assessment (SBA) marks automatically lead to high final examination results.

Moreover, Umalusi proudly hosted the 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA) from 19 to 22 August 2024 in Cape Town under the theme "Reimagining Educational Assessment in the Age of Multiple Dimensions of Learning in a Global Society." The conference attracted over 300 delegates, including education leaders, researchers, policymakers, academics, curriculum and assessment practitioners, heads of examination bodies, and private education agencies from Africa, Europe, India, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and other parts of the world.

The Minister of Basic Education, Honourable Siwiwe Gwarube, officially opened the conference on 19 August 2024. A comprehensive conference report has since been produced, capturing key highlights from the pre-conference activities, main proceedings, and post-conference reflections. This report offers readers an in-depth and holistic view of the event's discussions, themes, and outcomes.

As a key output of the conference, Umalusi also produced a peer-reviewed Book of Proceedings, which compiles a selection of high-quality academic papers presented at the conference. These papers critically examine topics such as digital pedagogy, non-traditional assessment methods, and innovative strategies to improve the quality and accessibility of education amidst global shifts. The Book of Proceedings is an accredited publication, meeting the requirements of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). It was published both online and in print by Open Books and Proceedings, hosted by the University of the Free State Library and Information Services. The online version is accessible both as a single volume and as individual articles, broadening access to this valuable knowledge resource.

To mark 20 years of quality assurance in education, Umalusi collaborated with the Southern African Linguistics and Applied Languages Society (SALALS) Journal to publish a special issue titled "Two Decades of Umalusi Quality Assuring Language Assessment in South Africa: The Language Enigma." This commemorative issue was guest-edited and managed by Umalusi. A total of six high-quality peer-reviewed articles were published through the National Inquiry Services Centre (NISC), with three articles authored by Umalusi staff. All articles were made available online as open access.

3.2.2.2 Challenges that may have affected the performance of the institution in achieving the five-year targets

Umalusi has reviewed its ***Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy***, but encountered implementation challenges. These challenges have been communicated to the DBE, outlining the complexities of fully implementing the reviewed revised policy and requesting further engagement to determine a feasible approach within the GFETQSF.

Umalusi had also planned to appraise the NASCA curricula, develop a quality assurance framework, and create a comprehensive implementation plan for NASCA. However, these activities could not proceed due to the DHET's failure to submit key

policy documents. In response, the Umalusi Council sent a formal letter to the DHET outlining concerns and providing directives. A decision was subsequently taken by both the DHET and Umalusi to delay the NASCA pilot until the following conditions are met: a) Finalisation of the intended curricula for all subjects involved in the pilot, b) Quality assurance of the assessed curriculum documents by Umalusi; and c) Completion of all outstanding policies, regulations, and assessment protocols necessary for implementation. The DHET has since established a Ministerial Task Team to reconceptualise NASCA, with Umalusi participating as a member. Consequently, the planned activities related to NASCA remain pending, and the associated implementation plan and framework are still in draft form.

Similarly, the DBE has delayed the implementation of the General Education Certificate (GEC). The DBE is attending to Umalusi's directives, emanating from the appraisal of the GEC qualification and its underpinning curricula, and is considering the public comments provided on the gazetted qualification policy. The registration and implementation of the GEC depend on the resubmission of the qualification and its related documents by the DBE, as well as approval by Umalusi.

Umalusi continues to face two persistent challenges, namely the operation of non-accredited private institutions offering GFETQSF qualifications and the misrepresentation of GFETQSF qualifications. The offering of qualifications by non-accredited providers contravenes both Umalusi and NQF legislations and is therefore illegal. This also poses numerous challenges within the system, potentially leading to the non-certification of those learners' qualifications. Umalusi continues to receive applications from assessment bodies requesting concessions to register these unaccredited centres as examination centres. Even when learners sit for examinations at registered centres, the fact that their tuition was provided by unaccredited institutions remains problematic. This situation threatens the credibility of the GFETQSF qualifications.

To mitigate this, Umalusi cross-checked lists of private centres registering candidates for the NSC against lists of approved centres and informed the relevant assessment bodies of discrepancies. Additionally, "green lists," which specify Umalusi-compliant independent schools, were disseminated to assessment bodies. Lists of accredited private colleges for the NATED Report 190/191 and NC(V) examinations were also compiled and shared.

