



2009

Report on the Quality Assurance of the Examinations and Assessment for Vocational Education and Training

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Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training



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General and Further Education and Training

REPORT ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2009

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General and Further Education and Training

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Foreword

Umalusi has since its inception been involved in the quality assurance of vocational education and training qualifications that are certified by this statutory body, namely the National Technical Education (NATED) Report 190/191 and the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) programmes. Umalusi by virtue of its Act, undertakes to quality assure these national qualifications and does so through a rigorous process involving reporting on each of the assessment processes and procedures.

By the end of 2009 the roll out of the NCV qualification, which was introduced in 2007, had reached level 4 – the final exit level for this qualification. While this may be viewed as an accomplishment for the vocational education trajectory in South Africa, it has also identified challenges for stakeholders to embrace.

During 2009 certain processes of all the examinations conducted for the afore-mentioned qualifications were quality assured. The major emphasis was, however, on the NCV programmes at levels 2, 3, and 4 as the NATED Report 190/191 programmes are being phased out. While Umalusi would normally have targeted level 4 of the NCV (as the qualification exit point), they responded to the request from the National Department of Education to quality assure levels 2, 3, and 4. In an integrated approach, samples from each level were quality assured. Samples were interrogated by Umalusi to ensure that the overall standard and quality of the examinations for these qualifications are beyond reproach. This was accomplished through the following quality assurance processes:

- Moderation of question papers, including the Integrated Summative Assessment Tasks;
- Monitoring and moderation of internal continuous assessment;
- Monitoring of the different phases of the examinations;
- Moderation of marking; and
- Standardisation of marks according to agreed statistical and educational principles.

Substantial progress has been made with the improvement of certain systems and processes for the successful implementation and quality assurance of the NCV qualification, but there are unfortunately still many challenges. The quality assurance of the practical component of this qualification coupled with the inability to find and/or retain suitably qualified and experienced staff to offer and assess the qualification pose particular challenges. It is of utmost importance that solutions to these challenges be found.

Based on the reports received from Umalusi's team of external moderators and monitors, as well as the deliberations and conclusions of its Assessment Standards Committee, Umalusi Council concluded that the 2009 assessment processes were conducted in a fair and reliable manner, that the results are valid, and that there is currently no report of any irregularity that would compromise the credibility of the 2009 Vocational Education and Training assessments.

Through its quality assurance processes, Umalusi will continue to ensure that the quality, integrity, and credibility of the Vocational Education and Training assessments are improved and maintained, and will continue in its endeavor towards a world-class assessment system in this sector.


Prof J D Volmink

21 December 2009

Acronyms

CD:NEAM	-	Chief Directorate: National Examinations and Measurement
DHET	-	Department of Higher Education and Training
EC	-	Eastern Cape Province
FET	-	Further Education and Training
FS	-	Free State Province
Gau	-	Gauteng Province
KZN	-	KwaZulu-Natal Province
ICASS	-	Internal Continuous Assessment
ISAT	-	Integrated Summative Assessment Task
L2	-	Level 2
L3	-	Level 3
L4	-	Level 4
Lim	-	Limpopo Province
Mpu	-	Mpumalanga Province
NATED	-	National Technical Education
NC	-	Northern Cape Province
NCV	-	National Certificate Vocational
NIC	-	National Intermediate Certificate
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	-	National Senior Certificate
NW	-	North West Province
OBE	-	Outcomes Based Education
PDE	-	Provincial Department of Education
UMALUSI	-	Quality Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
VET	-	Vocational Education and Training
WC	-	Western Cape Province

Section One

Overview of the report

1. BACKGROUND

The amended *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (No. 58 of 2001)* as well as the recently enacted *National Qualifications Framework Act (No. 76 of 2008)* assign quality assurance to the Quality Councils. Umalusi, as one of the quality councils, executes this function through, inter alia:

- Setting standards;
- Monitoring and reporting on the adequacy and suitability of qualifications and standards;
- Quality assurance of exit point assessments;
- Certification of learner achievements;
- Quality promotion amongst providers; and
- Accreditation of private providers of education, training and assessment.

Umalusi quality assures the assessments of the following VET qualifications:

- The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) levels 2, 3 and 4; and
- The NATED 190/191 which are currently being phased out, namely,
 - o The National Technical Certificates, N2 and N3;
 - o The National Intermediate Certificate (NIC); and
 - o The National Senior Certificate (NSC).

This report focuses on the quality assurance of the assessment of the above qualifications for the year 2009. Umalusi reports on the standard of the Vocational Education and Training (VET) assessment on an annual basis. In this regard, Umalusi reports on each of the quality assurance processes and procedures, which jointly allow Umalusi to make an evaluative judgement on the credibility of the assessments. These processes ensure that all aspects of the assessment are moderated and monitored against prescribed criteria thus ensuring that standards are maintained and improved.

The Evaluation and Accreditation Unit of Umalusi monitored the assessment systems of the NCV at national, provincial and college levels. This report incorporates findings from the Evaluation and Accreditation Report as appropriate.

Six National Technical Certificate (NATED Report 190/191) examinations were conducted during March, April, June, August, and November 2009. The Natural Sciences examinations were conducted during April, August, and November 2009 and the Business and General Studies examinations were conducted during March, June, and November 2009.

The NCV level 2 and 3 supplementary examinations were conducted during February / March 2009 and the level 2, 3, and 4 examinations were conducted during November 2009.

Umalusi quality assured sampled aspects of each of the above mentioned NATED 190/191 examinations and the NCV assessments. This included the Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) of a sample of the NCV subjects that are currently moderated by Umalusi. This process involved the monitoring and moderation of ICASS at selected sites (during August 2009) and centralised moderation of a sample of portfolios of evidence and portfolios of assessment at provincial level (during October 2009).

The Integrative Summative Assessment Tasks (ISATs) of a sample of programmes and subjects were evaluated and the conduct monitored / moderated during September / October 2009. This involved monitoring the conduct of the ISATs and/or the moderation of the completed tasks.

Examinations in this sector are written at different kinds of centres, namely, public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, private FET colleges, Correctional Services centres, and schools. The marking of scripts takes place externally at designated centralised marking centres in the case of N3, NSC, and NCV level 4; and at designated provincial / college marking centres in the case of NCV level 2 and 3.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of assessment in vocational education and training by determining the:

- Level of adherence to policy in implementing assessment related processes;
- Efficiency and effectiveness of systems, processes, and procedures for the conduct of assessment;
- Cognitive challenge, weighting of content, and presentation of examination question papers and ISATs;
- Quality of the marking of examination answer scripts and ICASS; and
- Quality of assessment and conduct of the ISAT.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this document is to report on Umalusi's quality assurance of the 2009 VET assessments with respect to the following:

- The quality and standard of question papers and ISATs;
- The quality and standard of scoring / marking the assessments;
- The efficiency and effectiveness of systems and processes for the conduct of the VET assessments;
- The identification of good practice and areas for improvement of assessment; and
- The moderation of marks during the standardisation process.

The salient findings from the external moderators' and monitors' reports are analysed and used to make judgements on the standard of the VET assessments during the standardisation process.

3. SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report covers all the 2009 VET assessments and reports on the quality assurance of assessment processes used by Umalusi to ensure that the assessment was of the required standard.

This section of the report provides an overview of the quality assurance processes used by Umalusi to ensure that the assessments meet the required standards. It furthermore outlines the purpose and scope of the report. Section two covers the quality assurance of the NCV. Section three covers the quality assurance of the NATED 190/191 qualifications namely, Natural Sciences, as well as the Business and General Studies examinations.

Section two and three capture the salient findings with respect to each of the quality assurance processes, identify good practice, and highlight areas requiring improvement.

Section Two

Quality assurance of NCV assessment

Chapter 1

Moderation of question papers

1. INTRODUCTION

The examination question paper is central to the assessment of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cognitive abilities of a learner at a given level. In the case of the NCV, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is responsible for the setting and the administration of question papers, while Umalusi, through a rigorous moderating exercise, attests to the standard and quality of the question papers sampled in its moderation process.

Umalusi externally moderates question papers to ensure that the papers are fair, valid, and reliable and are of an acceptable standard in terms of criteria which have been nationally accepted.

Umalusi judges the quality and standard of question papers by determining the level of adherence to policy for the setting of question papers, the cognitive challenge of the question papers, the appropriateness and weighting of content in the question papers in accordance with the subject and assessment guidelines, and the quality of presentation of the question papers.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the validity and quality of the 2009 examination question papers for the NCV levels 2, 3 and 4 (including the March 2009 supplementary papers) in terms of the sample moderated. The report aims to:

- provide an indication of the sample size in terms of subjects and levels;
- give an overview of the crucial findings relating to the quality and standard of the question papers that were externally moderated;
- highlight both areas of good practice and areas for improvement;
- and include recommendations that will enhance the quality of future question papers.

3. SCOPE

This report covers the findings of the moderation process on the NCV examination papers of the subjects written during the February / March 2009 supplementary examinations and the November 2009 examinations.

The table below provides a list of the subjects and levels that were sampled and moderated during the 2009 moderation process:

Table 1: Moderation sample – subjects and levels

No.	NCV SUBJECTS MODERATED 2009	March		November		
		Level 2	Level 3	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
1	Advertising and Promotion	✓		✓	✓	✓
2	Afrikaans 1 st Additional Language	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Animal Production	✓	✓	✓		✓
4	Applied Accounting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

No.	NCV SUBJECTS MODERATED 2009	March		November		
		Level 2	Level 3	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
5	Applied Engineering Technology					✓
6	Automotive Repair and Maintenance	✓	✓			
7	Business Practice	✓				
8	Civil Construction Technology					✓
9	Client Service and Human Relations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Construction Carpentry and Roof Work	✓		✓	✓	
11	Construction Materials	✓				
12	Construction Planning			✓		
13	Construction Plant and Equipment	✓	✓		✓	
14	Construction Plumbing	✓				
15	Construction Supervision					✓
16	Drawings, Setting Out, Quantities, and Costing		✓		✓	✓
17	Economic Environment	✓	✓		✓	✓
18	Electrical Principles and Practice	✓	✓		✓	✓
19	Electronic Control and Digital Electronics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Engineering Graphics and Design		✓		✓	✓
21	Engineering Fabrication	✓				
22	Engineering Fabrication Sheet Metal Work					✓
23	Engineering Fundamentals	✓				
24	Engineering Practice and Maintenance		✓		✓	
25	Engineering Processes					✓
26	Engineering Systems	✓		✓		
27	Engineering Technology	✓				
28	English 1 st Additional Language	✓		✓	✓	✓
29	Entrepreneurship	✓		✓		
30	Farm Planning and Mechanisation					✓
31	Financial Management	✓	✓			
32	Fitting and Turning	✓	✓		✓	
33	Food Preparation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
34	Hospitality Generics	✓	✓	✓		
35	Introduction to Information Systems	✓				
36	Introduction to Systems Development	✓		✓		
37	Isixhosa 1 st Additional Language	✓		✓		
38	Life Orientation (Paper 1)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
39	Management Practice	✓		✓	✓	✓
40	Marketing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
41	Mathematical Literacy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
42	Mathematics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
43	New Venture Creation	✓	✓	✓		
44	Office Data Processing	✓	✓		✓	✓
45	Office Practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
46	Physical Science	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
47	Principles of Computer Programming				✓	

No.	NCV SUBJECTS MODERATED 2009	March		November		
		Level 2	Level 3	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
48	Project Management		✓		✓	✓
49	Science of Tourism	✓	✓		✓	✓
50	Soil Science	✓	✓	✓	✓	
51	Sustainable Tourism in South Africa	✓				
52	Sustainable Tourism in SA and Regional Travel		✓		✓	
53	Systems Analysis and Design					✓
54	Tourism Operations	✓	✓	✓		
	Total Subjects at each level (note some subjects may have two papers – not included in this total)	40	29	25	28	29

Note:

1. All the listed subjects were moderated on some level.
2. Where the subject has two papers, each paper was moderated except for Life Orientation where the computer paper (Paper 2) was not moderated.
3. Due to changes made by the DHET in the moderation model, Umalusi was unable to moderate all the papers originally planned. The change from *on-site moderation* to *off-site moderation* did not facilitate immediate contact between examiners and internal and external moderators and resulted in tight time constraints for the process.

4. APPROACH

Umalusi utilises subject experts to externally moderate a sample of NCV level 2, level 3, and level 4 question papers (outlined above). The criteria used to moderate the question papers cover the following aspects:

- The technical aspects relating to the presentation of the question papers and memoranda;
- The internal moderation in terms of purposeful efficiency for quality assurance;
- The coverage of content, learning, and skills outcomes of the subjects;
- The balance of cognitive skill demands of the types of questions;
- The consistency of mark distribution and allocation according to cognitive skill demand and type of question;
- The relevance and correctness of the marking memoranda especially in terms of the accuracy and the standard of marking;
- The language and bias in terms of universality of interpretation;
- The predictability and level of innovation in the questions;
- The adherence of the paper to Subject Guideline and Assessment documents in terms of weightings and spread of question types and cognitive demand as demonstrated by the assessment frameworks / grids used in paper setting; and
- The evaluative judgement of external moderators on their overall impression of the standard of the paper in terms of the validity, reliability, and suitability of the paper to assess on the level it purposed to evaluate.

The original *on-site moderation model* was designed to provide opportunities for clarifying exchanges between the assessment personnel of the DHET and Umalusi external moderators. The intended exchanges in these meetings were to allow for the:

- Explanation of Umalusi's external moderation process with regard to the quality and standard of national examination papers;
- Discussion of issues emanating from previous moderation of examination papers and focus on the moderation of the 2009 examination papers;
- Establishment of mutual consensus on the format, content, and cognitive demands of the examination papers; and
- Finalisation of the assessment framework / grid and memorandum for each paper.

After the first meeting on 24 May 2009 at the DHET, the plan was changed to an *off-site moderation model*. This decision was intended to assist the process but resulted in delays and the necessity of contingency plans that were not ideal.

Furthermore, time became so critical that, instead of Umalusi's moderators finally signing off papers to ensure that all recommendations had been effected, the DHET Management took responsibility for the signing off of the NCV November 2009 question papers.

5. FINDINGS

The findings of the moderation of the sample of question papers by Umalusi moderators are presented both statistically and in expanded notation.

