

ABRIDGED REPORT ON  
THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE  
EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT  
OF THE NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE  
2011

PUBLISHED BY:



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General and Further Education and Training**

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# Foreword

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It has been four years since the first implementation of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations in 2008. On looking back to where we were at this time in 2008, in comparison to where we are now, a notable degree of both growth and stability with regard to the NSC examination systems and processes can be discerned. As far as Umalusi is concerned, the experiences and gains of the previous three years have contributed to improved quality assurance processes.

Umalusi has just recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. The organisation has spent 10 solid years ensuring the quality of education in South Africa. Although we cannot boast that we have been the best there is when it comes to ensuring the quality of education, nevertheless we can say without hesitation that we have consistently ensured that the standard and quality of the NSC examination has been maintained. 2011 is therefore the year when we look back to see how we have grown as an organisation through the years. One remarkable achievement this year is that we made history by going public with our standardisation processes and decisions. The decision by Umalusi to make these matters public was made in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA). After consultation with other external bodies, and in the best interests of the qualification and the reputation of Umalusi as the Quality Council, Umalusi disclosed the 2010 NSC standardisation decisions on 25 February 2011. This detailed disclosure of standardisation decisions set the precedent for the 2011 standardisation decisions.

Umalusi carried out the following standard quality assurance processes for the 2011 NSC examinations:

- Moderation of the November 2011 and March 2012 question papers
- Moderation of site-based assessment (SBA): teacher files and evidence of learner performance
- Monitoring of the conduct of the NSC examinations
- Verification of a sample of marked scripts
- Standardisation of marks according to agreed statistical and educational principles

Umalusi has its own teams of subject specialists, referred to as external moderators, and these were used to conduct the moderation of question papers and the SBA and the verification of marked scripts. Umalusi also has its own teams of monitors located in all nine provinces, who are conversant with the NSC examination system, having been part of the system previously. These teams of monitors monitored the writing and marking of the NSC examinations in the nine provinces. The standardisation of marks was undertaken by members of the Umalusi Assessment Standards Committee (ASC) – a committee of the Umalusi Council. The members of the ASC are a combination of esteemed statisticians and educationists, whose role is to ensure that learner marks are standardised against educationally sound statistical principles.

Over and above the quality assurance processes mentioned above, Umalusi conducted

a post-exam analysis of 10 "gateway" subjects. Teams of subject specialists were appointed to analyse question papers of these 10 subjects using criteria determined by Umalusi. The reports emanating from these teams were used as part of the evidence presented to the Umalusi Assessment Standards Committee, with a view to informing the decisions taken with regard to the standardisation of these subjects.

On the whole, Umalusi is satisfied that the 2011 NSC examination was conducted in line with the relevant policies and regulations governing this examination and strictly in accordance with Umalusi policies, directives, guidelines and requirements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Mabizela', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Dr Sizwe Mabizela  
Chairperson of Council  
29 December 2011

# Chapter 1

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## Moderation of question papers

### 1 SCOPE

The DBE submitted 265 question papers for the November 2011 and March 2012 NSC examinations.

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF NOVEMBER 2011 AND MARCH 2012 QUESTION PAPERS MODERATED**

Examination	Number of subjects	Number of papers	Approved at 1st moderation	Approved at 2nd moderation	Approved at 3rd moderation	4th and beyond
November 2011	38	135	41	73	18	3
March 2012	38	130	38	72	19	1

Only four papers went beyond the third moderation, i.e. Life Sciences P1 and P2 (old content, November 2011), and Afrikaans FAL P1 (November and March). These were approved at the fifth moderation. Furthermore, two papers were rejected at the first moderation: English HL P2 for November and Sesotho FAL P2 for March. The moderation of Life Sciences was prolonged owing to the fact that there were two versions in the Life Sciences papers. The external moderators needed to ensure that question papers for both versions were of a comparable standard while also taking into consideration the fact that the papers for the two examinations, namely November and March, were also of a comparable standard.

### 2 APPROACH

The external moderation of the DBE papers took place at the DBE offices. External moderators were deployed by Umalusi to the DBE to undertake the moderation exercise. The question papers were moderated according to the prescribed Umalusi criteria.

Umalusi continued this year with its practice of quality assurance (external moderation) to ensure that question papers complied with policy (National Curriculum Statements and subjacent assessment guidelines), especially with respect to the weighting and spread of

content and cognitive skills. Umalusi allows a 5% deviation in the distribution of cognitive skills; accordingly, deviations beyond this level were not accepted. Question papers in which anomalies were found were required to be rectified by the DBE panel and the external moderators to ensure that the standard was acceptable.

Umalusi also introduced another quality assurance initiative this year; pre-writing of question papers in selected subjects. Umalusi conducted this as a pilot in three subjects: Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting. In this respect, Umalusi made use of subject specialists who are team leaders of Umalusi post-exam analysis teams. Question papers were written at the DBE offices, and the DBE was provided with input accordingly.

## **3 FINDINGS**

### **3.1 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE**

- The decision by the DBE to develop additional back-up papers for Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology is commended. The writing of these papers is always at risk of being interrupted owing to their reliance on technology.
- The number of the November and March question papers that were submitted at the same time for external moderation improved as compared to 2010. This ensured that both papers were of a comparable standard.
- The DBE should be commended for developing papers of an acceptable standard. This is shown by a steady decrease in the number of papers that go beyond the second moderation.

### **3.2 AREAS OF CONCERN**

- Non-adherence to agreed timeframes and continuous submission of question papers. The DBE failed to ensure that all question papers were submitted by 30 April 2011 for the first moderation. Council gave the DBE an extension to 30 May 2011 and even this date could not be met in some subjects. The majority of papers were submitted in May 2011 for the first moderation.
- While it is now the practice of the DBE to submit the question papers for November and March for external moderation at the same time, this was not the case with some of the papers. The DBE should ensure that November and March question papers are set together and submitted for moderation together.

