



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**PROTOCOL FOR THE MARKING
OF THE NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER AND MAY/JUNE EXAMINATIONS
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS**

December 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Definitions	3
2.	Purpose	5
3.	Guiding Principles	5
4.	Basic Safety and Health Requirements to be observed across all Marking Centres	6
5.	Training of Markers	10
6.	Management of Marking Personnel	10
7.	Management of Official Visitors	13
8.	Marking Personnel Suspected to be Infected or Confirmed Infected with COVID-19	14
9.	Safe Handling and Management of Scripts	18
10.	Management of Accommodation in respect of Social Distancing	18
11.	Catering and Management of Meals	19
12.	Permit to allow for Movement during curfew hours	21
13.	APPENDIX 1:	22
14.	APPENDIX 2	23

DEFINITIONS

Confirmed COVID-19 case: When a member of the marking personnel, or any other person working at the marking centre tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 with or without symptoms.

COVID-19 Compliance Officer: An appointed official who works closely with the Marking Centre Manager to take responsibility for compliance with all COVID-19 protocols. S/he ensures the provision and use of personal protective equipment at the marking venue, all marking personnel are aware and adhere to the COVID-19 protocols, manages all suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19, apprises the marking centre manager of instances of non-compliance and advises on interventions to improve compliance. S/he keeps abreast of updated information provided by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), Department of Health (DoH) and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) on the health and safety of all marking personnel. The Compliance Officer role not necessarily be allocated to a designated official but can also be shared amongst the Marking Management Team.

Direct/Close contact: A member of the marking personnel or any other person working at the marking centre who has been in contact with an individual with **confirmed** COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes and within 1 metre without a mask, face shield or face covering.

Distant/Casual contact: A member of the marking personnel, or any other person working at the marking centre who has been in contact with an individual with confirmed COVID-19 for a short period (15 minutes or less), and maintained physical distancing of more than 1 metre, and who was wearing a mask, face shield or face covering.

Contact time: The time that a disinfectant must be in contact with a surface or device to ensure that appropriate disinfection has occurred. For most disinfectants, the surface should remain wet for the required contact time. For SARS-CoV-2, it takes 20 seconds to dissolve the virus membrane.

Detergent: A synthetic cleansing agent that can emulsify and suspend oil. It contains surfactant or a mixture of surfactants with cleaning properties in dilute solutions to lower surface tension and aid in the removal of organic soil and oils, fats and greases. Detergents are effective against coronaviruses.

Disinfectants: Chemical compounds that inactivate (i.e. kill) pathogens and other microbes. Disinfectants are applied only to inanimate objects. All organic material and soil must be removed by a cleaning product before application of disinfectants. Some products combine a cleaner with a disinfectant.

Decontamination: All equipment and rooms that individuals with confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis have been in contact with, during the preceding three (3) days, should be identified for appropriate cleaning. Following a thorough wet cleaning, surfaces must be wiped, not sprayed with disinfectants, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The surfaces should remain wet for at least 20 seconds to dissolve the membrane of the virus.

Isolation: A period during which someone who is confirmed to have COVID-19 is separated from healthy people. The period ends after 10 days of the onset of symptoms if symptomatic or from the date of testing if asymptomatic or from the date of clinical stability if hospitalised (end of oxygen treatment).

Isolation room in hostel residence: A room identified and prepared in the hostel residence that will serve as the place in which a member of the marking personnel who shows symptoms of COVID-19 is accommodated until a health professional is consulted for further advice and intervention for the official and also where marking personnel are accommodated while awaiting the results of the COVID-19 test.

Isolation Waiting Room: A waiting room that is prepared and available close to the screening point/station to allow for a member of the marking personnel, or any other person/official working at or visiting the marking centre who presents with a temperature higher than 38 degrees, to have their temperature checked at 10-minute intervals for a 30-minute period, or where they could be retained until they obtain advice from a health professional.

Marking Personnel: This refers to all persons that are appointed to work at a marking centre and this will include: markers, senior markers, deputy chief markers, chief markers, internal moderators, centre manager, deputy centre manager, marking centre compliance officer, administration officials, examination assistants (EAs), data capturers, security staff, catering staff and cleaning staff.

Quarantine: A period during which someone who has been exposed to a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19, is separated from healthy people and observed for the development of symptoms of COVID-19. This period is currently ten (10) days from the last date of exposure.

