



STATE OF READINESS TO ADMINISTER AND MANAGE THE NOVEMBER 2021 NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION

9 November 2021



Presentation Outline

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Umalusi mandate and regulatory framework

According to the **National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No. 67 of 2008**, Umalusi must:

Develop and implement policy and criteria for assessment for the qualifications on its sub-framework;

with regard to quality assurance within its sub-framework, do the following:

- (i) develop and implement policy for quality assurance;
- (ii) ensure the integrity and credibility of quality assurance; and
- (iii) ensure that quality assurance as is necessary for the sub-framework is undertaken.

GENFETQA Act, amended 2008, Section 17A

- (3) The Council must, perform the external moderation of assessment of all assessment bodies and education institutions.
- (4) The Council may adjust raw marks during the standardization process.

Umalusi mandate and regulatory framework

GENFETQA Act, amended 2008, Section 17A

- (5) The Council must, with the concurrence of the Director-General and after consultation with the relevant assessment body or education institution, approve the publication of the results of learners if the Council is satisfied that the assessment body or education institution has:-
- (i) conducted the assessment free from any irregularity that may jeopardise the integrity of the assessment or its outcomes;
 - (ii) complied with the requirements prescribed by the Council for conducting assessments;
 - (iii) applied the standards prescribed by the Council, which a learner is required to comply with in order to obtain a certificate; and
 - (iv) complied with every other condition determined by the Council.

Framework for Quality Assurance of Assessment

Quality assurance of assessment is conducted to ensure that assessment leading to the award of certificates in schools, adult education centres and technical and vocational education and training colleges is of the required standard. This is in order to ensure that the certificates issued by Umalusi are credible.

This is achieved through:

- Moderation of examination question papers, Practical Assessment Tasks (PAT) and Common Assessment Tasks in the case of Life Orientation;
- Monitoring and moderation of School Based Assessment (SBA);
- Monitoring the state of readiness to conduct, administer, and manage examinations;
- Monitoring of the conduct, administration and management of assessment and examination processes;
- Monitoring and moderation of marking;
- Management of concessions and examination irregularities;
- Standardisation of assessment outcomes;
- Approval of the publication of the results of learners if the Council is satisfied that the assessment body has conducted the assessment free from any irregularities that might jeopardise the integrity of the assessment; and
- Certification.

State of Readiness approach

Umalusi adopted a **Risk Management Based** approach as its strategy to evaluate the level of preparedness of assessment bodies to conduct the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations.

The intention in making use of the strategy was for Umalusi to timeously identify the areas with potential risk, which may likely compromise the delivery of credible examinations and advise the assessment bodies accordingly.

State of Readiness approach

Conducted desktop evaluation

The assessment body used Umalusi state of readiness evaluation instrument to conduct self-evaluation and submitted the self-evaluation reports for desktop analysis.

Risk analysis and feedback

Umalusi used the submitted self-evaluation reports to determine a risk profile of the assessment body.

Evidence-based audits

This process was used to evaluate the submitted report(s) and/or any other reports received from the assessment body, including the Provincial Education Departments (PED).

2021 Implementation Strategy

DBE Approach	Procedure/Process
DBE review meetings of the PEDs.	Review meetings were conducted remotely through an online platform.
DBE state of readiness of the PEDs	State of readiness presentations were received, and Umalusi conducted its independent audit of the PED readiness
DBE state of readiness report	DBE state of readiness report was received and evaluated

This approach was instrumental in providing useful information in the finalisation of the State of Readiness report for 2021.

Brief on key findings on level of readiness to conduct, administer, and manage examinations as at October 2021

Status on key examination processes

The 2021 registration of candidates was finalised and final enrolment information was available.

The PEDs were found to be ready to provide the registered candidates with admission letters for the 2021 November examination cycle.

The question papers for 2021 November examinations were moderated and approved on time and consignments for their printing were also managed successfully by the DBE.

All PEDs commenced with the selection and appointment of marking personnel and Umalusi verification of appointed markers were conducted successfully. Shortages at 3 PED were noted, communicated to the Director General and are currently being addressed.

