



**POLICY AND CRITERIA FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE, ACCREDITATION
AND MONITORING OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE
ASSESSMENT BODIES**

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ACRONYMS

GFET	General and Further Education and Training
GFETQF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QC	Quality Council
SASA	South African Schools Act

CHAPTER 1

DEFINITIONS PURPOSE AND APPLICATION OF THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

Definitions

In this document, any word or expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)* and the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act 2001, (Act No. 58 of 2001)*, has the same meaning, unless the context otherwise indicates:

In the event of a conflict between the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)*, the *Higher Education Act*, the *Skills Development Act* and the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act*, the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008*, must be given preference.

“accreditation” the recognition of-

- (a) the capacity of an independent school to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, and the independent school's implementation of the curriculum in support of the qualification, at the required standard. ; and
- (b) the capacity of a private assessment body to assess a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework and the quality and standard of the assessment services and products provided by the private assessment body.
- (c) As part of a quality assurance process accreditation attests to the capacity and the quality of the offering in an independent school or in a private assessment body.

“assessment” means the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement in order to-

(a) assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching; and

(b) evaluate and certify competence in order to ensure qualification credibility;

“assessment body” means a department of education or a juristic body accredited by the Council as a body responsible for conducting internal assessment and external examinations;

“certification” means the formal recognition of a qualification or part qualifications awarded to a successful learner;

“Council” refers to Umalusi, the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training; as contemplated in the *National Qualifications Framework, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)* and the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act 2001, (Act No. 58 of 2001)*;

“curriculum” A curriculum is the underpinning policy provided for a qualification to facilitate a more general understanding of its implementation in an educational system. The curriculum encompasses three components:

- a) The intended curriculum: the documented curriculum for a qualification that provides a more detailed description in terms of the depth, breadth and level of difficulty and cognitive demand of what is required for the purpose of the qualification to be fulfilled. Syllabi for the necessary subjects form an integral part of the curriculum.
- b) The enacted curriculum: the delivery of the curriculum in an institution which includes leadership and management, the ethos and values , teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities, learner support, institutional performance and the management of quality towards improvement,.

- c) The assessed curriculum: the internal assessment and the external examination of the intended curriculum.

The curriculum policy and its syllabi provide the information necessary for the enactment of the curriculum in the institution and the necessary framework for assessment.; A “programme” means the same as curriculum in the Act.

“exit point” means a point in General and Further Education and Training at which a learner is required to demonstrate competence with a view to obtaining documentary proof of proficiency;

“external assessment” means any assessment conducted by an assessment body, the outcomes of which count towards the achievement of a qualification;

“Further Education and Training” means all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications from Levels 2-4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which levels are above general education and training but below higher education;

“General Education and Training” means all learning and training programmes leading to a qualification on Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework, which level is below further education and training;

“General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework” means the Sub-framework of qualifications developed and managed by Umalusi Quality Council for NQF Levels 1-4 as envisioned in *sections 4-7 of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)*;

“independent school” as defined in the *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)*;

“minimum outcomes and standards” as contemplated in the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, published *Government Gazette No. 34600* of 12 September 2011, *the National protocol for assessment Grades R -12*; and any other policy documents promulgated by the Minister pertaining to qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework of Qualifications and their provision.

“Minister” means the Minister of Basic Education;

“National Senior Certificate” as contemplated in the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, published *Government Gazette No. 34600* of 12 September 2011;

“National Qualification Framework” (NQF) is a ten-level framework provided for the registration of national qualifications;

“private education institution” as contemplated in the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. 58 of 2001)*;

“processes and procedures for the assessment of learner achievement” as contemplated in the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, published *Government Gazette No. 34600* of 12 September 2011;

“programme” means the same as curriculum in the Act

“qualification” as contemplated in the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)*;

“quality assurance” means the process of measuring, evaluating and reporting on quality against standards, and monitoring for ongoing improvement in the qualification, the curriculum / programme, the assessment, the implementation and delivery of the curriculum and the capacity of the institution or assessment body to offer and/or assess the qualification;