- The same short stories have been prescribed for more than a decade in Afrikaans Second Additional Language; this may result in the paper being predictable.

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- The DBE needs to ensure that all question papers are ready for external moderation within the agreed timeframes.
- The DBE must ensure that November and March question papers are set together and submitted for moderation together.
- The current prescribed networks for Afrikaans SAL need to be reconsidered.

# Chapter 2

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## Moderation of the SBA

### 1 SCOPE

In 2011, for the very first time, the DBE addressed a major gap in the system by moderating evidence of learner performance for the SBA at a national level. The DBE appointed independent panels of moderators with a clear mandate to moderate samples of evidence that were predetermined and selected by the DBE from schools and districts across the nine provinces. This approach enabled Umalusi to occupy its rightful position of verifier.

Umalusi conducted a verification of the samples moderated by the DBE in eight subjects across the nine provincial departments of education, during the third and fourth term of the year. Over and above the verification exercise, Umalusi also observed the DBE moderation processes and sat in on the sessions where the DBE moderators provided feedback to provincial officials at the end of each moderation session.

#### **Sampling**

The verification was conducted in the following eight subjects: Mathematics, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Accounting, English First Additional Language, History, Geography and Life Orientation.

#### **DBE sample size and requirements for selection of learner evidence**

A total of 200 samples of learner evidence per subject was required in each of the provinces. These samples were moderated at a central venue identified by the provinces. The samples were selected from two districts in each province which had been predetermined by the DBE SBA coordinator. Each of the two selected districts was required to present 20 samples of learner evidence per school from five schools. This implies that a total of 10 schools were selected per province.

The provinces were required to select learner evidence from each school based on performance as follows:

- Seven low performing learners
- Seven medium performing learners
- Six high performing learners

## 2 FINDINGS

### 2.1 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

- DBE national moderation is seen as a move in the right direction with regard to standard setting in the implementation and assessment of SBA.
- The provincially set preliminary examinations were of a very good standard and were able to provide learners with an idea of what to expect in the final year-end papers.
- There were two isolated cases (Akademia Hennenman and Welveld Agric School) where the rubric used for oral assessment was well designed and appropriately applied.
- Use of common tasks in Life Orientation in some districts is seen as an effective tool for setting acceptable standards equivalent to those set in external examinations.
- Setting of high standards for SBA through common tasks is a growing practice across all the provinces.
- Appointment of provincial SBA moderators by the North West, and Gauteng PDEs.
- Standardisation of the programme of assessment tasks for Physical Sciences by the Free State Education Department.

### 2.2 AREAS OF CONCERN

- The DBE moderation tool and report were not made available to Umalusi external moderators and this defeated the purpose of the verification exercise that Umalusi conducts on the DBE moderation process.
- Setting of substandard tasks that have an inappropriate distribution of cognitive skills.
- Marking using rubrics was not applied accurately; the criterion descriptors were not aligned so as to facilitate fairness in the allocation of marks.
- Setting of tasks based on Grade 10 content was inappropriate for the preparation of Grade 12s.
- There was also evidence of Grade 10 content being taught in Grade 12 Life Orientation.
- Rigour in moderation at both school and district levels was lacking.
- Hypothesis testing in Life Sciences was difficult for teachers to assess appropriately. Most of the learners did not do well in this area.
- In History, the standard of the source-based and extended writing tasks was poor.
- Investigation tasks in Mathematics were inappropriately assessed.

- Testing of Practical Investigation and Research tasks in Physical Sciences was theoretical and this is strongly discouraged. Practical and procedural skills cannot be tested using written pen-and-paper tests.
- General setting of substandard tasks took place in virtually all the provinces, and in all the subjects moderated.
- There was insufficient evidence to justify the marks allocated for assessment of the Physical Education Task (PET) in Life Orientation. There was virtually no evidence of “participation and movement”, which is a key skill assessed in this component. It was also observed that there is no evidence of PET Face moderation in any of the schools moderated.
- The use of symbols in the recording of the movement activity in PET could have advantaged or disadvantaged learners when the actual marks were recorded.
- Moderation of recorded SBA marks for Life Orientation was not rigorous.

## 2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is important that the DBE provide Umalusi with its moderation report and a copy of the moderation instrument used in order for Umalusi to report appropriately on the verification process conducted.
- SBA standards should be set through the formation of subject-specific cluster moderations in each district. The moderation at this level will ensure that common standards are maintained when determining the quality of tasks and the quality of marking in general.
- Support provided for subject advisory personnel should be strengthened and monitored. Moderation by subject specialists should entail a detailed moderation instrument that differs from the one used at school level. The moderation feedback report should accompany the learner evidence of schools that were selected for moderation.
- “Hands-on practical” in Life Sciences was a problematic topic across the provinces. It is recommended that the DBE provide guidance on how this topic should be handled.
- Use of previous question papers is acceptable if they are used in the benchmarking of internally set tasks. However, it is incorrect to lift questions from those papers without using them creatively or adapting them to suit learners and the demographics.
- Marking with the use of rubrics still poses serious challenges to most of the teachers in all the eight moderated subjects. Marking rubrics must be very clear and should make assessment more meaningful. The criteria involved must determine the specific levels of performance to be achieved.

- There is an urgent need to review the assessment of the PET component of Life Orientation. The instruments used to record the marks must give sufficient information about the marks awarded; otherwise detailed evidence must be available to justify the awarding of marks.
- Teachers should be trained in the use of analysis grids for setting good quality and cognitively balanced tasks.