Summary of Findings

**Findings on State of Readiness of the
DBE to conduct, administer and
manage the November 2021 NSC
examinations**

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 1: Management	Staff capacity: <p>Staff shortages was found to be a national challenge and ran as a thread.</p> <p>The filling of vacancies remains a systemic challenge and the current budget cuts further exacerbated the challenge, however, the PEDs put measures in place to ensure that examination deliverables are not compromised.</p> <p>The DBE has since brought the challenge to the attention of the authorities for intervention.</p>

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 2 (a): Registration of candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DBE delivers its mandate through the nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDs). The registration of candidates were finalised in all the nine PEDs.• In the main, two system were instrumental in the management of learner registration through which the upload at school level took place, and these were the South African School Administration Management System (SA SAMS) and the Centralised Educational Management Information System (CEMIS). Final uploads went into the Integrated Examination Computer System (IECS).• For 2021 November National Senior Certificate full-time candidates (learner) registrations data was extracted from these systems. However, duplication of candidates was noted, and these required the DBE to investigate and ensure that accurate data was uploaded on IECS.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 2 (a): Registration of candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A significant shift was noted in the administration of registration and certification. PED considered the decentralisation of registration function to the districts. In a way, this initiative by the DBE/PED aimed to bring the service closer to the communities.• Process of registration of immigrant candidates was finalised in all PEDs, and the DBE verification of the process was also finalised. All the processing of immigrant applications met the requirements.

National size and magnitude of November 2021 NSC examinations

Registration of Candidates (NSC)

The registration of candidates for the November 2021 NSC examinations was successfully completed by all provinces, and the national registration outlook, **as provided by DBE** as at 20 October 2021, is as follows:

NSC (Nov 2021)	
Full-Time	735 677
Part-Time	162 109
Grand Total	897 786

National size and magnitude of November 2021 NSC examinations

EXAMINATIONS	YEAR	ECED	FSED	GDE	KZNED	LIMPED	MPUED	NCED	NWED	WCED
Full-Time (FT)	2021	96 944	36 399	132 888	178 151	106 573	69 272	13 465	42 147	59 838
	2020	77 620	29 289	115 069	144 307	79 813	56 030	12 021	38 292	54 785
Part-Time (PT)	2021	17 976	7 621	42 444	25 141	35 572	10 505	3 419	5 316	14 115
	2020	14 854	7 215	34 316	22 060	16 119	7 141	1 709	3 429	10 965
Grant Total per PED (FT and PT)	2021	114 920	44 020	175 332	203 292	142 145	79 777	16 884	47 463	73 953
	2020	92 474	36 504	149 385	166 367	95 932	63 171	13 730	41 721	65 750

Data provided by DBE as at 20 October 2021

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 2(b): Registration of examination centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audit of examination centres was conducted across PED.• The responsibility to conduct the audit was delegated to the districts. This process was completed.• The PED put risk management strategies in place to manage the independent schools during the administration of examination.• All the nine PED complied with the accreditation concession requirement as required by Umalusi.

Number of Established Examination Centres

Each of the nine PEDs put measures in place to manage established designated centres and independent centres.

Total take over by the districts will happen through different initiatives, which includes deploying resident monitors to oversee the administration of examinations.

DESCRIPTION	EC	FS	GD	KZN	LIMP	MPU	NC	NW	WC	Total
Number of Public Schools	890	320	667	1 699	1 284	522	138	418	388	6 326
Number of Part Time centres (centre were non-full-time candidates will be accommodated for the writing of examinations)	144	275	374	1 603	329	524	138	343	400	4 130
Number of Designated centres (centre to accommodate candidates from independent schools whom the PED will manage)	0	5	5	3	280	0	2	5	26	326
Number of Independent centres	51	18	226	59	44	35	7	20	66	526
	1 085	618	1 272	3 364	1 937	1 081	285	786	880	11 308

