

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: ACCREDITATION OF PRIVATE COLLEGES TO OFFER THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE: ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GETC: ABET)

This document is intended to contribute to a better understanding of Umalusi's quality assurance mandate, scope, and initiatives as they apply to Adult Education and Training (AET) private colleges.

### 1. Quality assurance mandate and scope

1.1	<p><b>Why does Umalusi refer to a private Adult Education and Training Centre as a "private college"?</b></p> <p>The Continuing Education and Training (CET) Act, No. 16 of 2016 defines a "private college" as any college that provides continuing education and training on a full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is registered or provisionally registered as a private college in terms of Chapter 6 of the Act.</p> <p>The Act continues to state in section 28: No person other than a public college or an organ of state may provide continuing education and training unless that person is –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Incorporated or recognised as a company in terms of the Companies Act, 2008.</li> <li>b) Registered or provisionally registered as a private college in terms of the Act.</li> </ul>
1.2	<p><b>Why does a private college have to be accredited?</b></p> <p>Accreditation is a legal requirement for private colleges in terms of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act 2001 as amended,</li> <li>- National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008 as amended,</li> <li>- Policy for the Quality Assurance of Private Colleges for Continuing Education and Training offering qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and the Accreditation of Private Assessment Bodies (Government Gazette 41887, of 7 September 2018).</li> <li>- Continuing Education and Training Act No. 16 of 2006.</li> </ul>
1.3	<p><b>What is the difference between accreditation and registration?</b></p> <p>Accreditation is the recognition of the capacity of a private college to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework and the private college's implementation of the curriculum in support of the qualification at the required standard.</p> <p>Accreditation attests to the capacity and the quality of the offering of a specific qualification in a private college.</p> <p>Registration is the "licence to operate" issued by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to private colleges that meet their requirements for registration as a private college.</p> <p>Registration as an examination centre is separate from registration as a private college. An accredited private college may register as an examination centre for the GETC: ABET</p>

	with either the Department of Higher Education and Training or an accredited private assessment body (the IEB or SACAI).
1.4	<p><b>Are all private Adult Education and Training (AET) colleges expected to apply for accreditation with Umalusi?</b></p> <p>Private AET colleges (AET centres) that intend to offer the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training at NQF Level 1 are required to apply for accreditation with Umalusi as outlined in the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance (GENFETQA) Act, 2001, as amended, and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008 as amended.</p>
1.5	<p><b>How do I apply for accreditation?</b></p> <p>Application for accreditation is an online process, which can be accessed on Umalusi's website: <a href="http://www.umalusi.org.za">www.umalusi.org.za</a>. Click on the link "Apply for Accreditation" <a href="https://www.umalusi-online.org.za/OA/">https://www.umalusi-online.org.za/OA/</a>. You will then be guided through the online application process.</p> <p>Information about the accreditation process is available on the Umalusi website on the following link: <a href="https://www.umalusi.org.za/services/accreditation/">https://www.umalusi.org.za/services/accreditation/</a>. Scroll down and click on the link to the "Open Letter to Applicants".</p>
1.6	<p><b>Our college offers the qualification at different sites. Does the accreditation apply to all the sites?</b></p> <p>A private college is accredited to offer the qualification at a specific site. However, AET private colleges may request authorisation to offer the qualification at an additional site based on a contract with the company requiring training. All sites where delivery takes place must conform to resource and health and safety requirements. Contracts with clients at different sites of delivery must be forwarded to Umalusi. A site visit will be conducted at the main site of delivery, and monitoring may take place at additional sites of delivery.</p>
1.7	<p><b>Is provisional accreditation automatically extended?</b></p> <p>No. The two-year provisional accreditation is not automatically extended. This is a period granted to an institution whose evaluation indicated that there are some issues that the institution was not able to meet at the time of application, and there is an indication that the institution can be able to meet those within the two years granted for improvement. If by the end of the two years, the institution has not demonstrated that it meets all the requirements for accreditation and/or has not paid the required fee for follow-up evaluation, the provisional accreditation will lapse, and the college will be considered as not accredited.</p> <p>The college must demonstrate implementation of teaching and learning at the required standard within the provisional accreditation period. A college must, therefore, secure a training contract within that period and inform Umalusi once training under that contract is taking place so that Umalusi can evaluate the implementation of teaching and learning.</p>