In 2009, 84 March Supplementary papers and 103 November papers were moderated. Statistics indicated the following information about the approval status of question papers after **the first Umalusi moderation**:

- Overall, between the March and November 2009 examinations there was a drop of 5% of papers approved on first moderation.
- Further, between March and November 2009 there was an increase of 4% of those rejected on first moderation and an increase of 6% in those requiring resubmission for a subsequent moderation.
- During 2009 the percentage of level 2 papers approved on first moderation was 7% higher than those of level 3.
- In the same year the percentage of level 3 papers approved on first moderation was 9% higher than level 4.

From the above the following trends are evident:

- Overall the skills involved in the setting of fair, valid, and reliable examinations for national assessment purposes still need to be refined and improved.
- The statistics might be interpreted to mean that the experience of examiners in setting level 2 papers assisted in achieving a higher percentage of approvals on the first moderation this year. However, this was countered by a greater percentage of papers at level 2 that were rejected at first moderation, so the problem of setting papers to the required standard continues to exist.
- Level 4 was introduced for the first time in November 2009; the examiners setting these papers therefore did not have the benefit of benchmarking the new papers against previously set papers. Even taking this into account, the statistics still point to problems in the examination setting process.

However, it is recognised that many factors influence the interpretation of statistics. While certain key factors will be clarified later under 'areas of good practice' and 'areas for improvement', a summary of findings is captured below.

Table 2: Summary of findings

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Technical aspects	<p>There was an improvement in the technical quality of question papers and most were generally compliant in respect of adherence to the format requirements.</p> <p>Aspects of non-compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The numbering and marks were not always clear or correctly indicated; • The mark allocation on papers and memoranda differed in some cases; • The quality of illustrations, graphs and tables was sometimes not appropriate and print ready; and • A greater variety of questioning techniques could have been used.
Internal moderation	<p>Internal moderation of question papers was evident but the following must be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of the internal moderation process was contested in the majority of the papers that were externally moderated; • Papers were received without the full history of drafts and internal moderators' comments; • Many question papers were received without an analysis grid; and • Where examiners and moderators were able to meet (as in the on-site moderation model), the moderation exercise was more efficient both in respect of quality assurance procedures and use of time.
Content coverage	<p>The prescribed Learning Outcomes were covered and questions were within the broad scope but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, there was insufficient allowance for answer creativity and challenge.
Cognitive skills	<p>Content and skills were adequately covered, however, there was evidence of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial deviations from guidelines in terms of weighting and distribution in some subjects; • Insufficient allowance for creativity and challenge; • Too little engagement with the range of questioning techniques to assess higher cognitive thinking skills; and • An imbalance of the spread of questions that would challenge and require learners to see casual relationships, to interpret, to show an ability to think, to argue, and to reason.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Marking memorandum	Generally the marking memoranda covered most answers but they were limited in scope. However despite the memoranda being mostly well presented, there were too many mistakes (of varying natures) to make them reliable and useful tools to ensure parity in the standard and accuracy of marking.
Language and bias	The language of most question papers was pitched at the right level. Gender, race, and cultural bias were not evident in the sampled question papers.
Adherence to policies / guideline documents	Most question papers complied in terms of the current policy and guideline documents. Where this was not the case it has been noted under improvements.
Predictability	Verbatim repetition of questions was not evident, although some questioning techniques for topics could be predicted.
Overall impression of question papers	The challenge for examiners to improve standards generally remains. This is supported by the statistics given at the beginning of this section. It is noted by way of summary that only: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28% of the moderated question papers were approved at first external moderation; and • 45% were conditionally approved with no requirement for a resubmission at the first moderation.
External moderation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeframes did not allow for the final signing off of the print-ready papers by the external moderators, hence the DHET Management contingency plan.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Technical presentation

- Most L2, L3 and L4 papers moderated adhered to the presentation requirements.
- Instructions to candidates were generally unambiguous and the papers were candidate friendly.
- Overall, the presentation was acceptable in all papers apart from a few instances where the clarity of graphs and illustrations could have been improved.
- Most papers were allocated the correct duration.

Internal moderation

Most question papers showed some evidence of internal moderation; however, of the information packs that accompanied the November 2009 question papers, only 32% included internal moderators' reports and assessment frameworks.

Umalusi believes that the history of internal moderation and the tools used assist in guiding and establishing the acceptability of the question paper. Hence these should always be presented,

especially in moderation models that do not provide for meetings of the examiners and moderators.

Content coverage

Most of the question papers sufficiently covered content as prescribed by the Subject and Assessment Guidelines.

Generally, as evident in 88% of moderated papers, there was an acceptable relationship between mark allocation, level of difficulty, and time allocation.

Cognitive demand

Some improvements in the cognitive demands of the 2009 November papers were noted, with 81% of the papers judged as fully / mostly compliant with the requirements in this category.

Question papers showed a visible improvement in the distribution of cognitive levels – the higher-level questions included in some of the papers were challenging, and many of the application questions required a mastery of the necessary skills. The examiners also made appropriate references to the latest developments in the subject fields.

The trend to include different forms of cognitively stimulating questions and questions that reflect some of the latest technological developments, which may provide interesting and creative responses, is commendable and should continue to be fostered actively.

The growing tendency to allow for cognitive reasoning and the ability to recognise and solve problems within a familiar, well-defined context is also to be promoted as good practice.

Language and bias

In most of the examination papers the language used was clear, fair, and pitched at an appropriate level.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Meetings between examiners, moderators and other persons involved in the setting process

The experience of the 2009 moderation exercise has led Umalusi and its external moderators to suggest that meetings where the major role players such as examiners and moderators are present, facilitate a more efficient and less time-consuming moderation process. This was demonstrated by the fact that papers moderated on-site at the DHET were signed off expeditiously, whereas papers moderated off-site in some cases required up to four moderations.

Technical aspects

Inconsistency of numbering and marks was evident in many papers and in 23 % of the November 2009 papers that were moderated the mark allocation on the papers and memoranda differed.

Overall the graphs were acceptable but some could have been enhanced for greater clarity. Some pictures also needed enlargement.

Editing and final proofreading could have been done more rigorously:

- There were still too many unnecessary language / typing errors, despite the decision by the

DHET to hold back the papers until they were print ready.

- The number of question papers in certain subjects, for example: Introduction to Systems Development, Principles of Computer Programming, and Computer Programming, was increased from one to two. This belated curriculum decision resulted in Paper 1 being the theory paper and Paper 2, the practical paper, which was in addition to the ISAT. This principle was not applied consistently across subjects and the motivation for the change was not clear.

Internal moderation of question papers

Umalusi's external moderators found that where the full setting history of the papers, with all the drafts and internal moderators' comments, grid / assessment framework, was not supplied, this complicated moderation judgements.

It is of the utmost importance that the full history of the question paper is presented to external moderators to show the development progression of the question paper.

The absence of these documents means that the depth of the interrogation of the suitability of the question paper for a subject at a given level is not reflected. Consequently, the external moderators lost valuable time in trying to determine whether the weighting and spread of the contents, the level of cognitive demand, and the allocation of marks were appropriate.

Of particular concern was the absence of assessment frameworks / grids, which occurred in 14% of the November 2009 papers that were moderated.

The quality of the internal moderation, in many cases, requires attention:

- The poorest internal moderation was on NCV level 3 – where the internal moderation was rated as inappropriate in 40% of the November 2009 papers.
- Furthermore, in 22% of the November 2009 papers, the external moderators identified that the internal moderators' recommendations had not been effected.

It must be concluded that, in general, the standard of the internal moderation and the implementation of moderator recommendations was neither at the recommended level nor reliable and needs to be improved.

Content coverage

A Taxonomy and assessment framework should be used to guide examiners and demonstrate to moderators that a balanced paper has been designed in terms of the content and cognitive demands of the subject. External moderators found where there was an imbalance of cognitive demand in question papers, assessment grids were mostly not supplied:

- Problems with regard to content coverage and cognitive challenge were encountered in both Physical Science papers on all levels;
- The compliance level was judged as limited in Mathematical Literacy L4, where the strengthening of progression was advised.

Since it is strategically important to have a plan to benchmark the setting and moderation of assessment, the problem involving ineffective or lack of assessment grids needs to be addressed. Question papers must demonstrate concretely that the content has been covered and assessed at the appropriate level.

Cognitive demand

There are still too many questions requiring only knowledge recall-type answers. This problem would be solved if examiners adhered to the recommendations in the relevant Assessment Guidelines and demonstrated that they had complied by drawing up an assessment framework. It has already been noted that many papers were sent for external moderation without such frameworks.

External moderators reported that some examiners demonstrated a lack of initiative and creativity with regard to taking new approaches to questioning that could assess higher cognitive thinking. Case studies could be utilised here.

The percentage of questions that challenged and required learners to see casual relationships, to interpret, to show ability to think, and to argue a point of view could be improved in many papers.

Although there were some examples where the concepts assessed were representative of the latest developments in the teaching of the knowledge field, this remains an area for improvement. The relevance of the qualification can certainly be enhanced by using case examples and by introducing application concepts that relate to more recent developments in the field of study and industry.

While it was difficult to benchmark NCV L4 papers since this was the first year that this level was assessed, exemplars and assessment grids could have assisted examiners in setting papers at the correct level:

- It was occasionally noted that the standard of the L4 examination was not sufficiently higher than the L3 examination;
- The cognitive demand was judged to be generally inadequate in 12% of the L4 November question papers.

Marking memoranda

In most of the question papers and memoranda that were externally moderated, the memoranda did not indicate which Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards were being assessed and 16% of the November 2009 memoranda were evaluated as being limited in terms of facilitating marking. This should not become a trend as it could have serious implications for the reliability of the marking process and the validity of the assessment exercise.

There were inconsistencies, inaccuracies, and incorrect answers in some of the memoranda that were not addressed during the internal moderation process.

34% of the November 2009 memoranda were judged as not accurate.

The reports indicated that there were many errors in the marking memoranda. Some examples are as follows:

- There were mark allocations on some memoranda that did not correspond with the question papers;
- There were instances where questions and answers did not correlate;
- There were too many marks allocated to some questions;
- There were some queries as to the factual accuracy of some of the recommended answers;
- There were a number of questions which lacked mark distributions within the questions;

- The numbering on the memoranda often did not correspond with the numbering on the question papers; and
- The mark allocation on the memoranda was also sometimes not clearly indicated.

Any one of the above errors in a memorandum would affect the accuracy of the marking, and as such these errors are serious.

Some allowance was made for alternative responses / answers but there is room for improvement especially in subjects that were intrinsically creative.

Memoranda generally provided knowledge-type answers instead of making provision for the application of skills and values.

Marking would be made easier if the marks awarded for each question and each sub-question, were allocated according to the complexity of the knowledge being assessed and the cognitive level involved.

Memoranda are tools intended to cover a wide range of possible answers for markers to ensure that the marking is fair, unambiguous, and valid. The intrinsic value of memoranda should be carefully considered and recognised when papers are being set.

Adherence to policies and guidelines

The importance of adhering to the requirements of policy is demonstrated by the fact that papers found to be limited in this regard, were largely rejected or required to be resubmitted during the first moderation of the November 2009 papers.

A deviation of one kind or another from policy guidelines occurred in 17% of the subjects moderated by Umalusi. This is sometimes as a result of a lack of time to implement policy changes and as such it is important that the DHET should communicate examination and curriculum changes timeously in order to allow the colleges, examiners, and moderators to implement the changes efficiently.

Predictability and repetition

The external moderators noted that some papers were considered to be on the incorrect level and/or had questions that had been only slightly remodelled from lower levels:

- There was concern around the L2 November 2009 Economic Environment paper regarding the measure of innovation / difference from the 2008 paper. Closer investigation revealed that this was easily corrected but examination setters must be cautioned about replicating and remodelling questions from previous examination papers.
- A general lack of innovation was noted in at least eight papers in the November 2009 moderation sample.

Timeframes

The timeframes regarding the setting and moderation of question papers remain an issue. There were cases where question papers could not be properly externally moderated because papers were either set too late or resubmissions were not sent out timeously. Some question papers were sent to external moderators with such tight timeframes that they had to finalise papers under extreme pressure.

The late submission of question papers for external moderation seriously undermines the effectiveness of the moderation process. The external moderators must be allowed enough time for an initial rigorous interrogation of the paper and to ensure that the recommended changes are implemented. These are recurring problems that need to be resolved.

Planning around the setting and moderation of question papers needs to be strengthened. Timeframes must be set and adhered to; this will eliminate problems where the setting and moderation is done under pressure. It is critical that the November and Supplementary question papers be sent out for external moderation simultaneously in order to ensure comparable standards.

8. CONCLUSION

The reports noted that most examination question papers succeeded in assessing the outcomes, aims, and objectives of the Subject and Assessment Guidelines in accordance with policy documents. However, the challenge to examiners to make the papers more interesting and pertinent remains.

Although the standard of the question papers was generally satisfactory, the cognitive challenge of some question papers could be raised. More should be done to allow candidates to demonstrate application of knowledge and to challenge their intellect. There was a general lack of innovative creativity in the setting of questions that should be addressed.

The suggestions to include relevant case studies indicate that there is a need to align the focus of the assessment to make it more relevant to the post-qualification trajectory into the world of work.

It is the responsibility of the Assessment Body to ensure that there is rigorous internal moderation of all papers before they are submitted for external moderation. The poor quality or absence of evidence of internal moderation of some question papers is of serious concern as it has a general negative impact on the standard of the assessment.

The absence of meetings between examiners and moderators, created by the off-site moderation model, and the late submission of question papers for external moderation unavoidably led to the compromising of the external moderators' role in ensuring the quality and standard of the examinations.

It is critical that the November and Supplementary question papers are sent out simultaneously in order to ensure comparable standards.

The final signing off, including a declaration that all recommended changes have been effected before question papers are printed, is an essential non-negotiable step in the quality assurance

process and sufficient time must be allowed for this to occur. This will ensure that many of the issues raised in this report are addressed.

In the main it was noted that where compliance to policy requirements was high, the examination papers were of a satisfactory standard, and the setting and moderation processes were efficient.