Suspected COVID-19 case: Marking personnel, or any other person working at or visiting the marking centre, that appears ill or displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19, but has either not been tested or is awaiting a SARS-CoV-2 test result. Such cases should immediately be placed in an isolation room until the outcome of the test is received.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the standardised procedures that are to be implemented at all marking centres during the marking of the National Senior Certificate, October/November and May/June Examinations, in order to comply with the COVID-19 requirements. The protocol must be read in conjunction with the most recent revised *Standard Operating Procedure for the containment and management of COVID-19 for schools and school communities*, issued by the Department of Basic Education (DBE). This protocol must also be implemented in conjunction with the *Regulations pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the NSC examination*. The COVID-19 protocols must be followed at all times during the marking session, including the practice of social distancing, sanitisation and hygiene, and the use of appropriate personal protective equipment, like a cloth face masks, as determined by the National Department of Health. This Marking Protocol is applicable to all marking personnel that are based at marking centres and any person entering the marking centre to perform a service, make deliveries, monitor and support the marking personnel and processes.

Based on the risk exposure to the COVID-19 virus, the Alert Levels are adjusted accordingly and this has implications for the October/November and May/June examinations with specific reference to the marking of the examination scripts and the subsequent processing and resulting of the candidate's results. Amended Regulations are promulgated in terms of Disaster Management Act, 2002, which, inter alia, refer to the allowance of gatherings at a workplace for work purposes, subject to strict adherence to all health protocols and social distancing measures. Subject to these Regulations and the directions, the marking of the examination scripts of the October/November 2021 Examinations will be conducted at designated schools as contemplated in the Regulations.

This protocol addresses the general applicable principles and Regulations but may be adjusted on short notice based on adjusted Alert Levels and Regulations promulgated.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles will serve as the basis for the implementation of this Marking protocol:

- (a) Maintaining the safety and well-being of markers, administration official, or any other person working at the marking centre is priority and this will guide all decisions and actions to be taken in the management of the marking centre.

- (b) A nationally coordinated approach will be implemented in the management of the safety and protection of markers, administration officials, or any other person working at the marking centre. Given the diversity of the South African environment and varying contextual factors, the DBE will provide the national directives, which must be adhered to in all marking centres.
- (c) This protocol must be implemented in conjunction with the *Regulations pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the National Senior Certificate Examinations*.
- (d) The COVID-19 health and safety protocols will serve as the basis of this protocol.
- (e) Any behaviour or action that would compromise the safety and health of markers or the integrity and credibility of the marking of the examinations, must be avoided by all marking personnel.
- (f) The Provincial Education Department (PED) and the DBE must establish rigorous monitoring procedures to ensure that the marking protocol is adhered to at every marking centre.
- (g) The PED must ensure prior to the marking session that sufficient hand sanitisers, cleaning equipment and supplies, as well as the personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided at each of the marking centres.
- (h) In keeping with the adjusted Alert Level 1 Regulations, the number of marking personnel either in the marking room, dining area or in the area where tea is served must be kept to a minimum. In the case of the marking venue/room the number will not exceed 50% of the venue/room capacity and in the case of the dining and tea areas, this also will not exceed 50%.

3. BASIC SAFETY AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS TO BE OBSERVED ACROSS ALL MARKING CENTRES

The following are the basic health and safety requirements that must be observed at all Marking Centres, to protect everyone in this workspace and prevent the spread of COVID-19. These measures cannot be compromised irrespective of the circumstances:

- 3.1. All PEDs must establish systems required for the implementation of COVID-19 protocols. These systems must be integrated with the roles and responsibilities of the Marking Centre Management Team. Key is the appointment of a Marking Centre COVID-19 Compliance Officer who works closely with the Marking Centre Management Team to:
 - (a) Ensure adherence to the COVID-19 screening procedures and completion and archiving of the COVID-19 screening questionnaires;
 - (b) Ensures compliance with the occupational health and safety requirements at the marking venue;

- (c) Establish isolation rooms in the hostel residence and at the screening point at the marking centre;
- (d) Ensures that appropriate personal protective equipment is provided and monitor compliance by marking personnel;
- (e) Manage and support suspected COVID-19 markers and ensure further medical advice and intervention for the affected individual;
- (f) Monitor and report instances of non-compliance to the Marking Centre Management Team and implement interventions to improve compliance;
- (g) Keep abreast of all new developments and information provided by the Department of Basic Education, Department of Health and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD); and
- (h) Provide advice and support to the Centre Manager when a member of the marking personnel either displays symptoms of COVID-19, or is tested positive.