“Quality Council (QC)” means a Quality Council contemplated in *sections 24-27* of the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)*;

“registered” means a qualification registered on the National Qualifications Framework by SAQA in terms of *section 13(1)(h)* of the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)*; or an independent school registered by the provincial department of education in which the school is located in terms of *section 51* of the *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)*;

“requirements” means requirements as outlined in the *National Curriculum Statement, Grades R-12* and requirements established by this policy as determined by Council in respect of the quality assurance of independent schools, assessment bodies;

“Umalusi” – means Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training established in terms of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. 58 of 2001)*.

Purpose of the policy

1. The *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)* enables Umalusi to-

- (1) Develop policy and criteria for the quality assurance, accreditation and monitoring of private education institutions; including independent schools.
 - (2) Develop policy for the accreditation of assessment bodies other than departments of education and to submit it to the Minister for regulation.
 - (4) Monitor private and public assessment bodies in accordance with a set of regulated accreditation criteria.
2. In accordance with *sections 17A(2)(a)-(c), 23(1), 23(2) and 24(1)(b)* of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. 58 of 2001)*, the aim of this policy is to-
- (1) regulate the process for accreditation of an independent school seeking to offer a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework through a quality assurance process that may lead to accreditation. The aim is to establish whether such independent school has the capacity to offer and manage the quality of such a qualification and its related curriculum/programme and whether it implements the curriculum and its assessment at the required standard.
 - (2) regulate the basis upon which, subject to the outcome of the accreditation process as contemplated in *subsection 1* above, Umalusi grants accreditation, provisional accreditation or no status to the independent school that has applied for such accreditation.
 - (3) regularly monitor to ensure the independent school is compliant with the quality assurance requirements as stipulated in this policy;

- (4) Umalusi may withdraw accreditation if the independent school is found not to be compliant with the accreditation requirements; and
- (5) accredit, monitor and report on private assessment bodies. Umalusi may withdraw the accreditation of private assessment bodies that are found not to be compliant with the accreditation requirements.

Application of the Policy

3. This policy applies to-

- (1) Independent schools which are registered in accordance with the *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)* and offer qualifications which are registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.
- (2) Public and private assessment bodies that conduct and manage formal internal and external assessment in accordance with the regulatory framework outlined in the national policies that govern the qualifications they assess. In the case of the National Senior Certificate these include: *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12*, and the *Regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of assessment for the National Senior Certificate*.

CHAPTER 2

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

3. The *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)* and the *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)* provides for the establishment of independent schools and public schools. Independent schools are required to register with the relevant provincial department of education.

4. The *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)* provides for the establishment of Umalusi as a Quality Council that is responsible for the development and management of a Sub-framework of qualifications at Levels 1-4 of the National Qualifications Framework and the related quality assurance processes. The said Act determines that the Quality Council must, in respect of quality assurance within its Sub-framework, be responsible for the following-
 - (1) develop and implement policy for quality assurance;
 - (2) ensure the integrity and credibility of quality assurance; and
 - (3) ensure that quality assurance as is necessary for the Sub-framework is undertaken.

5. In order to determine and maintain the standard of qualifications in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, Umalusi as Quality Council must ensure the following-
 - (1) qualifications are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (and the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework);

- (2) education institutions, including independent schools, that offer provision towards the achievement of such qualifications are quality assured and accredited to offer the curriculum/programme that support such qualifications;
 - (3) assessment bodies and systems that externally examine such qualifications are accredited to do so and monitored; and
 - (4) the conduct of national external examinations for qualifications on the sub-framework is monitored and moderated.
6. The *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. 58 of 2001)* assigns, in terms of *section 23(2)(a)* of the said *Act*, responsibility for the quality assurance of the independent schools and the accreditation to offer the curriculum/programme of a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework to Umalusi.
7. In line with the aim of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)*, namely, to enhance the quality of general and further education and training, Umalusi was established with the purpose of maintaining norms and standards in General and Further Education and Training and as such its mandate is confirmed as follows:
- (1) developing and maintaining a sub-framework of qualifications for General and Further Education and Training;
 - (2) quality assurance of all exit point assessment of such qualifications ;
 - (3) certification of learner achievements;
 - (4) quality assurance of independent schools and accreditation to offer a qualification and its associated curriculum/programme; and
 - (5) accreditation of private assessment bodies.

