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GOVERNMENT NOTICE GOEWERMENSKENNISGEWING

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION MINISTERIE VAN ONDERWYS

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT, 1996 (ACT No. 27 OF 1996)

CALL FOR COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ASSESSMENT POLICY FOR THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING PHASE, GRADE R TO 9 AND ABET

I, Sibusiso Mandlenkosi Emmanuel Bengu, Minister of Education, hereby in terms of section 3 (4) (1) of the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996) request any person, society or organisation to submit to me, before **Tuesday, 14 July 1998**, comments on the aforementioned report as contained in the Schedule.

Comments should be forwarded to—

The Director-General: Education
(For the attention of Dr N. Mgijima)
Private Bag X895
PRETORIA
0001

S. M. E. BENGU
Minister of Education

NASIONALE ONDERWYSBELEID, 1996 (WET No. 27 VAN 1996)

OPROEP OM KOMMENTAAR OP DIE KONSEPEVALUERINGSBELEID VIR DIE ALGEMENE ONDERWYS- EN OPLEIDINGSFASE, GRAAD R TOT 9, EN VOLWASSE-ONDERWYS

Ek, Sibusiso Mandlenkosi Emmanuel Bengu, Minister van Onderwys, versoek hiermee in terme van of artikel 3 (4) (1) van die Wet op Nasionale Onderwysbeleid, 1996 (No. 27 van 1996) enige persoon, vereniging of organisasie om aan my voor **Dinsdag, 14 Julie 1998**, kommentaar op die voorgenoemde dokument, soos vervat in die Skedule, voor te lê.

Kommentaar moet gestuur word aan—

Die Direkteur-Generaal: Onderwys
(Vir aandag: Dr N. Mgijima)
Privaatsak X895
PRETORIA
0001

S. M. E. BENGU

Minister van Onderwys

DRAFT ASSESSMENT POLICY
IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION
AND TRAINING PHASE
GRADE R TO 9 AND ABET

MAY 1998



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PREFACE

The development and implementation of a new assessment system within the General Education and Training phase in South Africa presents our nation with exciting opportunities to reconstruct and develop our current education and training systems into a system that reflects an integrated approach which addresses the learner's and nation's needs.

This draft assessment policy is addressed to Provincial Departments of Education, heads of curriculum and assessment units, school principals, subject advisers, curriculum facilitators and classroom practitioners. It will also inform parents, school governing bodies and all other stakeholders involved in learner assessment.

It aims to assist each school to develop sound school-based assessment practices which will improve students' learning, as well as the quality of learning programmes.

The draft policy document gives a broad framework for assessment. This is grounded in the context of the requirements of the National Education Policy Act (1996), the Curriculum 2005 Policy Documents for the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase (October 1997), and the SAQA Act (1995).

The National Department acknowledges the valuable contributions of the Curriculum Management Committee, and the various consultations and workshops that were held. Appendix A lists the members of these groups, those consulted, and the workshops addressed. While these workshops and consultations were not exhaustive and did not cover all possible stakeholders, and role players, they certainly assisted in mapping out the issues that needed to be addressed in the field of assessment.

DRAFT POLICY STATEMENTS

These draft policy statements are extracted from the text, referring to the following paragraphs:

4.1 Outcomes-Based Assessment

From the beginning of schooling (Grade R) and ABET level 1 to the end of the General Education & Training Phase (Grade 9 and ABET level 4), outcomes-based assessment must be an integral part of the teaching and learning process, administered within the guidelines of the provincial education departments, which complies with national education policy.

4.2 The Purpose of Assessment

The primary purpose of assessment should be to maximise learners' access to the knowledge, skills and attitudes as defined in the national *Curriculum 2005 Policy Documents for the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase*. Directly connected to assessment is the issue of Quality Assurance (i.e. maintaining standards) together with the national requirement of equity, access and redress. It should therefore, for example, advance race, gender, ELSEN, opportunities in a culture-fair and anti-bias manner.

4.4 What is being assessed?

The learners performance as they progress towards achieving the outcomes as stated in the national *Curriculum 2005 Policy Documents for the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase*.

4.5 Who is involved?

The teacher/practitioner should have overall responsibility for the assessment. However, the decision of who should be involved will be determined partly by the actual form of assessment undertaken. At its best it involves a partnership between teacher, learner and parents and other school support teams e.g. occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists etc. In this partnership the rights to confidentiality should be borne in mind. In order to achieve a balance, some assessment reflections should rely mainly on the teacher/practitioner insight, some on the learner, some on the learners' peers or parents and some on the school support teams.

4.6 Types of Assessment

Some assessments should be based on working independently, some on working in pairs and some in groups or teams.

4.6.1 Continuous/Formative Assessment

From the beginning of Schooling (Grade R) and ABET Level 1 to the end of the General Education & Training Phase (Grade 9) and ABET Level 4, continuous/ formative assessment must be an integral part of the teaching and learning process administered within the guidelines of the provincial education department, which complies with national education policy.

4.6.2 Summative Assessment

In summative assessment carried out either at the end of a term or at the end of a grade, assessors should include information about a learner's progress drawn mainly from continuous/formative assessments made throughout the learning process.

4.7 Techniques of assessment

A wide variety of techniques suitable for assessing the performance of learners should be incorporated into the continuous assessment practice. These should be employed to ascertain mastery of what is required, as fairly and as transparently as possible, according to publicly agreed criteria.

4.8 Reporting Achievement

The assessment of learners must be transparent; must acknowledge the rights to confidentiality, the rights of learners and their parents to be an integral part of any assessment process and must ensure their understanding of and right of access to all assessment results and reports. Formal reporting on learner assessment should be carried out once a term within the guidelines of the provincial education department.

4.9 Internal and External Assessment

4.9.1 Internal Assessment

From the beginning of schooling (Grade R) and ABET level 1 to the end of the General Education & Training Phase (Grade 9 and ABET level 4), there will be internal continuous assessment which is

administered and marked by teachers/facilitators and moderated externally, (for example other schools, advisory services, outside agencies) within the guidelines of the provincial education department, which comply with national education policy. A system should be in place to ensure external reference points for internal assessment decisions. System moderation is essential.

4.9.2 External Assessment

At the end of the General Education & Training Phase (Grade 9 and ABET level 4), there will be external assessment designed, set, marked and moderated by a body/provincial department, which is separate from the school/organisation/institution which delivers learning.

5 Promotion And Progression Within Phases

From the beginning of the General Education & Training phase (Grade R to Grade 9) learners will progress with their age cohort. Should the learner, according to his/her assessment profile as developed during the course of the year, display a lack of progress in achieving the outcomes and in a case where teachers/facilitators/schools/support services provide adequate information or evidence of interventions and support given to the learner, the parents/guardian and/or institution/provincial department could use their discretion by allowing such a learner to spend more time on task on those areas where difficulties are experienced. As a guideline no learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years.

5.2 Foundation Phase Assessment

Continuous and formative assessment for the Foundation Phase, from grade R to 3, will be internal, set and marked by the teacher and moderated externally within guidelines of the Provincial Education Departments.

Summative assessment at Grade 3 will be external, administered as part of the national systemic evaluation.

5.3 Intermediate Phase Assessment

Continuous and formative assessment, as well as summative assessment for the Intermediate Phase, from grade 4 to 6, will be internal and external, set and marked by the teachers and moderated externally within guidelines of the Provincial Education Departments.

Grade 6 summative assessment will form part of the national systemic evaluation.

5.4 Senior Phase Assessment

Continuous and formative assessment, as well as summative assessment for the Senior Phase, from grade 7 to 9, will be internal and external, set and marked by the teachers and moderated externally within guidelines of the Provincial Education Departments. Grade 6 summative assessment will form part of the national systemic evaluation.