Umalusi continues to face the challenge of misrepresented qualifications, which poses a significant threat to the credibility of qualifications offered under its sub-framework. To address this, Umalusi maintains a whistleblower hotline and actively responds to social media reports and public discussions concerning these fraudulent practices.

A recurring difficulty arises when private colleges fail to submit lists of candidates registered for examinations. Without these lists, Umalusi is unable to verify whether candidates are registered through accredited institutions, making it difficult to enforce the policy of non-certification for learners who sit for examinations at non-accredited

colleges. Timely access to accurate registration data is therefore essential to safeguard the integrity of the certification process.

Following the November 2024 examination cycle and approval of results, Umalusi identified various concerns regarding the conduct, administration, and management of examinations by the DHET. In response, Umalusi has developed a close monitoring plan for the DHET, which will be implemented and managed over the 2025/26 financial years.

With the return to face-to-face teaching, some independent schools continued to implement remote teaching strategies developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, rebranding themselves as "online schools." However, the current legislation does not provide for the regulation of online schooling, as existing frameworks are designed specifically for traditional, physical school environments. In light of this, Umalusi has established an internal Online Schools Task Team to lead investigations into this emerging mode of education. The task team has reviewed the regulatory frameworks and submitted inputs, conducted an exploratory study to examine the operations of different online schools, and engaged with assessment bodies. Based on these engagements, Umalusi has issued a set of non-negotiable interim directives for online schools, including the requirement that learners must write the NSC examinations at accredited examination centres, in accordance with NSC standards.

Furthermore, Umalusi has drafted accreditation instruments for registered online education institutions. However, these instruments are currently on hold pending further discussions related to the registration framework for online institutions, as accreditation must align with institutional registration processes.

3.2.2.2 Corrective measures in instances where the five-year targets have not been achieved by 2024/25

Although the Outcome 2: Enhanced Educational Standards, as outlined in the 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, was achieved, the table below outlines corrective measures implemented to address challenges encountered in achieving both Outcome 2 and the intended impact.

Table 7: Corrective measures for Outcome 2 targets

Area of operation	Challenges	Corrective measures
Certification	• Misrepresented certificates compromise the credibility of Umalusi's qualifications. Learners are not protected from fraudsters • Issuing certificates incorrectly or withholding certificates from learners affects the	• Continue providing lists of accredited institutions • Establish a centralised system to manage Umalusi's results and certification system • Compare certification data with the resulting data

Area of operation	Challenges	Corrective measures
	credibility of Umalusi's certificates and delays the issuance of certificates. This compromises the standards and impacts Umalusi's reputation • Certification of learners at unaccredited institutions	
Learner data for standardisation	• Assessment bodies often fail to adhere to timeframes for submitting datasets for quality assurance processes, such as testing the data for accuracy. This affects the standardisation and integrity of the resulting process. The integrity of the assessment process and the accuracy of test results may be compromised, potentially impacting educational standards	• Continued consultations with assessment bodies • Release dates to consider in relation to administrative processes • Timeframes for end-of-year processes must be reviewed
QAA	• Umalusi is unable to quality assure all subjects of qualifications registered on the sub-framework. This is primarily due to budget limitations, limited expertise in certain subjects within the country, and the introduction of new subjects by assessment bodies	• Umalusi will continue to rotate the sample of subjects to be quality assured • Recruitment involves headhunting suitably qualified personnel • There is a need to plan for the quality assurance of newly introduced subjects
Unaccredited institutions	• There has been a proliferation of online schools that are not accredited by Umalusi, yet they continue to offer the NSC qualification	• Continued advocacy to reduce the number of unaccredited private education institutions
Advocacy	• The lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities of Umalusi	• Continue advocacy programmes through webinars, CEO roadshows, exhibitions, and media presence

4. Contribution of government and non-government partners to the achievement of the outcomes

The following partners assisted Umalusi in achieving its outcomes.

Assessment bodies

Umalusi's ability to fulfil its core mandate of quality assuring qualifications on the GFETQSF depends on the compliance of assessment bodies, namely the DHET, DBE, IEB, and SACAI, with the Council's policies and directives. These assessment bodies are responsible for preparing and administering examinations, including the registration of candidates and the development of question papers. Umalusi externally moderates these papers to ensure they meet the required cognitive standards. In addition, assessment bodies implement strict security measures for examination materials, which have contributed to the absence of systemic irregularities over the past two years.

The portfolio committees of education

Umalusi presents its APPs and annual reports to the Portfolio Committee of Basic Education. Through constructive criticism and guidance, the organisation continues to strengthen the implementation of its qualifications in line with established standards.

