

**For Immediate Release**

**02 March 2018**

**Umalusi publishes report on South African Sign Language as an examinable subject**

Today Umalusi released a report of its research study on the inclusion of South African Sign Language (SASL) in the curriculum as one of the examinable subjects for the National Senior Certificate. The aim of the study was to provide guidance to Umalusi in its role as the quality assurer for SASL-Home Language with specific reference to school-based assessment and national examinations.

The scope of the study also encompassed understanding how Deaf learners are assessed as well as the kind of resources and materials required for assessment, including identifying potential national moderators and evaluators. It is a monumental step forward that SASL has now – **for the very first time in South Africa** - been officially recognised as a home language in our education system, and it is a source of great elation for all stakeholders within the education sector that SASL is finally being recognised as part of the overt curriculum – as it always should have been.

Deaf learners in South Africa no longer need to feel like foreigners in their own land, and at last they can exercise their rights to be taught and assessed in their own language. This may be a bigger step than many people realise, for in recognising SASL as a home language in our education system, the system is by implication recognising Deaf culture as a fundamental part of South African culture.

When reflecting on this momentous occasion, the Chairperson of Umalusi Council, Prof John Volmink, made the following remark, “today we can say to Deaf learners that the system has fully embraced them, that their language is valued and respected, and that they now have the opportunity to learn and study and be tested through the medium of their home language.” The full details of the study are available in the report entitled, “*Sign of the Times: The Quality of the Teaching and Assessment of South African Sign Language.*” The report is available on Umalusi website: [www.umalusi.org.za](http://www.umalusi.org.za)

Umalusi is the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training responsible for qualifications on levels 1 – 4 of the National Qualifications Framework.

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