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 3: School Based Assessment</p> <p>SOR audit and verification conducted for SBA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DBE/PED have systems in place and management plans for the implementation of SBA.• The DBE issued circulars/assessment instructions to PED which provided guidance on the approach and management of SBA marks. This was intended to standardise the procedures and approach the PEDs need to apply in dealing with moderation and processing of the SBA marks.• Umalusi moderation of SBA was conducted in line with plans which were communicated to the DBE/PED and the moderation process was completed in October 2021.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 4: Printing, Packaging, distribution of question papers/ examination materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For 2021, the DBE has put measures in place for the release and collection of question paper consignment prior to printing commences. This required the PED to conduct and put together a risk assessment document and mitigating strategies for printing, packaging, storage and distribution.• The DBE national norms and standard on security and safekeeping of examination question papers regulate and determine the measures to be put in place for printing of the question papers.• High security measures were displayed across all printing facilities and access control into the building where printing is taking place was strengthened. For example, detectors for unauthorized material at access points were installed; additional surveillance cameras in areas where question papers are stitched, i.e., where stappling into a booklet is done, and packing is taking place.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 4: Printing, Packaging, distribution of question papers/ examination materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DBE conducted an audit of the Government Printing Works (GPW) to evaluate the security measures in place to mitigate the potential risks in the printing warehouse. This was done in collaboration with the PED which signed an SLA for the printing of the 2021 November question papers with GPW. Umalusi verified the DBE process and was satisfied with all measures the GPW has put in place. Vetting of staff was another security measure the GPW had put in place and managed closely. • Confidentiality declaration forms of appointed staff assigned to work in the printing warehouse and packaging of examination material were signed. All PED were expected to apply the requirement stringently and that was complied with. • The printing of the November 2021 NSC examinations commenced in line with PEDs management plans for printing of national question papers. • As at 15 October 2021, eight PED successfully secured and signed contracts with service providers who would be responsible for the printing of the November 2021 question papers, except for the Free State PED who had an incomplete procurement of service for printing.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 4:</p> <p>Printing, Packaging, distribution of question papers /examination materials</p>	<p>The DBE in collaboration with the PED ensured that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management plans for printing, packaging and distribution of examination question papers and related materials were in place and reported on.• Measures for quality assurance of printed consignments were in place.• The level of security at storage rooms across the printing warehouses were strengthened. For example, all storage points had to meet the major criteria which was non-negotiable.• Strong room managers were appointed in writing in all instances, declaration of accountability and confidentiality were signed.• The DBE standardised protocols on health and safety was to be complied with and strict adherence on compliance was reported.• Measures for managing storage facilities were put in place and be monitored closely.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 4: Printing, Packaging, distribution of question papers /examination materials</p>	<p>The national criteria determined for audit of storage points informed the approval of identified storage points. The criteria was classified into two critical categories, viz., major and additional as indicated below.</p> <p>All PED conducted audits of nodal points, and the reports revealed that the approved nodal points satisfied and met the following required criteria:</p> <p>Major criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong room• Strong room space• Security guards• Double locking• Level of key holder storage manager <p>Additional criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location• Lighting• Armed response/Alarm system• CCTV Monitoring

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 4: Printing, Packaging, distribution of question papers/ examination materials</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There were PED which partially approved some of the nodal points, and these were disqualified by the DBE since they did not meet the major criteria which for 2021 was non-negotiable and required that the PED address the limitations before storage of question papers could take place.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 5: Conduct of Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DBE encouraged the adoption of three tier monitoring model/hierarchy as a national monitoring approach. This implies that monitoring will be conducted at Provincial, Districts and Circuit levels.• The DBE set a monitoring target of 70% to 100% coverage across districts in the provinces, particularly when subjects with high enrolments are written.• Furthermore, the DBE promoted the integrated monitoring model which was intended to strengthen the monitoring across level of the examination system. However, as at 15 October 2021, the PED were in the process of finalising and making submission of such plans to the DBE as required.• The standardised national protocols on health and safety for monitoring of the writing of examinations were developed and strict adherence to these protocols will be monitored across provinces, districts, circuits and examination centres.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 5: Conduct of Examinations	<p>Blended approaches were adopted for ensuring that training of officials was conducted safely due to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic. The PED opted for face-to-face or online/virtual platform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Face-to-face training sessions. <p>This modality earmarked areas with less resources so to ensure that participants could attend the training sessions. The PED put measures to ensure that training was conducted under strict Health and Safety protocols as developed by the PED.</p> <p>The training of chief invigilators were completed and 90% of the invigilator training were successfully completed as at 23 September 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Online/electronic platform training sessions <p>The online training sessions were adopted in the training of office-based personnel who were to be involved in the conduct and management of examinations</p> <p>The training the trainer approach for invigilator training was adopted across different PEDs and was to be monitored closely.</p>

