

Guidelines For The Assessment Of Learners In Grade 9 In 2002

February 2002

INTRODUCTION

1. The Grade R – 9 assessment policy (Government Gazette 19640 of 1998) states that measures will be introduced to extend the application of the policy across all school grades and ABET levels of the General Education and Training (GET) Band. This implementation framework aims at outlining the assessment requirements and process applicable to the senior phase.
2. This Implementation Framework outlines the assessment requirements at Grade 9 level for the School based component of the General Education and Training (GET) Band and thus caters specifically for learners in the schooling system.
3. The assessment requirements at Grade 9 level would be determined within the parameters of current policies i.e. Curriculum 2005 (Department of Education (DOE); 1997), Assessment Policy for grade R-9 (Department of Education; 1998), Language in Education Policy (DoE, 1997), White Paper on Education and Training (Doe, March 1995), Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) and the General Education and Training Certificate Policy (South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), 2001). The "Framework for the GETC" approved by HEDCOM forms the basis of the strategy.
4. Grade 9 marks the end of compulsory schooling.

THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND

5. The General Education and Training band serves to provide learners with a broad foundation of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enables them to access Further Education and Training programmes that reflect their emerging areas of interests, takes cognisance of leanings towards broad career fields and allows them to participate in society through age appropriate social, emotional, physical, ethical and cognitive behaviour.

ESSENCE OF THE STRATEGY

6. Learners would progress from Grade 9 on the basis of demonstrating competence in more than half of the 66 specific outcomes that reflect a balanced and weighted spread over all 8 learning areas, through an institution based continuous assessment programme that is moderated externally and includes an external summative assessment component at the end of grade 9.
7. The School-Based continuous assessment (CASS) would constitute 75% of the final result and this would be moderated externally.
8. The external summative assessment would be conducted through an instrument known as the Common Task for Assessment (CTA). The CTA would be set for each of the eight Learning Areas. This instrument is designed to sample learner achievement in each learning area through tasks that encompass a range of appropriate and relevant assessment techniques and activities. It would be applied in schools at a provincial or district level and would constitute 25% of the final result. It would also help to quality assure the results of the School-Based Assessment.
9. The relevant teachers at their schools would mark all the instruments using supplied marking memoranda. Teachers would mark the instruments completed by the learners they teach. Appropriate officials of the provincial education departments would moderate the marking.

10. SAFCERT is responsible for quality assurance of the entire process and for verifying the results.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE (GETC) – SCHOOLS

11. According to South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA: 2001) the purpose of the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) is to equip learners with the values, knowledge and skills that will enable or enhance meaningful participation in society, contribute towards developing sustainable communities, provide a basis for learning in further education and training, and establish a firm foundation for the assumption of a productive and responsible role in the workplace.

12. In the case of schooling it is a qualification awarded at the end (i.e. grade 9) of the GET band that will provide accreditation within the NQF, for the end of the compulsory attendance phase. It will also assist in the selection and placement of learners for further learning; be diagnostic and have a filtering purpose, and recognise competencies that learners have acquired in the 10 years of compulsory schooling.

PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE ASSESSMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK - SCHOOLS

13. The implementation framework for schooling is underpinned by outcomes based education principles. These principles are: Integration, Relevance, Coherence, Legitimacy, Access, Portability, Progression, Quality, Integration and Flexibility.

14. The design of the assessment instruments would be of such a nature that all learners would reasonably be able to achieve at the end of Grade 9.

15. The principle of inclusion will be applied through agreed upon special conditions for learners with special education needs e.g. curriculum adaptation, adjustment of time allocated for assessment, unique, individualised assessment techniques, etc.

16. For the schooling system, a learner would be awarded an "achieved" rating in a learning area when a learner has demonstrated competence in delineated specific outcomes i.e. the learner has successfully demonstrated competence against a set of criteria within that learning area. The ratings would be applicable at the end of the year.

17. Progression will be based on the attainment of at least an "achieved" rating on more than half of the specific outcomes that reflect a balanced and weighted spread over all 8 learning areas.

18. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) weighting requirements in terms of Communications and Mathematics will be incorporated. That is, at least 20 credits for Language, Literacy and Communication, and at least 16 credits for Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences.