In 2021, the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Innovation monitored Umalusi and the DHET regarding delays in the certification of candidates who had completed qualifications on the General Education and Training Qualifications Framework (GFETQSF). In response to this oversight, a Certification Task Team comprising the DHET, the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), and Umalusi was established. This collaborative intervention led to a 90% reduction in the certification backlog.

International bodies

Umalusi holds membership with the Southern Africa Association for Educational Assessment (SAAEA), the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA), and the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA). These international organisations provide platforms for the exchange of best practices in educational assessment, primarily through annual rotational conferences. Umalusi currently holds the AEAA presidential seat for the 2024/25 financial year. The organisation shares its research findings and quality assurance processes with these bodies through academic papers and reports.

The 40th AEAA Annual Conference has secured conference sponsorship from several partners, including the MTN Foundation, Old Mutual Foundation, INICEF, ETDP-SETA, Government Printing Works, IEB, Oxford, Coltech, and Fundi. These sponsors have played a vital role not only in supporting the event but also in contributing to

meaningful and measurable improvements in GENFET. Umalusi acknowledges their contribution as stakeholders in shaping the future of education and looks forward to ongoing collaborations.

To benchmark and enhance its quality assurance processes, Umalusi also engages with international organisations such as the examination councils and ministries of education across the continent.

5. Findings of the evaluation of institutional programmes

Over the past five years, Umalusi has conducted various evaluations and research initiatives. Sections 5 and 6 of this report highlight how these efforts have contributed to Umalusi's outcomes and impact statements.

To ensure the credibility and global competitiveness of the NSC, Umalusi benchmarked it against comparable international qualifications. The exercise involved comparisons with the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE), International Baccalaureate (IB), the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education, the Australian New South Wales Higher School Certificate, and the Zimbabwean Grade 5 –6 Advanced Level. The benchmarked subjects included English First Additional Language, Mathematics, Physical Sciences, Life Sciences (Biology), and Geography. The findings confirmed that the NSC is comparable to similar qualifications offered both in well-established education systems and in countries with similar economic contexts. This benchmarking process reinforces Umalusi's commitment to maintaining the credibility, relevance, and international competitiveness of its qualifications. The resulting reports have been published and shared with stakeholders and the public.

As part of its quality assurance mandate, Umalusi appraised eight new NATED N1–N3 curricula submitted by the DHET. The subjects appraised included Bricklaying and Plastering N1–N2, Electrical Trade Theory N1–N3, and Motor Trade Theory N1–N3. Umalusi provided DHET with detailed, subject-specific feedback covering technical document requirements, the absence of SAGs, and qualification audit findings, such as missing notional hours and misalignment with the credit structure of the NATED programmes. Following this process, the revised curricula were registered with SAQA.

Umalusi also evaluated the qualification policy for the GEC to determine its suitability for registration on the NQF. The evaluation found that the policy lacked clarity in its purpose and was not sufficiently inclusive of all learner groups. Umalusi communicated these findings to the DBE, resulting in a delay in the registration of the qualification. In response, the DBE is reconceptualising the qualification policy and will resubmit it to Umalusi for evaluation once revised.

Umalusi appraised the **intended curricula for the GEC** through the following initiatives:

- Full Steam ahead: Towards Three Streams – Issue 1 (Appraisal of the GEC Vocational and Occupation-Oriented Subjects): This appraisal aimed to determine the acceptability of the intended GEC curriculum for Grades 8 and

9 and Years 1–4. An appraisal of the intended curriculum for 35 vocational- and occupational-oriented subjects was conducted in three phases. Phase 1 focused on Civil Technology; Phases two and three each covered six additional subject fields. Findings from the first phase were shared through various platforms, including a formal letter to the DBE, recommending enhancements to certain curricula and requesting submission of the assessed curricula associated with the GEC.

- Full Steam Ahead: Towards Three Streams – Issue 2 (Appraisal of the GEC Schools of Skill (SoS) Fundamentals): This appraisal assessed the acceptability of the SoS fundamentals for Years 1–4. Seven subjects were reviewed. The findings revealed that the structure of these subjects was not compatible with the GEC and that their level of complexity aligned more closely with the Intermediate Phase. These results were presented to the DBE Chief Directors Forum for further consideration.

