

- (e) The drop down menu that allows for a selection of the data base to be accessed should be changed so that the user selects the data base (Grade 11 or Grade 12) on first entry into the system and that remains as the default setting until the setting is changed.
- (f) The Department of Education must finalise the draft policy on user access, security and closure of certain modules of the IECS. This will allow for the registration module to be closed after the registration data has been finalized and also to limit access to the IECS post the registration process.
- (g) Greater advocacy and mediation of the new NSC policy needs to be undertaken across all provinces. It is not adequate to communicate via a circular to schools. Circulars and other documents explaining policy and procedural changes must be communicated via "face to face" meetings with school principals so that a common understanding can be established and questions can be dealt with effectively. A common application of policy will ensure a more accurate registration of candidates and hence a reduced number of incomplete results.
- (h) The DoE must develop a common process map for the registration of candidates on the IECS. Although PEDs are utilising a common national computer system, provinces follow different approaches in the registration process and therefore national control becomes a challenge. A greater degree of national co-ordination is necessary for future examinations.
- (i) For 2009, IPEC must seriously give consideration to utilising candidate identity numbers where they are available and a unique computer generated number can be used in cases where the identity number is not available. It is estimated that the ID documents are available for approximately 70% of the candidates. It is the intention of the DoE to adopt the ID number as the unique identifier for all candidates and if this practice is made mandatory candidates will very soon realize that acquiring their identity documents is a pre-requisite for writing the NSC examination. The other advantage of using the ID number is that candidates that need to be placed on manually generated mark sheets can be easily tracked and captured on the system.
- (j) The IECS must be programmed to avoid duplicate candidate entries being accepted. The recommended procedure is that once a second candidate is captured with details similar to an existing candidate, the system administrator may override this function if after investigation he/she has established that the candidate is in fact not a duplicate.
- (k) The Department of Education must ensure that generation and printing of mark sheets is done timeously so as to allow the provincial departments' ample time to deal with all their processes.

- (l) The Department of Education must also ensure that mark sheets are only generated and printed after all the amendments from the preliminary schedules have been effected and the registration data has been corrected and finally certified by the DoE.
- (m) The IECS must be enhanced to allow for the different mark sheets i.e. examination mark sheets, SBA mark sheets, PAT mark sheets, and Oral mark sheets to be printed in separate batches so as to allow for the use of different colours for different mark sheets. This will facilitate better control and identification of the different mark sheets.
- (n) Training must be organized for the system administrator and the support staff on all aspects regarding mark sheets.

4.3 COLLECTION AND CONTROL OF SBA MARK SHEETS

School based assessment is administered across approximately 8000 secondary schools nationally. School based assessment is a compulsory component for all subjects in the National Senior Certificate (NSC). School based assessment includes Oral, PAT and all other assessment administered by the teacher in the class. It is therefore essential that every single assessment that contributes to the final promotion of the candidate is collected and accurately captured.

Even though the process of collection of SBA mark sheets is implemented at all levels, the control of these processes differed from province to province (**Annexure J**).

In KwaZulu-Natal, there are twelve districts in this province. At the provincial office, each district is allocated an administrative clerk for the collection of SBA, PAT & oral mark sheets. A circular is made available to schools on the management of SBA, PAT & Orals. The management plan indicates all dates of submissions and the process to be followed. Each district collected the mark sheets from schools and submitted to the province. The admin clerks responsible for the specific district at provincial level registers the submitted mark sheets on their control list. The admin clerks then submits the mark sheet to the provincial moderation team. The provincial moderation team then checks the mark sheets and submits the mark sheets back to the respective admin clerk. The mark sheets are then transferred to the capturers. In the case of outstanding mark sheets, the admin clerk issued a circular to remind the District and further indicating the number of outstanding mark sheets and their centre numbers. Such letters were sent to districts more than once (**Annexure K**). A subsequent date for submission is then given.