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 5: Conduct of Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitoring strategies to ensure effective conduct, administration and management of credible examinations across the nine PED were found to be in place.• Audit of all examination centres was enforced in 2021, taking into consideration guidelines issued to curb the spread of Covid-19. The following was the status in relation to the examination centres:<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) each of the nine PED had profiled the examination centres according to the three risk levels: high; medium, and low, and this was national criteria which each of the PED had to comply with;b) in line with the national approach, administration of examinations in all high-risk centres, is taken over by the PEDs.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 5: Conduct of Examinations	<p>c) All candidates including those who tested positive for Covid-19 or display symptoms would be allowed to write the examinations, and in such instances, examination centres would establish isolation centres to cater for the candidates who might need to write examinations under strict Covid-19 restrictions,</p> <p>d) Designated centres were established to accommodate candidates from independent centres and the centres will be closely monitored by the PED.</p>

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 5: Conduct of Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More stringent measures to curb compromise of the examination integrity and credibility were in place. For example, the deployment of resident monitors to all identified high-risk centres were initiated. Some of the PED extended the scope of invigilation, and since finalised the appointment of private invigilators to strengthen the invigilation.• Training of chief invigilators took place as per the PED plans and were completed successfully, however there was no indication of plans to monitor the training which the examination centres were to conduct for invigilators.• DBE made significant effort to ensure that the November examinations would be monitored closely by appointing 50 part-time monitors to be deployed across provinces for monitoring purposes.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 5: Conduct of Examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A concern of limited resources in KwaZulu Natal which was likely to impact on the PED inability to meet the desired 100% monitoring coverage as requested by the DBE, was noted.• In the North West it was noted that the PED has limited transport. This was likely to contribute to the PED failure to adequately cover the desired 100% monitoring of centres. Notably, the PED has limited safe vehicles to transport question papers across the districts in the province. The PED was in the process of procuring lockable canopies for some of the vans to be used to transport the examination material.• The required integrated monitoring plans were not finalised yet at the time of Umalusi verification on 23 September 2021• The DBE planned to issue protocol on the writing of examination and marking which was to be implemented by all examination centres.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 6: Marker selection and appointment of marking personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The PED used Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) as a measure/instrument for the selection and appointment of markers.• Some PED strengthened their selection and appointment processes by enhancing the PAM criteria, e.g. Western Cape included, as one of its selection criteria, the writing of a competency test and the candidate pass rate of 60% in the previous year in the subject applied for.• As at 23 September 2021, marker shortages were reported in North West, Western Cape and the Northern Cape as a result, these PED embarked on second recruitment drives to address the shortages.• The marking venues were secured and all PED increased the number of centres to accommodate the social distancing requirement. All PED management plans to conduct the marking and related quality assurance processes are in place.• Marking at designated marking centres would be conducted in line with the developed National Protocol on marking.



Number of Established Marking Centres per PED and Appointed Markers

41 596 markers are appointed for the November 2021 examinations, nationally. All established marking centres will be subjected to Covid-19 protocols developed for marking of the examinations by the DBE and those of the PEDs.

❖ The DBE planned to establish one central marking venue in Pretoria.

CRITERIA	YEAR	ECED	FSED	GDE	KZNED	LIMPED	MPED	NCED	NWED	WCED
No. of Marking Centres	2021	25	23	35	29	28	21	3	18	11
	2020	23	23	30	30	28	19	4	18	10

No. of Markers appointed As at 15 October 2021	2021	5 912	1 658	9 956	7 053	6 760	4 263	782	2 682	2 530
	2020	5 915	2 171	12 148	1 881	7 150	4 082	1 491	2 625	2 533

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 6: Marker selection and appointment of marking personnel</p>	<p>EASTERN CAPE (as at 10 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection and appointments were completed.• There were no marker shortages noted for marking of the examinations. <p>FREE STATE (as at 7 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection took place in September and the appointments were in the stage of being finalised. As at 29 October 2021, the process for appointments had since been completed. The PED has since appointed adequate number of markers for marking of the examinations. <p>LIMPOPO (as at 9 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection and appointment of markers is completed.• No markers shortages were reported.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 6: Marker selection and appointment of marking personnel</p>	<p>GAUTENG (as at 23 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online selection of markers was conducted in August 2021, and marker selection and recommendation for appointments were completed in September for the Chief Director and Head of Department approval.• The markers appointment letters were generated electronically and were issued to qualifying applicants. <p>KWAZULU NATAL (as at 17 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection and appointment process were completed on 11 June 2021.• Umalusi audit of markers was successfully undertaken and found no marker shortages .