Chapter 2

Moderation of Integrated Summative Assessment Tasks (ISATs)

1. INTRODUCTION

An Integrated Summative Assessment Task (ISAT) is a practical assessment task that is a compulsory component of the external summative assessment in the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) at all three levels. The ISAT draws on the skills acquired through the practice of cumulative learning throughout the year. The tasks apply to all vocational subjects and are conducted according to the requirements specified in the Subject Assessment Guidelines.

Two types of ISATs are used:

- Programme ISATs that integrate a substantial amount of the practical work of the three compulsory vocational subjects of a specific programme; and
- Subject-specific ISATs for the optional vocational subjects.

ISATs are used for a period of three years. However, where and if revision is needed new ISAT papers are set and subjected to a moderation process. In certain cases curriculum changes have necessitated the setting of new ISATs.

Tasks are either completed in phases throughout the year or as once-off tasks. The ISATs contribute 30% of the external summative assessment mark.

The ISATs are subjected to moderation processes by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and Umalusi. Umalusi has been involved in the moderation of the ISATs and the conduct thereof since the introduction of the NCV in 2007. The moderation of these tasks as well as the conduct thereof remains critical to ensure that these tasks are fair, valid, reliable, and practicable.

The main objective of the moderation of the ISATs and the conduct thereof is to:

- Ascertain the appropriateness and standard of the practical assessment tasks;
- Confirm that a student has demonstrated the required skills and competence as well as an understanding of the necessary underpinning knowledge;
- Ensure that evidence of successful performance is collected and documented effectively;
- Assure quality by verifying that practical assessment submits to the principles of being fair, valid, reliable, and practicable;
- Ensure that assessment across different sites of delivery is consistent and that standards are maintained; and
- Ensure that policies and procedures are followed.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- Provide an indication of the number of ISATs moderated;
- Provide an overview of the crucial findings relating to the quality and standard of ISATs and the conduct thereof at various sites;

- Highlight areas of good practice; as well as
- Highlight areas for improvement and provide recommendations that will enhance the quality of the ISATs.

3. SCOPE

This report covers the findings relating to the programme and subject-specific ISATs for the NCV levels 2, 3, and 4 as externally moderated by Umalusi.

The tables that follow provide more specific information on the scope of ISATs that were moderated and monitored in 2009.

Table 3 provides a list of the programme and subject ISATs that were covered in the moderation of the tasks at each level.

Table 3: List of ISATs moderated

NCV L4		
Programme ISATs		Subject-specific ISATs
1	Civil Engineering and Building Construction	Applied Accounting
2	Electrical Infrastructure Construction	Automotive Repair and Maintenance
3	Finance, Economics, and Accounting	Civil and Construction Technology
4	Hospitality	Electrical Systems and Construction
5	Information Technology and Computer Science	Engineering Fabrication – Boiler Making
6	Office Administration	Fitting and Turning
7	Primary Agriculture	Hospitality Services
8		Office Data Processing
9		Physical Science
10		Project Management
NCV L3		
Programme ISATs		Subject-specific ISATs
1	Civil Engineering and Building Construction	Applied Accounting
2	Electrical Infrastructure Construction	Automotive Repair and Maintenance
3	Engineering and Related Design	Construction Carpentry and Roof Work
4	Finance, Economics, and Accounting	Construction Plumbing
5	Hospitality	Engineering Fabrication – Sheet Metal Work
6	Information Technology and Computer Science	Engineering Practice and Maintenance
7	Marketing	Electrical Systems and Construction
8	Office Administration	Hospitality Services
9	Primary Agriculture	Office Data Processing
10		Physical Science

NCV L2		
Programme ISATs		Subject-specific ISATs
1	Civil Engineering and Building Construction	Applied Accounting
2	Electrical Infrastructure Construction	Automotive Repair and Maintenance
3	Engineering and Related Design	Construction Carpentry and Roof Work
4	Finance, Economics, and Accounting	Construction Plumbing
5	Hospitality	Electrical Systems and Construction
6	Office Administration	Engineering Fabrication
7	Primary Agriculture	Entrepreneurship
8		Fitting and Turning
9		Hospitality Services
10		Office Data Processing
11		Tourism Operations
12		Physical Science

Table 4 and 5 provides a list of the programme and subject ISATs the conduct of which was monitored by Umalusi as well as the sites visited for moderation purposes.

Table 4: Programme ISATs

No.	PROGRAMME	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
1	Civil Engineering and Building Construction	4	Gauteng	Tshwane South	Atteridgeville *
				Coastal KZN	Swinton Road
2	Electrical Infrastructure Construction	4	Gauteng	South West	Molapo
				Gauteng	Pretoria West *
3	Finance, Economics, and Accounting	3	Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth	Russel Road
			Gauteng	Ekurhuleni West	Usizo
4	Marketing	2, 3	Limpopo	Capricorn	Senwabarwana
5	Office Administration	2,3,4	Mpumalanga	Nkangala	Witbank
		2, 3			CN Mahlangu
		2	North West	Orbit	Brits
			Gauteng	Johannesburg	Parktown
6	Hospitality	2,3,4	Gauteng	Tshwane South	Centurion
			Limpopo	Waterberg	Mokopane
7	Tourism	2,3,4	Western Cape	Boland	Stellenbosch
				Northlink	Tygerberg
8	Primary Agriculture	2,3	Eastern Cape	King Hintsa	Teko
				Lovedale	Lovedale Community

*External moderation could not be done at these sites due to ongoing industrial action

Table 5: Subject-specific ISATs

No.	PROGRAMME	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
1	Management Practice	3	Northern Cape	Rural	Kathu
					Kuruman
2	Project Management	3	Northern Cape	Rural	Kuruman
3	Introduction to Information Systems	3	KwaZulu-Natal	Esayidi	Port Shepstone
				Coastal	Durban
4	Engineering Fabrication – Boiler making	2,3	Mpumalanga	Nkangala	Witbank
			North West	Orbit	Rustenburg
5	Construction Plumbing	2,3	Mpumalanga	Gert Sibande	Standerton
		2, 3	Free State	Maluti	Itemoheleng
6	Food Preparation	2,3,4	Limpopo	Waterberg	Mokopane
			Gauteng	Tshwane South	Centurion
7	Office Data Processing	2	Gauteng	Jeppe	Jeppe#
8	Fitting and Turning	2,3,4	Western Cape	False Bay	Westlake
				Northlink	Wingfield
9	Construction Carpentry and Roof Work	3	KwaZulu-Natal	Coastal KZN	Umlazi
					Swinton Road
10	Civil and Construction Technology	3	KwaZulu-Natal	Coastal KZN	Swinton Road
11	New Venture Creation	4	Free State	Motheo	Bloemfontein
12	Physical Science	2,3,4	Gauteng	Ekurhuleni East	Tlamoha
			KwaZulu-Natal	Umfolozi	Esikhawini
13	Tourism Operations	2,3,4	Gauteng	Ekurhuleni East	Springs
				Tshwane North	Pretoria
14	Advertising and Promotion	2,3	Eastern Cape	Eastcape	High Street
				Midlands	
				Fort Glamorgan	

In addition to the above-mentioned sites, Umalusi staff monitored the implementation of NCV at NTEK, a private college offering the three Engineering programmes.

4. APPROACH

The moderation of the ISATs commenced in October 2008 and was concluded by the end of March 2009 (with the exception of a few tasks).

The ISATs were moderated off-site. The external moderators evaluated the ISATs and submitted reports to Umalusi and the DHET. The DHET assumed the responsibility of effecting the recommended changes and finalising the tasks.

The conduct of the ISATs was monitored from September to October 2009. This exercise focused on the process, as well as the ISAT product. Moderators observed the candidates completing the task or moderated the completed product and evidence of the completion of the task. A sample of thirty-one (31) sites was visited across the country during the moderation of the conduct of the ISATs.

The challenges experienced with the implementation of the ISATs at level 2 and 3 during 2007 and 2008 and input provided by stakeholders resulted in the DHET implementing a team of 'critical friends' to ensure improvement of the quality and standard of the ISATs before their implementation in 2009.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 MODERATION OF ISATs

The approval status of the tasks after external moderation was as follows:

Level 2:	74% approved
Level 3:	79% approved
Level 4:	76% approved.

Due to time constraints, DHET took responsibility for the standard of the ISATs that were not approved after first moderation and ensured that they were of an acceptable standard before distribution and implementation.

The table below outlines the findings on the external moderation of ISATs.

Table 6: External moderation – findings

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Technical aspects	<p>Despite the challenges in the design and development of the ISATs there has been a marked improvement compared to past years' tests. However, the following should be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the NCV level 3 and 4, the external moderators reported that almost all of the ISATs included assessment tools / instruments, whereas in NCV level 2 only 74% of the tasks included assessment tools / instruments. • At least 50% of tasks in level 3 did not include clear instructions to both learners and lecturers whilst for levels 2 and 4, only 26% and 18% respectively included clear instructions. • Some tasks did not clearly stipulate the list of resources and time frames to complete the tasks. • Only 14% of the ISATs across all levels were accompanied by the history of the development of the task.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Content coverage	Moderators observed that 74% of tasks encouraged liaison with industry or the workplace. However some ISATs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not cover an adequate range of assessment standards and learning outcomes within broad scope of the subject(s). • Were also reported to be lacking in terms of equality of the weighting of the integrated subjects.
Cognitive skills	Most level 4 ISATs were reported to be of a high standard in terms of the cognitive demand of the tasks and balanced in terms of the assessment of skills, knowledge and values. 77% of the tasks were said to be representative of the latest developments in their respective field of study.
Instruments / tools for assessing learners' performance	With regard to tools to assist in assessing candidates the following were observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instruments and resources list were found to be insufficient for the outcomes to be assessed in some tasks. • Some marking guidelines and/or checklists were not provided. • There was also no correlation between the proposed scoring and difficulty level of some of the tasks.
Language and bias	The language used was simple and the subject terminology was used correctly.
Adherence to assessment policies / guideline document	75% of the ISATs were in line with policies and guidelines.
Overall impression of the task	There was a remarkable improvement in the standard of the ISATs. Most were approved on first moderation.

The implementation of the 'critical friends' process by the DHET led to the ISATs being much more uniform in terms of the format of the tasks and the timeous distribution of good quality ISATs to the colleges.

5.2 MODERATION OF THE CONDUCT OF ISATs

The table below provides a broad overview of the findings with regard to the conduct of the ISATs.

Table 7: Moderation of conduct – findings

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Planning for conduct of tasks	15 of the 31 sites monitored had schedules that were realistic and achievable. It was reported by Umalusi moderators that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tasks were received at the campuses between February and July 2009. The time lapse between the distribution and the actual receipt of tasks complicated planning. Some lecturers decided on an ad hoc basis when and how to conduct the ISAT;

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The availability of equipment and consumables for the execution of the ISATs is still of concern. At only 20 of the sites visited (approximately 65 %) was there enough equipment and consumables for the execution of the tasks; It was also observed that some of the new equipment was not yet in use.
Conduct of ISAT	<p>The external moderation of the conduct of ISATs took place during October 2009. However at four sites the ISAT was not yet implemented and at one it had not been assessed. (Industrial action appears to have caused this problem).</p> <p>In most cases tasks were conducted in simulated or structured environments. The following was noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There had been adjustments to some of the tasks at site level; Vast differences were observed in terms of available resources; At a private college visited, practical tasks conducted throughout the year were used to compile the "ISAT" marks.
Internal moderation	At 42% of the sites visited there was evidence of internal moderation at campus level.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 QUALITY OF ISATs

In general the quality of the ISATs has improved markedly. The role that the critical friends played in this regard was beneficial. (See areas for improvement).

Most ISATs were found to be in line with policies and guidelines.

It was observed that a substantial number of the ISATs were representative of the latest developments in their respective fields of study. It was also observed that some of the tasks encouraged liaison with business and industry.

6.2 CONDUCT OF ISATs

Team-work, well-designed and appropriately equipped laboratories, simulation environments, and workshops at some sites contributed to the effective and successful implementation of the ISATs.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

There seems to be inconsistency in terms of when ISATs were received by colleges. For instance, a college in Gauteng indicated receipt in June 2009 whereas another college reported that they received the ISAT for the same subject and level in March 2009.

7.1 QUALITY OF ISATs

Standard of ISATs

The moderated sample revealed the following challenges / non compliance with regard to standards and subject coverage:

- It would seem that it was more difficult to integrate the content of cross-programme ISATs in certain fields than others. For example, the Finance, Economics and Accounting level 3 ISAT consisted of three distinct tasks. The weighting and spread of assessment outcomes of the core subjects were also not distributed equally and the learning outcomes were not appropriately linked;
- Some ISATs were deemed to be unrealistic and too expensive to implement, for example, Project Management level 4;
- The Office Administration level 2 and 3 and Entrepreneurship level 2 ISATs were lacking and needed revision and improvement;
- The weighting and spread of assessment outcomes of the core subjects was not correct at level 2: Hospitality, Hospitality Services, Office Administration and Office Data Processing; in level 4: Civil Engineering and Building Construction and Information Technology and Computer Science;
- The range of assessment standards and learning outcomes within the ISATs for Civil Engineering and Building Construction and Information Technology was inadequate.

Aspects that were found to be lacking during the external moderation process (as mentioned above and below) were addressed in the 'critical friends' process before the tasks were distributed to colleges for implementation. These included amongst others the following:

- ISATs that needed to be improved in terms of the format and layout to make them user-friendly;
- Tasks without clear instructions to lecturers and learners;
- ISATs that lacked clear and unambiguous instructions to lecturers on the implementation and assessment of the task;
- ISATs where the assessment checklist and task duration for sub-tasks were not included; and
- Tasks where the quality of illustrations and drawings were not appropriate and ready for print.

7.2 CONDUCT OF ISATs

Planning

The following observations indicate lack of effective planning and implementation:

- There were no specific schedules for Project Management at Kuruman Campus; for the conduct of the Office Administration ISAT at Nkangala FET College (Witbank and CN Mahlangu Campuses); for Electrical Infrastructure Construction ISAT at the Molapo and Pretoria West Campuses;
- Adjustments to ISATs at site level were a concern. At Mokopane Campus slight changes were made to the Hospitality level 2 ISAT and at Witbank Campus, a deviation from the Engineering Fabrication task was observed. At the private college visited, practical tasks conducted throughout the year were used to compile the "ISAT" marks.

Infrastructure and resources

It was observed that some colleges offer programmes without the necessary infrastructure.