# Chapter 3

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## Monitoring of the NSC examinations

### 1 SCOPE AND APPROACH

Umalusi monitored the NSC examinations in all nine provinces. Monitoring was undertaken by Umalusi staff and monitors located within the provinces. Monitoring focused on the following three areas:

- Monitoring of the state of readiness
- Monitoring of the conduct of the examination
- Monitoring of marking

#### 1.1 MONITORING OF THE STATE OF READINESS

Prior to the 2011 NSC examinations, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) conducted an intensive monitoring of the state of readiness of provinces to administer the examinations. The DBE classified the provinces into three categories and monitoring for each category was structured to suit the challenges identified in each category. The categories were as follows:

- Four provinces that required intensive monitoring owing to serious problems having been identified in them.
- Four provinces that required minimal normal monitoring because they more or less had systems in place and running well.
- One province that required special care and focused attention.

In order to avoid duplication by running parallel processes and place a greater burden on provincial authorities, Umalusi decided to “shadow” the DBE teams on their monitoring visits to provinces, with a view to establishing the veracity of the DBE monitoring processes and authenticating the DBE reports. Umalusi therefore accompanied the DBE on six visits that it conducted to monitor the state of readiness, namely, Eastern Cape, Free State, Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo and KwaZulu- Natal. This allowed Umalusi to verify the DBE monitoring processes.

## 1.2 MONITORING OF THE WRITING OF THE EXAMINATION

Umalusi intensified its monitoring this year. New teams of monitors were appointed, also increasing the number of monitors allocated per province. Umalusi staff also visited more centres than it did in the past three years.

The table below indicates the scope of the monitoring conducted with regard to the writing of the examination:

**Table 1: Monitoring of writing**

Assessment body	Number of examination centres	Number of candidates enrolled	Number of candidates who wrote	Number of centres monitored by Umalusi monitors	Number of centres monitored by Umalusi staff
Eastern Cape	918	68 175	65 187	14	2
Free State	319	26 395	25 925	24	2
Gauteng	778	87 630	85 360	19	1
KwaZulu- Natal	1708	12 7056	122 083	17	1
Limpopo	1411	74 671	73 719	17	2
Mpumalanga	527	49 600	48 091	19	5
Northern Cape	134	10 425	10 111	26	2
North West	379	25 930	25 360	18	1
Western Cape	419	41 271	39 831	32	1
Total	6593	511 153	495 667	186	17

## 1.3 MONITORING OF MARKING

Monitoring of marking was conducted by Umalusi monitors and staff. The table below gives an indication of the scope of marking covered:

**Table 2: Monitoring of marking:**

Assessment body	Number of marking centres	Number of centres covered by monitors	Number of centres covered by staff
Eastern Cape	15	6	2
Free State	18	14	2
Gauteng	7	6	2
KwaZulu- Natal	29	14	2
Limpopo	19	13	1
Mpumalanga	17	11	6

Assessment body	Number of marking centres	Number of centres covered by monitors	Number of centres covered by staff
Northern Cape	3	3	1
North West	14	7	1
Western Cape	1	1	1
Total	123	75	18

## 2 FINDINGS

### 2.1 MONITORING THE STATE OF READINESS

The findings reported here are based on issues that were observed at the point of monitoring. Provinces were told to work on these concerns, and the DBE conducted follow-up visits to ensure that the concerns were addressed prior to the commencement of the examinations.

#### 2.1.1 Eastern Cape

##### Compliance/strong points:

- A mature and consolidated examination system
- Management and operational plans in place

##### Concerns:

- Staffing – vacant posts; contract workers
- Security – storage facilities at Butterworth
- Private centres/independent schools a risk
- Large number of marking centres
- Labour issues

#### 2.1.2 Free State

##### Compliance/strong points:

- Management and operational plans in place
- Security arrangements at marking centres
- Exam processes in place

**Concerns:**

- Staffing – vacant posts
- Storage facilities and storage time at nodal points
- Printing outsourced – SITA
- Packaging of scripts

**2.1.3 KwaZulu-Natal****Compliance/strong points:**

- A mature and consolidated exam system
- Management and operational plans in place
- Mark capture system
- 

**Concerns:**

- Staffing – vacant posts; contract workers
- Security at nodal points ( outlying areas)
- High number of marking centres

**2.1.4 Limpopo****Compliance/strong points:**

- Management and operational plans in place
- 50 posts filled
- Exam processes in place
- 

**Concerns:**

- Printing of question papers
- Large number of distribution points
- Security risks
- Appointment of markers
- District monitoring
- Script control

**2.1.5 North West****Compliance/strong points:**

- Management and operational plans in place
- Assessment management coordinating committee

- Exam processes in place
- Printing
- 

**Concerns:**

- Use of schools as distribution points
- Monitoring compromised – shortage of vehicles

### **2.1.6 Mpumalanga**

**Compliance/strong points:**

- Management and operational plans
- Key management posts filled
- Exam processes in place
- 

**Concerns:**

- Coordination and communication between head office and districts
- Printing of question papers
- Private centres
- Large number of marking centres
- Security risks
- Appointment of markers

## **2.2 MONITORING THE WRITING AND MARKING OF THE EXAMINATIONS**

### **2.2.1 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE**

Northern Cape and Western Cape administered competency tests for the selection of their markers. This proved effective in the improvement of marking quality.

### **2.2.2 AREAS OF CONCERN**

- Security tended to be lax at some of the centres visited. Security guards opened the gates without asking for identification at one centre in Mpumalanga, one in KwaZulu-Natal and one in Northern Cape.