On the other hand in the Limpopo province, there was no adequate control of SBA mark sheets at district and provincial level. The IECS provides a check list of all the mark sheets that need to be collected per district. This check list should have been used to control mark sheets at district and provincial level. In some districts, there

were poor control mechanisms. The Waterberg and Mopani districts exercised good control of the SBA mark sheets and this resulted in a small number of outstanding mark sheets from these districts. At the provincial level, there was also no control and checking of the mark sheets. A lack of time was cited as the reason and there was the expectation that after the mark sheets were captured, the IECS would generate a list of mark sheets that are outstanding – a functionality that was only developed and implemented towards the middle of December 08. The availability of this function towards the middle of December 08, when schools were closed made follow up on outstanding mark sheets virtually impossible. As SBA mark sheets were received they were forwarded to the data capturers for capturing and at that level as well there was no proper recording of what was received and what was outstanding.

In Mpumalanga, there were no adequate control systems in place at district level. The provincial curriculum team had control lists that provided specific schools that had outstanding mark sheets (**Annexure L**). This didn't help much since the district that was expected to follow outstanding marks had no evidence of what was outstanding. At provincial level, there was a plan to monitor the collection of mark sheets, but the monitoring systems were not effective. Mark sheets were not submitted on time in all regions, and there were not adequate mechanisms in place to enforce compliance. This led to submissions of SBA marks after the resulting period/date.

In provinces like Gauteng (**Annexure M**), Eastern Cape and Western Cape, monitoring systems were tightened to ensure that there is compliance. In Western Cape, district assessment coordinators worked very closely with the Curriculum Advisers and monitored the submission of mark sheets to the Directorate: Examinations. Principals and Assessment Coordinators were instructed to provide reasons for any outstanding SBA marks. These cases were followed through to determine the reasons for the outstanding marks. Most of these cases were medical related cases; however there was one case in which the teacher did not submit SBA marks for the learner. This teacher is being dealt with in terms of the *Educators' Employment Act*.

Other provinces administered their SBA mark fairly well, however, there is room for improvement.

Recommendation

- i. Updating the policy on School-based assessment
- ii. National structures for the moderation of SBA must be improved
- iii. Improve accounting systems
- iv. Affirm the role of Subject advisers in School-based assessment
- v. Affirm the moderation roles of Subject Heads of Departments at school level

4.4 CONTROL OF EXAMINATION MARK SHEETS

Each candidate writes an examination in a minimum of seven subjects and these examinations are administered across approximately eight thousand different examination centres. A successful examination is one that is able to efficiently collect the scripts from these centres, have them marked, checked, moderated and captured correctly against the correct candidate. After the script is marked the marks for a maximum of forty candidates are recorded on a single mark sheet. The mark sheet therefore is the most critical tool in the capturing and finalization of candidates' results. This section addresses the control measures put in place by provinces to ensure control of mark sheets from the time of generation until such time that marks have been captured and verified and finally stored for future retrieval.

After marks sheets are generated, they are packaged with the examination question papers. Mark sheets are sent to examination centres to ensure that the examination centres record candidates that are absent and those that are present on the mark sheet. The mark sheets are packed with the scripts and this is then forwarded to the district/region. The district/regional office is then responsible to ensure that all scripts and mark sheets are received and recorded by making use of a mark sheet control list. In Gauteng, North West, Western Cape, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal mark sheets are scanned for better control. In Free State batches of scripts accompanied by two mark sheets per batch are sent to the marking centre where the chief marker controls the information with a control list. Any discrepancies are immediately reported to ensure that the missing scripts can be tracked. It is very encouraging to note that there were very few missing scripts in the 2008 examination across all provinces.

When scripts are marked and the marks transferred to the mark sheets, these mark sheets are forwarded to the marking centre manager who finally verifies the mark sheet. The mark sheets are then controlled and released by the marking centre manager for capturing. The Western Cape has adopted an approach where mark sheets are scanned at three (3) different stages for tracking purposes. Mark sheets are once again verified when they are received at the capturing venue. Once captured and verified, the mark sheets are filed and stored. Each province has a unique filing system. The Western Cape for example, stores the mark sheets per subject, district and school. In Gauteng, examination mark sheet control administration is well organised and documented on the IECS system and additionally augmented with their internal computer systems. This province also scans the mark sheets and batches them in bundles of one hundred, regardless of the subject and the order for filing which is based on a custom made offline mark sheet flow system. In KwaZulu Natal, the filing is less controlled and stored in random batches of thirty making it difficult to trace mark sheets.

The filing of mark sheets was inspected by the team in Gauteng and in Limpopo and in these two provinces a mark sheet could easily be retrieved when required. This bodes well for these provinces and affirms the fact that the retrieval of mark sheets did not in any way delay processes relating to capture and verification of marks.

