



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**TO: HEADS OF DEPARTMENT
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT
HEADS OF PROVINCIAL CURRICULUM
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
AREA MANAGERS
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
TEACHER UNIONS
SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY ASSOCIATIONS
NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CIRCULAR 01 OF 2021

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2021 ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME IN MAINSTREAM AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS ACROSS THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GET) BAND

1. This circular provides guidelines on the implementation and administration of the assessment programme related to each subject in line with the released 2021 Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) in the General Education and Training (GET) band.
2. This circular builds on the key principles of implementing assessment tasks in GET introduced in 2020 through *National Assessment Circular 02 of 2020* and follows on from processes around curriculum trimming and re-organisation. As in 2020, the emphasis on School Based Assessment (SBA) remains on utilising strategies

aligned to an assessment for learning approach to assist learners to achieve the learning outcomes of each grade and subject.

3. In the Intermediate and Senior Phases, the mid-year and end-of-year examinations are replaced by Controlled Tests that are administered under controlled settings. The content of the Controlled Tests must be based on work covered as stipulated in the 2021 ATPs. In principle, the June Controlled Test should cover work from Term 1 and Term 2 and would form part of the Term 2 SBA. The end of year controlled test should cover work from Term 3 and Term 4.

4. **SBA and task weighting**

- 4.1 In the Foundation Phase SBA constitutes a 100% weighting, and is achieved through a series of continuous assessment practices indicated in the ATP.
- 4.2 In the Intermediate and Senior Phases the weighting of SBA will constitute 80%. The Controlled Test administered in Term 4, and any other assessment task, as listed in the relevant Annexure, will constitute the 20%.
- 4.3 The types and number of tasks including mark allocation and weightings of tasks per subject and grade are summarised for each phase in **Annexures A, B, and C** of this circular.
- 4.4 If the learning of the trimmed curriculum is compromised due to a loss of teaching time due to *COVID-19*, and *COVID* related variants, or through rotated timetabling options, mark allocations may be reduced to match the content covered but the weighting of the task as indicated in the attached **Annexures** and its contribution towards a term mark and overall SBA mark will remain unchanged.

5. **Summative assessment**

- 5.1 The summative tasks in a subject must be moderated at school level by the school management team member responsible for that subject. The moderator must also ensure that the summative task is accompanied by a detailed marking guideline and or rubric, which are accurately formulated. All moderation findings must be discussed with the relevant teacher(s) of that subject.
- 5.2 For the controlled tests conducted in June and November, teachers of the same grade and subject should sample a few scripts and discuss the marking guidelines/rubric as a team to ensure that the marking is standardised. All scripts

- that have been marked by the teacher must be submitted to the moderator who should sample a reasonable number for moderation.
- 5.3 The setting of high quality summative tasks is important and schools should keep proper records on the setting and moderation processes followed and this may be subjected to moderation through district and provincial procedures.
- 5.4 An assessment for learning approach including formative assessments should be used by teachers in their classroom teaching to support and prepare learners for summative assessments.
6. **Formative assessment**
- 6.1 Formative assessment was referenced in *National Assessment Circular 03 of 2020*. It refers to all assessments undertaken during the lesson, by learners and teachers, to obtain evidence for use in supporting learners to improve their knowledge, understanding or skills. The primary purpose of formative assessment is to improve learning.
- 6.2 Formative assessment in lesson plans sets forth the learning experience for further engagement by learners to improve learning and for teachers to improve their teaching. In the context of the classroom, formative assessment evidence can be obtained from spontaneous and planned activities. Spontaneous activities include impromptu questions or discussions that occur during lessons while planned activities include all exercises and questions planned before the lessons, e.g. classwork exercises and higher order thinking questions.
7. **Mitigation measures for practical assessment and physical education tasks**
- 7.1 Districts must ensure that all schools implement the COVID–19 social distancing protocols, hand sanitisation, and sanitisation of the workspace in all subjects with a practical or physical education component.
- 7.2 Clear guidelines must be provided to teachers and learners on the use of facemasks when conducting certain performance tasks in subjects like Life Skills, Life Orientation and Creative Arts.
8. **Recording of learners' performance**

- 8.1 The moderator must approve and sign off the mark sheets prior to the recording on South African School Administration Management System (SA-SAMS) by trained Administrative staff. All data captured must be verified.
- 8.2 The weightings of a task are included on SA-SAMS and schools will not be expected to make changes to the individual task weightings.
- 8.3 SA-SAMS contains a built-in functionality to address cases where an assessment is not administered e.g. absenteeism with a valid reason or in the case of an unforeseen event. By capturing “-1” as a code it removes the task from the learner’s SBA and promotion mark and automatically redistributes the weight proportionally to the other assessment tasks.

9. **Schedules and reports**

- 9.1 Final promotion schedules for all grades must be approved and signed off using the prescribed protocols of the provincial education department.
- 9.2 Learner reports must be generated based on the signed off promotion schedule marks using SA-SAMS’ templates. The report provided to parents must show the code/term mark/percentage for all four terms and the final promotion/progression mark/code/percentage.
- 9.3 In addition, the reporting to parents should be a holistic reflection of learner’s capabilities and not just a summary of summative scores. It should also reflect evidence of learners’ capabilities that were generated and observed through formative assessment processes. This integrated method of reporting will be the focus of teacher training and the SA-SAMS’ reporting templates will be adjusted to accommodate this holistic reporting of learner’s capabilities, for the future.
- 9.4 It is required that learners’ performances are recorded for each subject. The comments in the report should indicate an overview considering both the summative and formative assessments.

10. **School based support**

- 10.1 School Based Support Teams (SBST) should ensure that adequate and appropriate support is given to learners who display learning gaps or experience barriers to learning in line with the *Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Policy (2014)*. Where necessary accommodations and concessions

should be identified and granted as early as possible to ensure learners are not disadvantaged in any way.

11. Further guidelines and directives will be provided on the implementation of assessment for learning strategies, assessment in schools of skill, and promotion and progression requirements during the course of the academic year. All enquiries regarding this circular must be directed to Dr M Chetty via telephone on 012 357 3835 or email at chetty.m@dbe.gov.za.

12. Your support in ensuring compliance with the contents of this circular will be greatly appreciated



MR HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 19/04/2021