- In some provinces markers and examination assistants were informed about their appointments very late. Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal issued no letters of appointment for examination assistants.
- There was a concern about the marker selection process. Reports about the performance of markers were apparently disregarded when markers were appointed. A concern about the reappointment of underperforming markers was also raised at one centre in Limpopo. In Mpumalanga it was suggested that markers who were struggling with the process should be excluded in future.
- Chief markers were not informed about changes with respect to the appointment of markers in the Eastern Cape.
- One of the centres in the Eastern Cape was located a long way from the main centres and accommodation was not provided for examination assistants. Consequently, they had to travel very late in the evening and very early in the morning, thus compromising their safety.
- One centre in KwaZulu-Natal was not suitable for the marking process, as there was limited space and inadequate facilities. Moreover, the water supply was cut for two days at some point.
- One centre in Gauteng had no communication facilities.
- Appointment of internal moderators was a concern. In Mpumalanga, one internal moderator was appointed for three language papers. In Limpopo, it was reported that some internal moderators had to move among more than two marking centres, some of which were a long way from one another.
- Late receipt of the final memoranda was a concern in the Northern Cape. Final memoranda should be available on the first day of marking.

### **2.2.3 IRREGULARITIES**

The following irregularities were reported:

- Registration-related irregularities: All provinces reported a number of registration-related irregularities of various forms. The most serious was a centre in the Eastern Cape which was not registered as an examination centre.
- An alternative centre used in the Eastern Cape – the chief invigilator changed the venue without approval.
- At another centre in the Eastern Cape it took 40 minutes to reorganise the examination venue, thus delaying the start of the examination.
- The occurrence of power outages/failure, mainly during the writing of Computer Applications Technology (CAT) in all provinces.
- Other challenges reported during the writing of CAT include candidates at a centre in Gauteng who were unable to access Question 7.3 because they could not open the folder, as well as a late start in the Eastern Cape owing to a faulty disc that could not be opened.

- Printing errors and the omission of questions were reported in various subjects, e.g. Design in the Eastern Cape. Printing errors were also reported in Gauteng, one of which involved the Afrikaans HL paper that contained pages 3 to 8 of the Mathematics P1 paper. A translation problem was reported in the Western Cape.
- Shortage of question papers was a serious concern reported by almost all provinces. This resulted mainly from inaccurate registrations.
- Shortage of answer books in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and Gauteng resulted in candidates losing up to 20 minutes writing time whilst waiting for answer books.
- Candidates were denied access to the examination rooms for various trivial reasons, e.g. wrong shoes, hairstyle, pregnancy. These issues were observed in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Free State, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal. The most serious case reported was in Limpopo where the principal barred candidates from writing the examination because their performance might spoil the pass rate of the school. In all cases the officials were at fault and candidates were later allowed to write.
- There were a number of cases of alleged copying/ possession of crib notes/ assistance by others or invigilators. The most serious transgressions were found in the Eastern Cape where the chief invigilator assisted candidates by ruling out some of the questions and making and selecting questions for them; in another centre 17 candidates were caught with crib notes. In the Western Cape four candidates used the same user ID to log in and could have had access to each other's work. Other candidates in a different centre in the Western Cape benefited from an embedded code that was given in the Afrikaans Java file for Question 3 that was actually part of the solution.
- Possession of cell phones and sometimes copying using cell phones were reported in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo and Western Cape.
- Incorrect packaging was reported in the North West, Eastern Cape, and Gauteng.
- Cases of candidates who left the examination rooms with answer scripts were also reported in Gauteng and Western Cape. In KwaZulu-Natal, a Chief invigilator allowed unregistered candidates to write, which is acceptable as long as appropriate measures are put in place to report and deal with this; in this case, however, the chief invigilator did not submit the learners' scripts.

## 2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Security companies need to ensure that their security guards are aware of their responsibilities at marking centres. There should be proper, thorough checking of each vehicle and the persons who are allowed access to marking centres.
- Markers and examination assistants should be informed on time of their appointment, and be furnished with a proper official letter of appointment.

- Care should be taken to ensure that the examination assistants' lives are not put in danger, especially those who need to return home in remote rural areas after having worked very late at night.
- The process of appointing suitable markers requires attention in the majority of provinces. The criteria for appointing markers should be strictly adhered to.
- Provinces need to ensure that the number of appointed internal moderators is commensurate with the work the internal moderators are required to do. This would alleviate reported problems where internal moderators have to move between marking centres that are sometime far apart.

# Chapter 4

## Verification of marking

### 1 SCOPE

Marking guideline discussions were held for all 38 NSC subjects and the 130 papers that were written in the 2011 NSC examinations. All Umalusi NSC moderators took part in the process. The discussion meetings were coordinated by the DBE. These meetings comprised the external moderators, internal moderators, chief examiners, curriculum specialists and representatives from the provincial education departments in the form of provincial chief markers and internal moderators.

### 2 APPROACH

According to the DBE marking guideline discussion schedule, subjects were divided into two categories as follows:

- Papers with marking guidelines that were discussed over a period of two days. The second day of this discussion was designated for training. The subjects involved were usually those with a large enrolment. Each province was represented by the chief marker and the internal moderator.
- Papers for which the marking guidelines discussion was completed in one day. These were usually small enrolment subjects and those present included one representative from each province who was either the chief marker or the internal moderator.
- 

The table below indicates subjects and their various categories.

**Table 1: Subjects and papers and their various categories**

Large enrolment subjects	Small enrolment subjects
Accounting	Afrikaans SAL
Afrikaans HL and FAL	Agricultural Technology
Agricultural Management Practices	Civil Technology
Agricultural Science	Computer Applications Technology
Business Studies	Consumer Studies
Economics	Dance Studies

Large enrolment subjects	Small enrolment subjects
English HL and FAL	Design
Geography	Dramatic Arts
History	Electrical Technology
Life Sciences	Engineering, Graphics and Design
Mathematical Literacy	English SAL
Mathematics	Hospitality Studies
Physical Science	Information Technology
	IsiNdebele HL, FAL and SAL
	IsiXhosa HL, FAL and SAL
	IsiZulu HL, FAL and SAL
	Mechanical Technology
	Music
	Religion Studies
	Sepedi HL, FAL and SAL
	Setswana HL, FAL and SAL
	SiSwati HL, FAL and SAL
	Tourism
	Tshivenda HL, FAL and SAL
	Visual Arts
	Xitsonga HL, FAL and SAL

Umalusi moderators were deployed to these meetings as a quality assurance measure and also to sign off the final memoranda before they were dispatched to the provincial education departments.