3.2. Screening of all personnel at the marking centre must be conducted daily. At a minimum, the screening of marking personnel must be done daily on entry to the marking venue. For those officials who will be accommodated at the marking centre, screening must be done daily upon their entry at the marking venue and on entry to the hostel/ accommodation facilities at the end of the day. The screening station or stations must be strategically located at the entrance to the marking centre. Marking personnel leaving the accommodation facility must be screened at the entrance to the marking centre to ensure that all marking personnel entering the marking venue are monitored, accounted for and screened. Careful management of the screening procedure is required so that it is time efficient, prevents bottlenecking and adheres to social distancing:

- (a) On arrival at the marking centre, all persons must complete the COVID-19 screening questionnaire (**APPENDIX 1**). This must be done on a daily basis and the records must be filed. Where possible, PEDs could explore the use of electronic measures of managing the completion of the daily questionnaire.
- (b) Entry and exit of all authorised marking personnel must be stringently monitored and managed to ensure that any person can be tracked, traced and contacted in the event of an infection at a marking centre.
- (c) Any member of the marking personnel who is sick/unwell should not report to the marking centre, but must inform the Centre manager or the Chief Marker and seek medical attention.

- 3.3. Marking personnel with co-morbidities must declare their health condition in a confidential questionnaire that will be retained by the Marking Centre Manager. The Marking Centre Manager and the Chief Marker will accommodate the individual, to the extent that it is possible. In the signing of the declaration the individual will be made aware that he/she is at a higher risk and therefore as much as the centre management will ensure adherence to the COVID-19 protocols, the onus is on the individual to protect their personal health.
- 3.4. The provincial marking manager and marking centre manager must be informed if a marking official is unable to report for the marking session and approval for the withdrawal of service due to illness will be approved based on advice from the Health Professional. Replacement marking personnel will then be contacted and appointed.
- 3.5. Where possible, each marking centre should have access to a Health Professional to provide medical support to the marking personnel. The Health Professional must be available to visit the marking centre on an occasional basis to provide support, advice and monitor the centre. Where this is not possible, the PED must ensure that a health professional or a group of health professionals are within easy reach of the marking centre to provide support and advice and deal with emergencies that may arise. This implies that the marking centres must identify and have available the contact numbers/persons and addresses of the nearest medical doctor/s, psychologists, public/private health care services that could be utilised or alternatively have a mechanism in place that will allow for medical care to be provided to a marking centre at short notice.
- 3.6. All marking centres must be compliant with the universal COVID-19 protocols and must have the necessary systems and processes in place at the marking centre, at the accommodation facility and in the dining facilities where meals will be prepared and served.
- 3.7. There must be clear signage throughout the marking centre, accommodation facility, dining, tea/lunch stations and recreational facilities to remind marking personnel of, and to reinforce the COVID-19 protocols that apply in each space.
- 3.8. Facilities for the regular washing of hands with clean water and soap and alcohol-based hand sanitiser (70% alcohol) must be available. A foot pedal hand sanitiser and portable handwashing station should be made available at the entry point of every marking room. Handwashing soap or hand sanitiser should be in all toilet facilities.

- 3.9. Daily cleaning and disinfection of all rooms in use at the marking centre, is necessary. This will include all work surfaces, door handles/knobs, toilets, washbasins, cupboard and drawer handles. The marking centres must ensure the provision of clean running water, sanitation and waste management facilities.
- 3.10. Social distancing coupled with the wearing of a cloth mask, the practice of hand hygiene and coughing and sneezing etiquette, must be integrated into all operations and activities at the marking centre. The marking centres must implement and promote social distancing of 1,5 metres that will apply to the organisation of furniture and organisation of markers and marking groups in the marking rooms. This will also apply to the organisation of examination assistants (EAs)/checkers/captors and during all interpersonal interaction between all marking personnel. Social distancing will apply during the registration and arrival of markers, during the daily screening procedures, at training, during meal times, at tea or water stations, in common areas at the accommodation facilities. Bottlenecking, crowding and queueing of officials must not be allowed.
- 3.11. Before any institution is approved as a marking centre, a site visit must be conducted to verify that it is compliant with all the COVID-19 protocols, over and above the norms and standards that are applicable to the selection of a marking centre. Provincial officials must therefore ensure that any institution that is approved as a marking centre is able to ensure that the basic hygiene requirements are met.
- 3.12. All marking rooms and workspaces in which officials are based must be well ventilated with all windows kept open throughout the marking session.
- 3.13. The seating arrangements of marking personnel must be noted and recorded so that where contact tracing is necessary, this can be easily done. Wherever possible, marking personnel should keep to the same group.
- 3.14. In the event that there is an infection at the marking centre, the official/group affected will be isolated to enable the affected marking room/ workspace/area in which the affected officials were based to be cordoned off and decontaminated.
- 3.15. There must be contingency planning so that:
- (a) In the extreme circumstance that a marking centre has to be closed for an extended time period, there should be an identified reserve venue that can be “activated” for marking.

- (b) Protocols and procedures for the safe movement/relocation and storage and security of answer scripts must be in place and adhered to.