One of the main reasons for failure of the Mpumalanga province to finalise results timeously is that when capturing of outstanding marks was in progress, not all the mark sheets were sorted and stored for easy retrieval.

This made the tracing of outstanding mark sheets difficult and severely delayed the capture of the outstanding marks.

4.5 MANUALLY GENERATED MARK SHEETS

Manually generated mark sheets are used in cases where a candidate, for some reason or the other does not appear on the computer generated mark sheet. In such cases a provisional mark sheet template from the provincial department is used to enter the details of the candidate. These cases are then recorded as technical irregularities which must be dealt with as such.

A large number of provisional mark sheets were used in the 2008 examination in Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu Natal, which impacted on the capturing of marks. In Gauteng and Western Cape, manually generated mark sheets are tightly controlled and recorded. In Mpumalanga, recording and control of manually generated mark sheets was lacking and this contributed to the outstanding and incomplete results. Subject changes and incorrect registration details were the main reasons for manually generated mark sheets.

The computerized mark sheets were printed and attached to the manually generated mark sheets in most provinces. The challenge was that manually generated mark sheets do not in all cases match the system generated mark sheets, i.e. order of candidates, sequence of candidate information. Therefore, specialised expertise was required to handle these manually generated mark sheets and this delayed the capture of marks.

A major problem was created by the incorrect practice by chief invigilators of correcting or adding to the existing mark sheet information that was omitted or incorrect on the mark sheet. Any information added to a mark sheet at school level is not reflected on the IECS and must therefore be included on a manually generated mark sheet. The inclusion of information by the principal implies that when this mark sheet is being captured, a manually generated mark sheet must be generated at that stage and this causes serious delays in the capture process.

Recommendations

- (a) There is a need for timeous distribution, collection, control, verification and storage of all mark sheets.
- (b) All written mark sheets must be generated from the IECS and stricter control is required for additionally generated system mark sheets so to minimize or avoid the need for manually generated mark sheets.
- (c) It is essential that mark sheets are printed once. This implies that a control list generated by the system to keep track of mark sheets is also generated and printed. The control list will assist in the forwarding and collection of mark sheets from schools.
- (d) Scanning of mark sheets should be introduced as a general control measure across all PEDs. This will ensure better control of mark sheets and will facilitate easier retrieval.

- (e) The control of the manually generated marks sheets could be improved especially in provinces where there were large numbers of such mark sheets used.

4.6. CAPTURE OF SBA AND EXAMINATION MARKS

The recording and capturing of the correct marks of candidates is one of the actions ensuring the validity and the credibility of any assessment. Umalusi therefore places a high premium on this aspect and has prescribed principles and procedures to which provinces must strictly adhere.

These principles and procedures require that only computer generated mark sheets should be used to record and capture marks. For example where a candidate was incorrectly registered for a wrong subject, it must be verified by a district official who must then request in writing a mark sheet for that particular candidate from the provincial IECS Administrator. The mark sheet must be accompanied by evidence to support this approval. The mark sheet must be sent to the marking centre where after the marks are captured on the computer generated mark sheet or on a manual generated mark sheet. Record should be kept of such mark sheets.

Examination marks must then be recorded by the marker and verified by a marking assistant. All mark sheets must be approved and signed off by the Chief Marker. The verification here again includes checking that all calculations are correct.

When capturing mark sheets, mark sheet moderation is one of the vital stages of the mark consolidation process and this function should be performed with precision. The function is usually performed by the district office and provincial officials in the examinations office assigned with this task according to district. This information can be verified according to province in **Annexure R, Annexure S, and Annexure T** attached to this report.

Evidence was discovered in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga provinces that officials signed off mark sheets without recorded marks or marks that in some cases exceeded the total. This was shown as an incomplete result on the IECS system (**Annexure N**).

It was expected that all school based assessment marks would be captured during November to allow the capturing of written examination marks, but in the cases of provinces with high numbers of outstanding marks (Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal) this was not the case. Late capturing of school based assessment marks contributed to the late resulting or non-resulting of candidates. Provinces with large numbers of outstanding results, as a rule had large numbers of outstanding school-based assessment marks.