## 3 FINDINGS:

### 3.1 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

- The DBE is commended for splitting the memo discussions for Computer Applications Technology and Information Technology. In the past these were held simultaneously thus creating problems firstly for Umalusi, which had an external moderator who was involved in both subjects, and secondly, for provinces such as the Northern Cape, which sent one representative for both subjects.

## 3.2 AREAS OF CONCERN

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- Some of the provincial representatives left before the end of the memo discussions as they needed to catch flights back home. The programme for the meeting, as developed by the DBE, made provision for discussions to continue until 17h00.
- The size of the Information Technology panel was viewed to be relatively small for the amount of work that they were required to do. The panel comprised the chief examiner and three examiners for setting three practical papers and two theory papers. In addition, the practical papers had to be set using both Delphi and Java programming languages. There should at least be six examiners so that they can split into two groups with each group concentrating on either the theory or the practical paper. This problem with the size of the panel will be compounded in 2012, as the current internal moderator has been appointed as the external moderator and one of the panel members cannot participate in the setting of the 2012/2013 papers as they have a child writing the subject in 2012.
- The English page stipulating the guidelines for the marking of the summary inserted in the marking guidelines for all the language papers. This elicited some disquiet among some of the representatives for the other language papers. They argued that they were seeing it for the first time during the marking guideline discussions, whereas English HL and FAL had been made aware of this long before.
- Non-attendance of the memo discussion meetings by some of the provincial delegates. This could have a negative impact on the marking of the scripts as the chief markers and internal moderators would be oblivious to the decisions taken at the meeting, as well as how the meeting arrived at those decisions.
- Some of the provinces, namely the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, had their memo printed on a different scale. Eastern Cape had all its question papers printed in the wrong scale, thus making them smaller in size than the rest of the provinces.

## 3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The DBE should emphasise to the provinces the importance of delegates remaining for the full duration of the marking guideline discussions.
- The DBE should consider strengthening the Information Technology panel.
- In future the DBE should look into the manner in which it disseminates information to the examiners, internal moderators and external moderators. This is with reference to the amended guidelines for the marking of the summary, which were issued by the DBE.

- The importance of provincial delegates attending marking guideline discussion meetings cannot be over-emphasised, as non-attendance may have a negative impact on the marking process.
- Centralisation of printing may alleviate problems pertaining to the poor quality of examination material.
- The circumstances surrounding the issuance of errata by the Western Cape with respect to Life Sciences need to be investigated by the DBE, as this was interpreted as an alleged tampering with the question paper.

## 4 CENTRALISED VERIFICATION OF MARKING

- Centralised verification of marking for the sampled DBE subjects was held at Umalusi. A team of external moderators moderated a sample of scripts to verify, among other things, the consistent application of the marking guidelines, as well as the marking in general.
- A total of 17 subjects were sampled for centralised verification of marking, namely, Accounting, Afrikaans FAL, Agricultural Sciences, Business Studies, Computer Applications Technology, Consumer Studies, Economics, Engineering Graphics and Design, English FAL, English HL, Geography, History, Life Sciences, Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Tourism.

### 4.1 AREAS OF CONCERN

- 
- There was still evidence of some markers who were not competent to mark interpretation-type questions. There were numerous cases where candidates were not awarded the marks they deserved.
- Partial moderation by internal moderators. It was noted that in some of the samples of scripts, moderation was incomplete. Accordingly, only a few questions and, in some cases, only one question had been moderated.
- Some provinces submitted scripts without the accompanying final marking guidelines.
- Large variations were detected in certain scripts where marks had to be adjusted by as much as two-digit numbers.
- Questions in the scripts that were not marked and not picked up by internal moderators. This had the potential to greatly disadvantage candidates and deprive them of the marks they deserved.
- Additions and/or changes to the marking guidelines without following protocol, for instance without consulting the internal or external moderator.

## 4.2 AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

- The standard of marking showed some improvement. The incidence of non-adherence to the marking guidelines and inconsistencies in marking were limited to certain questions and not widespread.
- A high level of moderation by provinces was noted in the majority of subjects.
- Training of markers in some provinces resulted in an efficient marking process.

## 4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Higher-order questions and questions requiring candidates to use their own insight should be allocated to experienced markers.
- Training of teachers on the teaching of GIS is still required.
- It is advisable for the internal moderators to moderate the whole script, especially when marking has just commenced, as this will enable them to identify problematic questions.
- Although this was limited to a very few subjects, provinces are still urged to include marking guidelines and question papers with sampled scripts.
- All marked scripts should be thoroughly checked to ensure that all questions have been marked before marks are captured.
- Provinces should refrain from making changes or additions to the marking guidelines without the approval of DBE and Umalusi.
- A decision should be taken by Umalusi and DBE with regard to discrepancies picked up during external moderation. It would be advisable for provinces to check scripts upon receipt from Umalusi to address cases where learners are unduly disadvantaged or advantaged by huge margins.

# Chapter 5

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## Standardisation of marks

### 1 SCOPE

A total of 56 subjects which include the non-official languages were subjected to the standardisation process at the DBE Standardisation Meeting.