4. TRAINING OF MARKERS

In order to minimise the risk associated with the training of large number of markers in one large meeting, training should be decentralised to smaller groups of markers. The Chief Marker remains the primary trainer and the training can be decentralised to deputy chief markers who will manage the training in smaller groups at the whole script level and this can subsequently be further decentralised to senior markers who could train the markers focussing on specific questions.

5. MANAGEMENT OF MARKING PERSONNEL

5.1. Briefing of marking personnel prior to marking

To ensure uniform messaging and preparation, the briefing of all marking personnel before marking starts could be conducted at the following levels:

- (a) The Provincial Education Department: Conducts a briefing session for the marking centre management, examination assistants and security personnel.
- (b) The Marking Centre Management team: Conducts a briefing session with the chief markers and internal moderators, school staff who are on site to support the marking session, security staff, cleaning and catering staff.
- (c) The Chief Markers/Internal Moderators: Conducts a briefing session with the markers per subject paper.
- (d) The briefing sessions at the respective levels on the COVID-19 protocols should include the following:
 - (i) The PED's plan and approach to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, inclusive of updated information, amended regulations and marking operations and the adherence required;
 - (ii) Overview of anticipated risks and how these will be responded to via this protocol;
 - (iii) The roles and responsibilities of all marking personnel at each level of the marking system to ensure consistent and stringent adherence to the COVID-19 occupational health and safety requirements;
 - (iv) The PED systems, processes, networks with SAPS, DoH, in place to respond to an infection; psychosocial support available; wellness of all marking personnel over an extended marking session

- (v) Layout and signage at the marking centres
- (vi) Organisation of markers/EAs
- (vii) Screening procedures to be implemented for all marking personnel throughout the marking session;
- (viii) Protocols to be followed at the marking centres in the event of a suspected case/ infection in the marking centre /capture room/hostel facilities;
- (ix) Decontamination procedures to be followed in the event of an infection;
- (x) Management of hostel room space, dormitory accommodation, meals, movement of marking personnel and visitors at the marking centre;
- (xi) Role of the Marking Centre Management Team, the COVID-19 Compliance Officer to implement the protocols, monitor and support compliance with the COVID-19 occupational health and safety requirements;
- (xii) Outline of the protocols to be followed at the marking centre, including the mandatory and correct wearing of masks when entering the centre and throughout the entire day at the centre (No mask, no entry into the centre)

5.2. Entrance into the marking centre

- (a) If there are no biometric systems in place, manual checks must be in place to ensure adherence to the COVID-19 health and safety requirements prior to entry into the marking centre.
- (b) All vehicles entering the premises must be signed in with relevant details of the driver and passengers, e.g. name, surname, cell phone number, ID, address and reasons for entry. All drivers and passengers must be screened and have their temperature checked. This includes all staff of the school/college/institution as well.
- (c) All drop-offs should be outside the entrance of the college/institution.
- (d) Any marker/official/visitor with a body temperature above 38°C must be reported to the COVID-19 Compliance Officer for the necessary attention. The marker/official/visitor must be isolated in a waiting room nearby for 30 minutes. The temperature should be taken again every 10 minutes to establish if it has normalised. (Hot weather or other variables may impact on a person's body temperature). If the temperature has not normalised, the marker/official/visitor must be isolated and referred to the Health Professional to facilitate further medical investigation and subsequent action.
- (e) All marking personnel must wear a face mask or face covering at all times.
- (f) The hands of all marking personnel must be sanitised upon entry into the marking centre.
- (g) All marking personnel must complete the COVID-19 questionnaire (**APPENDIX 1**) which must be filed by the compliance officer. Where this can be done electronically at the marking centre, the PED

must ensure that the necessary systems are in place to support the electronic process. The questionnaire must be completed on a daily basis by all persons entering the marking centre, including marking personnel that are resident at the marking centre.

5.3. During the marking session

In the marking rooms:

- (a) There must be sanitisers at the entrance to each marking room and markers must sanitise their hands before entering the room.
- (b) Surfaces of the desks, tables and countertops must be sanitised daily during cleaning and before markers enter the venue.
- (c) There must be no sharing of desks by markers.
- (d) Marking personnel must be conscientised about social distancing within the venue as well as outside the venue.
- (e) Markers are to be seated at least **1.5 m** apart in the marking room and not more than 50% of the occupancy capacity of the room must be utilised. Where possible the number of markers in a marking room should not exceed eighteen (18) markers.
- (f) In cases where a school hall is used, the number of markers should also not exceed 50% of the capacity of the hall. It is also recommended that where a school hall is used, that markers be clustered in smaller groups to limit the possible spread of the infection, if one of the markers is infected.
- (g) All marking personnel must wear a face mask at all times. The mask must cover the mouth and nose at all times. A face shield may be worn together with a mask, never on its own.
- (h) Mask breaks will not be allowed in the marking room/venue. Mask breaks can only be taken in an open area, if there are no other persons in the vicinity of the individual. It is recommended for all Marking personnel to take regular mask breaks (at least after every 2 hours. Senior Managers must manage this to ensure the marking norm times are not compromised. Mask break can be combined with a snack/smoke break. Marking personnel that need a mask break must leave the marking room to take a short mask break.
- (i) No eating or snacking will be allowed in the marking room. In cases where the marker needs to have a quick snack, he/she must leave the examination room and return after he/she has completed his snack. There must be no sharing of drinks, snacks or food. Markers will be allowed to bring a water bottle and to drink from the water bottle in the marking room.
- (j) Markers to sanitise their hands as regularly as possible, during the marking process.
- (k) No sharing of pens/pencils. All officials/markers/EAs/moderators must have their own pens/pencils/stationery.