Provinces that started capturing on time had few or no outstanding school based assessment marks to capture. Therefore the number of candidates without results in such provinces was minimal. For instance in the North West Province, Northern Cape, Western Cape and Eastern Cape, capturing commenced as early as October and concluded at the end of November. The North West Province started on 27 October 2008 and capturing was

completed on 15 November 2008. One batch of mark sheets was allocated to one capturer and this consisted usually of 50 or more mark sheets. This contributed to the province's better control of the capture process, hence the lower level of incomplete candidates.

Limpopo, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal provinces started late in November and could not finish capturing, some until standardization and resulting of candidates occurred.

Another factor that contributed to delays in mark capturing was lack of data capturers. In all provinces, it is clear that the number of capturers was not based on the number of mark sheets that had to be captured. It was the responsibility of each province to ensure that a relationship be established between the number of data capturers used and the number of mark sheets to be processed.

In Mpumalanga the number of candidate enrollment totaled 58 459, with 545 501 mark sheets for school based assessment only. The number of data capturers was only 16 at the initial stages of capturing, and later was increased to 27. This number could not manage and as many as 60 capturers had to be used. The resulting process in Mpumalanga was not well managed compared to the Eastern Cape with its 63 285 enrolled candidates, where 22 data capturers completed the task on time.

During capturing of marks, a process of capturing and verification has to be followed but in Mpumalanga and Limpopo most mark sheets were not verified immediately after capturing. There was no standard mark sheet recording mechanism in place in Mpumalanga to determine which mark sheets had been captured and/or verified. This led to double capturing.

In KwaZulu Natal and Eastern Cape a stamp was used for each function. The Eastern Cape adopted a project approach for the capturing of school based assessment marks. Two groups were formed in the capturing centre, one team capturing and the other verifying. Stamps were used (i.e. captured and verified) to indicate whether the mark sheet has been captured or verified.

North West, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Gauteng and Free State followed the same process. All capturers capture marks, once finished they all indicate "C" to reflect all captured mark sheets. They in turn circulate the captured mark sheets in such a manner that one capturer does not get the same batch that he/she captured. The verification is then done and at this stage they indicate "V" indicating that the mark sheet has been verified.

Moderation done in Mpumalanga showed lack of commitment by some officials. Mark sheets were not signed by all officials who were required to sign. Other mark sheets were moderated and signed, but the marks were incorrect or total marks and the entered marks did not correspond. This practice was also observed in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. In KwaZulu-Natal it was evident that schools in some districts had not complied with mid-year moderation practice (**Annexure O**).

The Western Cape had a mechanism to ensure that marks were correctly entered on mark sheets. After the moderation process, the mark sheets were provided to the district offices to be scanned for control purposes before submission to the examinations directorate. Mark sheets were scanned for the 2nd time at the Examinations Section, and every mark sheet was checked afterwards for any outstanding marks and discrepancies (Examination Instruction no 14/9/2 dated 14 October 2008).

With regard to the capturing of school based assessment marks, schools must ensure that each mark is verified by a responsible person other than the teacher who enters the mark. It is further required that verification of school based assessment marks should be done during cluster/district and provincial moderation sessions. This is then confirmed by an Umalusi external moderator when sample verification is done. The verification includes checking that all calculations are correct.

When officials in Limpopo Province realized that the process was falling behind schedule, contingency measures were introduced so the process was 99,3% complete by the 15 December 2008 target date.

The clearing process (also known as "mopping up" process) of outstanding mark sheets was performed satisfactorily by most provinces but was time-consuming. The codes used for recording outstanding marks (777), de-registered candidates (888) and absentees (999) resulted in incomplete results. This contributed to "incomplete results" on the date of the release of the 2008 NSC results.

The provinces with the most incomplete results cases had the biggest problem with the mopping up process as indicated in this report and for a variety of reasons given in this report Mpumalanga had the most incomplete results at the date of the investigation. The examination mark sheet mopping up before release of results was completed later in some provinces than in others, e.g. in Gauteng it was completed one week later than planned.

The late completion of this module for the IECS system can be ascribed to a number of factors not addressed in this investigation but did contribute to the lack of training of capturers which was a factor that hampered those provinces that had the most outstanding results at date of release but it particularly affected those provinces where school based assessments were submitted late. It was also established in Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal that capturers were unaware of the IECS training manual that was available. In the provinces that had the most outstanding marks at the date of release, capturing capacity had to be doubled towards the 16 December 2008.