5.5 Grade 9 and ABET Level 4 (GETC)

The principle of equal access to education opportunities will be prevalent at the GET phase to support the principle of education for all, enshrined in the Constitution. A modular system at ABET levels in the GET phase is highly recommended in order to facilitate access, mobility and portability of qualifications and credits. The GETC will be the first national assessment in the schooling and ABET systems accredited by the NQF.

There will be external assessment, which, together with the credits accumulated from grade 7, will contribute to the attainment of the qualification. The assessment will be of an integrative nature i.e. continuous/formative and summative.

Accountability to the public and transparency to all stakeholders will require that the Department of Education introduce external moderation for the validation of the assessment that leads to the qualification at Grade 9 and ABET level 4.

6 Adult learners' assessment

All the recommendations featured in this draft policy document apply to the assessment of adult learners. This draft policy should be applied in conjunction with the National Interim Guidelines ABET, and the Guidelines to ABET assessment documents.

6.1 Recognition of Prior Learning

It must be considered a priority to develop policy, to set up mechanisms and provide access to a formal system of RPL, leading to credits and qualifications registered on the NQF. The national

Department, in collaboration with provincial departments, should initiate this process.

7 *Learners With Special Educational Needs*

All the recommendations featured in this draft policy document apply to the assessment of Learners with Special Educational Needs. The new outcomes-based approach has taken the requirements of learners with special education needs (ELSEN) into account in the process of developing learning programme guidelines.

7.1 *Role of Education Support Personnel*

Direct involvement by education support personnel in routine assessment of individual learners should be de-emphasised. They should rather play a role in supporting educators and parents in assessment and developing appropriate interventions, developing preventative and promotive programmes, and only addressing individual problems when other centre-based interventions have not proved effective.

7.2 *Standardised Tests*

Learners should only be assessed by means of standardised tests, which have proven usefulness in identifying barriers to learning and development. The routine administration of group tests of intelligence should be discontinued.

7.3 *Early identification*

The early identification and assessment of children who are likely to experience barriers to learning and development, as well as the principles of early intervention, should be a national priority.

8 *Systemic Evaluation*

Systemic Evaluation should play an integral part in ensuring that all learners derive maximum benefit from the system of education. Systemic Evaluation includes the evaluation of all aspects of the sites of learning and learning programmes. Systemic Evaluation will take place at grades 3, 6 and 9. This evaluation will not be done annually. It is important to state that not all learners and learning sites will be evaluated. A nationally representative sample of learners and learning sites will be evaluated.

9 **Implementation of the Draft Assessment Policy**

The new draft assessment policy should be phased in over a period adequate for the preparation and trial of new assessment methods, for educator preparation and capacity building, and for learners to benefit from curriculum 2005. This should continue at least until 2004, the review year.

9.4.1 **Teacher/Educator Support**

The implementation of a system of teacher-driven assessment must be supported by a focused programme for training and re-orientating teachers and education support services personnel, to fulfil new roles and perform new functions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Assessment has played a prominent role in educational reform because of "its potential to influence the entire reform process". One of the driving forces behind educational reform is the desire to initiate improvements of standards and measure their attainment. These are standards in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. The argument is that measurement of educational reform will be easier to achieve if assessment is tied to standards.

It is increasingly acknowledged, both internationally and in South Africa, that assessment has a direct influence on teaching and learning, and that this power can be harnessed and directed to achieve positive impact.

The negative effect of many types of examination and testing has been well documented. In South Africa the use of the Senior Certificate Examination as the basis for both university entrance and the accrediting of school leavers with a certificate, has led to a complicated system of subject groupings, Higher, Standard and Lower Grade examination papers, aggregates, compulsory and non-compulsory, examinable and non-examinable 'offerings', special exceptions for 'immigrants' and African first language speakers, which only a few experts could confidently interpret and apply. This complexity has added to the aura and secrecy which has shrouded assessment procedures in South Africa.

With the introduction of new curriculum in January 1998, South Africans have been presented a life-time opportunity to transform their assessment procedures to fall into line with current educational policies that seek to transform education.

Assessment is undergoing transformation in the majority of countries, where the pressures of a changing global economy demand sites of learning to develop competent citizens, capable of flexible thinking and independent learning. To meet these demands sites of learning are increasingly required to have an ongoing commitment to an appropriate relevant curriculum, with quality teaching and learning, informed by good practice in assessment.

2. THE CURRENT POLICY ON ASSESSMENT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Section 3(4)(l) of the *National Education Policy Act, 1996 (no. 27 of 1996)*, makes provision for the determination of national education policy regarding curriculum frameworks, core syllabi and education programmes, learning standards, examinations and the certification of qualifications, subject to the provisions of any law establishing a national qualifications framework or a certifying or accrediting body:

The policy document, *A Résumé of Instructional Programmes in Public Schools, Report 550 (97/06)*, containing the programme requirements for current school education, has at this stage only a maintenance function and will be gradually replaced by the new curriculum policy currently introduced in grade 1, and this draft assessment policy, once it has been declared as policy.

2.1. A RÉSUMÉ OF INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, REPORT 550 97/06

From Grade 2 to 4, decisions on a learner's promotion are to be based on the two core instructional offerings, i.e. Mathematics and the approved language.

The promotion requirements for Grades 5 and 6 are satisfactory levels of achievement in the approved language and Mathematics, and any other two of the remaining compulsory examined instructional offerings, i.e. General Science, Geography, History and an additional official language.

In Grade 7 a learner must pass four instructional offerings at the following levels:

- 40 percent in an approved language (at first or second language level);
- 40 percent in one of the following: the other approved language, an additional language, Mathematics, General Science, or Geography/History.
- 40 percent in one other examination instructional offering, and
- 35 percent in one other examination instructional offering.

For Grades 8 and 9 the promotion requirements are as follows:

a learner must pass five instructional offerings at the following levels:

- 40 percent in an approved language (at first or second language level);
- 40 percent in one of the following: the other approved language, an additional language, Mathematics, General science, or Geography/History.
- 40 percent in one other examination instructional offering, and
- 35 percent in two other examination instructional offerings.

To obtain a Senior Certificate (Grade 10-12), a candidate must offer and write not fewer than six instructional offerings, excluding Advanced Mathematics, from groups A-F of instructional offerings as listed in the policy document, *A Résumé of Instructional Programmes in Public Schools, Report 550 97/06*, provided that:

- the five instructional offerings passed, include the two official languages, one on First Language Level and the other on First or Second Language Level, or one official language and another approved language, and

a minimum aggregate mark of 720 is obtained.

2.2 INEFFICIENCIES ASSOCIATED WITH CURRENT PRACTICES IN ASSESSMENT

The following are but a few of the **inefficiencies** that are associated with current practices in assessment.

- As a result of current policy having promotion requirements, for particular subjects, at every grade, many learners are repeating the whole year, even when they have mastered other subjects. This has given rise to a high repetition rate.
- Many learners who find themselves having difficulty in fulfilling the requirements for promotion and thus having to repeat grades a number of times, are dropping out of the system.
- Due to the fact current policy stipulates requirements for promotion and progression at the end of every grade, teachers have tended to rely on written tests and examinations at the end of the year in their assessment of learners.