### 2 UMALUSI'S APPROACH TO THE STANDARDISATION OF THE NSC

Umalusi makes use of an evidence-based approach to standardisation. Decisions are based on the thorough consideration of historical and situational factors, and careful and systematic reasoning. Umalusi has introduced the following measures to facilitate these processes to ensure that standardisation decisions are systematic, appropriate and fair:

- Historical averages were presented to the Umalusi Assessment Standards Committee in booklet form for each achievement level for each subject standardised. These averages were determined by using three-year averages. The 2008, 2009 and 2010 raw and adjusted scores were also used to inform the 2011 standardisation decisions.
- Pairs analysis was used to show correlations between the average performance of learners in the subject being standardised and those in other subjects being taken by the same cohort of learners.

In addition to the above, evidence-based reports were presented to the Umalusi Assessment Standards Committee with a view to informing the standardisation decisions as follows:

- For 2011, Umalusi appointed teams of subject specialists to conduct the post-examination analysis for the 11 "gateway" subjects which were part of the 2009 and 2010 project. The post-examination analysis provided an evaluation of the cognitive demand of the 2011 NSC examination papers in the selected subjects, and it also provided a comparative evaluation of the standard and quality of the 2011 question papers in relation to the 2010 question papers.

- Umalusi external moderators presented detailed reports that gave an overview impression of the question papers moderated. The reports also provided an indication of general learner performance based on a sample of scripts moderated.
- The DBE tabled a report indicating the strategic interventions implemented in the teaching and learning environment.
- The DBE Internal Moderator and Chief Marker reports were also consulted, and these provided a post-exam analysis of the question paper from a marking perspective.

The following principles were applied in the standardisation of the 2011 examination results:

- No adjustments should be made to the raw marks unless compelling evidence is provided to support them.
- No adjustments, either upwards or downwards, will exceed 10% or the historical average.
- In the case of individual candidates, the adjustment effected should not exceed 50% of the marks obtained by the candidate.
- If the distribution of the raw marks is above or below the historical average, the marks may be adjusted downward or upwards, respectively.
- Computer adjustments are calculated on the basis of the principles outlined in the bullet points immediately above.
- Umalusi retains the right to amend these principles as deemed necessary based on sound evidence and educational principles.

### 3 2011 STANDARDISATION DECISIONS

The final outcome of the standardisation of the 56 NSC subjects is as follows:

- Raw marks : 45 subjects
- Moderated upward : 3 subjects
- Moderated downward : 8 subjects

Umalusi is pleased with the fact that for 80% of the subjects raw marks were accepted. This is an indication that the qualification is stabilising and that the assessment instruments are in general being pitched at the correct levels. It should also be noted that for the subjects where upward adjustments were effected, no subject was adjusted to the maximum 10%.

## **4 VERIFICATION OF THE RESULTING PROCESSES**

Umalusi has developed its own standardisation, moderation and resulting modules on its mainframe. The same principles and requirements as per the Umalusi requirements and specifications were applied. This system was used to verify the datasets generated by the Integrated Examinations Computer System.

The adjustments approved at the Standardisation Meeting were verified as correct.

## **5 AREAS OF CONCERN**

### **5.1 ENGLISH FIRST ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE**

Concerns were raised about the poor standard of the English First Additional Language question papers. This was to be investigated prior to the setting of the 2011 question papers.

### **5.2 BUSINESS STUDIES**

Kinks on the graph at the 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, and 80% intervals indicate that markers have attempted to move the marks upwards at these levels. This practice should be discouraged.

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The DBE is urged to investigate the standard of the English First Additional Language papers and ensure that they are appropriate for Grade 12 learners.

Provinces should caution markers about the practice of moving marks at certain intervals. Markers should just mark and not adjust marks.

# Chapter 6

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## Conclusion

The findings of the quality assurance processes given in this report are a clear indication of a maturing system that has made positive strides towards improvement. Having said that, the areas of concern highlighted in this report indicate that there is still work to be done to ensure that these are addressed.

Despite the challenges presented by the delay in the commencement of the external moderation of question papers this year, efforts were made to have all the papers ready for the writing of the examination in good time. The DBE is commended for submitting question papers and marking guidelines that were typed and neatly laid out for external moderation.

DBE moderation of the SBA should be seen as a critical quality assurance process in this regard, which the DBE can use to correct anomalies in its implementation. The DBE is therefore applauded for having conducted the national moderation of the SBA. Having said this, the areas of concern mentioned above require urgent attention in order for the system to truly move forward with regard to SBA implementation. One of the critical concerns is that the DBE moderation tool and report should be made available to Umalusi external moderators so as to facilitate the Umalusi verification exercise.

Assessment in Life Orientation is starting to show gradual signs of maturity and stability with regard to the way the different components are assessed. It is good to see some of the teachers being able to produce good quality question papers which complied with the SAG. On the other hand, it should also be indicated that moderation at both school and district levels continues to undermine the norm standards set for marking and awarding marks for the PET component. It is therefore important that face moderation be incorporated as one of the levels that can confirm the authenticity, validity, and reliability of the PET mark.

The two processes in the verification of marking, namely memo discussions and centralised verification of marking proceeded well. Memo discussions were conducted in a professional manner, and fruitful and robust discussions under the guidance of internal moderators were witnessed. The DBE should be commended for the meticulous manner in which it managed and administered the discussion meetings.

Notwithstanding the areas of concern and the irregularities highlighted in this report, Umalusi maintains that the 2011 NSC examinations were conducted in a fair, valid and credible manner. Umalusi thus gives approval for the release of results at the date determined by the Ministry of the Department of Basic Education.