The time consuming operation of the IECS mark sheet programme was advanced as reason for delays in results in Mpumalanga (e.g. the time taken to access a candidate's records through the mark sheet IECS page). The Northern Cape reported that initial errors pertaining to allocation of language compensation, the implementation of the adjustments and the resulting of candidates with more than seven subjects impacted on the correctness of the resulting process.

The mark capturing process of school based assessment and examination marks was mostly standardized except for the Western Cape which used a custom made offline PC-based mark capturing system that captures per question per paper.

The condensed post-examination completion timeframe required adjustment to the staggered marking concept requiring the bulk of marking to be done as the final submission date was approaching. This in turn had an impact on mark capturing and mopping up.

The help desk support was reported as a problem in Gauteng, KwaZulu- Natal and North West Province. From the interviews in Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal it became evident that there was a need to address the accountability of school principals and district offices/regional offices when recording school based assessment, practical assessment tasks and oral marks.

A complaint recorded in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga was that no IECS audit trail function was available other than through MagnaFS which had implications for the accountability of the capturer. MagnaFS confirmed that this functionality still has to be developed.

Inadequate security during mark changes without audit trail facility for IECS was identified as a security problem. The visits to the KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga province capturing offices and records revealed that system access should be restricted to a higher level of responsibility. The understanding of the requirements and the recording of assessment in the external Music subjects also contributed to the number of incomplete results. It should be noted that 2008 was the first year that these bodies were required to submit marks as three different components. The handling and understanding of the requirements in subjects, of submitting the practical assessment task and school based assessment marks also added to the number of incomplete results.

Recommendations

- (a) There is a need for support to administration officials during the execution of their duties.
- (b) Control on collection of school based assessment mark sheets must be closely monitored up to the last submission. It is therefore important for all levels to have control lists.
- (c) Moderators at all levels must ensure that total mark allocation on mark sheets is correct before they sign mark sheets.
- (d) The process of collection and control of mark sheets is in place across provinces, however in KwaZulu Natal and Mpumalanga control systems must be tightened significantly. The head office officials responsible for collection of mark sheets must be able to enforce district compliance with submission deadlines. It is particularly important for collection of school based assessment, practical assessment tasks and oral marks to be concluded before the beginning of examination mark capturing.

- (e) The IECS systems capturing function should be restricted to district office managers with the concomitant accountability

4.7 EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES

The management of examination irregularities can have an impact on the release of candidate's results. In terms of current policy, technical examination irregularities must be resolved before the release of results. Only in the case of serious irregularities that need further investigations and where candidates need to present themselves at a formal hearing, should results be withheld. In such cases, only the results of subject or subjects for which there has been an alleged irregularity, should be withheld. Provincial Education Departments have been given until 15 February 2009 to finalise these serious irregularities and release results that have been withheld due to examination irregularities.

The technical irregularities in provinces include: candidates with two computer generated numbers, and different candidates with the same examination number. This is caused by the system allocating two numbers to the same candidate. The issue of duplicate candidates has been dealt with earlier in this report and is related to the IECS system. The majority of the irregularities forming part of the non-release of learner results can be linked to copying, where candidates either used "crib notes", and cases where "exact same answers" in different scripts were detected by markers at the marking centre. A summary of the irregularities per province is included in **Annexure Q**.

Generally, examination irregularities have been significantly reduced across all provinces. At least two Provincial officials responsible for irregularities confirmed that there was a definite reduction in the number of irregularities from the previous year. However, it was disturbing to note that some results were withheld due to un-resolved technical irregularities.

One province indicated that they are dependent on legal advice from the Labour division of the province to conduct irregularity hearings, and this slows the process of completing the hearings. Some capacity is needed within the Provincial Examination offices in this regard, that would allow the province to deal with hearings without total dependency on the labour division of the province.

Irregularities in general account for a number of outstanding results. PEDs are committed to ensuring that proper hearings are conducted in the case of serious irregularities, which is in compliance with the Regulations. Irregularities that could be resolved were resolved and released. The remaining irregularities are of such a nature that they cannot currently be released. These were referred to the Provincial Irregularities Committee for a final decision. Hearings started in January and will be completed towards middle February. This is however a very time consuming process.