Examples are:

- Construction Plumbing which is offered at Standerton Campus without an appropriately equipped workshop. The college was however innovative and used the Electrical workshop to successfully conduct the Plumbing ISAT;
- Witbank Campus (Engineering Fabrication) did not have workshops that could accommodate enrolments;
- At Bloemfontein Campus there was limited access to internet facilities which were necessary to complete the New Venture Creation ISAT;
- At Parktown Campus, the challenge is that the computer laboratories have to be shared by too many learners;
- At Kuruman Campus the Project Management ISAT was completed in an ordinary classroom;
- The limited resources available at e.g. Molapo and Pretoria West Campuses could be used more effectively if proper planning is done;
- At Fort Glamorgan Correctional Services, the ISAT for Advertising and Promotion was not conducted in a suitably resourced environment (no simulation room and the dining hall was used as a classroom and for the conduct of the ISAT).

Some ISATs (e.g. Marketing) required learners to visit workplaces and this seemed to be challenging and not always viable.

Capacity remains a challenge at some colleges due to the high rate of staff turnover. As a result, some lecturers have limited knowledge and skills with regard to the conduct of the practical tasks. For example, the lecturers responsible for the programme ISAT of Electrical Infrastructure Construction level 4 (Molapo Campus), reported that they were not familiar with the software programme, which is an integral part of the ISAT.

Timeframes

The external moderation of the conduct of ISATs took place during October 2009. Plans received from colleges had indicated that most ISATs would have been completed by then. During the site visits, it was observed that some ISATs were partially completed or not done at all. The following were stated as reasons:

- Tedious procurement processes - lecturers seemed not to be aware whether the consumables were ordered or not;
- Industrial action at some colleges in Gauteng delayed implementation;
- High rate of learner absenteeism delayed ISATs.

Quality and standard of scoring

There was inconsistency with regard to the scoring for tasks. The following practices must be eradicated:

- Deviating from or amending the ISAT to suit the campus;
- Inconsistency in the conduct of the tasks as some sites completed only sections of the ISAT while others completed all the sections;
- The apparent unawareness of some of the private colleges e.g. NTEK as to the existence of standardised ISATs;

- The scoring and awarding of marks was in some cases according to the marking guidelines and rubrics provided but in other instances these were not the case;
- Failure to complete reports for each student, group reports or any reports.
- The non compliance with the National Policy on the Conduct, Administration and Management of the Assessment of the National Certificate Vocational.

Internal moderation

Effective training of moderators needs to be implemented in order to ensure confidence in the conduct and outcomes of the ISATs. It was noted that the internal moderation of the conduct of ISATs done at campus level was either lacking or not of an appropriate standard.

8. CONCLUSION

Despite concerns about the conduct of ISATs and deviations from the original set tasks in both public and private colleges, there has been considerable improvement of ISATs.

Commendable efforts have been made to improve the format and quality of tasks. The implementation of the concept of 'critical friends' by DHET led to substantial progress in the improvement of quality and realistic tasks that could be implemented within available time and budget.

This report demonstrates that the remaining challenges with ISATs, are mainly with conduct. Efficient systems in terms of timeframes, monitoring and greater adherence by campuses to the protocol of assessment, will improve the implementation and use of ISATs as an effective measure of the practical examination component of the NCV programmes.

Chapter 3

Moderation of Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) is assessment conducted at the site of learning, by the college, the outcomes of which count towards the achievement of the National Certificate Vocational (NCV). The ICASS evidence is contained in a portfolio of evidence according to the requirements as specified in the Subject Assessment Guidelines of the NCV.

An ICASS mark is a compulsory component of the final promotion mark for all learners registered for the NCV. The ICASS mark has a weighting of 25% for the fundamental subjects and 50% for the vocational components.

As the internal assessment of the NCV qualification is seen as equally important as the external assessment in terms of contribution to the final mark, Umalusi quality assures internal assessment through the application of a rigorous moderation and verification process.

Umalusi also monitors the systems in place for internal assessment, as internal assessment is mostly set, marked, and graded at site level.

The main objective of the moderation of the internal assessment is to:

- Ascertain the appropriateness and standard of the assessment tasks;
- Assure that sufficient tasks of different types have been administered;
- Ensure that evidence is collected and documented effectively;
- Ensure that assessment across different sites of delivery is consistent and that standards are maintained; and
- Assure that the quality assurance of the internal assessment component of the NCV is effectively managed.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- Outline the approach used for the 2009 moderation of internal assessment;
- Highlight the findings of the moderation exercise with a particular focus on areas of good practice; and
- Highlight areas needing improvement and to provide a few recommendations based on the findings.

The evaluation is based on the reports submitted to Umalusi by its external moderators from visits to selected sites, interviews and observations conducted, and scrutiny of documentary evidence.

3. SCOPE

Umalusi monitored the implementation of internal assessment for a sample of 22 NCV levels 2, 3, and 4 subjects across the colleges in all nine provinces during the month of August 2009.

The sites and subjects included in the August 2009 visits are indicated in the table below.

Table 8: Sites and subjects included in the August 2009 ICASS monitoring visits

No.	PROGRAMME	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
1	Afrikaans 1st Additional Language	4	Northern Cape	Rural Public	Upington
			Western Cape	Boland	Paarl
2	Applied Engineering Technology	4	Gauteng	Tshwane North	Soshanguve
3	Client Services and Human Relations	4	Gauteng	Tshwane North	Pretoria
			Western Cape	Falsebay	Muizenberg
4	Drawings, Setting Out, Quantities and Costing	4	Mpumalanga	Gert Sibande	Standerton
5	Economic Environment	4	Eastern Cape	Buffalo City	East London
6	Electrical Principles and Practice	4	Western Cape	College of Cape Town	Pinelands
7	Engineering Fabrication	2	Mpumalanga	Nkangala	Mpondozankomo
8	English 1st Additional Language	3	North West	Orbit	Brits
9	Farm Planning and Mechanisation	4	Limpopo	Vhembe	Mashamba
10	Fitting and Turning	3	Mpumalanga	Gert Sibande	Evander
			Gauteng	Sedibeng	Vereeniging
11	Life Orientation	4	North West	Orbit	Rustenburg
			Kwa-Zulu Natal	Coastal KZN	Durban
12	Management Practice	2	Free State	Motheo	Botshabelo
					Thaba N'chu
13	Mathematical Literacy	3	Northern Cape	Urban Public	City Campus
					Moremogolo
14	Mathematics	4	Eastern Cape	Port Elizabeth	Russel Road
			Limpopo	Mopani South East	Sir Val Duncan
15	Office Data Processing	3	Free State	Maluti	Bonamelo
					Bethlehem
16	Office Practice	4	North West	Vuselela	Klerksdorp
			Kwa-Zulu Natal	Coastal KZN	Umbumbulu
17	Physical Science	3	Limpopo	Vhembe	Mavhoi
				Waterberg	Information Technology Centre
18	Plumbing	2	Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	Mapulaneng

No.	PROGRAMME	LEVEL	PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
19	Principles of Computer Programming	3	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Elangeni	Kwa Mashu
				Thekwini	LC Johnson
20	Project Management	3	Western Cape	College of Cape Town	Crawford
				Falsebay	Good Hope
21	Sustainable Tourism in South Africa and International Travel	4	North West	Orbit	Mankwe
			Gauteng	Central Johannesburg	Highveld
22	Tourism Operations	3	Eastern Cape	Buffalo City	East London
				Port Elizabeth	Russel Road

During October 2009 Umalusi moderated level 2, 3, and 4 portfolios (portfolios of evidence and portfolios of assessment) of a selected sample of the NCV subjects. The subjects as well as the provinces where the portfolios were moderated are indicated in the table below.

Table 9: Moderation of ICASS portfolios – October 2009

SUBJECT	PROVINCE								
	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape
Applied Engineering Technology L4			✓						✓
Client Services and Human Relations L4			✓						✓
Economic Environment L4	✓								
Engineering Fabrication L2			✓			✓			
English 1 st Additional Language L3						✓			
English 1 st Additional Language L4			✓				✓		
Farm Planning and Mechanization L4				✓	✓				
Fitting and Turning L3			✓			✓			
Life Orientation L4				✓					✓
Management Practice L2		✓							
Marketing L3			✓		✓				
Marketing L4			✓		✓				
Mathematical Literacy L2			✓					✓	
Mathematical Literacy L4			✓						
Mathematics L4				✓	✓				
Office Data Processing L3									✓
Office Practice L4				✓			✓		
Physical Science L2			✓		✓				
Physical Science L3			✓						
Plumbing L2						✓			
Plumbing L3			✓			✓			
Principles of Computer Programming L3				✓					✓
Project Management L3									✓

SUBJECT	PROVINCE								
	Eastern Cape	Free State	Gauteng	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Limpopo	Mpumalanga	North West	Northern Cape	Western Cape
Sustainable Tourism L3			✓				✓		
Sustainable Tourism L4			✓				✓		
Tourism Operations L3	✓								
TOTALS	2	1	14	5	5	5	4	1	6

4. APPROACH

On-site monitoring of the state of internal assessment was conducted during August 2009 and central moderation of portfolios was conducted at provincial level during October 2009. For the moderation of portfolios during October 2009, a sample of sites was requested to submit a predetermined number of portfolios of evidence accompanied by the relevant portfolios of assessment.

5. FINDINGS

The table below provides a brief overview of the findings in terms of the implementation of internal assessment during August 2009.

Table 10: Findings on the implementation of internal assessment

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Resources	
Physical resources	<p>Despite the funds allocated for the recapitalisation of colleges, there were sites still lacking resources to successfully offer the NCV:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% of the sites visited had an environment in which learners could gain practical experience within the subject but only 76% of these rooms had the necessary facilities and equipment to perform practical tasks as contained in the outcomes of the subject. • Only 65% of the sites visited had sufficient facilities for the number of learners enrolled. • Only approximately 60% of the workshops / laboratories complied with Occupational Health and Safety standards. • Around 84% of the sites had media centres with 70% having good control systems. 81% of these sites had computers and printers for the learners to complete assignments, however only 59% had access to the Internet and subject-related reference books, magazines, etc.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Human resources	Around 70% of the lecturers were qualified in terms of their subjects, Outcomes Based Education (OBE), assessment of practical work, and the integration of assessment within the programme. Only 57% of the lecturers had workplace exposure.
Learning and training material	Most of the educators were satisfied with the textbooks. They also use additional support material. It was noted that : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54% of the sites received textbooks / teaching material by the commencement of classes in 2009. While 62% of the sites visited had a budget for consumables used for practical work, the tedious procurement procedures delayed the timeous acquisition of consumables.
Teaching and learning	The variable dates of commencement of classes within and across colleges tended to impact on the implementation of courses. It was noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% of the sites indicated that they experienced challenges with the implementation of the NCV. Some sites had innovative measures in place to manage inhibiting factors.
Assessment	
Assessment policy	All the colleges visited had assessment policies. It was noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date of policies used was not consistent. • 89% of the sites used the Subject and Assessment Guidelines and 92% had monitoring and moderation of assessment policies. • 65% made provision for learners with barriers.
Assessment tasks	The subject committees and other similar structures ensured the development of different types of tasks and consistency across the campuses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% of the sites had internal systems to ensure that tasks were of an acceptable standard.
Portfolios	95% of portfolios were well organised, were varied in the level of difficulty and a variety of assessment methods were used. The design and use of rubrics / scorecards of good quality seemed to be a challenging task.
Administration of internal assessment	It was noted that 89% of the assessments were recorded effectively. However : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 38% of subjects moderated showed evidence of the review of assessment tasks. • Re-assessment was inconsistently applied.
Quality assurance of assessment	Internal moderation of the assessment tasks was evident in approximately 70% of the sites. However the feedback systems were not very effective.
Moderation of internal assessment tasks	82% of the tasks were moderated and 76% of the marking guidelines were moderated.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Moderation of conduct of internal assessment	There was satisfactory evidence that moderation of completed tasks was done. Scripts covering the full range of performance of learners were included in the sample.
Moderation of portfolios	Moderation of portfolios was conducted in 76% of sampled sites, but this process was generally an audit (to check compliance) rather than moderation of the standard of internal assessment.
Irregularity register	Only approximately 8% of the sites maintained irregularity registers.

The sites and subjects listed below could not be monitored / moderated due to industrial action at colleges.

Table 11: List of sites and subjects not monitored or moderated

PROVINCE	SITE	SUBJECT
Gauteng	Atteridgeville	Civil Engineering and Building Construction
	Atteridgeville	Construction Plumbing
	Odi	English 1st Additional Language
	Vereeniging	Fitting and Turning
	Highveld	Sustainable Tourism

The table below provides a broad overview of the findings on the moderation of portfolios during October 2009.

Table12: Findings on the moderation of portfolios

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Lecturer portfolios	
Content	<p>The standard of Lecturer portfolios ranged from excellent to very poor. It was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The daily / weekly / year plan was either lacking or partially completed in 42% of the portfolios. There was no indication of work progression, time allocation, and schedule of assessment. Some colleges put effort into planning and followed their year plans to the letter whilst at others this was not the case at all.
Assessment tasks	<p>Evidence indicates that most PDEs had developed and implemented common assessment tasks, and 84% of the moderated portfolios had assessment tools of an acceptable standard. However, it was noted that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The practice of reviewing the assessment tasks for improvement of learner performance still needs to be implemented in 85% of sites;

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 16% were found to have assessment tools (memoranda / rubrics, etc.) of a low standard or tools that were incomplete or non-existent; • There was inconsistency in the interpretation of weighting of instruments / tasks; • The calculation of ICASS marks differed vastly from college to college. This practice has an impact on the veracity of the final results.
Internal moderation	74% of the lecturer portfolios were internally moderated at campus level but feedback to educators was not detailed enough.
Recording and reporting	<p>The records of learner achievements were included in 87% of portfolios, but some were partially or incorrectly completed or not completed at all.</p> <p>Discrepancies were observed between marks recorded in lecturer portfolios and marks for the same tasks recorded in learner portfolios.</p>
Learner portfolios	
Structure of portfolios	Around 98% of the portfolios were well organised and presentable. Authenticity was proven in different ways e.g., some learners were required to sign an authenticity declaration form.
Assessment tasks	<p>There were significant disparities in the number and standard of assessment instruments / tasks administered at the colleges.</p> <p>Portfolios from provinces that had standardised assessment practices included the prescribed number of tasks, which were assessed according to agreed criteria.</p> <p>Qualitative feedback to learners was limited.</p>
Internal moderation	74% of the learner portfolios were found to have been moderated at campus / college level. There was some evidence of moderation at the provincial level, but none at national level.