- The teaching and learning strategies currently operating in most of our learning centres are teacher-driven and traditional, and they do not lend themselves to progressive forms of assessment.
- The high rate of failure in the Senior Certificate examination. In 1997, only 47.4% of the learners who wrote the examination passed.
- In most of the provinces, for some of the subjects the overall assessment of a learner in the Senior Certificate is based on the examination marks only.
- Although continuous assessment has been introduced as part of the public schools' policy, its implementation has proved to be problematic, as a result of varied interpretations of continuous assessment.
- The high rate of unemployment of out of school youth has been viewed as one of the inefficiencies associated with current assessment practices.
- The mismatch between formal qualifications and the skills possessed by learners, who leave the education system.
- The high exclusion of learners with special educational needs within the system, as a result of inaccurate assessments.
- The flow of learners within the system has been hampered by the high repeater rate.
- The lack of transparency and accountability in the system of assessment, has resulted in learners not being clear about what is required in the assessments, and who is accountable for their failure to fulfil the requirements.

3. THE NEED FOR CHANGE

A dramatic paradigm shift is needed in assessment practice in education and training in South Africa, as a logical and essential part of the transformation envisaged in new policies. The critical characteristic of the required shift, is the move from the judgmental to the developmental role of assessment. This reflects a changing perception world-wide of the nature of assessment and its main purpose. The old assessment paradigm still operating, particularly at micro-policy level, is grossly inadequate to deal with the challenges presented by new policies aimed at transformation.

The current high levels of expenditure and costs borne by the state for offering the Senior Certificate Examination without the positive returns required for such expenditure, cannot continue without being questioned.

In the introduction of a new policy on assessment, it is imperative that alternative strategies of assessing learner achievement are implemented. These alternative strategies must take into consideration the continuous/formative assessment in the summative assessment. In this way the principles of access, equity and redress and positive returns in the form of financial investments into education could be realised.

3.1 A NEW APPROACH TO LEARNING & TEACHING - OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

Outcomes-based education is a learner-centred, results-orientated design, based on the belief that all individuals can learn. The strategy for outcomes-based education implies the following:

What learners are to learn is clearly identified
Each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement
Each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools
Each learner is provided the time assistance to realise his/her potential.

Characteristics of outcomes-based education

1. What a learner is to learn is clearly identified. There is a clear focus on culminating outcomes of significance.

Outcomes are:

- future oriented
- publicly defined
- learner centred
- focused on life skills and context
- characterised by high expectations of and for all learners
- sources from which all other educational decisions flow

Learning is:

- carefully facilitated towards achievement of outcomes
- characterised by its appropriateness to each learner's needs, interests and developmental level

active and experienced-based for maximum application of the knowledge, skills and orientation necessary to learner success in the present and future.

2. Each learner's progress is based on demonstrated achievement

Emphasis is on achievement of outcomes and application of learning rather than on "covering" material

assessment of learning is appropriate to the learning, its life context and the learner

advancement is based on achievement of outcomes, rather than on seat time or comparative data

progress is demonstrated and recorded based, on criterion-referenced, rather than on norm-referenced assessment

learners advance because they demonstrate the accomplishment of significant skills for independence and future success.

3. Each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching and learning strategies and assessment tools

Instructional decisions are based on each learners' needs, desires and readiness for achieving outcomes

instructional design for each learner is an ongoing process of reflection and analysis that is focused on meeting the learner's needs

educators facilitate the learning process and coach learners based on the best theory, research and analysis

assessments are effectively used to practise and substantiate learning and provide data for further learning decisions

learners become progressively more able to design their own learning options and assessments

4. Each learner is provided the time assistance to realise his/her potential

All learners work to become more:

responsible for their own learning

able to make appropriate learning decisions

independent in their learning and thinking

self-assessing

successful

Time is:

Viewed and applied as a variable, while learning is a constant managed wisely by the learner and the school to achieve ever-increasing levels of accomplishment.

Assistance is

sought from every available resource to provide significant learning opportunities ensured to maximise each learner's success not limited to traditional definitions of school, learning or teaching provided to meet the needs of the whole learner.

4. A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSMENT

This draft assessment policy document stipulates the assessment requirements of the new curriculum, phased in during the period 1998 -2005.

The policy document stipulates the following:

- the purposes of assessment and their underlying principles
- types of assessment
- assessment requirements
- planning and conducting assessment at the school level
- recording information on learner achievement
- reporting to learners and parents
- promotion and progression
- the new assessment model
- moderation/validation
- other assessment systems, ABET & ELSEN

4.1. ASSESSMENT IN OUTCOMES- BASED EDUCATION

An outcomes-based system of education builds on the notion that all learners can achieve their full potential. In terms of assessment suited to new theories of learning, an outcomes-based system is helpful. These theories suggest that the *tabula rasa* image of filling empty vessels with knowledge, or other approaches where the learner is a passive recipient or rote learner, although effective in some cases, deprive large numbers of learners of adequate opportunities to realise their full potential. Outcomes-based assessment can assure access to such opportunities.

Outcomes-based learning focuses on the achievement of clearly defined outcomes, rather than teacher input in terms of the syllabus content. Thus it supports the learner-centred models of assessment. Outcomes-based assessment makes it possible to credit learners' achievements at every level, whatever pathway they may have followed, and at whatever rate they may have acquired the necessary competence. Assessment thus moves us away from the traditional concept which involved spending a specified period of time to achieve particular learning outcomes, irrespective of whether a learner was able to achieve them in a much shorter time.

In addition, agreed common learning outcomes, can be met at different rates by learners with specialised educational needs [LSEN], adults and children, both in and outside mainstream schooling. Assessment can be learner-paced. This should be of great importance to LSEN and their teachers, as both curriculum and assessment have presented great problems in the past.

Assessment in an outcomes-based system facilitates transparency of process and the support of learning through agreed assessment criteria. All who meet the agreed criteria for specified learning outcomes, receive acknowledgement or credit. Those who do not meet the criteria can receive clear explanations, indicating areas which need further work in order to reach the required standard. Thus they are given support to try again. The transparency of the goals, making explicit much that was formerly only implied or assumed, makes assessment easier to understand and more equitable.

Acknowledgement of competence at every level is also made easier in an outcomes-based system. In certain fields, outcomes-based assessment has always been used, for example, driving tests, music certificates, a pilot's licence; the candidate receives the credit on demonstrating *competence* or mastery at a certain level. In any particular batch of candidates, if no-one is competent, no-one passes. If all are competent, all pass. Outcomes-based assessment seeks to acknowledge competence wherever it is demonstrated in all fields, whilst recognising that competence may be harder to judge in some fields than others.

This approach contrasts with systems which rely overwhelmingly on norm referencing, where the primary purpose is selection.

Assessment in an outcomes-based system also facilitates flexible credit accumulation allowing portability and progression. In documentation about the NQF, it is envisaged that adult basic education and training and all education and training above level 1, will be modularised, with credits awarded to candidates who meet the assessment criteria stated on the unit standards registered on the NQF. Learners whose studies are interrupted by family circumstances, changing jobs or housing, and those with specialised educational needs, will be able to retain their credits and build on them to achieve a qualification whenever and wherever the opportunity arises. Because the credits will be based on nationally recognised standards, they will be accepted in all parts of South Africa. Qualifications awarded should also receive international recognition once the system is established.

In conclusion, the introduction of an outcomes-based system of education and training and outcomes-based assessment, are mutually reliant and have a symbiotic relationship. All of the benefits of changing the system in terms of realising the vision and the principles outlined in the *White Paper on Education and Training* [1995], are dependent on educators understanding that a simultaneous change in assessment paradigm is essential. Flexibility, quality assurance, portability, credit accumulation, transparency, relevance, access, equity, integration, and RPL are all facilitated by the new approach, only if assessment practices also make the necessary shift.