8. This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policy documents-

- (1) the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework 2011;
- (2) Standard Setting and Quality Assurance of the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework, Umalusi, 2011;
- (3) A Policy for the Management of Qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, a Sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework
- (4) policy documents and guidelines pertaining to the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* which underpins the National Senior Certificate; and any other policy document pertaining to a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework as applicable;
- (5) other related legislation as appropriate to the various education and training sectors Umalusi is mandated to work in;
- (6) Council policies and directives;;
- (7) the regulations pertaining to qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework that are developed by the Department of Basic Education and promulgated by the Minister on assessment and certification including those that are promulgated by provincial legislatures; and
- (8) any other relevant policies and directives issued by the Council.

CHAPTER 3

QUALIFICATIONS ON THE GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS AND PRIVATE ASSESSMENT BODIES

9. In terms of *section 3* of the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)*, every qualification or part-qualification, offered in the Republic by education institutions, must be registered on the NQF in accordance with the said Act.
10. In accordance with the aim of the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008*, Umalusi's mandate is limited to qualifications and part qualifications which are registered on the sub-framework of qualifications for General and Further Education and Training at Levels 1-4 of the NQF.
11. The qualifications and part-qualifications are used as benchmarks of quality in the education and training system. Standards are embedded in qualifications, their related curricula/programmes and assessment requirements, and in the type and extent of knowledge, skills and competence that the learner is expected to acquire as expressed in these.
12. The criteria for the accreditation of independent schools, as contemplated in *Chapter 6* of this document, are intended to assess, inter alia the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum/programme of a qualification on the sub-framework including its internal assessment.
13. Based on the outcome of the quality assurance process as contemplated in *paragraph 2(1)* of this document, and subject to the compliance with the criteria for accreditation, contemplated in *Chapter 6* of this document, accreditation may be granted to an independent school by Umalusi.

14. Compliance with the criteria for accreditation of independent schools, is determined through a desktop evaluation by Umalusi of a self-evaluation report with supporting evidence provided by the accreditation applicant. The desktop evaluation is followed up with a verification site visit to the independent school.
15. Compliant independent schools are accredited to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework of qualifications and the related curriculum/programme for a **period of 7 years** and are subject to biennial monitoring to ensure improvement and maintenance of standards.
16. Independent schools that are granted provisional accreditation are required to address areas of partial compliance within a period not **exceeding one year**.
17. A register of provisionally and fully accredited independent schools is published by Umalusi.
18. In accordance with the constitutional right of private education institutions to conduct educational activities, and further to the general development of the Sub-framework of qualifications for General and Further Education and Training, as contemplated in the *National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)*, Umalusi may consider registering alternative qualifications (qualification variants) for General and Further Education and Training in terms of the Council policy entitled, *A Policy for the Management of Qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework, a Sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework* and any applicable SAQA policies.

CHAPTER 4

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

19. Umalusi Council is required to quality assure independent schools which means that such schools are required to participate in a process that measures against standards, the school's capacity to deliver a qualification and its supporting curriculum/programme, and the quality of the implementation of such, at the required standard. If the institution is found to meet the standards the institution is accredited to offer the specific qualification as contemplated in paragraph 14 of this document. Continued meeting of the standards is monitored for ongoing improvement.
20. Umalusi may withdraw accreditation if the independent schools if the independent school is found to be non-compliant with the requirements of this policy.
21. Quality assurance of independent schools is carried out through processes that include:
 - (1) expression of interest to seek accreditation to offer a qualification on the sub-framework;
 - (2) self-evaluation by the institution to enhance an internal culture of quality management and ongoing improvement;
 - (3) A desktop evaluation by Umalusi of the self-evaluation report;
 - (4) external validation to ensure that the independent schools meet the regulated criteria, national policy and regulations and to ensure a bench marked standard of provision and school improvement;

- (5) granting of accreditation or provisional accreditation or no status by Umalusi; and

- (6) monitoring to ensure maintenance of standards and continued improvement.