The sample of sites and subjects for moderation was predetermined and communicated at all levels however, some sites submitted portfolios which were not requested or did not submit portfolios at all, e.g.:

- Benoni Campus submitted Mathematical Literacy L2 instead of L3.
- George Tabor Campus submitted Sustainable Tourism L3 instead of L4.
- Durban Campus submitted Principles of Computer Programming L3 instead of L4.

Lecturer and learner portfolios of certain subjects from 31 sites could not be moderated due to the non-availability of the portfolios. Reasons for the non-availability varied. There were claims of late receipt of relevant information at some sites. Some sites indicated that the subjects were no longer offered at the requested levels. Some colleges in Gauteng Province collected the portfolios before the stipulated moderation date.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Policies

There is a marked improvement in the availability and quality of relevant policies.

Portfolios

95% of the portfolios were well organised and the tasks were appropriate for the outcomes assessed. The moderators observed examples of outstanding portfolios, which included well-planned assessment schedules and good assessment tasks. Examples of good practice are Umlazi Campus (Farm Planning and Mechanisation) and Mandini Campus (Life Orientation).

The Western Cape and Mpumalanga must be commended for their consistency in ensuring effective implementation of internal assessment and reliable internal assessment results. This suggests a high level of provincial support, monitoring, and control that is useful for standardisation purposes.

Assessment

The use of subject committees, focus groups, or other similar structures to develop assessment tasks and share good practice proved to be valuable.

There was an observation that the implementation of NCV programmes was gaining impetus at some colleges and that colleges were increasingly better resourced. Substantial efforts were made in designing and implementing relevant assessment instruments. A good example is that of Life Orientation in the Western Cape where very good standardised assessment tasks are set, moderated, and placed on the website for use by the colleges. After administration and marking, marks were electronically sent to the head office.

Education and Training

New educators who joined the system for the first time without workplace experience were receiving support and guidance. For example, Crawford Campus, Western Cape, had a training schedule which ran from January to September 2009 to facilitate effective training and support to lecturers.

Some of the measures implemented at certain colleges to deal with challenges / inhibiting factors are listed below:

- Incorporating PLATO in the student support timetable;
- Conducting tuition on Saturdays;
- Providing extra classes; and
- Providing remedial support.

Learning and teaching material

A good practice observed was the retaining of textbooks so that they could be passed on to the next group of learners. This could reduce the cost of learning materials.

Internal moderation

Some colleges had good management plans for college and provincial moderation. Some examples of good moderation templates were observed.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Policies

Policies must be implemented uniformly to improve the quality of work. Control of documents and records needs to be improved to ensure that obsolete documents are not in use. Provision should be made for the review of policies to ensure that information is current, relevant, and correct. It was found that staff at different campuses of the same college interpreted policies differently. This hampered the successful implementation of the policies.

Outdated Subject Assessment Guideline documents were found in some files.
Policies must make provision for the specific needs of the NCV.

Lecturers and other stakeholders must be made aware of what the assessment and other policies entail.

Portfolios

The absence of properly designed and utilised year plans resulted in evidence of poor planning and lack of quality assurance.

Of major concern is the poor standard of some of the portfolios, as this reflects poor delivery and a definite lack of internal quality assurance. For example, Life Orientation at the Kwa-Gqikazi, Ntuzuma and Durban Campuses presented portfolios which were rated as 'very poor' – incomplete year plans and assessment plans, empty forms, etc., and content pages that did not reflect the content of the files accurately. This complicated the task of the external moderator in finding the relevant information.

There is an urgent need to standardise portfolio design and documentation.

Assessment

Educator training in respect of assessment planning and administration still appeared as an area that needs more attention. With some guidance from the national and provincial departments the following areas of concern could improve:

- Design of assessments to improve quality, creativity, and assessment demand;
- Design of policies / flowcharts to guide learners through preparation for assessments;
- Design of templates to document required information;
- Visible evidence of internal moderation; and
- Evidence of authenticity.

Some provinces had facilitated a process of setting common assessment tasks, and were able to achieve the desired results. However, there is a need to standardise instruments and tools through the establishment of item banks.

Practical assessment task marks form part of the final learner results. Some sites had not yet conducted any practical tasks by October 2009, e.g., the Kwa Thema and Brooklyn City Campuses (Physical Science). This practice compromises the credibility of the NCV results.

67% of the sites claimed to provide feedback but it was found to be limited and ineffective in addressing the learners' weaknesses.

Feedback must be fully functional and effective (in terms of feedback, reporting to next level, follow-up and meetings / communication at different levels).

Scoring and recording

The following inconsistencies could challenge the credibility of the internal assessment marks:

- A high degree of variance in the interpretation and application of tasks;
- Unauthenticated work presented in portfolios; and
- Poor internal moderation practices at all levels.

The calculation of internal assessment marks differed across sites. Of great concern is the interpretation of the weighting of tasks. The inconsistency across colleges and provinces provided too much variance in scoring and compromised the internal assessment marks' validity nationally.

In some cases marks were not recorded effectively or the marks in the lecturers' portfolios did not match those in the corresponding learners' portfolios, e.g.: Applied Engineering Technology L4 (Soshanguve); Principles of Computer Programming L3 (LC Johnson) and Economic Environment L4 (East London).

Recording instruments require attention.

The implementation of re-assessment and the practicality thereof remains an area of contention. The general feeling is that re-assessment should only be allowed where there is a valid reason as time frame constraints do not allow for re-assessment. Re-assessment should also be restricted as much as possible to prevent abuse and to prevent being unfair to learners that prepare in time.

It is important that the DHET provides clear directives regarding the calculation and recording of internal assessment marks.

Moderation

Good moderation templates were included but were not properly utilised. Some colleges had a good management plan for college and provincial moderation, which, however, was not always implemented.

In most cases where internal moderation took place at the campus and college level, it was in the form of a checklist / audit. Moderation should show evidence of follow-up on initial findings, as this is crucial for setting standards.

Feedback to learners on progress was lacking and no evidence of intervention was found although marks were very poor. Feedback to learners should be instructive and indicate what is required in order to support learning effectively.

The higher levels of moderation are usually too late to make a difference to the current set of learners, e.g., the provincial moderation at Gauteng took place at the same time as the external moderation by Umalusi. The higher levels of moderation should give more attention to the standard of the instruments and tools, and the quality of learner performance, rather than the organisation of the portfolios.

The format of moderation reports should be standardised nationally. Moderation models need some refinement as they seem to be too labour intensive and reduce teaching time.

Physical resources

A grave lack of facilities and equipment was observed at some of the sites, e.g., Mavhoi Campus, where there is no Physical Science Laboratory in which learners can gain practical experience. The Campus also did not have a media centre to support the NCV offerings. The Mankwe and Highveld Campuses had environments in which learners might gain practical experience in Sustainable Tourism, though they were not fully equipped or operational yet.

Botshabelo, Thaba N'chu (Management Practice) and Bonamelo (Office Data Processing) had a serious lack of resources for the Office Administration programme.

The needed facilities and equipment must be available so that learners can adequately engage in various practical tasks and projects as outlined in the Subject Guidelines. Available resources must be considered when decisions are taken on the number of learners to admit to a programme.

Learning and Teaching material

Some of the textbooks e.g. Physical Science L3 and Client Services and Human Relations were still outstanding by the time of the moderation visit (August 2009). The sites where this was the case had, however, with the approval of the publishers, copied sections of the textbooks to facilitate teaching and learning.

Education and training

Only 57% of lecturers had workplace experience / exposure. 86% of lecturers / assessors indicated that they receive support / assistance.

While some lecturers were suitably qualified and had workplace experience, high staff turnover at campus level has led to a shortage of qualified lecturers with relevant experience. This could become a major threat to the effective delivery of the NCV programmes, including the conduct of both the ICASS and ISATs.

The continuous training of lecturers is seen as an integral part of the successful implementation of the NCV programmes. Some lecturers still do not meet the requirements for effective vocational teaching and lecturers need training on:

- OBE facilitation;
- Assessment theory and practices;
- Moderation theory and practices; and
- In-service training to gain both practical and workplace experience through job shadowing.

Colleges should form meaningful and beneficial partnerships and linkages with Business and Industry to support staff development.

8. CONCLUSION

Many good practices were observed. These practices should be maintained and replicated. There are however critical issues that are inhibiting successful implementation and need to be addressed.

Learner performance has been rather poor. This calls for serious investigation at a national level into the causes and to generate ways of improving the situation. Some moderators reported that poor performance could be attributed possibly to the quality of learning and teaching. Questions have arisen around the competence of many lecturers to deliver the NCV curriculum: some lecturers from a NATED background may lack the experience to undertake the practical components of the NCV, while those who have come from industry may lack the theoretical knowledge required. College councils do not appear to have sufficient financial resources to recruit and retain staff with the required expertise.

The design and use of rubrics / score-cards of good quality seems to be a challenging task for many assessors who then resorted to using only the marking guidelines.

While there has been improvement in standardising assessment tasks there is room for development. Given that the internal assessment represents 50% of the total mark of the vocational subjects, it is crucial that there is some comparability in terms of acceptable standards across colleges and across provinces.

Furthermore, a major challenge remains to ensure reliability of internal assessment in a system with vast inequalities in available resources.

A good year plan would contribute towards successful implementation.

Chapter 4

Monitoring the conduct of examinations

1. INTRODUCTION

The November 2009 monitoring of the VET examinations covered the three phases of the examination: the state of readiness to administer the examinations; the conduct of the examinations; and the marking of scripts.

Monitoring of the state of readiness is essential because it provides Umalusi with an indication of whether, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Provincial Departments of Education (PDEs), as well as the sites of delivery, are ready to administer and manage the examinations. The conduct and marking phases are monitored to ensure adherence to policy and that the examinations are not compromised in any manner.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to report on:

- The state of readiness of the PDEs for the conduct of the examination in the nine provinces;
- The state of readiness of the sampled examination centres and marking centres for the conduct of the examination;
- The effectiveness and integrity of the systems in place for the appointment of chief invigilators, invigilators, marking centre managers, chief markers, marking moderators, and markers;
- The security measures in place for the safe keeping of the question papers, scripts, and examination material;
- The quality of the processes related to the administration and conduct of the examination; and
- The quality of the processes involved in the marking of scripts, and the capturing of marks.

3. SCOPE

Umalusi deployed 24 monitors (including three Umalusi staff members) to visit a pre-selected sample of examination and marking centres in all nine provinces.

3.1 MONITORING OF THE STATE OF READINESS

To establish the 'state of readiness' for the conduct of the examinations, Umalusi monitors are deployed annually to each PDE and a college in each province to discuss planning and inspect concrete evidence of the design phase. All nine PDEs were visited as well as one examination and marking centre in each province.

The Umalusi monitor visited the East Cape Training Centre in the Eastern Cape when the Province held a meeting for all the colleges involved in the NCV November examinations. This was done as part of monitoring the state of readiness for marking.

The table below indicates the provinces, colleges and campuses monitored to establish the 'state of readiness' for the 2009 VET examinations.

Table 13: Sites included in monitoring of 'state of readiness' phase

PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
Eastern Cape	Ikhala	East Cape Training Centre
Free State	Motheo	Hillside View
Gauteng	South West Gauteng	George Tabor
KwaZulu-Natal	Thekwini	Centec
Limpopo	Capricorn	Polokwane
Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	Kanyamazane
Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural	De Aar
North West	Taletso	Mafikeng
Western Cape	College of Cape Town	Crawford

3.2 MONITORING OF THE WRITING PHASE

The table below provides a list of the sites included in Umalusi's monitoring of the writing phase.

Table 14: Sites included in the monitoring of the writing phase

PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
Eastern Cape (7 sites)	Port Elizabeth	Russell Road
	Correctional Services	St Albans Prison
	East Cape Midlands	High Street
		Park
	Ingwe	Mount Fletcher
	Correctional Services	Wellington Prison
King Sabata Dalindyebo	Ngcobo	
Free State (4 sites)	Maluti	Bethlehem
		Harrismith
	Goldfields	Welkom
Flavius Mareka	Kroonstad	
Gauteng (8 sites)	Ekurhuleni East	Springs
	Ekurhuleni West	Germiston
	Correctional Services	Leeuwkop Correctional Services (4 venues)
	Central Johannesburg	Johannesburg
	Central Johannesburg	Highveld
	Denver	
KwaZulu-Natal (7 sites)	Esayidi	Port Shepstone
		Enyenyenzi
	Majuba	Centre for People Development
	Elangeni	Qadi
Pinetown		

PROVINCE	COLLEGE	CAMPUS
	Umgungundlovu	KwaZulu-Natal Midlands Northdale
Limpopo (8 sites)	Vhembe	Mavhoi
		Techniven
	Letaba	Giyani
		Tzaneen
		Phalaborwa
Mpumalanga (3 sites)	Gert Sibande	Standerton
		Ermelo
		Sibanesethu
Northern Cape (1 site)	Northern Cape Rural	O'Kiep
North West (1 site)	Taletso	Lehurutshe
Western Cape (7 sites)	Boland	Strand
		Stellenbosch
	South Cape	Plettenberg Bay
		Mosselbay
		George
	False Bay	Muizenberg
Westlake		

The monitoring of the writing phase included examination centres at 25 public FET colleges (37 campuses / sites), 3 private FET colleges and 6 Correctional Services centres. Morning as well as afternoon sessions of the examination were monitored and the monitoring spanned the full examination period.

3.3 MONITORING OF THE MARKING PHASE

The NCV level 4 examination scripts were marked centrally at Umbumbulu Campus (Durban).

NCV level 2 and level 3 examination scripts were marked internally at the college or campus level in eight of the nine provinces. The Eastern Cape PDE centralised the marking of L2 and L3 scripts at the East Cape Training Centre.

Umalusi monitors visited a proposed marking centre in each of the provinces as part of the state of readiness monitoring in the design phase.

The Atlantis Campus in the Western Cape and Umbumbulu Campus in KwaZulu-Natal were monitored by Umalusi while marking was in progress.