4.2 THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment has a variety of purposes. Different kinds of assessment are appropriate for different purposes. These purposes might include:

- a learner seeking help in selecting learning programmes or a career direction
- a selection panel trying to assess the potential of under-qualified applicants for a particular programme
- an educator trying to place a learner in an appropriate grade/level
- an adult seeking formal recognition of prior learning achieved through work experience
- a learner wanting a clear picture of his/her strengths and developmental needs
- a parent wanting to know how the learner is progressing
- an educational psychologist diagnosing the root of a pupil's learning difficulty.

The purpose of assessment could include any of the following: diagnosis, evaluation, guidance, grading, selection, prediction and control. Most systems which rely heavily on external examinations, subordinate the first three [broadly formative, developmental and supportive] functions to the last four [which are

more summative and judgmental]. In the new paradigm we have shifted the balance in favour of formative aspects of assessment, which have historically been undervalued in South Africa.

Assessment designers must be clear whether they wish to obtain a mark or grade to record towards some summative assessment, whether they wish to inform their own planning, analyse patterns of errors to detect the underlying problem, or have in mind some other specific purposes. It is possible to serve more than one of the above-mentioned purposes at a time, but if this is understood in the planning and design of the assessment and it is carried out accordingly.

4.3 PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT

Together with the purpose of assessment, a number of principles emerge. Effective and informative assessment should:

- Have clear, direct links with the critical and specific outcomes.
- Be integral to teaching and learning.
- Be balanced, comprehensive and varied.
- Be valid and fair.
- Engage the learners.
- Value the education and training practitioner judgement.
- Be time efficient and manageable.
- Recognise individual achievements and progress.
- Involve a 'whole school' approach.
- Actively involve parents.
- Convey meaningful and useful information.
- Cater for learners with special educational needs.
- Be bias free and sensitive to the gender, race and cultural backgrounds and abilities of learners.
- Improve the quality of learning.

4.4 WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED

Learner Progress and Achievement

The best way to achieve a fair and balanced assessment of a learner's progress and achievement is to provide each learner with a variety of opportunities of demonstrating his/her competence in different ways and across different contexts. One person might excel at written assessment conducted under examination conditions; to another this might not be the case. Practical skills and creativity should not be assessed through lengthy theoretical descriptions.

Thus choosing what kind of assessment to use necessitates an overview of a system of assessment being used over a period of time, to produce a balanced holistic picture of the learner's progress.

Outcomes as benchmarked at grades 3,6 & 9 in compulsory education and Unit Standards for ABET levels 1,2,3 and 4.

The focus on outcomes requires that teaching practitioners assess individual learners' progress continually and that they use appropriate resources and strategies to facilitate and improve the quality of each learner's learning. In addition it is essential that all learners have a clear understanding of the **outcomes** of what they are expected to **know**, are able to **do**, and **value** at particular stages in their learning. These outcomes have been identified in the form of specific outcomes at key stages. Teachers can ensure that learners have this understanding by discussing their progress with them at frequent intervals.

Assessment Criteria for 3,6,9

As a result of the wide range of learning experience encountered by learners in attaining an outcome, the assessment criteria become an essential part of planning and learning. In order to achieve the assessment criteria (evidence of achievement of the outcome), the assessment task has to be appropriately designed, in terms of form, use, level of difficulty, frequency, timing and feedback, if it has to make a positive contribution to learning. Learners need information on their performance as a check on what they have or have not mastered, and as a guide and stimulus to subsequent learning.

Performance Indicators

In the process of ascertaining whether the **outcome** has been achieved or not, as stated in the **assessment criteria**, at key stages i.e. **3,6 & 9 and ABET levels 1,2,3 and 4**, practitioners will be assisted by the performance indicators. These will provide the practitioners and learners with a breakdown of the essential stages to reach in the process of achieving the outcome. Performance indicators will help to plan the learning process, track progress and diagnose areas of weakness.

4.5 WHO IS INVOLVED

Teacher/practitioners will have overall responsibility to assess the learners on all the achievement of the learning outcomes, and this will be followed by systemic evaluation at grade 3,6 and 9 for compulsory education. At ABET levels 1,2 and 3, internal summative assessment will be conducted and at ABET level 4 (GETC level) an external summative assessment will be conducted. Professional assessment focuses on individual progress and performance, and at its best, involves a partnership between teacher, learner and parents and other school support teams e.g. occupational therapists, speech therapist, psychologists etc.

The main beneficiary of assessment must be the individual learner, and therefore the main purposes must be for growth and development. Practitioners must become competent assessors and make for themselves an enhanced role within the national policy framework. Assessment is, after all, a tool for practitioners to be used for the benefit of learners.

4.6 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

4.6.1 Continuous/formative assessment

Continuous assessment is used to support the learner developmentally and to feed back into teaching and learning. The practice of Continuous Assessment (CASS) implies a paradigm shift from promotion decisions based on the results of a **single** test or examination (summative evaluation) to the ongoing formative assessment of the learner which is associated with feedback to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of learners' performance. Recorded evidence on the learner's progressive achievement will include portfolios and profiles of learner's work, as well as documented records of education and training practitioner's appraisals, both verbal and written.

All assessment will be underpinned by the assessment criteria of the critical and specific learning outcomes agreed upon and registered under the auspices of SAQA with the NQF (see *Curriculum 2005 Specific Outcomes Document*).

The emphasis of assessment is placed on formative assessment of the learner's work over a period of time, rather than on performance in a once-off achievement-based examination.

These policy initiatives aim to move education and training practitioners' and learner's focus away from memorisation of content as an end in itself, toward a more thematic approach by which learners work with content in pursuit of larger understandings; effectively, learners will be expected to translate content into meaning and meaningful action.

CASS should be redefined to reflect innovations in assessment which do not refer to assessment techniques, but to the *new connections* that have been made between these assessments and the cognitive skills and processes identified by cognitive theorists over the past ten years. In South Africa the NQF has set out critical cross-field outcomes that suggest the range of general skills that reflect the desired outcomes of teaching and learning in the new dispensation.

CASS should not be interpreted merely as being the accumulation of a series of traditional test results. Authentic assessments should be prominent components of incorporating the three main categories of new assessment (aimed at assessing skills and processes as well as knowledge and attitudes and personal growth) which

are encompassed in participating in group or individual projects, portfolios and performance assessments.

The strength and success of a CASS-based model rests on the professionalism and ability of a highly skilled teaching and training *corps* who understand, and are able to apply, the sound educational assessment principles and draw from the variety of assessment techniques advocated in this document.

In a CASS-based model the principle of criterion-referenced assessment underpins all assessment undertaken in the learning site, i.e. measuring individual performance against clearly defined standards. In the case of South Africa, therefore, teaching and learning would be aligned with the national requirements of NQF unit standards or defined outcomes in the case of Grades R to Grade 9 of compulsory education, as well as in Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET).

Features of Continuous/Formative Assessment (CASS)

CASS:

- enables education and training practitioners to use any planned learning experience to assess each learner's achievements and progress
- is an essential aspect of the total evaluation of every learner
- takes place over a long period - virtually all the time
- is diagnostic - enables the education and training practitioner to monitor strengths and weakness in the performance of each learner
- enables education and training practitioners to pace learners - provide enrichment for fast learners
- sets well-defined targets (outcomes) for learners
- ensures that course work assumes significance for the learner, thus provides positive outcomes and avoids *teaching for the test*
- is generally conducted more informally and covers a wide spectrum of learning activities and tasks
- is transparent - learners are aware and understand what is being assessed
- requires that a sound assessment record is developed of the learning process which forms the basis of progressive achievement for promotion
- involves informal daily assessment of different aspects of the curriculum ensuring that content is not the only focus
- encourages and teaches learners to appraise their own work
- ensures that education and training practitioners use a range of different assessment techniques
- ensures that learners are exposed to a wide range of assessment techniques and have a clear understanding of what is important
- ensures that summative assessment is **only a component** of the evaluation

4.6.2 Summative assessment

Summative assessment is assessment carried out at the end of a learning period and is used to confirm that learners have met all the competence requirements. It requires the collection of sufficient, appropriate evidence on which to base a judgement about achievement against the relevant national standard. The results of the formative assessment process should be taken into account in making this final judgement.