1.8	<p><b>Who is responsible for assessing ABET Levels 1-3?</b></p> <p>Umalusi is mandated to quality assure assessments at the exit point of the qualification, which in this case is the GETC: ABET at NQF Level 1. The provider is responsible for assessing Levels 1-3 and to recognise the achievements obtained at those levels. Private colleges that intend to conduct examinations for the GETC: ABET at NQF Level 1 must register through the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) or an accredited private assessment body, i.e. the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) or the South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) to write the GETC: ABET examinations.</p>
1.9	<p><b>The clients we offer ABET require us to provide the students with Umalusi certificates for ABET level 3. How does one go about getting such certificates?</b></p> <p>Umalusi is mandated to quality assure assessments and issue certificates at exit points. The cost of issuing the certificates is to the account of the service provider. In the case of the GETC: ABET, this is level 4 (NQF Level 1). The service provider needs to clarify this with their clients at the time of signing the contract for such provisioning. There should be a clear understanding at that point of how the achievements are going to be recognised. Umalusi-accredited providers are required to register with an accredited assessment body or the DHET to conduct exit examinations. The assessment body can provide guidance and support to providers in the assessment of the lower levels of the qualification.</p>
1.10	<p><b>What is the Umalusi quality assurance approach for private colleges?</b></p> <p>In line with its quality assurance mandate, Umalusi uses a set of criteria to accredit private colleges to offer a qualification on its sub-framework. Umalusi's main focus in regard to private colleges is their internal quality management of education provision.</p> <p>The criteria for the accreditation of a private college to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criterion 1: Mission Directed Leadership and Management</li> <li>Criterion 2: Teaching, Learning and Training</li> <li>Criterion 3: Assessment and Results</li> <li>Criterion 4: Learner Support</li> </ul>
1.11	<p><b>Is the accreditation of private colleges optional or compulsory?</b></p> <p>Private colleges that offer the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training at NQF Level 1 are obliged to be accredited with Umalusi and to comply with the monitoring and evaluation requirements of Umalusi.</p>
1.12	<p><b>We are in the process of establishing a private AET college. Do we start with accreditation or registration?</b></p> <p>An application for accreditation must be lodged with Umalusi, and, at the same time, the prospective college must lodge an application for registration with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). Once the self-evaluation report submitted to Umalusi by the prospective private college meets the minimum requirements, Umalusi will advise the DHET thereof. The DHET will then conduct their processes leading to provisional registration as a private college (and examination centre) if the college meets the DHET minimum requirements.</p>

	<p>The accreditation process will continue for the private college that is granted registration or provisional registration by the DHET. However, without provisional registration by the DHET, the accreditation process will not be able to continue since registration of a private college is a prerequisite for accreditation.</p>
1.13	<p><b>Is it a problem if our principal/teachers/lecturers/facilitators are not registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE)?</b></p> <p>Yes. Section 3(a), (c), and (f) of the South African Council for Educators Act No. 31 of 2000, as amended, "applies to all educators, lecturers, and management staff of colleges".</p> <p>Further, Chapter 3 Section 21(2) states that: "No person may be employed as an educator by any employer unless the person is registered with the council".</p>
1.14	<p><b>Does Umalusi accredit private providers of curriculum material, including teaching and learning aids?</b></p> <p>No. Umalusi accredits private Adult Education and Training colleges that offer the General Education and Training Certificate: Adult Basic Education and Training at NQF Level 1.</p>
1.15	<p><b>Does accreditation with Umalusi mean we can offer any qualifications and learning areas?</b></p> <p>No. You can only offer the programme and learning areas that you have been registered for and accredited to offer. The learning areas must meet the minimum requirements of 120 credits for the learner to be certificated for the qualification.</p> <p>If you wish to offer another qualification or programme, you are required to obtain accreditation from the relevant Quality Council to offer that qualification.</p>
1.16	<p><b>Does the public know about our college's accreditation status?</b></p> <p>Accredited colleges are listed on Umalusi's website. This information can be accessed at <a href="http://www.umalusi.org.za">www.umalusi.org.za</a> on the link "Search Accredited Service Providers". (<a href="https://www.umalusi-online.org.za/enquiries">https://www.umalusi-online.org.za/enquiries</a>).</p>
1.17	<p><b>Will our college be registered as an examination centre even if it is not accredited by Umalusi?</b></p> <p>Once a private college has met the minimum requirements at the desktop evaluation stage of the accreditation process, Umalusi refers the college to the DHET for provisional registration. Once a college meets the requirements of the DHET and is provisionally registered as a private college by the DHET, it may apply for registration as an examination centre with the DHET or an accredited private assessment body. The private college will have to meet the requirements for accreditation to offer the qualification within a specified time in order to retain the registration status.</p>
1.18	<p><b>How much do we have to pay for the accreditation application?</b></p> <p>The fees are stipulated on the annual fee schedule as determined by the Umalusi Council annually and are indicated in the Open Letter to Applicants, which can be found on the Umalusi website <a href="https://www.umalusi.org.za/services/accreditation/">https://www.umalusi.org.za/services/accreditation/</a>. The</p>

