



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DRAFT POLICY FOR THE *GENERAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE (GEC):
A QUALIFICATION AT LEVEL 1 ON THE GENERAL AND FURTHER
EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK OF
THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK***

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

A(B)ET	Adult (Basic) Education and Training
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
FET	Further Education and Training
GEC	General Education Certificate
GFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework
GET	General Education and Training
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
ICAT	Integrated Common Assessment Task
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
NAF	National Assessment Framework
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NPPPR	National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SASA	South African Schools Act
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Definitions

Accreditation	The outcome of a quality assurance process of evaluating: (a) a private assessment body, to determine whether its capacity, systems, processes and products are of the appropriate quality to deliver valid, reliable, fair and credible assessments and examinations; and (b) an independent school/ private college, to determine whether it has, in accordance with the policy and criteria for quality assurance as set out in the policy/ regulations, the capacity to offer a qualification or programmes leading to a qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF)
Articulation	Progression within the GFETQSF, to the HEQSF and QQSF
Assessment	The process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement in order to (a) assist the learner's development and improve the process of learning and teaching; and (b) evaluate and certify competence in order to ensure qualification credibility; assessment includes national examinations, end-of-term and/or once-off end-of-year examinations in order to ensure a national standard across providers
Assessment Body	A juristic body accredited by Umalusi Council to quality-assure internal assessment and conduct external examinations, and includes a department of education
Candidate	A learner who has enrolled in his or her Grade 9-year of the General Education and Training and who has registered for the General Education Certificate final examinations
Certification	Formal recognition of a qualification or part-qualification awarded to a successful learner
Curriculum	A statement of the training structure and expected methods of learning and teaching that underpin a qualification or part-qualification to facilitate a more general understanding of its implementation in an education system. The curriculum encompasses three components: a) The intended curriculum: an official guideline document which provides the core features, principles, topic areas, specified content and skills and levels of expected cognitive demands. b) The enacted curriculum: the enactment/ implementation / delivery of the curriculum in an institution which includes leadership and management, the ethos and values, teaching and learning, extra-curricular activities, learner support, institutional performance and the management of quality towards improvement.

	c) The assessed curriculum: the internal assessment and the external examination of the intended curriculum.
Deaf Learner	A learner who is either in a special school in terms of section 5(6) of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), or in an ordinary school where he or she has been assessed and verified by a registered health professional as Deaf. Such a Deaf learner may, in terms of section 6(4) of the South African Schools Act, 1996, offer South African Sign Language, which has the status of an official language for the purposes of learning, as a language of learning and teaching.
Department of Basic Education	The national department responsible for education, Grades R-12
Entry Level Requirements	The minimum academic knowledge and/or practical competencies, and/or work experience that a learner must have completed in order to be admitted for study towards a qualification or part-qualification; this may include recognition of other forms of prior learning such as non-formal and informal learning and work experience deemed as comparable for entry
Examination	The national external examination for the General Education Certificate, conducted by the Department of Basic Education and/or another Umalusi-accredited assessment body, and quality assured by Umalusi.
Exit level outcomes	The knowledge, skills and attitudes that a learner should have obtained or mastered on completion of a qualification and against which the learner is assessed for competence
External Assessment	Assessment conducted by a person or body that is not directly involved in the development and/or delivery of the learning programme conducted by a public or accredited private assessment body, the outcomes of which count towards the achievement of a qualification; external moderation
Full time learner	A candidate who has enrolled for tuition in a full-time capacity at a public or independent school or any other registered institution and who presents the required number of subjects as stipulated in this policy document
General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework	One of three qualifications sub-frameworks which comprise the National Qualifications Framework. The Sub-Framework of the NQF for General and Further Education and Training that is developed and managed by Umalusi
General Education Certificate	A qualification at the end of the General Education and Training implemented on a date determined by Umalusi by means of a Government Notice in a Government Gazette, and subsequently quality assured and certified by Umalusi.

