

Summary of Umalusi functions regarding exams and assessment

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Exams & Assessment

Umalusi quality assures assessment for the qualifications that we issue certificates for. Umalusi looks at external examinations as well as internal assessment, called continuous assessment (CASS) in schools and simply 'year mark' in colleges. Our functions include:

- [Moderating question papers](#)
- [Monitoring the conduct of the examinations](#)
- [Moderation of marking](#)
- [Standardizing results](#)
- [Verification and moderation of internal assessment.](#)

Umalusi's roles are described in more detail below.

Moderation of question papers

Umalusi utilises the services of external moderators who are highly qualified and experienced professionals in their respective subjects. The moderation process focuses on ensuring that question papers are of an acceptable standard, cover the appropriate content as prescribed in the syllabus, and are presented in a professional manner.

Moderators use criteria such as:

- standard of question paper;
- coverage of core syllabus;
- presentation of question paper;
- instructions to learners;
- language usage;
- competence of examiners;
- internal moderation;
- number of times question paper had to be externally moderated;
- time allocation.

Monitoring the conduct of examinations

Umalusi also monitors the writing of the exams. This consists of three main functions:

- auditing the assessment bodies' monitoring systems;
- monitoring their state of readiness to administer the examination; and
- monitoring the administration and conduct of the examination itself.

Moderation of the marking process

Umalusi moderates the marking of scripts by deploying external moderators to marking centres during the marking process to ensure that:

- the memoranda are correctly interpreted;
- the standard of marking and internal moderation of scripts is maintained across all examining bodies/marketing centres and throughout the marking process;
- all the systems and processes that relate to marking are in place and effective;
- the product of marking is a true reflection of the performance of individual candidates.

There is also a centralized moderation of a sample of scripts.

Statistical moderation of results

Umalusi standardizes both examination marks and internal assessment scores. Standardization is necessary to address the variation in the standard of question papers and marking that may occur from year to year and across examining bodies. Statistical moderation of examination marks consists of comparing the current mark distributions with the corresponding average distributions over the last three years. Standardization meetings take place between the completion of marking and publication of results. A detailed explanation of the standardization process is available.

Verification and moderation of continuous assessment

Since 2001 school-based continuous assessment marks have been included in the Senior Certificate examination, counting 25% of the final mark in all subjects. Inclusion of year marks was not new to the Senior Certificate examination: under the previous dispensation, year marks counted 50% towards the final mark in the Natal Education Department and 33% in the Transvaal Education Department. Umalusi's approach to the verification and moderation of CASS currently looks only at specific subjects. Statistical moderation of CASS is undertaken per institution and per subject. The mean and standard deviation of the examination mark (from the written paper) is used in this process. After the examination scores have been standardized, the mean of the examination score of a particular subject at a particular centre is compared to the mean of the CASS score. If the mean of the CASS score is within a certain range of the examination mean, then the CASS mean is accepted. If the mean of the CASS score is either too low or too high, it is brought within a certain range of the examination

For the National Senior Certificate and the National Certificates the year mark is standardized against the examination mark, with a tolerance of between 5% and 10%.