The Ministerial Committee is of the opinion that the number of examination irregularities, leading to the non-release of learner results, could have been further minimized if it were not for the following:

- i. Registration errors of all kinds contributed to the large number of technical irregularities. This was partly due a lack of understanding of the new system and its operations and the lack of training on the new system.
- ii. The late implementation of all the modules of the IECS, with special reference to the reporting functionality on the status of SBA capture. SBA marks outstanding was only identified at a very late stage of the capture process.

Recommendations

- (a) Help desk support for the IECS system would assist in the administration of examinations and also ensure early follow-up by District offices on registrations by schools. This will minimise errors on registrations that later culminate in technical irregularities.
- (b) An improved monitoring strategy of "suspect" schools as far as registration and creation of SBA marks are concerned, would limit future irregularities.
- (c) Provinces should improve their administration of the CAT examinations, ensuring that a CAT subject expert is available to ensure all data is properly saved and must be retrievable, so that there are no problems at marking centres, as these all result in irregularities.
- (d) Provinces must also ensure that examination irregularities are resolved sooner, specifically those cases where investigations and hearings can be conducted earlier so that these cases do not delay the release of results.
- (e) There is a need for improved support from districts in the facilitation of providing information needed for hearings and the finalization of irregularities.
- (e) Succession planning is vital in all PEDs. In cases where one official is responsible for all key functions of the examination process, this places the examinations at risk.

4.8 PROCESSING AND RELEASE OF THE RESULTS

All required steps relating to the processing of results were followed by the IECS and there was no compromise in this aspect of the examination cycle.

The Ministerial Committee confirmed that, candidates that fail to present SBA were regarded as 'incomplete'. It was also confirmed that a zero mark was not awarded to such candidates, adhering to the legislative requirements and the Umalusi directives. This implied that such candidates results were incomplete in terms of their overall result. The strict adherence to this legislative requirement and its close monitoring by the DoE contributed to the higher number of outstanding marks in 2008.

There was less time than in previous years available to complete the preparations required for the standardization meetings and the approval of results by the Umalusi Council. Although the time was limited all required processes were completed and quality assured.

Recommendations

- (a) The audit trail on the IECS needs to be checked to ensure that it works accurately. This is an important security measure that cannot be compromised.
- (b) The management plans of the provincial departments and those of the national department should be co-ordinated and communicated in time to ensure adequate planning at all levels.

4.9 TRAINING OF EDUCATORS, CHIEF INVIGILATORS, CHIEF MARKERS AND DISTRICT OFFICIALS

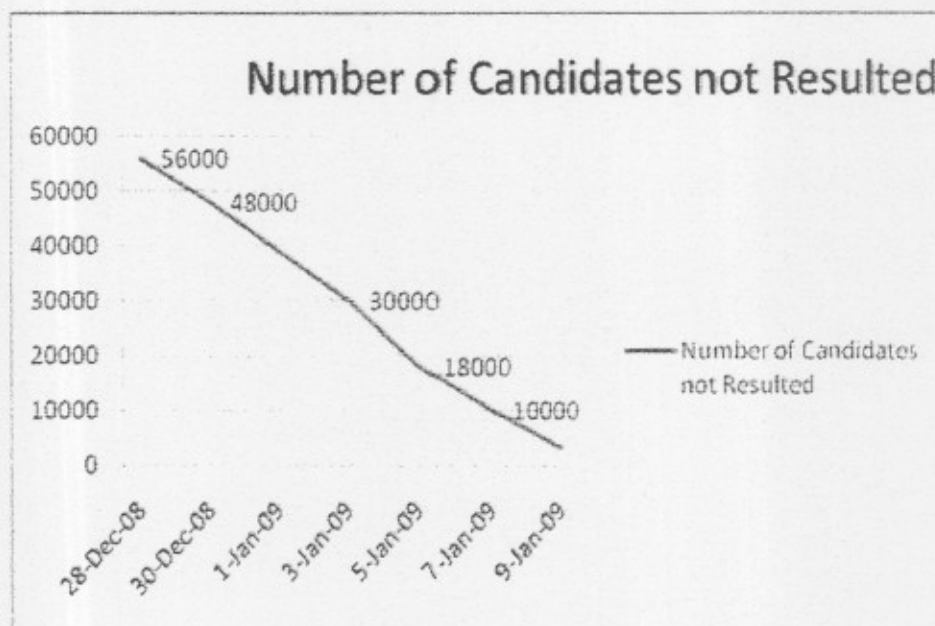
Training in the execution of examination related responsibilities and specifically the handling and completion of mark sheets is vital in ensuring that the subsequent process of data capture is efficiently and effectively accomplished. If these functions are not accurately administered, it can result in extended processes which can delay a normally straight forward operation. It also impacts directly on the correctness of registrations and subsequent processes, resulting in the possible withholding of learner results.