Umalusi received the Coding and Robotics Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Grades R-9 within the General Education and Training (GET) Band from the DBE. Umalusi conducted a workshop for the **appraisal of the Coding and Robotics Grade R-9 curriculum**. Umalusi also supported the DBE in refining the curriculum specifications. The appraisal found that while the curriculum provided a comprehensive list of topics (syllabus), it lacked several essential components for a fully developed curriculum, such as clearly defined learning outcomes, exit-level outcomes, and a learner profile. These findings were communicated to the DBE.

Umalusi also **appraised the NC(V) Levels 2–4 Robotics curricula**, submitted by the DHET. These curricula were introduced as a new stream of specialisation under the Information Technology & Computer Science (NCV: IT & CS) programme. The submitted suite of subjects was approved for implementation, with the first year of implementation commencing in 2023.

As part of its ongoing standards maintenance research, Umalusi conducts the **Post Examination Analysis (PEA)** annually for the NSC end-of-year examinations. This analysis assesses the comparability of the current year's examination papers with those of the previous two years across selected subjects and assessment bodies, namely the DBE, Independent Examinations Board (IEB), and SACAI. The findings are presented to the Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) during pre-standardisation meetings and subsequently shared with the assessment bodies.

Umalusi conducted an evaluation of the 2021–2023 **DBE NSC examinations guidelines**, comparing them with those from the 2018–2020 period. The evaluation focused on: (i) their alignment with Section 4 of the CAPS, (ii) format and structure, (ii) content coverage, (iv) weighting of cognitive demand, (v) marking guidelines, and (vi) other quality-related aspects. Based on these findings, a judgement was made regarding whether the changes in the guidelines had the potential to influence candidate performance. The findings were used in conjunction with the 2021 PEA results to deepen understanding of the extent to which examination standards were upheld.

Umalusi also received proposed changes to the **IEB SAGs** for five subjects. These changes were evaluated for alignment with policy and adherence to quality standards. Detailed feedback and directives were subsequently provided to the IEB. In addition, Umalusi appraised the **IEB Marine Sciences SAGs**, and, similarly, provided comprehensive feedback and recommendations to the IEB.

During the appraisal of these examination guidelines, Umalusi identified gaps within its own **Directives for the Quality Assurance of Curricula**. To address these shortcomings, the directives were reviewed and updated. The revised directives provide comprehensive guidance on the development of new curricula for existing and/or new qualifications, the review of current curricula, proposals for curriculum name changes, the review of examination and assessment guidelines, and intentions to modify subject structures. These updated Directives for the Quality Assurance of Curricula were shared with the relevant assessment bodies.

Observations from both the NSC SAGs and PEA research projects revealed inconsistencies across NSC subjects and assessment bodies, highlighting the need for a standardised guiding framework. In response, Umalusi developed the framework for **essential details of the NSC examination guidelines**. The aim of this framework was to outline the essential components of examination guidelines, thereby supporting the maintenance of examination standards and offering clear guidance for question paper development. The framework was developed through a systematic literature review, document analysis, and piloting the framework on selected DBE examination guidelines. Key findings revealed five core categories of essential details: general examination information, subject-specific details, examinable content specification and weighting, item specifications, and scoring and response specifications. These components are integral for ensuring consistency and clarity across diverse NSC subjects. Recommendations include disseminating the framework to assessment bodies, utilising it for evaluating current guidelines, as piloting revealed a gap in the guidelines used for the pilot, providing training on its application, and extending similar studies to other qualifications evaluated by Umalusi. These efforts aim to enhance the quality and comparability of the NSC.

Following the piloting phase, Umalusi undertook a study to evaluate the extent to which the current NSC Examination Guidelines incorporate the essential components required for upholding assessment standards and conducting an evaluation **from principle to practice**. This research aimed to assess the transition of the Umalusi Framework for Developing Examination Guidelines for NSC subjects, along with its associated instruments, from theoretical principles to practical implementation. High-enrolment subjects were sampled from each assessment body, namely, the IEB, SACAI, and DBE, as per the NSC Examination Guidelines. Key findings from the application of the framework confirmed that it is implementable and should be adopted as a standard for developing NSC examination guidelines. However, significant disparities were identified in the DBE, IEB, and SACAI examination guidelines, many of which were found to lack several essential components outlined in the Umalusi framework. Based on these findings, Umalusi recommended that the

DBE, IEB, and SACAI align their NSC examination guidelines with the Umalusi Framework for Developing Examination Guidelines for NSC Subjects.