- (l) Regular and thorough handwashing by all marking personnel at the marking centre, must be encouraged.
- (m) When outside the marking room during tea and lunch breaks, designated areas need to be cordoned off so that not more than 50 marking personnel will be able to gather at a time. Multiple serving areas should be considered to facilitate this

5.4 Control room and dispatch area

- (a) All desks, chairs and table surfaces where question papers and scripts are placed must be sprayed and sanitised before EAs and markers arrive in the venues.
- (a) The hall in which scripts are kept must be cleaned and sanitised daily before EAs arrive at the marking centre.
- (c) All marking personnel must have their hands sanitised each time they enter the marking room.
- (d) EAs must sanitise as regularly as possible.
- (e) In the event that the script storage room has to be decontaminated, the script manager must be in the room/hall for the duration of the decontamination to ensure that the process is carried out safely and without damaging any script/examination material.

6. MANAGEMENT OF OFFICIAL VISITORS

6.1 Restricted access to the marking centre

- (a) Only persons in possession of an accreditation/authorisation document or letter will be allowed entrance into marking centres. These include:
 - (i) Umalusi representatives (including verifiers)
 - (ii) DBE officials (including onsite moderators, monitors)
 - (iii) Provincial monitors
 - (iv) Parliamentary Portfolio Committee members
 - (v) Union representatives.
 - (vi) Persons/Companies rendering a service or delivering supplies to the marking centre
- (b) On arrival at the marking centre, all visitors must complete the COVID-19 screening questionnaire (**APPENDIX 1**). These will be filed in hard copy or electronically, depending on the system in place.
- (c) The movement of all visitors/officials entering the marking centre must be carefully monitored.

6.2 Role of the security personnel regarding access control

- (a) The primary role of the security guards at the marking centre is to ensure the safety of marking personnel, officials, visitors and the scripts.
- (b) They have an extended role relating to COVID-19 protocol. They must firstly direct all visitors to the point/station where they will be screened and requested to respond to the screening questionnaire before proceeding to the marking centre manager's office.
- (c) The security guards must:
 - (i) Ensure that all visitors are wearing a face mask and sanitise their hands at the entry point;
 - (ii) Assist the COVID-19 Compliance Officer to monitor and ensure that all marking personnel and visitors maintain social distancing when in proximity to their peers at the marking venue and ensure that marking personnel or visitors do not congregate outside the entrances/or cause bottlenecking throughout the marking venue and as they move between the marking rooms and dining areas and hostel accommodation.
 - (iii) Ensure that they keep a distance of at least 1,5 metres from others, when working with or having to assist or serve marking personnel or visitors;
 - (iv) Support the screening personnel and sanitise their hands before and after assisting each official or visitor;
 - (v) Ensure that the visitors also sanitise their hands before and after interaction with the security personnel, screening personnel, after handling any examination scripts/equipment/surfaces, and on exit from the marking venue.

7. MARKING PERSONNEL SUSPECTED TO BE INFECTED OR CONFIRMED TO BE INFECTED WITH COVID-19

7.1 Suspected cases

- (a) Marking personnel who at the screening station display a temperature of above 38°C or responds positively (indicate YES) to any two of the questions on the questionnaire, must be regarded as an individual needing further attention.
- (b) An individual displaying the symptoms indicated on the screening questionnaire cannot be allowed into the marking venue and therefore will not be allowed to mark.
- (c) Such an individual should be kept in the isolation waiting room in close proximity to the screening point at the marking centre until further advice and intervention is sought from the available Health Professional. If the individual is in the accommodation facility and reports having any of the

symptoms, the individual must be accommodated in the isolation room/s identified for this purpose or must isolate themselves in their room (in cases where the room is not shared) until they receive the necessary advice and intervention from the available Health Professional on the next steps to be taken.