	fees relate to the processing and evaluation of the college's application. The fees are payable per step in the process, and you will not be able to move on in the accreditation process without making the relevant payments.
1.19	<p><b>Who evaluates our self-evaluation and monitoring reports?</b></p> <p>Self-evaluation and monitoring reports are evaluated by adequately qualified and experienced educationists, college heads, senior lecturers or learning area experts, who are appointed and trained by Umalusi for that purpose.</p>
1.20	<p><b>Can we use generic policies to support our compliance with the accreditation criteria?</b></p> <p>Policies should be customised to suit the specific context of your college and be relevant to the specific qualification requirements. Generic policies can be used as a guideline but will not be accepted as meeting the requirements if submitted without being customised to the college and qualification that is being evaluated.</p>
1.21	<p><b>Our college's internal policies are not documented but are known to all staff members, students, and all stakeholders. Is it essential that policies should be documented?</b></p> <p>Yes. Internal policies must be documented. Policy documentation ensures consistent and effective implementation, monitoring, review, and general improvement of their effectiveness.</p>
1.22	<p><b>Can we ask an education consultant to compile our self-evaluation report or to develop policies for us?</b></p> <p>Although it is obviously the prerogative of colleges to use consultants in portfolio and/or policy development, it is Umalusi's considered view that policies compiled by consultants do not always provide an opportunity for staff members at the college to participate actively in their development. Subsequently, it is unlikely for staff members to take full ownership of the processes of policy implementation, monitoring and review. In the main, Umalusi believes that an increased role of consultants limits the entrenchment of an internal culture of quality management.</p> <p>The self-evaluation report should be completed by the directors of the company (owner) or the campus head or principal (people involved in the management and day-to-day running of the college) so that they can answer questions during the accreditation process. During the site visit, only the college staff are interviewed and consulted. Umalusi does not deal with consultants during the evaluation process.</p> <p>The requirements for accreditation are explained in detail at the Quality Promotion meetings, which consultants may not attend. The campus manager/director/principal and/or appointed quality assurance manager should attend the Quality Promotion meeting.</p>
1.23	<p><b>How do we know that the evidence we provide will sufficiently support our compliance with the criteria?</b></p> <p>Compulsory Quality Promotion meetings are held to assist colleges on how to apply for accreditation, to explain the evidence required for the self-evaluation report, and on what to expect during the site verification visit.</p>
1.24	<p><b>Surely, our narrative should be sufficient to support our compliance with the accreditation criteria.</b></p>

	No. Narratives serve to explain what the college perceives to be its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the compliance criteria. Compliance is mainly determined by the relevance and adequacy of supporting evidence provided by the college, which can be confirmed through observation of the actual implementation of the policies.
1.25	<p><b>How does the POPI Act affect the evaluation of our accreditation application?</b></p> <p>Section 11(1)(e) of the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act No. 4 of 2013 states that personal information may be processed if processing is necessary for the proper performance of a public law duty by a public body.</p> <p>Section 38(1) further states that personal information processed for the purpose of discharging a relevant function is exempt from sections 11(3) and (4), 12, 15 and 8 in any case to the extent to which the application of those provisions to the personal information would be likely to prejudice the proper discharge of that function.</p> <p>Section 38(2) states that "Relevant function", for the purposes of subsection (1), means any function (a) of a public body".</p> <p>Umalusi is exempted from sections 11(3) and (4), 12, 15 and 18<sup>1</sup> in terms of carrying out its mandate of accrediting private education institutions.</p> <p>Your college will need to ensure that the necessary provisions are in place in terms of the personal records that will be provided in terms of the college's application for accreditation.</p>