# ANNEXURE A

**TABLE 1: EXTERNAL MODERATION OF THE DBE GRADE 12 NOVEMBER 2011 QUESTION PAPERS**

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
	Accounting	Approved			
2.	Agricultural Management Practices		Approved		
3.	Agricultural Science P1	Approved			
4.	Agricultural Science P2	Approved			
5.	Agricultural Technology		Approved		
6.	Business Studies		Approved		
7.	Consumer Studies		Approved		
8.	Computer Applications Technology P1		Approved		
9	Computer Applications Technology P1 (back up)			Approved	
10.	Computer Applications Technology P2		Approved		
11	Computer Applications Technology P2 (back up)		Approved		
12	Civil Technology			Approved	
13	Dance Studies	Approved			
14	Design P1	Approved			
15	Design P2	Approved			
16	Dramatic Arts	Approved			
17	Economics		Approved		
18	Electrical Technology	Approved			
19	Engineering Graphics & Design P1	Approved			
20	Engineering Graphics & Design P2	Approved			
21	Geography P1			Approved	
22	Geography P2	Approved			
23	History P1			Approved	
24	History P2			Approved	
25	Hospitality Studies		Approved		
26	Information Technology P1		Approved		
27	Information Technology P2		Approved		
28	Information Technology P1 (back up)		Approved		

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
29	Life Science P1 (new content)			Approved	
30	Life Science P2 (new content)			Approved	
31	Life Science P1 (old content)				Approved
32	Life Science P2 (old content)				Approved
33	Mathematical Literacy P1		Approved		
34	Mathematical Literacy P2		Approved		
35	Mathematics P1			Approved	
36	Mathematics P2			Approved	
37	Mathematics P3			Approved	
38	Mechanical Technology	Approved			
39	Music P1		Approved		
40	Music P2		Approved		
41	Physical Science P1			Approved	
42	Physical Science P2			Approved	
43	Religion Studies P1		Approved		
44	Religion Studies P2		Approved		
45	Tourism	Approved			
46	Visual Arts P1	Approved			
47	Visual Arts P2	Approved			
48	Afrikaans HL P1	Approved			
49	Afrikaans HL P2	Approved			
50	Afrikaans HL P3		Approved		
51	Afrikaans FAL P1				Approved
52	Afrikaans FAL P2		Approved		
53	Afrikaans FAL P3		Approved		
54	Afrikaans SAL P1		Approved		
55	Afrikaans SAL P2		Approved		
56	English HL P1			Approved	
57	English HL P2			Approved	
58	English HL P3		Approved		
59	English FAL P1			Approved	
60	English FAL P2			Approved	
61	English FAL P3			Approved	
62	English SAL P1		Approved		
63	English SAL P2		Approved		
64	IsiNdebele HL P1		Approved		
65	IsiNdebele HL P2		Approved		
66	IsiNdebele HL P3		Approved		
67	IsiNdebele FAL P1	Approved			

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
68	IsiNdebele FAL P2		Approved		
69	IsiNdebele FAL P3	Approved			
70	IsiNdebele SAL P1	Approved			
71	IsiNdebele SAL P2	Approved			
72	IsiXhosa HL P1		Approved		
73	IsiXhosa HL P2		Approved		
74	IsiXhosa HL P3		Approved		
75	IsiXhosa FAL P1		Approved		
76	IsiXhosa FAL P2		Approved		
77	IsiXhosa FAL P3		Approved		
78	IsiXhosa SAL P1		Approved		
79	IsiXhosa SAL P2	Approved			
80	IsiZulu HL P1			Approved	
81	IsiZulu HL P2		Approved		
82	IsiZulu HL P3		Approved		
83	IsiZulu FAL P1	Approved			
84	IsiZulu FAL P2	Approved			
85	IsiZulu FAL P3	Approved			
86	IsiZulu SAL P1		Approved		
87	IsiZulu SAL P2	Approved			
88	Sepedi HL P1		Approved		
89	Sepedi HL P2		Approved		
90	Sepedi HL P3	Approved			
91	Sepedi FAL P1		Approved		
92	Sepedi FAL P2		Approved		
93	Sepedi FAL P3	Approved			
94	Sepedi SAL P1	Approved			
95	Sepedi SAL P2	Approved			
96	Sesotho HL P1		Approved		
97	Sesotho HL P2		Approved		
98	Sesotho HL P3	Approved			
99	Sesotho FAL P1	Approved			
100	Sesotho FAL P2	Approved			
101	Sesotho FAL P3	Approved			
102	Sesotho SAL P1	Approved			
103	Sesotho SAL P2	Approved			
104	Setswana HL P1		Approved		
105	Setswana HL P2		Approved		
106	Setswana HL P3		Approved		

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
107	Setswana FAL P1		Approved		
108	Setswana FAL P2		Approved		
109	Setswana FAL P3		Approved		
110	Setswana SAL P1		Approved		
111	Setswana SAL P2		Approved		
112	Siswati HL P1	Approved			
113	Siswati HL P2		Approved		
114	Siswati HL P3	Approved			
115	Siswati FAL P1		Approved		
116	Siswati FAL P2	Approved			
117	Siswati FAL P3		Approved		
118	Siswati SAL P1	Approved			
119	Siswati SAL P2	Approved			
120	Tshivenda HL P1		Approved		
121	Tshivenda HL P2		Approved		
122	Tshivenda HL P3		Approved		
123	Tshivenda FAL P1		Approved		
124	Tshivenda FAL P2		Approved		
125	Tshivenda FAL P3		Approved		
126	Tshivenda SAL P1		Approved		
127	Tshivenda SAL P2		Approved		
128	Xitsonga HL P1		Approved		
129	Xitsonga HL P2		Approved		
130	Xitsonga HL P3		Approved		
131	Xitsonga FAL P1		Approved		
132	Xitsonga FAL P2		Approved		
133	Xitsonga FAL P3		Approved		
134	Xitsonga SAL P1		Approved		
135	Xitsonga SAL P2		Approved		
TOTAL					

