**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1123**

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**1123. Mr Y Cassim (DA) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

Whether, with reference to her reply to question 213 on 6 March 2017, the requested information has been received from the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi); if not, (a) why not and (b) by what date is the information expected; if so, by what date will she communicate it? NW1263E

**RESPONSE:**

**With reference to question 213:**

*With reference to English First Additional Language Paper 3 of the 2016 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, were Umalusi moderators instructed that the word count requirement in the essay question be ignored; if so, (a) why was this instruction given and (b) which official gave this instruction to the moderators?*

Within a legislative framework, no official could instruct Umalusi moderators to ignore examination and curriculum policy. During the marking guideline discussion, Umalusi’s moderators serve as the ultimate authority in the standardisation of the marking guidelines. Therefore no instruction was given.

However, during the marking guideline discussion of English First Additional Language Paper 3, clarity was given in terms of the required word count. The stipulated word count is 250 to 300 words. It was emphasised that in the interest of fairness and the credibility of the marking process, there has to be a common understanding of the rubric’s requirements. The rubric for the marking of the essay in Section A of the mentioned paper makes no provision that penalties should be imposed when candidates exceed the word limit of 300 words. This was pointed out to ensure that no marking officials impose unfair penalties. The word count is therefore stipulated to guide candidates on the length of the essay.