- (d) The Health Professional will advise the individual whether he/she needs to be tested.
- (e) Such individuals, if requested by the Health Professional to be tested, must be tested and may only return to the marking centre, if the test results are negative. Cost of testing will be borne by the individual.
- (f) The individual who displays/reports such symptoms must be reported to the COVID-19 Compliance Officer and Marking Centre Manager for his/her daily reporting and for purposes of contact tracing.

7.2 Guidelines to follow if a marker/marketing official has tested positive for COVID-19

7.2.1. Marking Personnel tested positive prior to the commencement of marking

- (a) In cases where an appointed marker/marketing official tests positive, prior to the commencement of the marking, such a marker/official has a responsibility to inform the Head of examinations in writing of his/her status.
- (b) All markers/marketing officials that test positive must not report to the marking venue and will not be allowed to mark or participate in the marking process. In this case the marker/marketing official must be replaced.
- (c) In cases where a marker/marketing official fails to disclose his/her status, such a marker/official will be liable for misconduct.
- (d) In cases where a marker/marketing official has tested positive but has completed the isolation period prior to reporting to the marking centre, such an individual will be allowed to participate in the marking process. To confirm that the marker/marketing official has served the isolation period, he/she must present the positive test result certificate to confirm the date on which the test was conducted, or alternatively the SMS that was received to confirm the positive test result, will be adequate.

7.2.2. Marking Personnel testing positive for COVID-19

- (a) The case must be reported to the COVID-19 Compliance Officer and Centre manager immediately, who must discuss the case and determine the further action and precautions to be taken.

- (b) A marker or marking official that tests positive during the marking process, must be released from the marking process. The Marking Centre Manager must take responsibility for informing the next of kin of the Marker/Marking official so that they are officially informed and will now take responsibility for the travel of the marker/marketing official from the marking centre to his/her home.
- (c) A marker or marking official that is released from the marking centre will be remunerated only for the work done, up to that point.
- (d) If the marking official who tests positive displays severe symptoms, the Compliance Officer must immediately, with the support of the health professional, facilitate the transfer of the sick official to the nearest Public or Private health care facility so that he/she can obtain the medical care required. The centre manager must inform the next of kin accordingly.
- (e) The Compliance Officer must take responsibility for the drafting of a full report on the management of all cases that test positive, providing details relating to the procedure followed, the persons involved and the actions taken and the times.
- (f) A list of staff members who were in close contact with the individual/s who tested positive must be compiled by the COVID-19 Compliance Officer for contact tracing, monitoring and treatment where required.
- (g) The COVID-19 Compliance Officer must conduct a risk assessment and give recommendations on the management of markers/officials/support staff/management team/EAs.
- (h) Recommendations should include the safety of the (hostel) room where the individual is accommodated, if he/she resides at the marking centre or any accommodation arranged by the centre to allow for contact tracing, testing and treatment.
- (i) If several members at the marking centre test positive for COVID-19, the officials should be released from the marking centre to self-isolate at home and recover, or depending on the severity of the symptoms experienced, and on the advice of the available Health Professional be transferred to the nearest Public or private health care facility for further treatment and care.
- (j) A replacement from the reserve list should be appointed to ensure the pace of the marking and related administrative duties are not compromised or delayed.
- (k) The place/lodging where these individuals are accommodated (if outside the marking centre) should also be informed so that contact tracing, testing and treatment can be conducted.
- (l) The workspace that was occupied by the infected person/s must be evacuated and cleaned and decontaminated. The closure of the entire facility or marking centre will not be necessary, unless there is a large number of marking personnel/ support staff who test positive. In this case, the Department of Health will be consulted and will conduct a site visit to test and verify the extent of the infections and advise the Head of Department on the closure of the marking centre.

- (m) The Head of Department will be informed accordingly by the Head of Examinations in the province. Only the Head of Department can authorise the closure of an educational institution, including a facility used for marking. In the event that the entire marking centre has to be closed, the PED must ensure the safety of scripts until the centre is reopened.
- (n) The COVID-19 Compliance Officer and Marking Centre Management Team must ensure that all documents/examination scripts are safely stored after evacuating the marking personnel/EAs who may have been in contact with the infected person.
- (o) The DoH must be informed of the cases to facilitate contact tracing and the transfer of the infected personnel to the nearest health care facility for specialist treatment and care.
- (p) Decontamination can take place overnight or within 24 hours. After inspection by the COVID-19 Compliance Officer and Marking Centre Management marking activities can resume.
- (q) As an interim measure and to prevent the interruption of the marking session, if there are additional marking rooms available, the unaffected marking personnel/EAs can proceed with the marking process, after all examination materials have been relocated safely and securely, under the supervision of the security personnel.
- (r) The compliance officer must maintain communication with the individuals who tested positive to ensure monitoring, evaluation and to track the progress of these individuals for recording and reporting purposes per marking venue.