**TABLE 2: EXTERNAL MODERATION OF GRADE 12 MARCH 2012 QUESTION PAPERS**

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
	Accounting		Approved		
2.	Agricultural Management Practices		Approved		
3.	Agricultural Science P1	Approved			
4.	Agricultural Science P2	Approved			
5.	Agricultural Technology		Approved		
6.	Business Studies		Approved		
7.	Consumer Studies		Approved		
8.	Computer Applications Technology P1			Approved	
9.	Computer Applications Technology P2			Approved	
10	Civil Technology			Approved	
11	Dance Studies	Approved			
12	Design P1	Approved			
13	Dramatic Arts	Approved			
14	Economics		Approved		
15	Electrical Technology	Approved			
16	Engineering Graphics & Design P1	Approved			
17	Engineering Graphics & Design P2	Approved			
18	Geography P1	Approved			
19	Geography P2	Approved			
20	History P1			Approved	
21	History P2			Approved	
22	Hospitality Studies	Approved			
23	Information Technology P1		Approved		
24	Information Technology P2		Approved		
25	Life Science P1: Version 1		Approved		
26	Life Science P2: Version 1		Approved		
27	Life Science P1: Version 2			Approved	
28	Life Science P2: Version 2			Approved	
29	Mathematical Literacy P1		Approved		
30	Mathematical Literacy P2		Approved		
31	Mathematics P1			Approved	
32	Mathematics P2			Approved	
33	Mathematics P3		Approved		
34	Mechanical Technology	Approved			
35	Music P1	Approved			

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
36	Music P2		Approved		
37	Physical Science P1			Approved	
38	Physical Science P2			Approved	
39	Religion Studies P1		Approved		
40	Religion Studies P2		Approved		
41	Tourism	Approved			
42	Visual Arts P1	Approved			
43	Afrikaans HL P1	Approved			
44	Afrikaans HL P2	Approved			
45	Afrikaans HL P3		Approved		
46	Afrikaans FAL P1				Approved
47	Afrikaans FAL P2		Approved		
48	Afrikaans FAL P3			Approved	
49	Afrikaans SAL P1			Approved	
50	Afrikaans SAL P2			Approved	
51	English HL P1		Approved		
52	English HL P2			Approved	
53	English HL P3	Approved			
54	English FAL P1			Approved	
55	English FAL P2			Approved	
56	English FAL P3			Approved	
57	English SAL P1		Approved		
58	English SAL P2		Approved		
59	IsiNdebele HL P1	Approved			
60	IsiNdebele HL P2	Approved			
61	IsiNdebele HL P3	Approved			
62	IsiNdebele FAL P1	Approved			
63	IsiNdebele FAL P2		Approved		
64	IsiNdebele FAL P3	Approved			
65	IsiNdebele SAL P1		Approved		
66	IsiNdebele SAL P2		Approved		
67	IsiXhosa HL P1		Approved		
68	IsiXhosa HL P2		Approved		
69	IsiXhosa HL P3		Approved		
70	IsiXhosa FAL P1		Approved		
71	IsiXhosa FAL P2		Approved		
72	IsiXhosa FAL P3		Approved		
73	IsiXhosa SAL P1		Approved		
74	IsiXhosa SAL P2	Approved			

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
75	IsiZulu HL P1			Approved	
76	IsiZulu HL P2		Approved		
77	IsiZulu HL P3		Approved		
78	IsiZulu FAL P1		Approved		
79	IsiZulu FAL P2	Approved			
80	IsiZulu FAL P3		Approved		
81	IsiZulu SAL P1		Approved		
82	IsiZulu SAL P2	Approved			
83	Sepedi HL P1		Approved		
84	Sepedi HL P2		Approved		
85	Sepedi HL P3	Approved			
86	Sepedi FAL P1		Approved		
87	Sepedi FAL P2		Approved		
88	Sepedi FAL P3	Approved			
89	Sepedi SAL P1		Approved		
90	Sepedi SAL P2	Approved			
91	Sesotho HL P1		Approved		
92	Sesotho HL P2		Approved		
93	Sesotho HL P3	Approved			
94	Sesotho FAL P1		Approved		
95	Sesotho FAL P2		Approved		
96	Sesotho FAL P3	Approved			
97	Sesotho SAL P1	Approved			
98	Sesotho SAL P2		Approved		
99	Setswana HL P1		Approved		
100	Setswana HL P2		Approved		
101	Setswana HL P3		Approved		
102	Setswana FAL P1		Approved		
103	Setswana FAL P2		Approved		
104	Setswana FAL P3	Approved			
105	Setswana SAL P1		Approved		
106	Setswana SAL P2		Approved		
107	Siswati HL P1	Approved			
108	Siswati HL P2		Approved		
109	Siswati HL P3	Approved			
110	Siswati FAL P1		Approved		
111	Siswati FAL P2	Approved			
112	Siswati FAL P3		Approved		
113	Siswati SAL P1	Approved			

	SUBJECT	MODERATION			
		1st	2nd	3rd	Beyond
114	Siswati SAL P2	Approved			
115	Tshivenda HL P1		Approved		
116	Tshivenda HL P2		Approved		
117	Tshivenda HL P3		Approved		
118	Tshivenda FAL P1		Approved		
119	Tshivenda FAL P2		Approved		
120	Tshivenda FAL P3		Approved		
121	Tshivenda SAL P1		Approved		
122	Tshivenda SAL P2		Approved		
123	Xitsonga HL P1		Approved		
124	Xitsonga HL P2		Approved		
125	Xitsonga HL P3		Approved		
126	Xitsonga FAL P1		Approved		
127	Xitsonga FAL P2		Approved		
128	Xitsonga FAL P3		Approved		
129	Xitsonga SAL P1		Approved		
130	Xitsonga SAL P2		Approved		
TOTAL					

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