19. The prescription of a minimum of at least "partially achieved" rating in each of the 6 remaining learning areas (i.e. Natural Sciences, Technology, Life Orientation, Arts and Culture, Economic and Management Sciences & Human and Social Sciences) ensures a balanced curriculum and prevents the omission or neglect of any particular learning area by learners / teachers / schools.

20. The assessment process that will contribute towards making a decision about overall competence within a learning area will consistently reflect the 75% for internal assessment (CASS) and 25% for external assessment split.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT (CASS)

21. The 66 specific outcomes, which are grounded on the critical outcomes, will serve as the basis for assessment in the schools. From amongst these, a set of essential outcomes per learning area will be identified. These outcomes would reflect the core knowledge and skills related to the learning area and would guide the targets for assessment.

22. Learners will be continuously assessed against the criteria reflected in the assessment criteria, range statement and performance indicators related to the 66 Specific Outcomes.

23. The Continuous Assessment (CASS) would be School-Based.

24. The School-Based Assessment would contribute 75% in the final decision making process for each learning area.

25. School-Based Assessment should be managed and designed by the school using national guidelines for Continuous Assessment. This would ensure that items included in the final assessment result of a learner provide a fair representative sampling of the specific outcomes covered in each learning area. The School-Based Assessment should comprise of a variety of measures including assignments, projects, written tests, debates, quizzes, practical work etc. This means that the assessment result determining a final rating of a learner's performance must be based on multiple measures of achievement that have been collated in that learner's assessment portfolio.

26. The contents of portfolios should reflect at least 5 different measures of assessment[1].

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

27. The Assessment Policy for Grade R – 9 (Gazette 19640 of 1998) states that External Assessment should be designed, planned and administered by an examination body and would be undertaken at the end of grade 9.

28. The external assessment would take the form of the Common Tasks for Assessment.

29. Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) consisting of various forms of assessment activities will be set for each learning area and administered at least once a year by the end of the fourth quarter. These would form 25% of the external assessment component for each learning area.

30. The CTA will be designed in such a way that they would be administered over a period of time and not as a once off event. The administration would thus be infused into the routine schedule of the school and would not mirror a formal examination.

31. The Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) will be designed, developed and set provincially[2], with the Department of Education (National) fulfilling a co-ordinating, supportive and monitoring role.

32. SAFCERT would moderate the CTA and would attest to their standard, appropriateness and applicability. These moderated CTA would be lodged in an item bank compiled and maintained by the Department of Education (National). Provinces would have access to the item bank.

33. The Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) should be easily accessible to the teachers in order that they use them to evaluate their classroom assessment. A number of pathways such as websites and teacher-resource centres/packs should be explored for this purpose.

34. The Provincial Departments of Education will organise and plan all the logistical processes involved in the administration of the Common Tasks for Assessment.

35. The Common tasks for Assessment will form an integral part of quality assurance and would be linked to the cycle of systemic evaluation.

36. All learners in Grade 9 must participate in the External Assessment.

MODERATION

37. The Assessment Policy for Grade R – 9 (Gazette 19640 of 1998) states that moderation will be carried out to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained in the assessment process. This will be done on a sample basis at the different levels of the system. Moderation mechanisms will be put in place at school, provincial and national level.

38. The Assessment Policy for Grade R – 9 (Gazette 19640 of 1998) further states that continuous assessment should be moderated externally by professional support services within the guidelines set by the provincial education departments.

39. Provincial Departments of Education will be responsible to ensure that appropriate moderation mechanisms at school / school cluster / district levels are in place to moderate School-Based Assessment.

40. The Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA) will be geared to function as a moderating tool for school-based assessment.

41. It is the function of the Provinces to moderate learner performance on the Common Tasks for Assessment (CTA).

42. SAFCERT would moderate all the different forms of assessment (i.e. Continuous Assessment and External Assessment) in grade 9.

THE SYSTEM TO RECORD RESULTS

43. The distinction between recording and reporting results needs to be appreciated. Teachers' recording of learner achievement will track each learner's progress over the year. Various results of a range of assessment tasks would be recorded. Most teachers have expertise in using marks (mainly and percentages) as indicators of performance and also in the design of assessment tasks and would continue to use this expertise whilst their expertise to use a rating based system is developed. The records are used as a basis for reporting.