7.3 Psychological support to the official who has tested positive is crucial

Every Marking centre must have access to professional psychological support which the Marking Centre Manager will be able to utilise as and when the need arises.

- (a) The COVID-19 Compliance Officer must have a list and contact details of the range of health care professionals in the proximity of the marking venue who may be able to assist with, provide, counselling in the event that a member of the marking personnel /support staff member is overwhelmed or anxious and unable to carry out his/her duties.
- (b) The chief marker/centre manager should be informed of the psychosocial support required and the individual should be referred to the COVID-19 Compliance Officer who will seek psychosocial support on behalf of the individual.
- (c) Marking personnel must ensure that they have their medical aid details at hand in the event the intervention is provided by a psychologist, social worker or counsellor based at a private health care facility and payment will be required. (Note that GEMS provides psychological and trauma support at no cost to its members).

- (d) The family of the individual should be contacted and informed of the public/ private health care facility to which she/he has been transferred. Ensure that the details of the next of Kin is completed by every marker on arrival, in case this information is required.
- (e) In the event that the individual cannot manage to remain at the marking centre, and prefers to be released from the marking centre into the care and custody of family/next of kin to seek further assistance from a health professional or a health care facility of their choice, this must be recorded by the COVID-19 Compliance Officer and be included in the report to the Marking Centre Management Team.

8. SAFE HANDLING AND MANAGEMENT OF SCRIPTS

- 8.1. Since the marking of the examination will take place from 8 – 22 December 2021, the scripts will have “stood” for at least two to three weeks and if stored in a well-ventilated and clean environment, there should be no danger to anyone handling the scripts.
- 8.2. All officials/EAs/markers/moderators that receive/handle/dispatch scripts at the marking centre must prioritise regular hand sanitising.
- 8.3. When using a hand sanitiser, they must allow their hands to dry before touching the scripts to prevent transfer of the alcohol or other chemicals onto the script to prevent staining or damage to the scripts. Markers must ensure that their hands are dry so that no residue of sanitisers is transferred onto to the script and causes damage during the marking/ moderation process.
- 8.4. If decontamination is required and specific sections of a marking centre has to be evacuated and cordoned off, then the batches of scripts in marking rooms and EA rooms must be placed in their respective containers and moved to the central script control room at the marking centre.
- 8.5. In the event that marking room requires decontamination before marking can resume the following day, the senior markers/chief marker must remain in the marking room for the duration of the decontamination of the room.

9. MANAGEMENT OF ACCOMMODATION IN RESPECT OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

9.1 The PED should ensure that:

- (a) Prior to the confirmation of a marking centre, the accommodation facilities must be inspected to ensure that it meets the needs of the marking personnel and adheres to the COVID-19 protocols. An evaluation/audit of accommodation facilities at a marking centre/private accommodation facility must be conducted by means of a physical/onsite visit to the facility prior to the selection being made.

- (b) The accommodation/ hostel facilities at the marking centre/private accommodation facilities to accommodate the overflow of markers/marketing personnel near a marking centre must also be audited to ensure compliance with the COVID-19 health and safety requirements.
- (c) Cleaners allocated to the accommodation and hostel facilities must be trained on the protocols and monitored by the compliance officer to ensure the facilities are safe and clean at all times.
- (d) Floor and other surfaces at the hostel accommodation and catering areas must be cleaned daily with disinfectant cleaner.
- (e) Rooms must be prepared, taking into account social distancing measures. Ensure beds in rooms are spaced at least 2 metres apart. There should be no sharing of bunk beds. Preferably there should be no sharing of rooms. A Maximum of 50% occupancy rate should be utilised in cases where dormitory style accommodation is utilised.
- (f) Marking personnel who prefer to travel daily from home could be allowed to do so provided it is not more than 200km on daily return trip. Marking personnel that need to travel beyond the prescribed 75 km radius, must obtain approval from the Centre Manager.
- (g) All rooms and catering spaces must be properly ventilated at all times.
- (h) Hand sanitiser or liquid soap for hand washing must be made available for markers to use at all times, and placed at strategic points, in the accommodation/hostel facilities
- (i) Bathrooms/Showers and ablution facilities must be cleaned regularly. If shared, a roster for the use of the ablution facilities may be instituted to ensure that no more than 50% of the facility capacity is in use at any one time. (A list/roster of the cleaning staff responsible must be available for monitoring and follow-up by the centre manager.)
- (j) Ensure that there is a room at the hostel to temporarily isolate a marker should the need arise. Linen from Isolation rooms must be changed and washed after use and the isolation room decontaminated after each occupation

10. CATERING AND MANAGEMENT OF MEALS

- 10.1. Transmission of COVID-19 through food can occur if a person infected with the virus prepares or handles food with dirty hands and contaminates it.
- 10.2. Cooking food thoroughly and observing good hygiene practices when handling and preparing food are essential to prevent contamination.
- 10.3. The caterer must ensure proper food storage practices.
- 10.4. The marking centre management must ensure that there are alternate menu options that are available in the event that hot meals cannot be prepared during load shedding.