CHAPTER 5

THE REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

22. Independent schools are required to obtain interim registration with the Provincial Departments of Education before applying for accreditation with Umalusi. Independent schools that receive interim registration must apply to Umalusi for accreditation within **two months** after interim registration has been granted by the relevant province. Accreditation is considered within a period of **one year** after the date of receipt of the application for accreditation. Once an independent school has been accredited Umalusi will recommend it for final registration. Recommendation for final registration is informed by the accreditation of the independent school to offer qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training sub-framework of qualifications.
23. Provincial Departments of Education are required to register independent schools in accordance with the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)* and in terms of *section 46(1) of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)*. Independent schools are only able to operate legally in South Africa subject to registration by the relevant Provincial Department of Education.
24. In order for an independent school to conduct external assessments for a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework such a school, besides being registered as a school and accredited to offer a registered qualification, must also be registered as an examination centre with an accredited private assessment body or the state,.

25. Independent schools must be accredited to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework of Qualifications before they are registered as examination centres with the relevant public or accredited private assessment bodies. The registration of independent schools as examination centres is determined by the fulfillment of Umalusi's requirements for accreditation and the requirements of the assessment body which is either the state or a private assessment body accredited by Umalusi.
26. Institutions offering the National Senior Certificate or Senior Certificate as a second chance opportunity to unsuccessful Grade 12 learners must ensure that they have been accredited by Umalusi and that their institutions have been registered by the Provincial Departments of Education as independent schools. These institutions must also be registered as examination centres with either an accredited private assessment body or the state.
27. *Section 51 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)*, provides for the registration of learners to be educated at home.
28. Umalusi may accredit an assessment body to set, administer or manage assessments for the home based education system. Such an assessment body must establish and register assessment centres to conduct external examinations for home-based candidates. Alternatively, such candidates may be registered as private candidates at existing, registered examination centres for which the assessment body is responsible.
29. Learners to be educated at home in terms of *section 51 of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)* will be regarded as part-time candidates and must-

- (1) comply with the requirements as stipulated in the policy document, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*; and
- (2) must register with an accredited assessment body to ensure that such learners comply with the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 requirements as stipulated in the policy documents, *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, and *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12*.

CHAPTER 6
CRITERIA FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE, ACCREDITATION AND
MONITORING OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

30. The set of criteria for the accreditation of independent schools, constitutes the minimum standard that independent schools are expected to comply with. The standard is evaluated in three inter-related areas, namely:
- (1) Input criteria focus on the standard of input factors which include management and leadership, resources and all other enablers of a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning.
 - (2) Process criteria are used to assess the effectiveness of internal quality management and standards of curriculum implementation and assessment as well as any other processes that are intended to lead to the achievement of the school's stated goals.
 - (3) Output criteria focus on the quality of assessment outcomes or results as well as other indicators of success.
31. The criteria for the accreditation of an independent school to offer a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework are as follows:

(1) Criterion 1: Leadership, management and communication

The school's leadership is instructive and provides strategic direction and governance oversight based on acceptable practices. The school is sufficiently resourced and sustainable. The management strategies, policies and processes are effective in facilitating the achievement of the school's stated objectives and national

objectives, and in raising school performance. The management leads, monitors and continuously improves the capacity of the school as well as the quality and standard of the implementation and delivery of the curriculum/programme. School resource, financial and management records, as well as learner records are comprehensive, authentic and reliable. The school leadership and management consult and communicate effectively with all stakeholders in respect of strategic and management related matters.