6. Findings of internal and external research in relation to the outcomes

Practitioners' Perceptions and Understanding of the Approaches Underpinning Curriculum and Pedagogy in an Early Childhood Classroom: This study was prompted by Umalusi's earlier appraisal of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for children aged 0–4 years. It explored how practitioners interpret and implement the NCF, with particular attention to their understanding of the pedagogical approaches underpinning the teaching strategies employed, methods of assessing learner progress, and the implications for policy and quality assurance.

Towards a Review of Umalusi's School-Based Assessment (SBA) Moderation Model in Content Subjects: This study reviewed both local and international literature on the moderation of SBA. It examined the various stages and models of moderation used globally and found that, although definitions of SBA moderation differ, common themes and practices emerge. Building on the reviewed literature, the study identified broader challenges and their implications for South Africa and Umalusi, particularly regarding the moderation of SBA and the exploration of potentially viable models.

Towards a Reporting Framework of Learner Achievement at Phase-End Grades 3, 6, and 9: Over the past three decades, South Africa has undergone several curriculum reviews and configurations, each serving different educational purposes. One of the key motivations behind the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2012 was to ensure continuity and coherence of learning across all schooling phases. To support this, the 7-point common rating scale was adopted to standardise the reporting of learner performance across phases.

However, research conducted by Umalusi identified two critical issues:

a) Gaps in the current learner achievement reporting framework at the end of each phase; and

b) Misalignment between the reporting framework and the envisioned learner profile.

In response, this study aimed to strengthen the alignment between the phase-end learner profile and the reporting framework.

In preparation for the implementation of the GEC, Umalusi developed the **Assessment Framework: Framework for Evaluating the Vocational Assessment Underpinning the General Education Certificate (GEC).** This framework establishes the conceptual and theoretical basis for evaluating the assessed curriculum of the GEC. It specifies the standards for assessing academic, vocational, and occupational components of the GEC, which corresponds to a qualification at NQF Level 1. Additionally, Umalusi completed a comprehensive review of global and local literature on vocational

assessment, exploring various approaches to practical assessment tasks. The report advocates for a competency-based approach to vocational assessment in the GEC context.

Umalusi has observed the growing number of online schools; therefore, a study titled **Looking Beyond the Concrete Classroom Walls: A Report on the Development of an Accreditation Instrument for Online Schools** was conducted. This study aimed to develop an accreditation instrument tailored to online learning environments. The first phase produced a policy discussion document highlighting legislative considerations and challenges in accrediting online schools. The second phase involved a survey of accredited private assessment bodies. The findings will inform the development of an accreditation instrument and guidelines for managing both school-based and summative assessments in online contexts.

National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) African Language Framework: This project was undertaken in response to the broader call for quality assurance of newly developed (rather than inherited) qualifications. As part of this initiative, Umalusi developed a conceptual framework and evaluation instrument to guide the quality assurance of African languages in the NASCA.

Quality Assurance Model at Phase Exit Points – Grades 3, 6, and 9: This study aimed to develop an effective quality assurance model for Umalusi, focused on maintaining educational standards at the exit points of the Foundation, Intermediate, and Senior Phases. Recognising the limitations of relying solely on high-stakes examinations, the study explored a range of quality assurance approaches used in selected countries, including Brazil, China, Finland, Zambia, Namibia, and Malawi. The findings revealed diverse assessment practices and quality assurance mechanisms. Based on this, the proposed model recommends curriculum-focused quality assurance, with provincial departments administering standardised Grade 9 exams, which Umalusi would moderate using a sampling approach.

Investigating the Provision of the General Education Certificate (GEC) to Learners in Schools of Skills (SoS): This study explored how learners in SoS can be accommodated within the GEC. The objectives were to inform Umalusi's quality assurance practices for the provision of the GEC to SoS learners; provide evidence-based advice to the Minister of Basic Education on possible provisos to be included in the GEC qualification policy; and support the development of a GEC qualification that is sensitive to the cognitive needs of SoS learners.

Curriculum Mapping of Selected National Senior Certificate (NSC) Subjects Against National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)] Subjects: This study investigated the extent of curriculum alignment between selected NSC and NC(V) subjects to assess the viability of credit transfer for subject exemptions and certification. The aim was twofold: to inform policy directives that will support the articulation of learners within the GFETQSF by establishing the possibilities of credit transfer between the NSC and the NC(V) Level 4 qualifications for comparable subjects; and to promote lifelong

learning by enabling learners to avoid unnecessary repetition of previously acquired knowledge and competencies.