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 6: Marker selection and appointment of marking personnel</p>	<p>MPUMALANGA (as at 15 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection and appointments were completed.• There were no marker shortages noted for marking of the examinations. <p>NORTHERN CAPE (as at 13 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection and appointment of markers were completed.• However, there were shortages of markers in History Paper 1 and Paper 2, Afrikaans Home Language Paper 1, Paper 2, Paper 3,; Technical Sciences; Technical Mathematics.• To make up for the shortages, the PED embarked on another round of recruitment, to fill the shortages.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 6: Marker selection and appointment of marking personnel</p>	<p>NORTH-WEST (as at 20 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection and appointment of markers were completed.• However, shortage of markers was noted in History Paper 1 and 2, and the following official languages:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Afrikaans Home Language Paper 1, 2, and 3;b) Afrikaans First Additional Paper 1, 2 and 3c) Afrikaans Second Additional Paper 1 and 2d) English Home Language Paper 1, 2, 3;e) English First Additional Paper 3; andf) Setswana Home Language Paper 1, 2, 3.• The PED embarked on the final round of recruitment to address the shortage of markers in the six subjects.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 6: Marker selection and appointment of marking personnel</p>	<p>WESTERN CAPE: (as at 22 September 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marker selection and appointment of markers were completed, however, there was evidence of marker shortages in several subjects as listed below: <p>Content subjects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) History Paper 1 and Paper 2b) Business Studies Paper 2c) Life Sciences Paper 1 and Paper 2d) Mathematical Literacy Paper 1 and Paper 2, <p>Language question papers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Afrikaans Home Language Paper 1 and Paper 2b) IsiXhosa Home Language Paper 1 and Paper 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The PED embarked on another round of recruitment in order to address the shortages, otherwise the PED will start earlier so to extend the marking session by two days.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
<p>Focus area 7: Systems for mark capturing as at 23 September 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A detailed plan of expected number of marksheets to be captured was determined and mark capturing plans were in place across the nine PEDs.• Number of mark capturing venues had been identified and audits of sites/venues finalised. The number of capturing venues differ from one PED to another.• The protocol on health and safety was developed for marking centres as well as centres used for capturing of marks.• The level of preparedness at and across PED was to be finalised in line with PED plans.

Monitoring the State of Readiness Focus Areas

FOCUS AREA	FINDINGS
Focus area 8: Management of Examination Irregularities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The National Examinations Irregularities Committee (NEIC) was found to be fully functional.• The structures to deal with examinations and assessment irregularities at PED level were found to be fully established and committee members were appointed.• DBE guidelines used to standardise the management of imposition of sanctions were circulated and PED were to implement them in reporting irregular cases to the NEIC.• Whilst the District Assessment Irregularities Committee (DAIC) are emerging and supported by examinations directorates across PED, the functionality of the School Assessment Irregularities Committees(SAIC) remains an area of concern.

Conclusion

- Umalusi conducted the evaluation of the state of readiness of the DBE/PED.
- Umalusi was able to engage with the reports presented by the DBE/PED and feedback was provided in a letter to the Director General.
- Acceptable levels of readiness and related measures to ensure the conduct, administration and management of credible examinations by the DBE and all the PED were found to be in place and appreciated.
- The efforts of the DBE and the PED in addressing the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic are truly appreciated .
- Based on Umalusi observation and the reports on the SOR, Umalusi was satisfied that the DBE through the nine PEDs, was ready to conduct the November 2021 NSC examinations.
- Umalusi held a media briefing on 15 October 2021 to pronounce on the state of readiness of the DBE to conduct the November 2021 NSC examinations.

THANK YOU



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