Immigrant Learner	A child or a dependent of a diplomatic representative of a foreign government accredited in South Africa; or (ii) a person who: (aa) first enrolled at and entered a South African school in Grade 7 or a more senior grade, or (bb) having begun his or her schooling at a school in South Africa, has attended school outside South Africa for two or more consecutive years after Grade 3 or its equivalent, and has subsequently returned to South Africa.
Internal Assessment	Any assessment conducted by a provider, the outcomes of which count towards the achievement of a qualification.
Learner	An inclusive term referring to anyone learning, including pupils at school; students at colleges, traditional universities, comprehensives, and universities of technology; apprentices, learners in learnerships, interns; people undergoing training, and people learning non-formally and informally as well as people enrolled for particular qualifications or part-qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pupil, student (including an adult learner), person who attends an Early Childhood Development centre, school or A(B)ET centre
Learner who experiences barriers to learning	Any learner who has difficulties in accessing the curriculum due to factors that serve as barriers
Qualification	A registered national qualification consisting of a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning and which has been assessed in terms of exit level outcomes, registered on the NQF and certified and awarded by a recognised body
School	In this document a school means a <i>public school</i> or an independent <i>school</i> which enrolls <i>learners</i> in one or more <i>grades</i> from <i>grade R</i> (Reception) to <i>Grade twelve</i> as contemplated in section 1 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 as amended.
School-based assessment	Assessment as defined in the policy document, National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, Government Gazette No. 34600 of 12 September 2011
Umalusi	The Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training established by the GENFETQA Act (Act 58 of 2001). In terms of the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008), it is tasked to support the achievement of the objectives of the NQF and to develop and manage the GFETQSF

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO POLICY FOR THE *GENERAL EDUCATION CERTIFICATE: A QUALIFICATION AT LEVEL 1 ON THE GENERAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK*

1. Qualification Overview

- 1 The *General Education Certificate* (hereafter referred to as the (GEC) is a qualification at National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 1 on the GFETQSF of the NQF. It reinstates the *General Education Certificate*: ID No. 63289 and comes into effect at a date as determined in a Government Gazette.
- 2 The GEC is registered as a qualification with a minimum of 120 credits. The qualification is registered as a whole qualification as it is not unit standards based. The outcomes of the qualification are further defined in the curriculum. A minimum of nine subjects is required for successful completion of the qualification. The weighting of the nine subjects varies; with three subjects on 20 credits each and six subjects on 10 credits each.

Table 1: Time allocation and credits

Subjects	Hours per Week	Credits
Home Language	5	20
First Additional Language	4	20
Mathematics	4,5	20
Natural Sciences	3	10
Social Sciences	3	10
Technology	2	10
Economic and Management Sciences	2	10
Life Orientation	2	10
Creative Arts	2	10
	27.5 Hours per Week	120 Credits

- 3 The GEC is awarded at the end of the GET. Learners are prepared at different phases of the GET for entry into the qualification. The phases used to prepare learners for the GEC are: Foundation phase – Grades R to 3; Intermediate phase, Grades 4 to 6; and Senior phase, Grades 7 to 9.
- 4 The GEC is supported by curricula for all subjects. The national assessment is externally moderated and quality assured according to Umalusi's quality assurance policies. It is certified by Umalusi according to Umalusi's directives for the certification of the GEC. The GEC is not designed to rigidly follow the National Senior Certificate assessment model.

2. Policy Framework

- 1 *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 syllabuses and education programmes, learning standards, examinations and the certification of qualifications. This provision is subject to the provisions of any law establishing a national qualifications framework or a certifying or accrediting body.
- 2 The policy stipulated in this document is applicable to all public schools, independent schools or in other modes of education (such as home education) that write the General Education Certificate examination.
- 3 This policy document forms the basis for the Minister of Basic Education to determine minimum outcomes and standards, as well as the processes and procedures for the assessment of learner achievement as stipulated in *section 6A of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996)* which applies to school education in South Africa.
- 4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policy and legislative documents:
 - a. The policy document, the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12, which comprise:
 - i. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements for all approved subjects listed in this document;
 - ii. National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12; and
 - iii. National Policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12.
 - b. Regulations pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12, published as Government Notice 1114 in Government Gazette No. 36041 of 28 December 2012 as amended.
 - c. The National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) (NEPA).