4. APPROACH

Umalusi monitors are appointed provincially on the basis of their experience in the College sector and knowledge of the principles involved in conducting credible examinations. Their geographical knowledge of their provinces is also an advantage.

Monitors are trained and are required to submit a comprehensive monitoring report.

Sites are selected according to a plan in which Umalusi undertakes to visit most examination centres, as well as following up on poorly performing centres where necessary.

In the November 2009 examinations Umalusi also carefully monitored examinations where computer or other technological equipment was used in order to assess sufficiency, preparedness, support, and contingency plans, especially in the case of large enrolments, such as in Life Orientation L2 paper 2.

5. FINDINGS

Public FET colleges administer examinations regularly throughout the year and do so very effectively in most cases. Deviations from policy in respect of the conduct of examinations are mostly minor in nature. While public colleges were generally well prepared this was not the case with private colleges and Correctional Services sites.

The table below provides an overview of the findings during the monitoring of the three phases involved in the examination process.

Table 15: Preparation for and monitoring of the November 2009 examinations

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
State of readiness	
Provincial Departments	
Provincial monitoring of assessment	The PDEs provided evidence of monitoring plans for the November 2009 examinations but longer-term plans were unavailable. The PDEs planned to monitor the different phases of the examination at a sample of the public colleges and, in some cases, Correctional Services centres. KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga indicated that private colleges would also be monitored.
Appointment of examination officials	Provinces generally used the Umalusi Instruments and findings were discussed with personnel immediately after the visit or later at a scheduled meeting.
Registration	At the time of the 'state of readiness' monitoring not all the invigilators, markers, and moderators had been appointed. Examination permits for candidates were received early in September 2009 and were issued by campuses just prior to the examinations.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Examination centres	
Planning for examinations	The processes related to the planning for the administration and conduct of the examinations were well organised and invigilation timetables were in place at all centres.
Question papers and examination material	<p>Measures were in place to ensure that all question papers were received via courier from the DHET and any discrepancies were efficiently remedied. Question papers were stored in strong-rooms / safes. Marking memoranda were forwarded by the DHET a day or two after the question papers were written. Examination stationery was generally securely stored. Access to examination material was strictly limited to Chief Invigilators and campus managers or other senior staff members. Stock registers were in place.</p> <p>All campuses had adequate security systems in place and in many cases security guards were also deployed.</p>
Preparation for invigilation	<p>Most invigilators were internal staff appointments and were selected according to the <i>National Policy on the Conduct and Management of the Assessment of the NCV</i>.</p> <p>Chief Invigilators were appointed in writing by their colleges or provinces. Most Chief Invigilators were either very experienced or received additional training. The cascade system of training was used for the invigilators at the campus level and training manuals were in evidence.</p> <p>Campus managements compiled invigilation and duty rosters for their centres and had contingency plans in place. In the main, lecturers were not permitted to invigilate their own teaching subjects as per policy.</p> <p>The centres generally complied with the required student: invigilator ratios.</p>
Marking centres	
Preparation for marking	<p>The marking of NCV level 2 and 3 scripts was done at the campus level. Some colleges dedicated a specific campus for the marking of specific subjects – see good practice section.</p> <p>The monitors were satisfied that the campuses had secure environments conducive for marking, and had knowledge of the requirements and policies with regard to the appointment and training of examination staff. The examination staff members were well versed and experienced in the procedures related to the marking process.</p> <p>Markers were appointed in writing and trained according to policy requirements.</p> <p>Some monitors reported that lecturers marked scripts of candidates they taught, which was a breach of the agreed-upon approach, and could compromise the credibility of the results in these cases.</p>

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Monitoring of writing phase	
Security of examination materials	<p>There were no reported incidents of question papers received unsealed and all sites reported that the scripts were opened in the presence of the candidates.</p> <p>Most campuses had large strong-rooms, with space for secure storage of all examination materials and strictly limited access by senior officials.</p>
Examination room	<p>Venues were carefully prepared and were generally conducive for the writing of examinations.</p> <p>Examinations using computers and other technological equipment were carefully monitored and were found to be well supported and organised in the majority of centres.</p>
Writing of examination	<p>Monitors reported that most examination centres complied with correct procedures in terms of the following: seating of candidates; reading of regulations on the conduct of examinations; opening of envelopes containing question papers; allocation of reading time; the availability of timing devices; the collection of scripts; and the movement of candidates.</p> <p>Identity documents and examination permits were clearly displayed by candidates throughout the examination.</p> <p>Invigilation was well conducted and while irregularities were largely absent, the lack of irregularity registers was noted in 27% of centres monitored. Daily reports were completed and submitted to Umalusi by 69% of the centres monitored.</p>
Packaging and transmission of answer scripts	<p>The checking, collection, recording, and packaging of scripts were carefully done. Records were kept of the level 2 and 3 scripts for marking on site or at selected centres and of NCV level 4 for dispatching to the centralised marking centre.</p>
Evidence of monitoring by the Assessment Body	<p>Evidence of monitoring by the Assessment Body (DHET) was reported at only 18% of the centres monitored by Umalusi and registers for this were largely absent.</p>
Monitoring of the marking phase	
Security	<p>The security of the marking centres was generally good.</p>
Appointment and training of markers	<p>Markers were appointed according to accepted criteria and the memorandum discussions were used as training sessions. Training programmes were in evidence at most centres.</p>
Marking procedure (level 2 and 3)	<p>Monitors raised serious concerns about the quality of certain memoranda as this could impact on the quality and consistency of marking.</p>
Internal moderation	<p>In most centres it was claimed that 10% of marked scripts were moderated by heads of departments / senior lecturers.</p>
Handling of irregularities	<p>There was a general lack of Irregularity Registers, which prevented monitors from gauging a year-on-year improvement in the marking phase.</p>

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 MONITORING OF THE 'STATE OF READINESS' PHASE

Planning by Provincial Departments of Education

In general all the provinces had monitoring plans in place.

The Limpopo PDE was able to submit an intervention plan addressing previous recommendations from Umalusi as well as a comprehensive examination and marking monitoring timetable.

The Western Cape colleges generally felt that their PDE gave them good support. Once monitoring visits had been conducted, copies of findings were given to the respective campuses as immediate feedback so that, where necessary, problem areas could be remediated immediately for the benefit of the examinations in progress.

Planning by examination and marking centres

The following good practices were observed during the monitoring for 'state of readiness':

- Public FET colleges generally were found to have well established examination procedures which were constantly being refined. Most colleges and campuses had very experienced personnel who contributed to the effective administration of the examinations.
- Most examination papers were received in advance and immediate action was taken if question papers had not been received.
- Question papers, stationery, and other examination materials were stored in strong-rooms and/or safes and access was limited to either the examination officer or Chief Invigilator. Strict control measures were in place in most cases.
- The colleges received examination permits timeously but only issued them just prior to the beginning of the examination period. This was to ensure that candidates attended class for as long as possible.
- Invigilation schedules accommodated those examinations involving the use of computers by doubling the invigilator: student ratio. However, computers were often rather close together.
- It was noted by the monitor of the Free State that invigilators received exceptional training from the Free State PDE in preparation for the writing phase.
- Efficient procedures to ensure that the computer equipment necessary for examinations was ready for use were noted. Certificates verifying the equipment were sometimes displayed in the examination venue. The manager of the Crawford Campus signed readiness verification for each computer on the day prior to the examination.
- Some campuses had comprehensive plans in place for the marking of the level 2 and level 3 examinations.

6.2 MONITORING OF THE WRITING PHASE

In general, the invigilators conducted themselves in a professional manner and were particularly diligent about attendance registers, seating plans, the display of candidate identity, and checking candidate details on scripts.

6.3 MONITORING OF MARKING PHASE

The following good practices were observed in the marking of the examination scripts:

- Detailed invigilation timetables and marking schedules indicated that lecturers did not invigilate their own subjects or mark their own candidates' scripts wherever possible. (This was not the practice at all campuses or at the private college monitored – see areas for improvement).
- Criteria for the appointment of markers were generally strictly followed.
- The practice of peer mentoring among examination personnel was observed at many campuses. This enhanced the morale and expertise of staff, encouraged positive relationships, and enhanced the efficiency of marking processes.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

7.1 MONITORING OF THE 'STATE OF READINESS' PHASE

In order to ensure continuous improvement campuses should consider reviewing the following practices:

- While the PDEs indicated that monitoring and moderation were planned and that there would be discussions with officials at the various sites towards improving delivery, the absence of registers at campuses recording such visits made it impossible to evaluate whether such feedback occurred. The Eastern Cape monitor did not see evidence of much involvement from the PDE despite having been shown monitoring plans by the Province.
- In the same vein the absence of Irregularity Registers at sites made it impossible to compare the performance of the centres with that of previous years.
- Judging from the sample of private colleges and Correctional Services sites, it is clear that there is a need in general for them to upgrade their procedures and facilities for the conduct, writing, and marking of examinations at centre level – this applied particularly to Denver private FET College and Leeuwkop Correctional centre.
- The Department of Correctional Services should make a concerted attempt to inform themselves of the applicable policies and procedures for the three phases of the NCV examinations – this is particularly the case at Leeuwkop Correctional centre in Gauteng.

7.2 MONITORING OF THE WRITING PHASE

The following deviations from policy were observed at some of the examination centres:

- Security measures could be improved at the following sites: Phalaborwa, Germiston, Denver, Port Shepstone, and Enyenyazi. At Phalaborwa the delegation of authority in the absence of the Chief Invigilator was not carried out according to policy.
- At the Qadi Campus in KwaZulu-Natal there was no record kept of the remaining stationery and its use after the examination was completed. Stationery should be stored for use in future examinations.
- Some Centre Numbers were either not displayed or were not clearly visible to candidates.
- Regulations on the conduct of examinations were not read to candidates at some of the centres.

- A lack of learner support was noted at some centres where:
 - Chief invigilators did not read the instructions on the question papers to the candidates;
 - Candidates were not instructed to verify that they were writing the correct paper and
 - Candidates were not instructed to check the number of pages and text of the examination paper.

The Campuses of Mount Fletcher, Park and High Street Uitenhage, Ngcobobo, Phalaborwa, Wellington, and Leeuwkop Correctional Services, in particular, are in need of reinstating these practices.

- In a few cases a lecturer was allowed to invigilate when his own subject was written. The reason given for this violation of policy was a lack of capacity. Externally contracted invigilators should be used in such circumstances.
- It was observed that at Leeuwkop Correctional Services maximum security examination centre that the centre was largely unprepared for the conduct of the examinations, as illustrated in the following examples: computers were being organised by the inmates themselves; arbitrary persons were permitted to walk through the examination hall while the examination was in progress; late candidates had to find a desk; the desks provided for the candidates were uncomfortably small and more suited for juveniles than adults; the venue was neither clean nor conducive for examinations; dictionaries that had not been checked were used; none of the procedures regarding the reading of instructions or the confirmation of exam papers were carried out according to policy; the Chief Invigilator was conspicuously absent; none of the manuals or planning for the examination in terms of timetables, seating plans, or invigilation timetables was in evidence. The lack of preparedness of this Correctional Services centre was in marked contrast with the good practices observed in other Correctional Services centres that were monitored.
- The measures to ensure privacy of computers were generally not in place. Since the use of computers is becoming more widespread in examinations this aspect needs to be addressed.
- At some centres there were no registers of the scripts dispatched and only waybills were kept as proof of dispatch. It is recommended that a register be prepared for each examination as evidence of the scripts dispatched for marking.
- The lack of Irregularity Registers was a common problem except in the Western Cape.
- The absence of Monitoring Registers or improvement plans from previous monitoring exercises was noted at many centres.
- Contingency plans for coping with crises were not clear in 31% of the centres monitored. It is recommended that contingency plans are always up to date on all campuses.

7.3 MONITORING OF MARKING PHASE

The following deviations from policy were observed at some of the marking centres:

- There was a concern that markers had not been appointed at the Kanyamazane Campus by the 20th October 2009;
- The poor quality of some of the memoranda could impact on the quality and consistency of marking;
- All memoranda should arrive timeously at the marking centres to prevent delays in the marking process;
- The monitor at the Atlantis Campus was concerned about the final checking process. A system of double-checking should be implemented;

- Moderation plans were not available at the East Cape Training Centre when the monitor visited the centre on 23rd October 2009. This makes the procedure more vulnerable to crisis management and must be avoided;
- The inconsistency of campuses applying the 10% rule regarding the internal moderation of marking is a concern.

8. CONCLUSION

Umalusi completed its monitoring processes as planned. In general, the Provincial Departments of Education and the examination centres were well prepared for the conduct of the examinations, especially for the writing of the examinations.

Where there was a shortage of computer equipment at a campus, contingency plans were made together with the DHET and the candidates were accommodated without compromising the integrity of the examination.

The conduct of the staff at the sampled campuses was professional and the more experienced staff trained other personnel and candidates in the practices of examination writing and conduct.

The monitoring of the conduct of the November 2009 examinations confirmed that, apart from the policy deviation mentioned in this report, the examinations were well organised and conducted credibly.

Chapter 5

Moderation of marking

1. INTRODUCTION

The moderation of marking is of critical importance as it largely determines the standard and quality of marking and, ensures that marking happens according to established practices and standards. Umalusi moderated a sample of the marked 2009 NCV scripts.

The models used for the marking process were varied across the provinces. NCV levels 2 and 3 were marked either at campus level or centralised at specific campuses of a college, or at provincial level. The marking of NCV level 4 was centralised nationally.

The marking guidelines (memoranda) for levels 2 and 3 were finalised by the DHET. The marking guidelines (memoranda) for NCV level 4 were finalised at memorandum discussions at the centralised marking venue.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to report on:

- The standard of the marking guidelines and the marking guideline discussions;
- The standard and quality of the marking and the internal moderation; and
- The reliability and practicability of the systems, processes, and procedures as planned and implemented at the marking centres.

3. SCOPE

3.1 MARKING GUIDELINE DISCUSSIONS

Umalusi deployed eight moderators to attend the level 4 marking guideline discussions at the Umbumbulu Campus in KwaZulu-Natal on 28 November 2009. Umalusi officials also attended some of these discussions. The table below represents the sample of guideline discussions attended.