44. The results system used would be based on progression of knowledge skills, values and attitudes. Learner achievement would be reported through the attainments per learning area and would be recorded according to the following 4 level descriptor codes:

CODE EXPLANATION

1 - Not Achieved (Achieved less than 40% per learning area)

2 - Partially Achieved (achieved from 41% to 49% per learning area.)

3 - Achieved (achieved from 50% to 70% per learning area)

4 - Outstanding/ excellent achievement (achieved above 70% per learning area)

45. NOTE: A marks-based system to record learner achievement will be used, as teachers are familiar with the use of marks to indicate learner achievement. 50% is considered as the success indicator. The marks will be converted to level descriptor codes for purposes of reporting. A common template for Grade 9 will be used in this regard.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRESSION

46. The assessment process for Grade 9 will consist of 75% school based continuous assessment and 25% external summative assessment.

47. The learner will progress only if s/he satisfies the minimum requirements of each of the Continuous Assessment (CASS) and the External Assessment components.

48. The learner will progress only if s/he has satisfied the achievement requirements for each of the learning areas. These are as follows:

48.1. At least an "achieved" rating in Language Literacy and Communication (LLC) and Mathematics Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS)

48.2. At least a "partially achieved" rating should be obtained in each of the remaining 6 learning areas.

22.3 Learners must offer a minimum of two languages (as indicated in the Language-in-Education Policy) one of which should be the relevant language of learning and teaching.

22.4 The higher rating between the CASS result and the result of the CTA will impact on decisions related to progression to grade 10.

STATEMENT OF ACHIEVEMENT

Assessment in Outcomes-Based Education focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes; making it possible to credit learners' achievement at every level whatever pathway they may have followed and whatever rate they may have acquired the necessary competence (Gazette 19640, 1998). Learners meeting the Grade 9 progression requirements will receive a statement of achievement reflecting competencies per learning area. This would assist learners to enter Grade 10 in schools, technical colleges or to pursue other learning pathways.

GLOSSARY

Internal Assessment / School-Based Assessment

Any assessment activity, instrument or programme where the design, development, administration, marking, recording and reporting has been initiated, directed, planned, organised, controlled and managed by a school

External Assessment

Any assessment activity, instrument or programme where the design, development and implementation has been initiated, directed and, coordinated by Provincial Education Departments and the Department of Education (National) either collectively or individually.

Credit

For the schooling system, a credit is defined as the recognition of an achievement that a learner has demonstrated to satisfy a set of criteria within a specific outcome.

Moderation

The process of verifying results of School-Based Assessment, Common Tasks for Assessment and the External Assessment Test.

Continuous Assessment

An ongoing process that measures a learner's achievement during the course of a grade or level, providing information that is used to support a learner's development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process.

Common Tasks for Assessment

A series of tasks that is intended to obtain information about a learner's demonstrated achievement. These

tasks must cover a range of assessment activities e.g. practical / project / classroom / homework / oral / presentations / paper and pencil tests / etc.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The underlying table highlights the implementation milestones. Each milestone will form a component of detailed operational plans at national and provincial levels

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	DATE
Finalising GETC- Schools Implementation Framework	National	January 2002
Guidelines for Continuous Assessment & Portfolio	National Learning Area Committees	January 2002
Advocacy	National & Provinces	January 2002 ongoing
Refinement of the Training Packages for Provincial officials, School Management Teams and teachers	National & Provinces	March 2002
Training of Teachers	Provinces	Ongoing
Development of IT Systems	Provincial/Phambili	Ongoing
Registration of learners	Provinces	March 2002
Correction of registration forms	Provinces	June 2002
Compiling of CTAs	National Learning Area Committees & Service Provider	Ongoing (by March 2002)
Printing and Distribution of CTAs	Provinces	Provincial Time Table
Process of Administering of CTAs	National & Provinces	By end of term 4 2002
Marking and moderation of CTAs	National & Provinces	Nov – Dec 2002
Issuing of Results	National & Provinces	December 2002 – on last day of school