- d. South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) (SASA), as amended.
 - e. Policy for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework.
 - f. Policy and regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of assessment for the General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the GFETQSF of the NQF (to be developed after the publication of the qualification policy).
 - g. Umalusi's Directives for certification of the General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the GFETQSF of the NQF (to be developed after the publication of the qualification policy).
 - h. Policy framework for the quality assurance for qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (February 2015).
 - i. *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* that provides a policy framework for the transformation of practices related to assessment and examinations in general with a view to achieving enabling mechanisms to support learners who experience barriers to learning.
- 5 This policy provides the basis for the development of the policy and regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of assessment for the *General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the GFETQSF of the NQF* (to be developed after the publication of the qualification policy).
- 6 This policy describes the rules and provisos for the awarding of the *General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the GFETQSF of the NQF*. The *General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the GFETQSF of the NQF* is awarded to successful learners for the achievement of the exit level outcomes in terms of the rules of combination stipulated in the qualification and curriculum documents underpinning the qualification.
- 7 The *Policy for the General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the GFETQSF of the NQF* shall be reviewed after a period of five years from the first date of implementation. It may also be necessary for the policy to be reviewed from time to time during implementation considering developments in GET.

3. Rationale

- 1 The GEC qualification is aimed at serving the needs of learners in the schooling system who complete the compulsory basic education. This need is currently not met by any other qualification on the NQF. The GEC gives recognition to formal learning that has taken place by the end of Grade 9 in fulfilment of the promotion and progression requirements in the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R to 12.

- 2 The GEC qualification will provide learners with an earlier indicator of their performance on a standardised assessment.
- 3 The achievement of the General Education Certificate (GEC) is designed to enable learners to access three learning pathways:
 - a. To continue with an academic route through the completion of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in schools, culminating in the achievement of the National Senior Certificate at NQF Level 4.
 - b. To choose a vocational route through completion of the National Certificate: Vocational Qualifications at NQF Levels 2, 3 and 4, which contain vocational specialisations that are offered in TVET Colleges.
 - c. To have access to Occupational specific qualifications at NQF Level 2, 3 and 4, which consist of knowledge, skills and workplace experience and learning, in schools or in other institutions.
- 4 Achievement of the GEC will indicate that the successful learner has completed and achieved the required knowledge, skills, values and competence in a general educational qualification at Level 1 on the NQF.
- 5 The GEC provides requirements that will:
 - a. provide the system with a quality assurance mechanism that will be used to confirm the quality of learner performance and acknowledge the values, knowledge and skills the learners have acquired during the compulsory years of education;
 - b. assure quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the GET band; and
 - c. ensure that appropriate processes are put in place to monitor and support performance of learners throughout the GET band, and support learners into accessing different career and learning pathways.
- 7 The General Education Certificate, Level 1 aims to:
 - a. give recognition to learners who achieve and meet the necessary requirements and competencies as specified in the Exit Level Outcomes and associated Assessment Criteria as set out in the GFETQSF along differentiated pathways;
 - b. ensure that learners develop relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in each of the subjects;
 - c. provide a solid foundation of general education learning which is the basis for access to Further Education and Training learning and qualifications;
 - d. develop learners who are sensitive and reflective of issues relating to diversity, equality, inclusivity, cultural values, human rights, human dignity, non-racialism, belief, and gender;
 - e. equip learners with appreciation for lifelong learning;

- f. equip learners to function better as citizens in South Africa and contribute to societal and environmental issues; and
 - g. equip learners with study skills to be able to access further learning.
- 8 The GEC will provide for multiple modes of curriculum delivery, and cater for modernised examination system.

4. Purpose

- 1 The General Education Certificate (GEC), a Level 1 qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework is aimed at learners in schools. This Qualification provides a foundation certificate for learners in the General Education and Training (GET).
- 2 The aim is to build a schooling system that recognises the knowledge, skills, values and competencies gained from ten compulsory years of formal schooling at the end of Grade 9 and to provide access into Further Education and Training learning programmes. The GEC aims to provide a well-balanced, general education which will benefit learners at the end of compulsory schooling or, alternatively define a learner profile for learners accessing Further Education and Training, and other alternative institutions.
- 3 Provide foundation for quality, standardised general education and training as envisaged in the NCS for the end of the General Education and Training (GET), and help prepare them for life after school and enable them to access particular occupational workplace-based learning.
- 4 The GEC qualification will provide standardised benchmarks against which schools can compare their internal assessment standards.
- 5 The attainment of the GEC marks the end of the General Education and Training of formal schooling. A learner who obtained the GEC is advised to continue with their learning in the three learning pathways: general academic, technical and vocational, and occupational.