Table 16: Marking guideline discussions attended

NCV SUBJECT MARKING GUIDELINES
Animal Production
Applied Accounting
Business Practice
Construction Supervision
English 1st Additional Language
Marketing
Mathematical Literacy
Mathematics

3.2 MODERATION OF MARKING

Umalusi deployed ten moderators to moderate the marking of eleven level 2 and twelve level 3 subjects at the DHET in Pretoria from 8 - 10 December 2009. A sample of NCV level 4 scripts was moderated by ten Umalusi moderators from 2 – 4 December 2009 at the Umbumbulu Campus.

The sample included scripts from:

- Different sites at which the qualification was offered; and
- Sites from across all nine provinces.

The tables below indicate the subjects and provinces included in the moderation of marking exercise.

Table 17: Moderation of marking NCV level 2

NCV SUBJECT	NO. OF PROVINCES IN SAMPLE	EC	FS	Gau	KZN	Lim	Mpu	NC	NW	WC
Advertising and Promotion	6			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Afrikaans 1st Additional Language	2							✓		✓
Applied Accounting	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Client Services and Human Relations	8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Electronic Control and Digital Electronics	5			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Engineering Fabrication	4	✓		✓				✓		✓
Life Orientation	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematics	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Office Practice	7		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Office Data Processing	*									
Tourism Operations	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* Data for this subject was unavailable at time of printing

Table 18: Moderation of marking NCV level 3

NCV SUBJECT	NO. OF PROVINCES IN SAMPLE	EC	FS	Gau	KZN	Lim	Mpu	NC	NW	WC
Advertising and Promotion	8	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Afrikaans 1st Additional Language	3		✓					✓		✓
Applied Accounting	8		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Client Services and Human Relations	5			✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Economic Environment	*									
Electronic Control and Digital Electronics	7		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Engineering Fabrication – Boiler Making	3	✓						✓	✓	
Life Orientation	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematics Paper 1	7	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Mathematics Paper 2	4		✓		✓		✓			✓
Office Practice	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical Science Paper 2	3	✓		✓		✓				
Project Management	7			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* Data for this subject was unavailable at time of printing

Table 19: The moderation of marking NCV level 4

NCV SUBJECT	NO. OF PROVINCES IN SAMPLE	EC	FS	Gau	KZN	Lim	Mpu	NC	NW	WC
Animal Production	*									
Applied Accounting	6		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Business Practice	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Construction Supervision	7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
English 1st Additional Language	*									
Electrical Principles and Practice	3			✓			✓			✓
Life Orientation	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marketing	*									
Mathematical Literacy Paper 1	9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematical Literacy Paper 2	6	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Mathematics Paper 1	4			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Mathematics Paper 2	5	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓

* Data for this subject was unavailable at time of printing

In addition to the above process, Umalusi staff also played a role in the monitoring of the marking process.

4. APPROACH

A three-tier model for the moderation of marking was followed for level 2 and 3. Internal moderation took place at campus / college level, a sample of subjects was moderated at national level and thereafter Umalusi moderated a sample of subjects.

Umalusi appointed external moderators who are experienced in the moderation of assessment to moderate the quality of marking. The approach was to:

- Moderate a sample of level 2 and 3 scripts at the DHET in Pretoria;
- Attend memoranda / marking guideline discussions for level 4, and;
- Moderate a sample of level 4 scripts in a sample of subjects at the Umbumbulu Campus.

The sample of subject scripts moderated as spread across the provinces is represented in tables 17, 18, and 19 above.

In addition Umalusi staff:

- Attended some of the marking guideline discussion meetings;
- Monitored the marking venues during the moderation of marking process;
- Verified evidence of internal moderation of a sample of subjects (mostly with low enrolments to establish the scope of internal moderation) and;
- Scrutinised chief marker / internal moderator marking reports (levels 2, 3, and 4).

5. FINDINGS

5.1 MARKING GUIDELINE DISCUSSIONS

While the marking guideline discussions were vigorous and fruitful towards ensuring that the memoranda / marking guidelines for the NCV level 4 would ensure parity of the marking and allocation of marks, there were both aspects of compliance and non-compliance in respect of accepted practices.

The table below provides a summary of the findings during the NCV level 4 marking guideline discussions.

Table 20: Findings on the marking guideline discussions: level 4

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Preparedness of markers and chief markers	In order to maximise the benefit of having the memoranda / marking guidelines discussion, it is essential that markers and chief markers arrive having engaged with their particular paper beforehand. The following were observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markers were unprepared; • The markers and chief markers did not mark a sample of scripts before the discussion meetings (the notable exception was Mathematical Literacy); and • Scripts for pre-marking were only made available at the discussion meetings.
Attendance	Attendance at the marking guideline discussion is essential for markers to ensure parity in marking. It was noted that some of the markers failed to attend the discussions.
Participation in discussion	The chief markers and markers actively engaged with and amended the marking guidelines at the discussions.
Adjustment to the marking guideline	All the adjustments made to the marking guidelines were justified. However, it was noted that : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There had been changes to the question papers that were not reflected on the memoranda; • There was a lack of alternative responses; • Too many technical errors were still found despite the memoranda having been moderated.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Pre-marking	A pre-marking session for sampled subjects was conducted after the memorandum discussions. The exception was Construction Supervision as scripts were not available.

5.2 MODERATION OF MARKING

5.2.1 NCV level 2 and 3

The table below provides a summary of the findings by Umalusi moderators during the moderation of level 2 and 3 scripts at the DHET offices in Pretoria.

Table 21: The summary of the findings for the moderation of marking: level 2 and level 3

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Memorandum discussion	There was evidence of memoranda / marking guideline discussions having taken place but there was a considerable number of subjects where this was not the case. It became the responsibility of the marking site to correct the memoranda. This led to inconsistency of marking across the country. It was noted that for the sampled subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 40% of the level 2 and 30% of the level 3 sample there was little evidence that the accuracy of a memorandum was checked before forwarding it to the marking centres; 80% of level 2 marking centres and 38% of level 3 centres made changes to the marking memoranda.
Correct version of paper printed	In most subjects it was confirmed that the moderated examination paper had been printed and written by the candidates. It was noted with concern that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all the examination papers written by candidates were the final papers as moderated by Umalusi; and Questions had been added to some papers subsequent to moderation (see areas for improvement section).
Marking procedure and standard of marking	The pre-marking procedure varied between whole script and question marking. The general standard of marking was rated as reliable. However, it was noted that inconsistency of marking could occur across the country as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some memoranda had incorrect mark allocations and/or information; Some markers lacked the ability to make judgements with respect to alternative correct responses and/or evaluating answers to open-ended questions; and It became the responsibility of the marking site to correct the memoranda. It was unlikely that all centres would have had the same answers to questions.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Administration of marks	Mark allocation, and mark indication was generally efficient. It was noted that the unavailability of level 2 and 3 mark sheets prevented the moderators from judging the accuracy of mark transfer.
Moderation	Most moderators found that scripts had been moderated and the mark variance between internal and external moderators was generally acceptable. However, it was noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial differences in marks allocated by markers and external moderators were observed for some papers; and The verification of internal moderation of subjects with small enrolments revealed a general lack of internal moderation.
Standard of question papers	Generally the process applied during the moderation of question papers had ensured that question papers were well designed and suited to the level of the candidates. However, it was found that deviation from the accepted moderation process caused challenges (see areas for improvement section).

5.2.2 NCV level 4

Umalusi was able to endorse the centralised marking process of level 4 papers at the Umbumbulu Campus. The table below provides an overview of the findings by Umalusi moderators during the moderation of NCV level 4 scripts.

Table 22: The summary of the findings for the moderation of marking: level 4

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Memorandum discussion	Minor additions were made to 36% of memoranda / marking guidelines while significant / substantial changes had to be effected to 30% of the memoranda.
Correct version of papers printed	Question papers that had been moderated were generally written but there were deviations from accepted practice. It was noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not all the examination papers written by candidates were the final papers as moderated by Umalusi; and Questions had been changed subsequent to moderation.
Marking centre management	Certain good practices were observed but generally there was room for improvement.
Marking procedure and standard of marking	The recommended approach of marking by question was used in 75% of the scripts and generally the standard of marking was consistent and of an acceptable level. However it was noted that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some markers lacked the ability to make judgements with respect to alternative correct responses that deviated from the memorandum; and Papers where there were open-ended questions were challenging for some less experienced markers.

CRITERIA	FINDINGS
Administration of marks	The allocation, indication, and transfer of marks were accurate and efficient.
Internal moderation	A good standard of internal moderation was observed and 10% of all marked scripts was moderated.
Standard of performance of candidates	Moderators judged that 90% of the papers moderated were set within the candidates' ability but in 30% of these the candidates did not perform as predicted.

6. AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE

- Marking guideline discussions were chaired by the chief markers who were experienced in their subjects. The meetings were professionally conducted.
- Valuable guidance and support was given to the markers in preparation for the marking.
- Chief markers played a vital role in effecting changes / corrections to the marking guidelines.
- The need for substantial additions / corrections to the marking guidelines emphasises the importance of engaging with the question paper and marking guidelines prior to the meetings.
- The pre-marking of scripts by the markers after the discussions contributed positively to the further improvement of the marking guidelines. Umalusi recommends that markers should engage with a sample of scripts prior to the marking guideline discussions. This will inform the development of improved marking guidelines before the onset of actual marking.
- The moderator for English 1st Additional Language noted that the more experienced markers were delegated to mark questions which required greater interpretation. This is a commendable practice.
- The examination assistants made a valuable contribution in the administration of marking and control of scripts.
- In some instances the incorrect version of a paper was written, but the manner in which it was accommodated during the marking guideline discussions and at centres ensured that the candidates were fairly assessed.

7. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

7.1 GENERAL

The external moderation of an examination paper is conducted to give credibility to the qualification. The correct version of question papers must be printed and written. It is of great concern that the following was observed:

- The wrong versions of examination papers were printed, distributed, and written in for example the following subjects: Life Orientation L2; Electrical Principles and Practice L4; and Life Orientation L4;
- Questions had been added to English 1st Additional Language L4 after external moderation;

- Not all requested changes had been effected to a number of question papers namely: Mathematical Literacy Paper 1; Mathematics Paper 1 and English 1st Additional Language Paper 1.
- Candidates had to be credited with marks because of errors on question papers, e.g., Engineering Fabrication L3.
- The external moderator of Physical Science L3 Paper 2 found the Chief Marker's report insufficient.

In cases where amendments are made to question papers, the marking guidelines must be reconciled with the question paper. It was noted that where this had not occurred, it resulted in a time-consuming exercise during the discussion meetings.

Umalusi is of the opinion that errors on papers and marking guidelines may be caused by the tight timeframes within which the VET examinations currently operate. Therefore, Umalusi strongly advises the DHET to move to a model that uses an 18 month cycle. The extra time will allow the DHET to ensure that the necessary controls are put in place to avoid a repetition of the above and to enhance the quality of the papers.

7.2 MARKING GUIDELINES

The quality of the memorandum discussions and implementation of decisions play an important role in ensuring the validity of the marking process and candidate results.

It was noted that:

- Six markers were appointed for the marking of Mathematical Literacy but only three attended the marking guideline discussion meetings;
- For Business Practice, three markers were appointed and one was absent from the meeting;
- Only two of the four appointed markers attended the discussion meetings for Applied Accounting;
- Generally markers did not come prepared for the discussions around the marking guidelines;
- In some cases incorrect versions of examination papers and marking guidelines were sent to the marking centres, e.g., English 1st Additional Language;
- The memorandum for Life Orientation L4 was poorly presented and lacked breadth; and
- Some marking guidelines contained numbering, calculation, and mark allocation errors. The marking guidelines for English 1st Additional Language had to be redone. This delayed the marking process.

Only markers that attend marking guideline discussions are authorised to mark and the chief markers must ensure that they scrutinise the memoranda and train the markers so that they are well versed in the content and marking approaches.

7.3 MODERATION OF MARKING

The marking model applied must ensure the complete integrity of the marking process. The current models of marking for levels 2 and 3 cannot be regarded as fully effective and need to be interrogated if decentralised marking of these two levels is to be the preferred approach of the Assessment Body, the DHET.

- The moderation of level 2 and 3 scripts revealed that changes were made at marking centres which resulted in inconsistencies in marking in Applied Accounting L2 ; Client Services and Human Relations L2; Engineering Fabrication – Sheet Metal Work L2 ; Afrikaans 1st Additional Language L3 and Physical Science L3.
- The practice of allowing lecturers to mark their own scripts was observed at the Denver Campus. This is of major concern. The DHET must ensure that the selected marking model does not allow this practice.
- The standard of marking of the Client Services and Human Relations L2 and L3 was rated by the moderator as poor.
- Lack of consistency and interpretation was noted in the Applied Accounting and in the Office Practice L2.
- Subjects with open-ended questions, e.g., Life Orientation, should be marked centrally by experienced markers. Where markers fail to recognise the value of alternative answers that are not mentioned in the memorandum candidates could be disadvantaged.
- The marks allocated by the marker, internal moderator, and external moderator differed substantially in Client Services and Human Relations L2; Mathematics L2; and Physical Science L3.
- The proficiency level of all markers and moderators should be above reproach. There were concerns raised about the language proficiency of certain markers and internal moderators.
- Markers do not use the same format, which complicates the administration of marks. It is recommended that the format should be prescribed and used by all.
- Generally it was felt that the candidates lacked examination writing skills and competence in communication. This was reported by the moderators of Office Practice L2; Tourism Operations L2; Afrikaans 1st Additional Language L3; and Life Orientation L3.

8. CONCLUSION

The moderation of marking by Umalusi confirms that, in general, the marking of the NCV scripts was done professionally and competently. However, the report reveals that there is substantial scope for improvement of the systems and practices. It is also noted that the marking of examination scripts can only be as good as the systems in place. When different models are used during one examination period, measures that guarantee parity must be in place to ensure the credibility of the results of the examinations.

The findings from the moderation of marking process indicate that planning and control have to be thorough and disciplined in a decentralised marking model. This report attests to the fact that the current marking model for NCV level 2 and 3 must be revised.

Chapter 6

Standardisation of results

1. INTRODUCTION

Umalusi aims to ensure that the VET examinations yield results that are comparable across the examinations of a specific year and also from year to year through the standardisation of results and other quality assurance processes.