Quality Assurance in Online Basic Education: Global Policy Perspectives: This research study reviewed global best practices in quality assurance for online basic education through a scoping literature review. Its purpose was to inform Umalusi's approach to quality assurance for institutions offering the NSC in online formats. The study examined policy documents from various countries and regions, including Ghana, Uganda, Singapore, Sri Lanka, England, Ireland, Scotland, and the United Kingdom, as well as states within the United States of America such as Colorado, Oregon, Connecticut, Tennessee, Iowa, North Carolina, Indiana, and Washington, D.C. Key focus areas included governance, infrastructure, learner support, Learning Management Systems (LSM) standards, and digital assessment integrity. Recommendations include the use of secure online assessment tools such as lockdown browsers, robust proctoring systems, and data encryption protocols.

7. Contribution to the outcomes achievement of the MTSF and the NDP

7.1 The National Development Plan (NDP)

The NDP outlines key targets for the education sector, and Umalusi, as a Quality Council, plays a supportive role in assisting the DBE and the DHET in striving toward these goals. Specifically, Umalusi contributes to efforts aimed at:

a. Achieving a target of 450 000 learners qualifying for Bachelor's degree programmes with Mathematics and Science; and

b. Improving South Africa's standing in international education rankings.

While Umalusi is not directly accountable for the attainment of these targets, it works collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to support their realisation. Umalusi's primary focus is not the targets themselves, but rather ensuring that quality is upheld across all qualifications within its sub-framework as these targets are pursued. In this context, Umalusi has undertaken the following actions:

a) Enhanced the quality of the NCS through research and feedback to the DBE;

b) Evaluated various curricula, such as the GEC, and benchmarked them against international curricula, including the NSC in 2021/22;

c) Collaborated with all assessment bodies to enforce, maintain, and improve standards, particularly in relation to SBAs;

d) Assessed the quality and standards of the current examinations in comparison to previous years to ensure consistency in standards;

e) Safeguarded the quality of qualifications in the sub-framework by strengthening policies related to the quality assurance and accreditation of

independent schools and private learning centres, ensuring that teaching and learning occur in appropriately resourced and qualified institutions; and

f) Provided training for all officials involved in examinations, including moderators and evaluators.

7.2 The Medium-term Strategic Framework (MTSF)

The 2019–2024 MTSF prioritised education and skills development, positioning Umalusi at the core of ensuring quality education. In this context, the organisation continued to manage the qualifications within the GFETQSF to ensure that learners acquire lifelong skills.

Umalusi's contributions to the 2019–2024 MTSF are outlined in Table 6.

Table 8: Umalusi's contribution to the 2019–2024 MTSF

MTSF priority	Target	Indicator	Umalusi's contribution
Priority 3: Education, skills and health	**Target 3:** Improved quality of learning outcomes in the Intermediate and Senior Phases, with inequalities reduced by 2024 (youths better prepared for further studies and the world of work beyond Grade 9)	Coding and Robotics curriculum implemented	• Umalusi is part of the task team assisting the DBE with infusing Umalusi Directives and public comments, as well as strengthening and finalising the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for the Grade R-9 Coding and Robotics curriculum. • Umalusi appraised the revised curricular and robotics in Grade R-3, including the remaining grades.
		The number of youths obtaining Bachelor-level passes in the NSC	• Umalusi has standardised and processed the NSC certification data and issued certificates to candidates who have completed the NSC. • Umalusi continued to ensure that the quality of bachelor-level passes meets the required standard.
		The number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Mathematics	• Umalusi continued to quality assure the assessment activities in schools and process the certification data. • Umalusi externally moderates question papers for these examinations to ensure they are set at the appropriate cognitive levels. • A PEA is done every year to assist in the standardisation of examination results.
		The number of youths obtaining 60% and above in Physical Science	
	Target 4: More learners obtain an NSC with excellent marks in critically	100% of SoS implementing the technical-occupational curriculum	• Umalusi appraised the occupationally oriented subjects, provided feedback to the DBE for implementation, and conducted research to investigate how learners from the SoS can be accommodated in the proposed GEC qualification.