5. Exit Level Outcomes

- 1 The Exit Level Outcomes and their associated Criteria are identified below. They provide an indication of what candidates successfully completing the GEC qualification are able to do.
- 2 Learners successfully completing the GEC qualification will be able to:
 - a. Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
 - b. Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community.

- c. Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.
- d. Demonstrate entrepreneurial capabilities.
- e. Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes.
- f. Use Science and Technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.
- g. Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.

6. ASSOCIATED ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

- 1 Identify and solve problems and make decisions using critical and creative thinking.
 - a. Relevant questions about problems relating to natural phenomena are raised and articulated;
 - b. Scientific investigations to solve problems and investigations of geographical and environmental concepts and processes are planned and conducted;
 - c. Conceptual understanding through correct application of mathematical procedures and rules when solving problems is clearly demonstrated.
- 2 Work effectively with others as members of a team, group, organisation and community.
 - a. The implementation of strategies to enhance own and others' self-image through positive actions are identified and reported on;
 - b. Show evidence of respect for others and the ability to disagree in constructive ways; and
 - c. Collaboration skills are demonstrated in the arts product development activities and processes.
- 3 Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively.
 - a. The learner demonstrates improved self-confidence and self-esteem in the creative activities;
 - b. Decision-making skills are demonstrated and reflect on;
 - c. Time management skills and accountability in carrying out responsibilities are demonstrated.
- 4 Demonstrate entrepreneurial capabilities.
 - a. The relevant qualities of an entrepreneur are described in terms of skills sets and abilities;
 - b. Clear links are made between the concepts of needs and wants and how do these concepts influence the seller, and consumer's buying behaviour;
 - c. Verbal and non-verbal interactions with internal and external stakeholders in various contexts and situations in the relevant industries are understood and demonstrated.
- 5 Communicate effectively using visual, symbolic and/or language skills in various modes.
 - a. Learners communicate using written, oral, visual, graphic and other forms of communication to make information available to other people;
 - b. Results of a scientific investigation presented in suitable formats such as maps, tables, graphs, and drawings.
- 6 Use Science and Technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others.
 - a. Uses of science, technology and indigenous knowledge towards the environment are understood and explained;

- b. Appreciation of the relationship between scientific and technological knowledge and how it relates to environment and society is demonstrated;
 - c. Proficiency in blended learning skills; a mixture of online and offline activities is demonstrated.
- 7 Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- a. Connections between the ideas and concepts in science are made;
 - b. Abilities to access, recall, observe, record, sort, classify and interpret information to make sense of the natural world are demonstrated;
 - c. Enquiry skills and instruments to investigate the past and present are used; and historical knowledge aspects of history are understood, interpreted and demonstrated.

7. Identity of the particular learner group and General Requirements

- 1 The GEC is designed for learners enrolled at a public or independent school, or learning through other modes of education (such as home education) that are referred to in the National Education Policy Act, 1996 (Act No. 27 of 1996) and the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996).
- 2 A learner who progressed through the GET with his/her age cohort will reach grade 9 at the age of fifteen.
- 3 The GEC is not designed for adult learners enrolled at the following institutions:
 - a. Community Learning Centres, established by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology; and
 - b. Private college registered or deemed registered in terms of Section 4 of the Continuing Education and Training Act, Act 16 of 2006.