(2) Criterion 2: School ethos

The school gives expression to an ethos that promotes the values of the South African Constitution and displays values that reflect the specific character of the school, as articulated in the school's vision and mission statement, with specific attention to safety and discipline as required in the *South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)*.

(3) Criterion 3: Teaching and learning

The school is professionally staffed to support the qualifications it offers. The school implements the curriculum/programme and assessment requirements at the required standard and in accordance with the policy requirements of the qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework. The school provides appropriate learner support. The school manages and conducts internal continuous assessment of an acceptable standard and provides developmental feedback to learners. Where appropriate, the school is registered as an examination centre that undertakes external

assessment in compliance with the directives of the national policy that governs the qualification, policies and directives of Umalusi Council and the relevant assessment body. An appropriate and developmental extra-curricular programme is implemented.

(4) Criterion 4: School Results

The quality of school performance is evaluated and used to inform continuous improvement in the quality of provision with specific reference to the quality of learner achievements and assessment outcomes, and stakeholder satisfaction levels.

CHAPTER 7

ACCREDITATION OF PRIVATE ASSESSMENT BODIES

32. In terms of *section 17A(2)(a)* of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)*, the Council must develop policy for the accreditation of assessment bodies other than the departments of education for Ministerial approval.
33. Subsequent to *paragraph 36* above, the Minister must in terms of *section 2(b)* of the said *Act* make regulations in which the policy for accreditation is set out and in accordance with these regulations the Council must accredit a private assessment body.
34. The accreditation of private assessment bodies is a process of evaluating a private assessment body to determine whether its capacity, systems, processes and products are of the appropriate quality to deliver valid, reliable, fair and credible assessments and examinations.
35. The accreditation process for private assessment bodies is as follows:
 - (1) the lodging of an expression of intent to seek accreditation to assess a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework of Qualifications at least 18 months before the pilot examination is envisaged.
 - (2) establishing the need for an assessment body to assess such qualification and motivating the need through a feasibility study;
 - (3) application for accreditation to assess a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework of Qualifications. The

application is only processed if the following is evident:

- (a) The assessment body is a juristic person independent of any provision of education and training and is registered as a company in terms of the Companies Act 2008 (Act No 71 OF 2008);
 - (b) Is able to provide proof that the income of the applicant is sufficient to sustain its assessment regime in an acceptable manner;
 - (c) The applicant has a stable financial position that will enable it to maintain operational continuity;
 - (d) The applicant can provide proof that it has established financial surety or guarantee to ensure that it is able to meet its obligations to the learners registered for its examinations and assessment services;
 - (e) The applicant has sufficient professional expertise in education and assessment in order to provide assessment services for the qualification it is seeking to offer.
- (4) submission of a self-evaluation report and supporting evidence to Umalusi;
- (5) evaluation by Umalusi of the applicants capacity including its policy framework, assessment systems and standards through a desk-top evaluation of the self-evaluation report, state of readiness evaluation and verification site visits;
- (6) demonstrated competence by the applicant through a pilot in the development of assessment products and administration of an examination at the required standard;
- (7) awarding of accreditation or provisional accreditation or no status by Umalusi.

- (8) immediately after accreditation has been granted, planning for a lead time of 12 months before the first formal examination is conducted.
- (9) ongoing monitoring to ensure credible, fair and valid internal and external assessment of learner achievement at exit points.
36. Accreditation is granted to a private assessment body to assess a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Sub-framework which includes all the processes involved in the setting and administration of external examinations and internal assessment for the full period of the qualification as required by the policies that govern the qualification. In the case of the National Senior Certificate which is a three-year qualification this means grades 10, 11 and 12.
37. Provisional accreditation may be granted to private assessment bodies for a period of three years during which time the assessment body must meet all the requirements of accreditation. If the assessment body fails to meet these requirements it may not continue to offer national examinations for qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.
38. Provisional accreditation of an assessment body may not be extended unless the Umalusi Council decides to do so under exceptional circumstances and in that case only for one additional year.
39. Accreditation is granted for an unlimited period and private assessment bodies are monitored annually to ensure ongoing compliance with policies and regulations, improvement and maintenance of standards.
40. Accredited private assessment bodies are monitored and reported on annually.