MTSF priority	Target	Indicator	Umalusi's contribution
	important subjects by 2024 (contribute towards a prosperous and equitable South Africa)	1 007 ordinary schools implementing the technical-occupational curriculum	

8. Contribution towards prioritising women, youth, and people living with disabilities

Umalusi ensures the inclusion of people living with disabilities in the development and evaluation of qualifications. The organisation aligns its qualifications with SAQA's Policy and Criteria for the Registration of Qualifications and the Policy for the Development, Registration and Publication of Qualifications on the GFETQSF. In addition, all new and amended policies were submitted to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) for assessment through the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment System (SEIAS).

Umalusi has evaluated the GEC, a qualification at NQF Level 1, ensuring articulation across three learning pathways: academic, vocational, and occupational. This approach broadens opportunities for learners to pursue pathways aligned with their interests and aptitudes.

Furthermore, Umlausi evaluated the SoS and pre-vocational subjects offered in Grades 8 and 9 in general education. These subjects cater to learners who demonstrate a preference for practical or artisanal work over traditional academic learning. The organisation also evaluated Robotics within the NCS, which leads to the GEC qualification, as well as the NC(V) qualifications, to strengthen curricula. These efforts aim to enable learners to begin career-focused learning before attaining an NQF Level 4 qualification.

Through its advocacy strategy, Umalusi actively engages stakeholders in designated groups. For example, an advocacy video was developed for the Deaf community, incorporating clear, decipherable text wherever possible.

Umalusi also prioritises the employment of women, youth, and people living with disabilities by aligning its EE targets with the Provincial Economically Active Population (PEAP). All recruitment advertisements include a clause encouraging people living with disabilities to apply.

Additionally, the organisation promotes economic empowerment through its SCM processes. Its procurement evaluation criteria award points for ownership by designated groups. In the 2024/25 financial year, Umalusi appointed 269 suppliers (22 through multi-year contracts and 247 through once-off RFQs), with a combined contract value of R20.5 million. The average ownership of these suppliers was as follows:

- Black ownership = 59%
- Women ownership = 38%
- Youth ownership = 14%
- People living with disabilities ownership = 6%

8.1 Challenges encountered by the public entity when prioritising delivery for these designated groups

One of the ongoing challenges in procuring goods and services from designated groups is the low response rate from companies owned by women, youth, and people living with disabilities when requests for quotations and tenders are issued. Despite Umalusi's consistent efforts to encourage applications from people living with disabilities, including through inclusive language in advertisements, no applications were received from individuals in this group during the reporting period. Furthermore, Umalusi House currently lacks the necessary infrastructure to accommodate people living with disabilities, which remains a key area for improvement.

8.2 Corrective measures to address these challenges

The organisation remains committed to promoting inclusive employment practices and will continue to encourage people living with disabilities to apply for vacant positions. Targeted recruitment strategies will also be considered during the filling of vacancies to support this goal. Additionally, Umalusi will continue to enforce its current SCM policy and regulations to advance procurement from designated groups.

Renovation plans for Umalusi House are underway to enhance accessibility for people living with disabilities. Notably, Thuto-Mfundo has already been renovated and now includes features such as ramps, a lift, designated parking bays, and accessible toilets to accommodate wheelchair users.

9. Conclusion

This report outlines the activities undertaken by Umalusi during the five-year term from 2019/20 to 2024/25. It presents the planned results at the output, outcome, and impact levels, demonstrating the logical progression from activities to outputs, and from outputs to broader outcomes and long-term impact.

The report reflects how the organisation's efforts over the past five years were designed to produce outputs that contribute to medium-term outcomes. Of the two planned outcomes, Umalusi did not achieve the outcome related to efficient and effective administrative systems. This was primarily due to the organisation receiving an unqualified audit report with findings and adjustments to the annual financial statements for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. In response, the organisation has instituted measures to address and mitigate the issues that contributed to this outcome. The measures are already yielding a positive impact, resulting in an unqualified audit opinion with no material findings for the 2024/25 financial year.

The report also affirms that progress was made toward ensuring access to credible and relevant qualifications within the GFETQSF. It further identifies the persistent challenges that hinder the attainment of intended outcomes and impacts. Realising the desired impact will require sustained effort and greater collaboration within the education sector. While Umalusi plays a critical role in setting and upholding standards, achieving systemic integrity demands the active involvement of all stakeholders to safeguard the quality of South Africa's education system for future generations.

OFFICIAL SIGN-OFF

The Executive Management of Umalusi hereby certifies that this report reflects the organisation's end-of-term performance for the 2020 - 2024 planning cycle.

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