10.5. Monitoring of adherence to COVID-19 regulations by the kitchen manager who must ensure that the following is done:

- (a) Food handlers must wash their hands with soap and water before and after touching food during preparation and before and after serving food to marking personnel.
- (b) Clean and sanitise all work surfaces (i.e. tables, stoves and other resources) sinks and floors regularly.
- (c) Keep all appliances clean.
- (d) Wear clean attire and aprons at all times.
- (e) Wear head gear and masks to cover their mouths and noses.
- (f) Wear closed shoes to protect their feet and gloves when serving food.
- (g) Rinse all foodstuffs thoroughly before cooking, as well as fruit before serving it to markers.
- (h) Preferably disposable cups and crockery, should be used. Ensure that markers do not share utensils, food or drinks and observe strict hand hygiene.

10.6 Serving of tea and meals

- (a) Social distancing must be implemented and factored into the grouping/rotation of groups during tea and meal times and as they walk to and from the dining halls and in the corridors and stairways.
- (b) Consider an appropriate rotation plan to limit the number of people in the dining hall to no more than 50 people at each time
- (c) Serving station for tea times should also be set for a maximum of 50 people at a time. Consider decentralizing tea stations/water stations and the use of disposable cups and utensils.
- (d) Tables at dining halls should be set 1.5 m apart and markers should sit one chair away from each other at a table.
- (e) The dining hall can be divided into two parts so that if one section is being cleaned, the other section can be in use.
- (f) Consider serving take away meals to limit the time markers/officials/EAs/support staff have to queue or be in prolonged contact in a group.
- (g) If an individual is in an isolation room in the hostel, and is awaiting the results of the COVID-19 test or is preparing to be tested, the COVID-19 Compliance Officer will work with the catering staff to make safe arrangements for the individual to take meals in the isolation room. All staff involved in the meal preparation, serving, collection of utensils and crockery must wear PPE for their own protection.

11. PERMIT TO ALLOW FOR MOVEMENT DURING CURFEW HOURS

- (a) Marking Personnel that need to travel during the curfew hours must obtain a permit which will be issued by the PED and must be signed by the Head of Department (HoD) or an official duly authorized by the HoD (**APPENDIX 2**).



APPENDIX 1

COVID-19 HEALTH SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE MARKING OF THE 2021 and 2022 EXAMINATIONS

MARKING OFFICIAL / VISITOR'S DETAILS							
Name of Marking Centre:							
Name and Surname:							
Designation	Marking Official Resident		Marking Official Non-Resident		EA Resident	EA Non-Resident	Visitor
Purpose of visit							
ID. No. / PERSAL No.							
Physical Address							
E-mail address							
Cell phone No.							
Travel to and from marking centre	Use of own car		Travel in a lift club		Use of public transport		
COVID -19 SCREENING QUESTIONS							
1. Have you been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19?	YES		NO				
2. Was your temperature taken?	YES		NO				
3. Do you have any of the following symptoms? :	YES		NO				
a. Fever (high temperature) in the last 14 days?							
b. Cough							
c. Sore throat							
d. Shortness of breath							
e. Myalgia (general weakness)							
f. Loss of taste (ageusia)							
g. Loss of sense of smell (anosmia)							
h. Body aches							
i. Redness of the eyes							
j. Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhoea							

Declaration

I hereby certify that the information I have provided is complete, true and accurate and I give permission for the PED/marketing centre management/COVID-19 Compliance Officer to validate any information provided in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act. As a marking official, I accept that if I have provided false information, then disciplinary procedures and processes will apply.

As a visitor, if the information I've provided is false, I will not be permitted to enter/return to the marking centre and the company or organisation will be informed accordingly.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 2

PERMIT TO PERFORM AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE OR PERMITTED SERVICE
Regulation 16(2)(b) and 28(4)

Please note that the person to whom the permit is issued must at all times present a form of identification with this permit. If no identification is presented the person to whom the permit is issued will have to return to his or her place of residence during Alert level 4.

I, being the head of institution with the below mentioned details

Surname				
Full names				
Identity No.				
Contact details	Cell nr	Tel nr (w)	Tel nr (h)	e-mail address
Physical address of institution				

Hereby certify that the below mentioned official / employee is performing services in my institution

Surname	
Full names	
Identity nr	
Physical address of institution	

Signed at _____ on this the ____ of _____ **202_**

HEAD OF INSTITUTION

Official stamp of Institution