Training was done utilising manuals specifically developed according to national policy. The manuals addressed all aspects of the examination administration. Centres were monitored to ensure compliance. The manual completion of mark sheets was clearly explained to invigilators and formed part of the formal training session. In some instances examples of manually completed mark sheets were presented to the participants and all questions were answered. A separate training session was also held for provincial internal moderators, chief markers and deputy chief markers. All of the above are attempts to reduce possible irregularities that can result in learner results not being released.

Training was conducted at different levels in the province. The provincial office is responsible for the training of the district officials and the Provincial office has a monitoring role regarding the training and development that takes place. The district offices are responsible for the training of Chief Invigilators and teachers for examination purposes. It can be confirmed that the training in the Limpopo province was adequate, given that the provincial head office conducted the training directly with the principals and a select group of invigilators. This is more effective than the cascading model utilized in most provinces. However, the provinces must intensify monitoring and support provided to schools so as to ensure that all uncertainties are dealt with, thus minimizing errors and omissions. In the case of completion of documentation (i.e. mark sheets reports, etc) by chief invigilators and internal moderators at marking centres, there are still problems and the marking centre manager must be held

5. OUTSTANDING RESULTS

The following graph represents the number of candidates with outstanding results post 28 December 2008.



There has been a significant decrease in the number of candidates results outstanding from 56 351 on 30 December 2008 to 319 on 31 January 2009.

The Ministerial Committee collected data on the number of absent candidates over the last four years and analysed this to establish possible trends. The table and the graph below represents the number of candidates that were absent in each of the nine provinces over the last four years. The reasons for absenteeism varied from candidate to candidate and from province to province. The following were some of the reasons for absenteeism:

- Pregnancy
- Medical (illness, trauma, accident)
- Absenteeism for a subject/paper
- Withdrawal
- Death
- Transport problems
- Imprisonment

Province	2005	2006	2007	2008
Western Cape	1217	1274	1716	1455
KwaZulu Natal	5624	6597	6929	9061
Gauteng	1997	2761	2052	9493
Mpumalanga	1850	2151	2713	3847
North West	148	1127	963	1097
Limpopo	-	3299	5527	1040
Eastern Cape	5042	4656	5059	2988
Northern Cape	-	212	364	268
Free State	631	769	969	365
Totals	16 504	22 844	26 392	29614

The above statistics also confirm that more than 50% of the outstanding results were due to candidates being absent. During the provincial interviews officials were able to confirm absent candidates based on written documentation. Therefore, the Ministerial Committee can conclude that of the 56 351 candidates that were outstanding as at 30 December 2008, 29 614, were verified absentees.

AUDIT OF INCOMPLETE RESULTS

The Ministerial Team also conducted an audit of a sample of outstanding candidates on the IECS to establish the exact reasons for the marks outstanding on the system. This was done by selecting a small sample of candidates whose information was tracked on the IECS to confirm, the accuracy of marks that was captured, follow-through on incomplete results and the province had to provide evidence for each entry on the system.

6. CONCLUSION

The challenges experienced by the provinces in the implementation of the 2008 SC examination, must be seen in the context of the inherited uneven distribution of resources at the disposal of each of the nine provinces. The better resourced the province, the better the opportunity for a successful examination. Therefore, the challenges identified in this report must be seen in this context.

Lastly, the decision of the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) in 2008, that governance of examinations be placed under a national examination board should be implemented as a matter of urgency. The performance evaluation of examination officials is linked to the performance agreements of their senior managers who are accountable for provisioning of education and therefore cannot be seen to be objectively evaluating the education system. Therefore, the National Examination Board will be autonomous. This will enhance public confidence as the National Examination Board will be considered as separate to certain departmental processes. This will improve the level of accountability of officials entrusted with such a crucial national responsibility. Further, the establishment of the National Examination Board for educational assessment will place the national examination system on par with the best international practice.