41. Umalusi may periodically undertake in depth evaluations and report on both the state and private assessment systems.
42. The state assessment bodies, while not accredited, are annually monitored and reported on to ensure compliance with the same set of standards.
43. An accredited private assessment body must perform the functions with regard to external assessment as set out in *section 18* of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)*.
44. Private assessment bodies may register examination centres in countries other than South Africa on condition that they:
 - (1) assess a qualification registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework that is offered by accredited independent schools registered as exam centres with the private assessment body;
 - (2) have applied for and been granted official permission from the Minister of Basic Education on recommendation from Umalusi to do so;
 - (3) have been accredited by Umalusi and participate actively in the quality assurance regime of Umalusi; and
 - (4) all the requirements of regulations pertaining to the conduct and administration and management of an examination in respect of a qualification apply as contemplated in *Regulation 19(1)* of the *Regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and*

management of assessment for the National Senior Certificate, Government Notice No. R872 in Government Gazette No. 31337 of 29 August 2008, and are met

45. Accredited private assessment bodies may register accredited independent schools as examination centres, and must ensure that Umalusi's requirements are met and the requirements of the qualification being assessed are fulfilled both in terms of internal assessment and external examinations.
46. A register of accredited private assessment bodies is published by Umalusi.
47. In an effort to ensure consistency in the national assessment system, Umalusi sets common criteria for the state and private assessment bodies-

CHAPTER 8

CRITERIA FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIVATE ASSESSMENT BODIES AND FOR THE MONITORING OF THE STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

48. The quality of national external examinations is critical in determining standards in public and private education and training. The quality assurance and monitoring of assessment systems of such examinations are central to upholding the standards embodied in national qualifications. These roles are undertaken by both the state and private assessment bodies.
49. Accreditation is granted to private assessment bodies where such organisations satisfy the requirements for accreditation as indicated in this policy and such supporting policies and directives as established by the Council.
50. The state assessment system is monitored and reported on against the criteria of this policy and the supporting policies and directives as established by the Council and policies and regulations promulgated by the Minister.
51. Several broad criteria pertinent to the accreditation of assessment bodies are grouped into three focus areas:
 - (1) strategic leadership and management;
 - (2) assessment standards; and
 - (3) administration of assessment.

52. The set of criteria for the accreditation of private assessment bodies and the monitoring of public assessment bodies is outlined as follows:

(1) Criterion 1: Leadership, planning and management

The assessment body's leadership is instructive and provides strategic direction and governance oversight based on acceptable practices. The strategic initiatives, interventions, policies and procedures of the assessment body promote fair, valid and reliable assessments. The assessment body is sustainable and financially viable and demonstrates commitment to quality improvement in providing feedback annually to the institutions that are its examination centres. The assessment body is sufficiently and professionally staffed. The leadership and management identify and manage the organisational risks effectively.

(2) Criterion 2: Assessment standards

The assessment body's assessment approach and systems are credible in that assessments are administered against the policy requirements and standards of qualifications registered on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework and their attendant curricula. The assessment body produces assessment products of an acceptable standard and oversees the quality of internal and external assessment at all its examinations centres (schools). Assessment standards and practices are benchmarked and quality assured. Standards of assessment are maintained and improved through appropriate and effective monitoring and moderating mechanisms.

(3) Criterion 3: Development and research

The work of the assessment body is informed by appropriate research and assessment approaches are innovative, benchmarked and fit for purpose. Research findings are used to improve assessment products, systems and approaches as well as to provide feedback to education institutions in order to drive the improvement of teaching, learning and internal assessment. The capacity of professional and administrative staff employed in the assessment process is developed.