The standardisation of the examination and internal assessment marks is necessary to address the variation in the standard of the examination question papers, internal assessment, and the standard of marking that may occur from examination to examination and between sites of learning. The challenge with the NCV examination results is that it is a rather new qualification, with level 4 implemented for the first time in 2009. This is the second year of implementation for level 3 and the third year of implementation for level 2. For this reason there are no norms and a limited history of previous examination results available for comparison.

The marks presented for standardisation represent the full component of the external examination. It therefore includes the ISAT as well as the examination mark in the case of the vocational subjects and the examination marks in the case of the fundamental subjects.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the:

- Moderation of the NCV level 2, 3, and 4 marks; and
- Extent of the moderation of marks.

3. SCOPE

This chapter outlines the decisions reached during the standardisation meeting of the November 2009 NCV examinations.

4. APPROACH

4.1 Pre-standardisation meeting

A preliminary discussion and statistical moderation meeting took place on 17 December 2009 at which the examination results for each subject of all three levels were discussed by the Assessment Standards Committee (Committee of Umalusi Council) and adjustments (including no adjustment) were agreed upon.

Qualitative data as contained in the chief markers' and internal moderators' marking reports were, where applicable and appropriate, considered in the decision making process.

Principles of standardisation

The following are some of the principles that were applied in the standardisation of results:

- The Means Analysis test was used as a guideline to establish the external assessment results of the NCV examinations. This methodology compares the raw means of the compulsory vocational subjects of a programme as well as those of the optional subject. The assumption is that performance in these subjects should be fairly consistent as these are taken by the same cohort of learners.
- Where the subject was an optional subject across programmes, the most favourable adjustment was taken.
- The aim was to accept as many raw scores as possible.
- No adjustment in excess of 10%, either upwards or downwards, was applied.

ICASS marks are statistically moderated against the examination marks.

4.2 STANDARDISATION MEETING

The November NCV level 2, 3, and 4 examination results were standardised on 18 December 2009.

5. FINDINGS

All the NCV subjects were presented for standardisation and could be standardised.

The lack of qualitative data in the reports received from the chief markers and internal moderators was a concern.

In most cases either the raw marks were accepted or modest adjustments were agreed upon.

The table below summarises the adjustments that were effected. From the table it is evident that in the majority of subjects the raw marks were sufficiently close to the norm to be accepted without adjustments.

Table 23: Standardisation of NCV results

DECISIONS	NUMBER OF SUBJECTS		
	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Raw marks accepted	54	40	39
Computer adjustment upwards	6	11	6
Computer adjustment downwards	8	10	6
TOTAL	68	61	51

6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Chief marker and internal moderator reports

The chief markers' and internal moderators' reports lacked useful qualitative data. Consensus needs to be reached on exactly what type of qualitative information is needed to inform standardisation decisions. A concerted effort needs to be made to improve the standard of these reports.

Reporting of irregularities

Conduct of examinations at private centres and the lack of extensive monitoring of these sites by the assessment body remain an area of concern.

7. CONCLUSION

Umalusi is satisfied that the final examination marks, which in many cases are the raw marks, represent a fair reflection of the candidates' performance in the November 2009 examination.

Section Three

Quality assurance of NATED examinations

Quality assurance of NATED examinations

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the NATED programmes are currently being phased out Umalusi had not intended to quality assure any NATED examinations as from 2009. However due to the substantial numbers of candidates enrolled, the decision was revised and a limited quality assurance of the 2009 NATED examinations was undertaken.

2. SCOPE AND APPROACH

2.1 MODERATION OF QUESTION PAPERS

The very limited number of N3 subjects moderated during 2009 is reflected in Table 24 below.

Table 24: Subjects moderated for each of the NATED examinations

NATURAL SCIENCES			
No.	Subject	August	November
1	Industrial Electronics N3	✓	✓
2	Mathematics N3	✓	✓
BUSINESS AND GENERAL STUDIES			
No.	Subject	June	November
3	Computer Practice N3	✓	

No April 2009 examination papers were moderated.

2.2 MONITORING OF EXAMINATIONS

Umalusi deployed monitors to visit a pre-selected sample of examination centres during the April, June, August, and November examinations (please note that the information for the November examination is contained in Section 2 Chapter 4 as the NATED and NCV examinations ran concurrently at the same examination centres).

The monitoring / verification of the writing phase made provision for the inclusion of examination centres at public and private FET colleges and schools. The table below provides a summary of the different examinations included in Umalusi's monitoring of the writing phase and indicates the number and types of centres per province during the April, June, and August examinations.

Due to concern about the way in which Nzululwazi College was conducting examinations (during the June examination), this college was monitored again during the August examination.

Table 25: Monitoring of examination centres

EXAMINATION	PUBLIC FET COLLEGES			PRIVATE FET COLLEGES			SCHOOLS		
	April	June	August	April	June	August	April	June	August
Eastern Cape				✓	✓	✓			
Free State	✓								
Gauteng	✓				✓				
KwaZulu-Natal		✓		✓		✓ 2			
Limpopo					✓				✓
Mpumalanga				✓	✓				
North West		✓	✓						
Northern Cape	✓								
Western Cape							✓		
TOTAL	3	2	1	3	4	3	1	0	1

2.3 MODERATION OF MARKING

The marking of the NATED subjects that are currently moderated by Umalusi was selected to be moderated for each of the examinations.

The external moderators included scripts from all the provinces marked at the specific marking centre and ensured that they included the whole range of performance of candidates in their sample.

Table 26 gives an account of the N3 subjects moderated and the centres at which the memorandum discussions were attended and marking was moderated for each of the NATED examinations.

Table 26: Moderation of marking

SUBJECT	MARKING CENTRE			
	April	June	August	November
Business English				Roodepoort* Centec
Computer Practice		DHET		Phalaborwa* Kimberley
Industrial Electronics			Goodwood	Goodwood
Mathematics	Johannesburg		Mamelodi	Mamelodi

* Memorandum discussions attended

2.4 STANDARDISATION OF RESULTS

All the N2 – N3 subject results of the April, June, August, and November examinations were standardised in accordance with the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness of fit procedure* in conjunction with historical averages. For the February 2009 Supplementary examination the standardisation decisions of the November 2008 examinations were applied.

3. FINDINGS

The findings are based on information contained in the reports received from Umalusi monitors and moderators, reports received from the DHET, and the moderation of marks during the standardisation process.

3.1 MODERATION OF QUESTION PAPERS

The Mathematics moderator reported that, while the question papers could be regarded as being fair, valid, and reliable, they lacked innovative and challenging questions. Furthermore it was felt that the standard of internal moderation had not been appropriate. There was no internal moderator's report and errors in the memorandum had not been corrected. Concerns were also raised about the quality of the illustrations and graphs.

The Industrial Electronics moderator was pleased with the question papers and reported that the examiner produced a very good question paper. Minimal changes were recommended (e.g., there was only one correction to the memorandum).

The moderator of Computer Practice reported satisfaction regarding the implementation of previous recommendations which resulted in a marked improvement in the question paper in terms of the creativity and cognitive skills assessed. Some errors in terms of the mark allocation on the memorandum were detected and the internal moderator was requested to correct these.

3.2 MONITORING OF EXAMINATIONS

FET colleges administer examinations regularly throughout the year and do so very effectively in most cases. The necessary systems to ensure that the examinations are conducted in a credible manner were found to be in place. Deviations from policy in respect of the conduct of examinations were mostly minor in nature. While public colleges were generally well prepared this was not the case with private colleges and Correctional Services sites.

There was also a notable lack of evidence through recordkeeping of monitoring by the Assessment Body and recordkeeping of the occurrence of irregularities at all the centres visited.

3.3 MODERATION OF MARKING

Marking centres were well organised. Great care was taken to put the necessary systems in place to secure and manage the flow of scripts effectively.

The majority of markers were experienced markers, but new markers were appointed at each of the marking centres (in line with the decision to build capacity through the appointment of new

markers with every marking session). The marking of the new markers was monitored closely and they received support throughout the marking period.

The markers were sometimes not prepared when they attended the memorandum discussions, e.g., Computer Practice N3, Business English 1st Language Paper 2.

The lack of communication between marking centres and of agreement on changes effected to the memorandum at different marking centres are of concern as this impacts negatively on the consistency of the marking and scoring of candidates. This was particularly observed for Business English 1st Language N3. Different interpretations of how marks should be allocated / deducted for certain questions because of an inferior memorandum and numbering errors on the Business English 1st Language paper 1 question paper and memorandum were observed.

The standard of marking was generally good as is evident in the small differences in marks allocated by the marker, internal moderator, and external moderator. The allocation of marks and indication of marks was done according to the prescribed procedure in most of the subjects marked. Calculation and transfer of marks was done correctly. Markers adhered to the marking memoranda.

The fact that not all markers are first language speakers could lead to problems as second and third language speakers cannot understand the idiom as well as first language speakers can. They are therefore bound to the memorandum. Great care must be taken when question papers are set and proof-read to ensure that there are no technical errors and that the marking memoranda would facilitate complete standardisation of marking.

Both the internal moderator and external moderator of Business English found that the markers did not indicate marks on the scripts in a consistent manner. This led to incorrect totals being entered. Markers should all follow the previously prescribed method of marking, indication of marks / mark totals and transfer of marks.

Great care was taken to moderate 10% of the marked scripts of all markers and to ensure that a wide spectrum of performance was included in the moderation sample. Where there were substantial differences in the marks allocated by the marker and internal moderator, the moderator had to remark the whole batch of scripts.

3.4 STANDARDISATION OF RESULTS

The majority of subjects could be standardised at the standardisation meetings.

In most cases the raw marks of the subjects were accepted as indicated in the table below:

Table 27: Standardisation of NATED results

DESCRIPTION	EXAMINATION			
	April	June	August	November
Number of subjects presented for standardisation	63	22	76	131
Number of subjects that could not be standardised because less than 80% of the results were available	4	-	5	10
Number of subjects where Umalusi requested a revision of the proposed decision by the DHET	8	-	10	15
Number of subjects where raw marks were accepted	35	19	50	106
Number of subjects for which marks were adjusted	28	3	19	25
Number of subjects standardised	63	22	76	131

The following information provides an overview of the challenges that were experienced with the standardisation of the 2009 examination results:

- No chief marker and internal moderator reports were received for certain subjects;
- The reports submitted by the chief markers and internal moderators lacked sufficient qualitative information to be able to inform the necessary standardisation decisions;
- Very few of the internal moderator reports were accompanied by the minutes of the memorandum discussion meetings. The minutes of the meetings submitted were mostly of an inferior quality;
- There were a large number of unprepared candidates. The standard of work was very poor in certain subjects. Large numbers of candidates obtained marks between 0 and 29% despite the fact that moderators indicated that the papers were fair;
- The markers adjusted marks for certain subjects. This was evident from the large numbers of candidates that obtained 40% in certain subjects;
- Large numbers of candidates who had enrolled were absent from the examination;
- The cap on 60% skews the norms. The norms of certain subjects favour the candidates considerably;
- Exceptionally good or poor performance was observed for certain subjects, e.g. Communication: Mining N2 (86% pass) and Chemical Laboratory Technology N3 (8%). The Assessment Body was not really able to provide reasons for these instances of exceptionally good or poor performance. One possible reason for the good performance of the N2 candidates might be the new drive for apprenticeships.

4. CONCLUSION

The NATED examinations were, in general, administered in a professional manner and generally good standards were maintained. It is of concern, however, that matters that have already been raised a number of times are not yet resolved.

Section Four

Quality assurance of VET assessment

Conclusion

The main focus of the vocational education and training quality assurance in 2009 was on the National Certificate Vocational programmes. The NCV is the new qualification replacing the NATED 190/191 qualifications. The emphasis on the NCV was also due to the fact that the first cohort of learners that started with the NCV programmes in 2007 reached the final exit level 4 in 2009.

It was anticipated that with a relatively new qualification that there would be challenges with respect to implementation and assessment. However, Umalusi is, in general, satisfied with the evidence that positive progress has occurred in all areas this year.

The DHET successfully reviewed some systems and procedures; however, difficulty in implementing proper plans, coupled with the lack of capacity, still impacts on the quality and standard of assessment. The lack of systems and resources at some of the sites of delivery to effectively train the numbers of learners enrolled are also of concern.

Moderation of sampled NCV and NATED question papers and ISATs by Umalusi subject experts ensured that the papers written were appropriate in terms of subject content and cognitive challenge for each level.

The November 2009 examinations for the NCV and the NATED 190/191 were administered in a professional manner. Generally, good standards were maintained for the administering of the written part of the examinations; however, Umalusi has raised concerns about the consistency in terms of the conduct of the ISATs, across the different provinces and colleges.

A general improvement in the administration of ICASS was observed.

The current models used for marking of the different levels raise serious concerns and warrant review.

Umalusi Council approved the release of the results based on the fact that the examinations were administered in terms of the examination policy and there were no reports (at the date of release) of any serious irregularities which would jeopardise the credibility of the examination. However, Umalusi Council highlighted the following specific concerns to be attended to by the Assessment Body:

- The lack of adherence to timeframes which caused a delay in the external moderation of question papers. Consistent adherence to timeframes and plans must be instituted;
- The moderation / monitoring of ICASS by the Assessment Body requires attention;
- The internal moderation of question papers and ISATs must be upgraded;
- The internal moderation of marking is currently not being implemented for some of the smaller subjects. This must be remedied;
- The accuracy and consistencies of memoranda must be assured;
- The lack of infrastructure to offer certain programmes that was observed at certain colleges and the insufficiency of resources / facilities for the number of students must be resolved;
- In cases where lecturers have insufficient appropriate training and experience, training to redress this must be in place;
- Where protocol of internal assessment is lacking, effective planning and calculation of marks must be instituted;
- The non compliance in terms of submitting portfolios for moderation must be remedied;

- The possibility that irregularities are not being reported and the lack of Irregularity Registers at examination centres is of concern. Tighter controls on this reporting must be instituted;
- The non-attendance of memorandum discussions by markers was observed. This deviation from policy is not negotiable.

While the NCV is a maturing qualification and the challenges are varied, all quality issues are non-negotiable and must be addressed. It is envisaged that solutions can be found to ensure the success of the National Certificate Vocational as a viable qualification for the sector that it serves.

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