The boundary between formative and summative assessment is not always clear-cut. Certainly an examination at the end of a learner's course, which is being used to decide what the learner, as he/she is now, 'adds up to', and where the assessor has no intention of basing further teaching on the knowledge so gained, is a tool of summative assessment.

Certainly the practitioners comments on a learner's homework or his/her response to remarks in class, seem to indicate formative assessment - implying some kind of teaching intention.

4.7 ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

Numerous assessment techniques are suitable for continuous assessment in the learning site and all education and training practitioners should have a sound knowledge of what each technique offers.

Continuous/formative assessment would include using the following assessment techniques:

- Diagnostic assessment
- Achievement-based assessment
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- Portfolio assessment
- Performance assessment
- Observation sheets
- Journals
- Education and training practitioner-made tests
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Project work assessment (self/peer/publicly defended and assessed)

4.8 REPORTING PROGRESS & ACHIEVEMENT

The success of a continuous assessment model rests on sound and meticulous methods of recording learner achievement over an ongoing, lengthy period of time. Relevant outcomes of achievement should be recorded. Cumulative records of learners which record their progress, should accompany all learners throughout their learning path and should include some information on the holistic development of the learner, i.e. attitudes, social development, etc. Portfolios should be built over a period of time and retained so that they are visible proof of the development and improvement of learner achievement over time. Samples of learners' work should show that they are able to integrate knowledge, concepts and skills and that learners have not only been assessed on memorisation of facts. Remembering, understanding and using knowledge will thus become the focus of the assessment of learner achievement and not mere rote learning and regurgitation of content.

4.9 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

4.9.1 Internal Assessment

Internal assessment is administered and marked by teachers/facilitators. It may be designed by teachers themselves in co-operation with the partners involved in assessment or follow guidelines produced by the provincial education departments.

4.9.2 External Assessment

External assessment is an assessment [often in the form of an examination] designed, set and marked by a body which is separate from the organisation/institution which delivers the learning programme.

5. PROMOTION AND PROGRESSION WITHIN PHASES

This draft policy on assessment represents a shift from current policy i.e. *A résumé of instructional programmes in public schools*, Report 550 97/06), where there are promotion and progression requirements for every grade. In the current policy the evidence of the learner's fulfilment of these requirements is used to decide whether a learner can move to the next grade.

In outcomes-based assessment, progression is defined in terms of the accomplishment /achievements of nationally agreed specific outcomes. The pace at which these stated outcomes can be achieved is not time bound. The evidence of learner performance or progression in achieving outcomes, will be used to identify areas where the learner needs support, to assist with the planning of teaching and learning process, which responds to the learners' needs and areas of development. Therefore the evidence derived from the performance of learners in progressing to achieve these outcomes are for developmental and not gate-keeping purposes. It is expected that learners will progress with their age cohort.

5.1. FACTORS THAT PROMOTE PROGRESSION

These are some of the factors that will promote progression in assessment

- * The introduction of mixed ability teaching, which involves effective group work and continuous/formative assessment.
- * the more general use of assessment to inform differentiated planning by teachers, who should cater for different levels of achievement within each class;
- * planning by education policy makers for a move towards learner-paced assessment, which could be phased in from the reception year and foundation phase upwards;
- * a more flexible and holistic approach to summative assessment, which involves less rigid promotion requirements;
- * greater emphasis on developing learner autonomy over organising own work, awareness of own learning process and self-monitoring of achievement;
- * greater emphasis on peer group assessment, both for its immediate advantages and as preparation for lifelong learning.

5.2 FOUNDATION PHASE (GRADES R TO 3)

Foundation Phase Assessment

Continuous and formative assessment for the Foundation Phase, from grade R to 3, will be internal, set and marked by the teacher and moderated externally within guidelines of the Provincial Education Departments.

Summative assessment at Grade 3 will be external, administered as part of the national systemic evaluation.

5.3 INTERMEDIATE PHASE (GRADES 4 TO 6)

Intermediate Phase Assessment

Continuous and formative assessment, as well as summative assessment for the Intermediate Phase, from grade 4 to 6, will be internal and external, set and marked by the teachers and moderated externally within guidelines of the Provincial Education Departments. Grade 6 summative assessment will form part of the national systemic evaluation.

5.4 SENIOR PHASE (GRADES 7 TO 9)

Senior Phase Assessment

Continuous and formative assessment, as well as summative assessment for the Senior Phase, from grade 7 to 9, will be internal and external, set and marked by the teachers and moderated externally within guidelines of the Provincial Education Departments. Grade 9 summative assessment will form part of the national systemic evaluation.

5.5 GRADE 9 & ABET LEVEL 4 (GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING CERTIFICATE)

Grade 9 and ABET Level 4, represent the exit year for the GET Band and the first level of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The grade 9 exit certificate (GETC qualification) is recognised as a central component of education reform and renewal. It will bring South Africa into line with other developed systems by providing a clear attainment target for the end of compulsory schooling, rather than leaving a large part of learners without any formal recognition of their achievements. It is worth noting here that, although in most Western countries, only a small minority of learners now leave school at the end of compulsory

schooling, assessments and certificates awarded at this point continue to have an important function. In some countries they have independent credibility and importance for the labour market, in other countries, they are important in deciding which pathways a student should follow in further education.

Two general points are worth noting here:

- a) Assessment procedures for certificates awarded at the end of compulsory schooling cannot be too dissimilar from those used for more advanced procedures if they are to be valued.
Given the tradition of external assessment for the South African Senior Certificate, the Grade 9 Certificate will have to have an external component, at least in the short run, if it is to command respect, especially in the **labour market**.
- b) The certificate is bound, quite quickly, to be used as a steering and filtering mechanism affecting which routes learners follow after grade 9. Given that this is the case, it will be advisable, as soon as possible, to consider ways in which performance on the certificate should articulate with later options and choices.

Given that certain key decisions about the structure of the certificate have not been reached, it is difficult to make any clear recommendations about specific assessment methods at this stage.

6. ADULT LEARNERS

Adult Basic Education and Training comprises three benchmark levels below the General Education and Training Certificate. The ABET learning continuum therefore covers ABET Levels 1,2,3 and 4, with ABET Level 4 as equivalent to NQF Level 1 (GETC level).

The ABET sector has been engaged in a consultative standard-setting process for several years. The National Interim Guidelines document (Department of Education, ABET Directorate, August 1995), put forward outcomes for Language and Numeracy at ABET Levels 1-4, in order to provide transitional guidance for the ABET field. SAQA has agreed that there should be Unit Standards for ABET below GETC level, although this is not the case for formal schooling. Unit Standards for language and numeracy are currently being written on the basis of the outcomes in the National Interim Guidelines, taking into account work done by the Department of Education's Learning Area Committees in these two areas. Processes for developing unit standards at ABET Levels 1-3 in other learning areas, are underway.

These unit standards will provide a pathway which will enable adult learners to achieve a GETC. While unit standards from the eight learning areas at GETC

level will be the same for the ABET sector, as for schooling, rules of combination for qualifications for adults need to be flexible. Adult learners may well make up a GETC with unit standards which are taken from fields of learning other than the eight learning areas for schools. Issues regarding rules of combination for qualifications and beyond, and the relationships between unit standards taken from the twelve fields put forward by SAQA, are still under debate.