## 2. Site visits

2.1	<p><b>What preparation is needed for the site visit?</b></p> <p>All staff members should be able to display an understanding of applicable policies and demonstrate that they implement the policies and procedures accordingly. The key personnel must attend a pre-site visit meeting to ensure that they understand what is required for the site visit and the programme for the day.</p>
2.2	<p><b>How experienced and qualified are Umalusi's site evaluators?</b></p> <p>The site evaluators and learning area specialists who are appointed and trained by Umalusi are experienced educationists, college heads, senior lecturers or learning area experts.</p>
2.3	<p><b>The private college sector is competitive. Why should our college be site visited by educationists, college heads, senior lecturers or learning area experts from other colleges?</b></p> <p>The capacity of a private college to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework at the required standard must be</p>

<sup>1</sup>Umalusi is exempted from sections 11(3) and (4), 12, 15 and 18<sup>1</sup> in terms of carrying out its mandate of accrediting private education institutions, namely:

11(3) A data subject may object, at any time to the processing of personal information

11(4) If a data subject has objected to the processing of personal information in terms of subsection (3), the responsible party may no longer process the personal information.

12(1) Personal information must be collected directly from the data subject, except as otherwise provided for in subsection (2)

15 "Further processing of personal information" must be in accordance or compatible with the purpose for which it was collected in terms of section 13, and 18, "Notification to data subject when collecting personal information."

	<p>demonstrated and evaluated by Umalusi for the purpose of accreditation. It is important, therefore, that evaluation is conducted by people who are knowledgeable about the sector. Colleges are always informed prior to the site visit of the names of the potential site evaluators; thus, they are given an opportunity to express their unhappiness with any of the evaluation personnel that Umalusi assigns to the college.</p> <p>Site evaluators and learning area specialists are required to sign relevant documents to ensure that they conduct themselves ethically and with utmost confidentiality. Furthermore, it is Umalusi and not the site evaluator that makes the final accreditation decision.</p>
2.4	<p><b>Umalusi visited our college. Will there be another visit?</b></p> <p>There may be another visit to verify evidence subsequently submitted if your college is granted a "window period" to meet the requirements for accreditation within a given period or receives an outcome of provisional accreditation. There may also be an unannounced physical verification site visit after an online site visit or a visit as part of the monitoring process. Umalusi may also visit a college if there is a complaint lodged by students, parents, a member of the public or any government department.</p>

### 3. Monitoring

3.1	<p><b>How will Umalusi monitor the compliance of colleges that are accredited for 7 years?</b></p> <p>Umalusi uses a differentiated approach to monitor accredited colleges. This can either be through an electronic monitoring process or an unannounced physical site visit. The college will be informed via email if they must submit a monitoring report and the date by which they must submit a completed report and supporting evidence. If there are complaints or concerns about an accredited college, Umalusi has the right to conduct an unannounced site visit at any time during the period of accreditation or request an institution to complete a monitoring report.</p> <p>Note that Umalusi officials conducting site visits will always have a letter from Umalusi authorising them to conduct the site visit, as well as contact numbers at Umalusi to confirm the authenticity of the officials conducting the unannounced site visit.</p>
3.2	<p><b>Is it compulsory to submit monitoring reports?</b></p> <p>Yes. Accredited private colleges are required to submit monitoring reports as a condition of their accreditation. Umalusi may institute steps to withdraw the accreditation of private colleges that fail to submit the required monitoring reports or that fail to maintain the required standards for accreditation.</p>
3.3	<p><b>What is the purpose of post-accreditation monitoring?</b></p> <p>The purpose of post-accreditation monitoring is to ensure that the accredited institution continues to meet Umalusi's accreditation criteria.</p>
3.4	<p><b>What happens to private colleges that do not submit their monitoring reports to Umalusi?</b></p> <p>Their accreditation status will be reviewed, and consequently, the college's accreditation may be withdrawn. Such colleges will be notified of the implications of their failure to maintain their accreditation status.</p>

	Furthermore, the accreditation status of colleges is regularly communicated to the DHET. Failure of private colleges to maintain their accreditation status may lead to a review by the DHET of their registration as a private college (and examination centre, where applicable).
3.5	<p><b>Does our centre have to pay an administration fee every time it is monitored?</b></p> <p>No. Accredited institutions are required to pay an annual accreditation fee. From 1 April 2026, this fee will replace the current biennial accreditation fee.</p> <p>However, if a private college does not submit the required monitoring report and Umalusi is required to conduct a monitoring site visit, the private college will be required to pay a monitoring fee.</p> <p>Colleges which fail to pay the biennial accreditation fee may have their accreditation status reviewed.</p>
3.6	<p><b>Does a private AET college receive an accreditation certificate after each monitoring?</b></p> <p>No. An accredited private AET college receives an accreditation certificate only at the point of accreditation, not after each cycle of monitoring.</p>