(4) Criterion 4: The conduct and administration of examinations

The assessment body conducts credible external examinations in that it is effective and efficient in the management of all administrative and logistical processes associated with the conduct of examinations. Learners are registered for the examination at the commencement of the qualification (in the case of the NSC grade 10) by the private assessment body. Security systems with a low tolerance for irregularities are implemented and irregularities are reported and dealt with as required in Umalusi policy. The assessment body meets all Umalusi's requirements in respect of the registration and resulting system and is able to submit learner datasets that meet Umalusi specifications. The assessment body has efficient and reliable systems for the capture, storage and management of learner achievement data and is ethical in reporting and safeguarding the accuracy and security of learner results. The assessment body ensures that it has full ownership of its data from inception. All the requirements of regulations pertaining to the conduct and administration and management of an examination in respect of a qualification apply and are met. Delivery of the

examination is monitored and evaluated with the purpose of supporting continuous improvement.

CHAPTER 9

WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

53. Independent assessment bodies accredited in terms of the policy developed by the Council and approved by the Minister in terms of *section 17A2(a)* of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)*, must be monitored by the Council in terms of *section 25(1)* of the said *Act*, to ensure continued compliance with the policy set out in this document.
54. Umalusi may withdraw accreditation if the assessment body is found to be non-compliant with the requirements of this policy.
55. Where a private assessment body is found to be non-compliant Umalusi Council reserves the right to place the assessment body under close monitoring with the intention of reducing the risks for learners in the system.
56. In the case of non-compliance with this policy Umalusi will:
 - (1) Serve notice of administrative action to withdraw the accreditation of the private assessment body concerned at an appropriate time so as to minimize implications for existing and future learners.
 - (2) determine a reasonable period within which the private assessment body must comply with the policy set out in this document
 - (3) at the expiry of the period evaluate the steps taken by the private assessment body ; and may affirm or withdraw accreditation of the private assessment body.

57. Once a decision to withdraw accreditation has been made and communicated the private assessment body will not be permitted to register learners for the next examination cycle and must notify its clients of the decision with immediate effect and ensure that all past and present learner data and records are secured and transferred to Umalusi in the manner prescribed by Umalusi.
58. In terms of *section 16(5) of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)*, the Council must perform any function consistent with the said *Act* that the Minister may determine, and must therefore in the case of non compliance with the policy set out in this document by an independent school -
- (1) notify the independent school in writing and set out the nature and extent of the failure; and
 - (2) determine a reasonable period within which the independent school must comply with the policy set out in this document.
59. At the expiry period contemplated in *subsection (2)*, the Council must-
- (1) evaluate the steps taken by the independent school; and
 - (2) may affirm or withdraw accreditation of the independent school .
60. Withdrawal of accreditation of an independent school must be preceded by a notification of the Head of Department or Registrar concerned.
61. The withdrawal of the accreditation status may be appealed through a formal appeals process established and overseen by the Appeals Committee of Umalusi Council

CHAPTER 10

FUNDING

62. In terms of *section 13(1)(c)* of the of the *General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001 (Act No. No. 58 of 2001)*, makes provision for funds received by the Council in respect of fees charged for services. Accordingly, Umalusi determines annual quality assurance fees for all its services including accreditation and related processes.

CHAPTER 11

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY

63. TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

- (1) The implementation of this policy document, becomes effective with immediate effect on the date of publication in the *Government Gazette* thereof;
- (2) Independent schools that are currently registered but are not accredited must apply for accreditation with Umalusi within one year from the date of publication of this policy in the *Government Gazette*;
- (3) Independent schools that are registered and provisionally accredited will receive verification site visits and will be considered for full accreditation if they meet the requirements, commencing on the publication of this *Government Gazette*;
- (3) Accredited and registered independent schools, and accredited independent assessment bodies must take all reasonable steps to comply with the implementation of this policy document as contemplated in *subparagraph (1)*.

64. SHORT TITLE

This Policy may be cited as the *Policy and criteria for the quality assurance of independent schools and private assessment bodies* and will commence on the day of its promulgation in the *Government Gazette*.