6.1 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Purpose

Recognition of Prior Learning is an important application of assessment in the South African context because it is used to provide candidates with recognition of existing competency regardless of where, how and when it was acquired. It is of great benefit to adult learners because evidence can come from any source, including life experience and unstructured learning. It provides an alternative route to education and training and will give mobility in career and learning pathways.

Placement

Closely aligned to RPL is the need to place adults appropriately on training courses and learning programmes. All ABET learners are informally tested before being advised as to the level at which they should start. In addition to the obvious importance of RPL in the placement of adult learners, the concept of prior learning should be recognised in the schooling context. One area in which this applies most forcefully, is in relation to languages. Although children bring with them to school a whole range of levels of expertise in oral and written languages, the learning of language is usually organised in school as if all learners of a certain age-group were uniformly competent. Thus some are expected to cope with languages which may be entirely new to them, whilst others are bored by being treated as beginners when they may possess a high degree of communicative or even formal linguistic and literary competence.

Awarding a credit

It is considered a priority by the national Department to set up mechanisms and to provide access to a formal system of RPL leading to credits and qualifications registered on the NQF. This will be much easier when interim standards in most areas have been finalised, against which RPL candidates should be assessed.

Process, procedure and testing

Improved processes and procedures for testing Recognition of Prior Learning need to be developed. These would ensure better use of time and resources, allowing both for correct placement and also providing information to guide the

educator to give a relevant emphasis in a suitable learning programme. Similar diagnostic assessment is essential for out-of-school learners and youth joining schools or adult education programmes.

7. LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

All the recommendations featured in this draft policy document apply to the assessment of Learners with Special Educational Needs. The new outcomes-based approach has taken the requirements of learners with special education needs (ELSEN) into account in the process of developing learning programme guidelines. For learners who experience problems with the basic functions of reading, spelling, writing and calculating, alternative means of assessing will be provided to evaluate their true potential and level of knowledge. The focus on demonstrations and alternative assessment techniques, varying from complete exemption from all reading or writing inputs, to partial exemption by using tape recorders, amanuensis, etc., bears testimony to this paradigm shift.

The gifted learner should also not be neglected. The individualistic nature of OBE, where each learner would be working at his/her own pace, would enable such a learner to accelerate through the curriculum. Each province should determine its own policy whether acceleration or enrichment or both will form the basis of education for the gifted.

7.1 ROLE OF EDUCATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL IN ASSESSMENT

A focus on assessment by education support personnel would imply that a large number of personnel, equipped with appropriate assessment instruments, sharing the language and understanding the culture of those whom they assess, would be accessible to all learners. It would also presuppose that sufficient resources and facilities would be available to service the needs of learners identified through such assessment practice. Such a presupposition, at this stage of the development of education in our country, is clearly inappropriate and out of line with the proposed primary role of education support personnel in building the capacity of learners, educators and the system.

Scarce education support resources must inevitably limit access to individual learners and increase the need for a primary service delivery focus on educators, parents and other primary care-givers. Such a change in focus must impact directly on traditional roles, including the priority given to assessment or 'testing' by education support services personnel - especially psychologists.

Reducing traditional involvement in time-consuming 'testing' or specialist assessment functions, will free education support personnel in general, and psychologist employed by education departments in particular, to use their expertise to address other needs such as those relating to social and emotional

issues, in ways which will potentially impact positively on the learning experiences of many more learners.

7.2 STANDARDISED TESTS

Policies requiring the routine administration of a standard group test to a racially and culturally diverse learner population can be justified only if there is a reasonable guarantee that no learners subjected to the assessment will be disadvantaged in any way, and if it can be guaranteed that the results will contribute to a better understanding of the learner and/or the manner in which the learner accesses the general curriculum. A number of standardised tests, including group tests of intelligence, do not currently fall into such a category.

There are a number of other assessment methods which could also be considered to supplement continuous assessment in the classroom, without over-reliance on standard tests. These include the use of observational methods, criterion-referenced tests and dynamic assessment.

7.3 EARLY IDENTIFICATION

The benefits of early identification, assessment and intervention of 'at risk' learners are well-documented. During the pre-formal years, barriers to learning and development, such as severe disabilities, will most likely be identified within the Health sector. Facilities currently in place, such as community-based clinics, are likely to be in the best position to do an initial assessment, together with parents, of the needs presented by younger children. Clear links will have to be established between these services and those within the formal education systems. In order to prevent and address barriers to learning and development, earlier educational interventions for learners who have been assessed as requiring this support, should be provided. District-based support personnel or personnel from existing specialised centres of learning should co-ordinate this intervention.

8. SYSTEMIC EVALUATION

The National Education Policy Act of 1996, states that, "...the Minister shall direct that the standards of education provision, delivery and performance throughout the Republic be monitored and evaluated by the Department annually or at specified intervals in accordance with the object of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the Constitution and with national education policy,..." This therefore implies that the Minister has to put in place clear mechanisms of monitoring and evaluating the education system with a view to

ensuring that standards are maintained. The systemic evaluation process is one method of monitoring and evaluating the education system.

The main objective of systemic evaluation is to assess the extent to which the vision and goals of the education transformation process are being achieved by the education system, with particular reference to the GET and FET phases. The focus is the whole system and therefore it is imperative that all components and factors that sum up the system be evaluated during this process. It is not the learner, the educator or the learning site that is being evaluated but the effectiveness of the entire system.

Systemic evaluation is seen as a means of monitoring standards. The specific outcomes that are formulated for the GET band are the standards that need to be achieved in this band. During the systemic evaluation process, learner performance will be evaluated against these standards. This will serve the purpose of making available to decision-makers adequate and relevant information which can form the basis for formulation of policies and programmes for qualitative improvement of General and Further Education and Training.

With the introduction of outcomes-based education, commenced in Grade 1, in January 1998, formative assessment of the learner will be conducted by the teacher on a continuous basis against the agreed outcomes and assessment criteria. There is therefore a need to verify the assessment of the teacher at certain key stages.

Systemic evaluation is also seen as a means of determining the strengths and weaknesses of the system on a periodic basis. This is done with a view to providing feedback to the all persons participating in the system so as put in place processes and structures that will assist in providing remedial measures that will address the weaknesses, and at the same time take note of the strengths, and see how these could be used to improve the system.

9. IMPLEMENTING THE NEW DRAFT ASSESSMENT POLICY

The principle of phasing in new forms of assessment is in tandem with the unfolding of curriculum 2005. It is not a generous time-table, however, a trial run year with grade 1 learners and educators in 1998 means adaptation to previously unfamiliar procedures will be incorporated.

During year 1, it is important that the development of sample assessment materials and procedures takes place. These should be disseminated and in-service training given to educators on the use of these materials. During year 2, further development of grade 3 materials and trialling should take place, as well as referral to learning area reference groups.

9.1 NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

At the heart of any assessment system will be quality assurance. The national Department of Education, through the Quality Assurance directorate, will have the responsibility to co-ordinate the development of quality assurance of assessment. It will also be essential for the Quality Assurance Directorate in collaboration with the ECD and schools Directorate, to arrange for the provision of guidelines on assessment to the provinces. The latter directorate will ensure they furnish sufficiently clear criteria to allow appropriate means of assessment to be developed.

9.1.1 MONITORING

The Quality Assurance Directorate needs to carefully monitor and document the operation of the system with a view to improvement. The effects of the new assessment procedures on classroom teaching, and on the overall curriculum, ought to be a subject for careful review through, for example, commissioned research. A strategy for evaluation of the new system and for its improvement will have to be formulated.