#### 4. General

4.1	<p><b>As far as we are concerned, we comply with all the accreditation criteria, but our accreditation report says we are not fully compliant.</b></p> <p>To address this, compare the evidence provided by your college with Umalusi's evidence requirements. You may address queries to the Manager responsible for the accreditation of private colleges at Umalusi.</p> <p>Colleges which do not meet the minimum requirements for accreditation at the first presentation of the report to the Accreditation Committee of Council are granted a "window period" or "provisional accreditation" within which to meet the minimum requirements for accreditation.</p> <p>Together with the letter advising you of the outcome of your application, you will receive an indication of the areas in which the college failed to meet the minimum requirements for accreditation. In addition, you will be advised of the date by which the college is required to meet all the minimum requirements for accreditation, as well as the date by which a re-evaluation fee must be paid. Failure to pay the required fee by the date indicated will automatically result in an outcome of "no accreditation".</p> <p>Please note that at the time of review, all the accreditation criteria must be met. Therefore, if standards drop from the time of the initial site visit, that will be taken into account in determining the outcome of the college's application for accreditation, even if the item was not specified in the feedback on the accreditation application.</p> <p>The fee payable for evaluation of evidence following a "window period" to improve or provisional accreditation is indicated in the schedule of fees in the "Open Letter to Applicants – Private AET Colleges" on the Umalusi website: <a href="http://www.umalusi.org.za">www.umalusi.org.za</a></p> <p>The fees are revised on an annual basis.</p>
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4.2	<p><b>What are the costs associated with accreditation and monitoring?</b></p> <p>Please refer to the annual fees indicated in the "Open Letter to Applicants" found on the Umalusi website. <a href="http://www.umalusi.org.za">www.umalusi.org.za</a>.</p>
4.3	<p><b>Why do private providers have to pay such high accreditation fees?</b></p> <p>Fees are calculated on the costs incurred for conducting the evaluation process. The Constitution of South Africa, Chapter 2: Bill of Rights, paragraph 29 states: 3) Everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that: (a) do not discriminate based on race. (b) are registered with the state; and (c) maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.</p> <p>In addition, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001, Section 13 (1)c states: <i>The funds of the Council consist of money received by the Council in respect of fees charged for services.</i></p>
4.4	<p><b>Is there an appeal process if we disagree with the final outcome of our application?</b></p> <p>In terms of the Umalusi appeal process, a request for an appeal must be submitted within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the accreditation application.</p> <p>The basis for an appeal must be that the institution has evidence to support its claim that an incorrect decision was made, taking into account evidence that was available at the time of the decision. Any measures put in place after the evaluation or that are planned to be implemented will not be considered as the basis for an appeal.</p> <p>Detailed reasons for the appeal must be indicated on the appeal form. The appeal (on the requisite form) must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer of Umalusi and emailed to <a href="mailto:accreditation.appeals@umalusi.org.za">accreditation.appeals@umalusi.org.za</a>.</p> <p>Payment of the required fee must be made for an appeal to be considered. Should the finding of the appeal be in favour of the appellant, the fee paid will be refunded to the applicant.</p> <p>Note that a college may submit <b>an informal query</b> on the reason for their accreditation outcome to <a href="mailto:accreditation@umalusi.org.za">accreditation@umalusi.org.za</a> or one of the Umalusi staff copied in the email notifying them of the outcome of their application. No payment is required for a query. Colleges are advised to follow the query route before submission of a formal appeal.</p>

Email: [accreditation@umalusi.org.za](mailto:accreditation@umalusi.org.za)  
[Thomas.Magadze@umalusi.org.za](mailto:Thomas.Magadze@umalusi.org.za)  
[Vanessa.Naidoo@umalusi.org.za](mailto:Vanessa.Naidoo@umalusi.org.za)  
[Mariette.Ebersohn@umalusi.org.za](mailto:Mariette.Ebersohn@umalusi.org.za)  
[Anushka.Moodley@umalusi.org.za](mailto:Anushka.Moodley@umalusi.org.za)