9.2 PROVINCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

An enormous responsibility rests with the provincial education departments to:

- deliver the new draft assessment policy
- organise moderation procedures
- develop assessment support material and resources
- service enquiries and offer professional advice
- link the draft assessment policy with INSET programmes.

9.3 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Some of the conditions to secure the professional commitment of educators will be the following:

- Clear acceptance that the aim of the national Department of Education is to support and enhance the professional skill of educators to promote curriculum development.
- Clear recognition that the focus of responsibility for operation of a new system lies with educators within schools.
- Stress on the formative aims and on giving clear guidance about progress to learners and to parents.
- Widespread consultation and discussion before proposals are implemented.
- A realistic time-scale for phasing in a the new draft policy.
- Adequate resources, including in-service provision.

Help with moderation procedures so that the system contributes to communication within schools, between schools, parents and governing bodies and the community as a whole, about the realisation and evaluation of the aims of schools.

- Sensitive handling of requirements for outside reporting.

9.4 BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN COMMUNICATING THE POLICY

A range of agencies should be invited to do support work in attempting to build institutional capacity. Non-governmental agencies, publishers and provincial departments could enter into partnership. The aim of this partnership would be to develop a range of supplementary assessment materials to support the educational process generally, and be used at the discretion of schools. For instance, diagnostic tools for Transformational OBE learning need to be performance focused, applicable to a variety of ages, and would equally concentrate on analysis of methods and techniques used by learners, in order to identify their developmental needs. As part of advocacy, publications focusing on making the new assessment more accessible, need to be produced, and bulletins which share good practice, should be published.

9.4.1 TEACHER/EDUCATOR SUPPORT

Identifying the central role that teachers/educators will play in assessment does not imply that all of them will be immediately comfortable with such a role or that they will be expected to be assessors without support. It assumes that on-going training will be essential and that one of the primary functions of education support personnel will in future be to support educators and to assist with training.

All training programmes must include components which attempt to address anxieties and attitudes which will stem from the role changes of both educators and education support personnel.

9.4.2 TRAINING OF PERSONNEL AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE SYSTEM

Inset programmes will have to be accompanied by a range of assessment materials. It implies that development of a range of assessment materials will need to be undertaken. The scale of the training programme will have to be introduced in phases. The management of the whole programme of assessment and the reporting thereof, also points to the need for personnel in each school (or within a group of small schools) to have the responsibility and skills for such work.

Costs include production, distribution, and administration, as well as reporting arrangements. It is recognised that proposals will require a substantial investment of time (particularly teacher time) and other resources. The level of investment will be conditioned by whatever decisions are taken on the final structure of the new system at the certification level and the rate and phasing of its implementation. Provincial education departments will play an increasingly significant role. Teacher Development centres will largely support educators with specific capacity-building in assessment.

9.5 FUNDING

The implementation of this draft policy will require that, in conjunction with the implementation of Curriculum 2005, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework is utilised (MTEF).

The MTEF and the Minister of Finance's Budget Policy Statement are significant indicators of the Government's recognition of the importance of quality enhancing initiatives. This draft policy document is critical in introducing a system in education and training that will ensure the enhancement of quality.

10. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assessment	The process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about learners' learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on learner achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning.
Assessment Criteria	The assessment criteria provide evidence that the learner has achieved the specific outcome. The criteria indicate, in broad terms, the observable processes and products of learning which serve as culminating demonstrations of the learners' achievement. The assessment criteria are derived directly from the specific outcome and form a logical set of statements of what achievement could or should look like. To the extent that specific outcomes take the form of statements that "Learners will"...(verb noun) the assessment criteria generally indicate that learners have achieved the point where "nouns are passive" (verb + qualifier).
Assessment tasks	consist of a task or series of tasks set in order to obtain information about a learner's competence. These tasks can be workplace/course work/classroom/ homework based or they can be set in a examination paper.
Formative assessment	is used to support the learner developmentally and to feed back into the teaching/learning process.
Summative assessment	is used to provide information about a learner's level of competence at a given time.
Criterion referencing	is used in order to assess a learner's performance against an agreed set of criteria.
Norm referencing	is used to compare a learner's performance with that of other learners in a given group.
Self referencing	is used to evaluate a learner's performance with her or his own previous performance.
Evaluation	is the process whereby the information obtained through assessment is interpreted to make

judgements about a learner's level of competence. It is also used in the context of evaluation of a course, a system for the provision of education/training, or materials where the aim is to gauge the quality, impact and success of the subject in relation to its stated aims and desired outcomes.

Systemic evaluation

A process whereby an education system, [national, provincial and local] or an aspect thereof, is assessed and evaluated. This process may also be used to evaluate institutions, courses or particular policy inputs. It may be a general routine event, or it may be commissioned for a specific purpose. Systemic evaluation targets quality factors and examines education holistically.

Appraisal

An aspect of the management and development of human resources, in which people agree their job description with their line manager [and possibly a friend or trade union representative] and set periodic targets. The targets may involve both parties, for example, an additional responsibility might require training or a commitment of some additional support. At the end of the period, an appraisal evaluates performance against the agreed targets. Appraisal may or may not be linked directly or indirectly to pay or promotion opportunities.

Reliability

The consistency of an assessment task in terms of its administration by different assessors, at different times and in different places.

Validity

The extent to which an assessment measures that which it purports to measure.

Outcomes

The end products of a learning process. In outcomes-based education, curriculum developers work backwards from agreed desired outcomes within a particular context. These state clearly what the learner should be able to demonstrate. Programmes of learning are then designed to help the learners to achieve these outcomes. Outcomes are of two types: critical and specific.

Competence

The capacity for continuing performance within specified ranges and contexts resulting from integration of a number of specific outcomes. The

recognition of competence in this sense is the award of a qualification [e.g. a learner's Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) level 4 or GETC testifies to competence in that subject at that level].

ETD practitioner

An abbreviation for education, training and development practitioner and is a term used to include the whole spectrum of educators and trainers: teacher, trainers, facilitators, tutors, markers, lecturers, development officers, etc., including those qualified only by experience.

Performance criteria

Criteria by which the learner may demonstrate the achievement of specific outcomes.

External assessment

An assessment [often in the form of an examination] designed, set and marked by a body which is separate from the organisation which delivers the learning programme. In terms of the National Qualification Framework [NQF], this function will be the responsibility of Education and Training Quality Assurers [ETQAs] or bodies accredited by ETQAs.

Internal assessment

is administered and marked by teachers/facilitators. It may be designed by teachers or trainers themselves, or follow guidelines produced by the providers. This will be monitored by ETQAs.

Moderation

attempts to ensure that teachers/markers are assessing work according to agreed standards, and that there is consistency from year to year, and within districts, provinces and nationally. At higher levels international consistency is also sought.

(a) For course work and internal assessment: it can be an on-going, voluntary arrangement in a circuit or cluster of schools [group moderation/agreement trials], or officially required by education department officials.

(b) As part of external examination by the external assessment body: Initial assessment can be carried out internally and external moderators can visit centres and test a sample of learners [as in oral examinations]; or [as in portfolios] external moderators can check sample

	portfolios against the grade awarded by teachers.
Sample tasks	are examples of the kinds of tasks or exercises learners will be asked to do in the assessment. These are particularly important when changing the style of assessment and the teachers do not have access to past examination papers or past set assignments/practicals etc.
Exemplars	are examples of learner's performance at different levels, which are used to illustrate the application of assessment criteria.
Unit Standards	are nationally agreed and internationally comparable statements of specific outcomes and their associate performance/assessment criteria together with administrative and other necessary information. Unit standards are registered on the NQF at a defined level.
Credit	The recognition that a learner has achieved a unit standard. Credits may be accumulated until conditions have been met for the award of a qualification.
Credit value	is the value assigned to unit standards in order to facilitate comparisons between them, rules of combination for qualifications, and credit accumulation for learners.
Critical Outcomes	There are seven critical outcomes by adopted SAQA with an additional five outcomes which support development. These outcomes will ensure that learners gain the skills and values that will allow them to contribute to their own success as well as to the success of their family, community and nation as a whole.
Curriculum	This term includes all aspects of teaching and learning.
Learning areas (LA's)	SAQA adopted the following eight learning areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 Language, Literacy and Communication (LCC)2 Human and Social Sciences (HSS)3 Technology (T)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS) |
| 5 | Natural Science (NS) |
| 6 | Arts and Culture (AC) |
| 7 | Economics and Management Sciences (EMS) |
| 8 | Life Orientation (LO) |

Learning Programmes

A learning programme is the vehicle through which curriculum is implemented at various learning sites such as schools and centres. They are the sets of learning activities which the learner will be involved in working towards the achievement of one or more specific outcomes.

A learning programme includes:

- Critical Outcomes (CO's)
- Specific Outcomes (SO's)
- Assessment Criteria (AC's)
- Range Statements (RS's)
- Performance Indicators (PI's)
- Sample Assessment Activities (SAA's)
- Notional Time

Performance

Performance indicators provide the details of the **Indicators (PI's)** content and processes that learners should master as well details of the learning contexts that the learner will be engaged in. This will provide practitioners and learners with a breakdown of the essential stages to reach in the process of achieving the outcome. Performance indicators will help to plan the learning process, track progress and diagnose problems.

Specific Outcomes

In each Learning Area, it was found that a set of specific outcomes describes what learners will be able to do at all levels of learning. The differentiation between different phases of learning would be addressed by different levels of complexity in the processes in which learners engage and in the kinds of evidence through which learners demonstrate the outcome.

levels are the positions on the NQF where national unit standards are registered and qualifications awarded. These levels are arranged to signal increasing complexity in learning and to facilitate meaningful progression routes along career and learning pathways.

Level Descriptors are defined for every level on the framework and serve as criteria by which standards and the qualifications from which they are aggregated, may be assigned with confidence and consistency to the pre-determined levels of the framework.

Phases are distinguished within education in order to accommodate the various learning needs of learners at different stages of development.

11.

ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education & Training
AC	Assessment Criteria
AC	Arts and Culture
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CO	Critical Outcomes
ELSEN	Education for learners with Special Educational Needs
EMS	Economic and Management Sciences
ETD	Education, Training & Development
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurer
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education & Training
GETC	General Education Training Certificate
HSS	Human and Social Sciences
LA	Learning Areas
LCC	Language, Literacy and Communication
LO	Life Orientation
MLMMS	Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NS	Natural Science
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
PI	Performance Indicators
RPL	Recognition Prior Learning
RS	Range Statements
SAA	Sample Assessment Activities
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SO	Specific Outcomes
T	Technology

APPENDIX A:

National Department of Education

ECD & Schools Directorate
Quality Assurance Directorate
Adult Education & Training Directorate
ELSEN Directorate
Technical & Vocational Education Directorate
National Examinations Directorate

9 Provincial Education Department representatives

Eastern Cape
Free State
Gauteng
KwaZulu-Natal
Mpumalanga
Northern Cape
Northern Province
North West Province
Western Cape Province

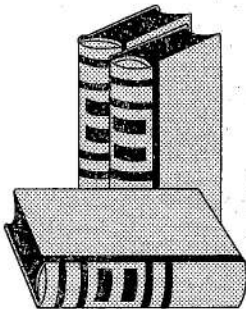
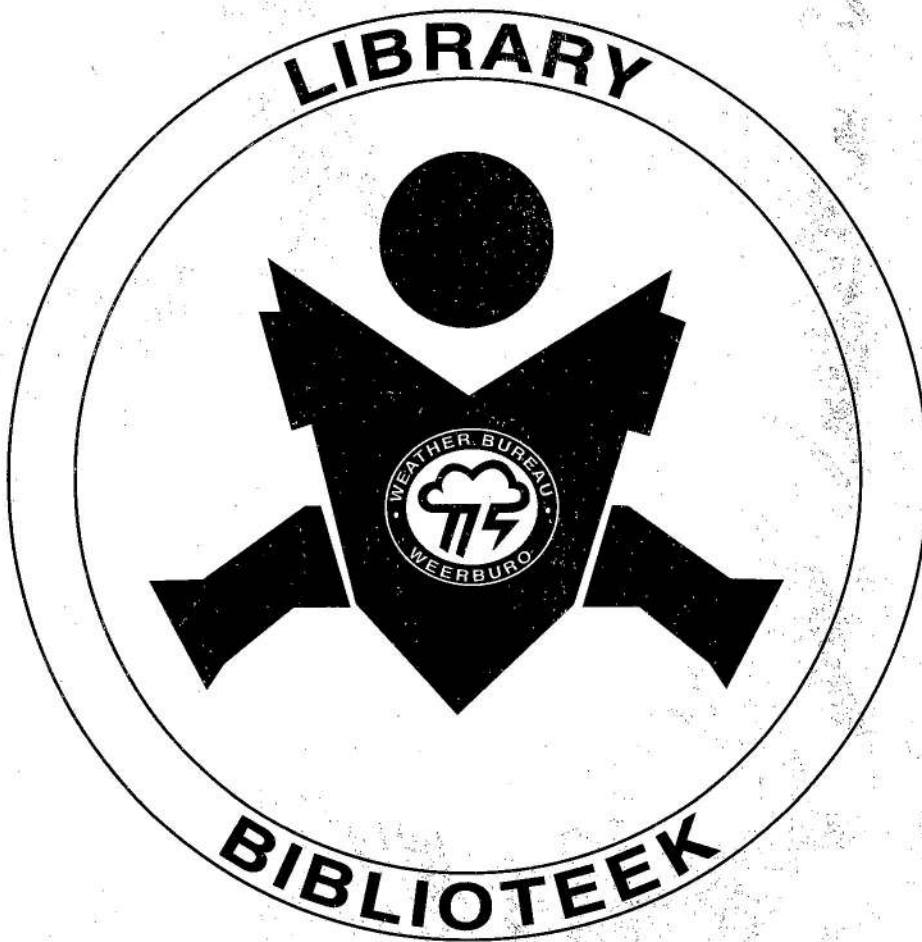
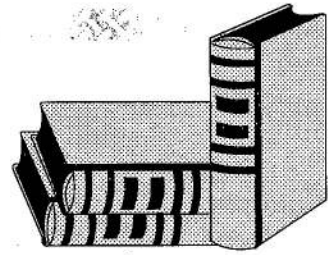
The national Department of Education met and held dialogue on the draft policy for assessment with numerous persons, and groupings. Without their contributions of time and mindpower this draft policy would have been much poorer. We dialogued with:

- representatives from the Department of labour
- the Independent Examinations Board
- the South African Certification Council
- the Technical College Sector
- the South African Qualifications Authority
- Teacher Organisations
- Human Science Research Council

Submissions and comments on the earlier drafts ,were received from:

- the Grove Primary School
- the Southern African Association for Learning and Educational Difficulties

Where is the largest amount of meteorological information in the whole of South Africa available?



Waar is die meeste weerkundige inligting in die hele Suid-Afrika beskikbaar?

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
Departement van Omgewingsake en Toerisme

Wetlands are wonderlands!



Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism

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