8. Entrance and registration requirements

- 1 Access to the GEC qualification is open to all learners at a public or independent school, or other modes of education (such as home education) who have met the minimum requirements for promotion and progression to Grade 9.
 - a. A learner must be in possession of an official Grade 8 report which indicates that they met the requirements for promotion to Grade 9 or they were progressed to grade 9.
- 2 A learner has offered 9 subjects in Grade 8, which include two approved languages, provided that one was offered at Home Language level and the other at First Additional Language level.
- 3 It is assumed that learners who access the GEC qualification are competent in the Grade 8 Learning Outcomes of the subjects they will offer in the GEC.
- 4 A recognised foreign qualification equivalent to Grade 8.

- 5 Learners with special education needs will be considered for registration in accordance with *White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001)*.

9. Recognition of Prior Learning

- 1 Recognition of prior learning will apply to all applicants who may have dropped out of the schooling system and need a GEC qualification. The RPL process will be undertaken to facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths. The awarding of RPL will be credible and conducted in line with the SAQA National Policy for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The process will also be informed by approved principles, criteria and regulations of SAQA and Umalusi.
- 2 RPL - Y

10. Duration

- 1 The GEC is a one-year qualification.
- 2 Grade 9 learners registering for the GEC must offer all subjects in one examination sitting and complete the programme requirements for the grade.

11. Articulation

- 1 Learners who have achieved the GEC qualification are able to access opportunities for further learning and be considered for access to qualifications beyond NQF Level 1. The qualification is designed to enable articulation with other qualifications on GFETQSF as well as on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-framework of the NQF. Learners can choose to continue with:
 - a. an academic route through the completion of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in schools, culminating in the achievement of the National Senior Certificate at NQF Level 4;
 - b. a vocational route through completion of the National Certificate: Vocational Qualifications at NQF Levels 2, 3 and 4, which contain vocational specialisations, in schools or other institutions; and
 - c. occupational specific qualifications at NQF Level 2, 3 and 4, which consist of knowledge, skills and workplace experience and learning, in schools or in other institutions.

CHAPTER 2

STRUCTURE AND DESIGN

12. The structure of the *General Education Certificate: A Qualification at Level 1 on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework of the National Qualifications Framework*

- 1 The GEC uses the twelve Organising Fields of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for organising purposes and registration on the NQF. These Organising Fields are linked to various disciplines and occupational fields in the world of work and are therefore designed to provide a framework for organising qualifications in a coherent and co-ordinated manner.
- 2 The organising fields listed in Annexure A are used for classification and grouping purposes.

13. Qualification requirements including rules of combination

- 1 A learner in Grade 9 registered for the GEC must offer and complete nine (9) subjects as listed in Annexure B, Tables 1 – 6:
 - a. Two (2) official languages selected from Table 1, Organising Field: Communication Studies and Language, provided that one of the two official languages is offered at Home Language level, and the other language, at either Home or at least at First Additional Language level, and provided further that one of the two languages offered is the language of learning and teaching or the language of literacy in the case of Deaf Learners (20 Credits each);
 - i. Deaf learners may, select South African Sign Language at Home Language level listed in Table 1A in lieu of the official language at First Additional Language level as contemplated above.
 - b. Mathematics selected from Table 2, Organising Field: Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences (20 Credits);
 - c. Natural Sciences selected from Table 2, Organising Field: Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences (10 Credits); and
 - d. Life Orientation from Table 3, Organising Field: Human and Social Sciences (10 Credits);

- e. Social Sciences from Table 3, Organising Field: Human and Social Sciences (10 Credits);
- f. Technology from Table 4, Organising Field: Engineering and Technology (10 Credits);
- g. Creative Arts from Table 5, Organising Field: Culture and Arts (10 Credits); and
- h. Economic and Management Sciences from Table 6, Organising Field: Business, Commerce and Management Studies (10 Credits).
- i. One official or approved non-official language may be offered as an optional subject at least at Second Additional Language level, provided that in the case of an official language, the language offered must not be a language offered in terms of subparagraph (1) above. The Additional Language will be regarded as an additional subject not to be taken into account for promotion requirements.
 - (1) South African Sign Language at Home Language level, listed in Table 1A, may be offered as an optional subject by non-deaf learners, provided that South African Sign Language at Home Language level will be regarded as an additional subject not to be taken into account for promotion requirements.
- j. The Second Additional language may not replace any of the compulsory subjects listed above, but must be done as an additional subject. Optional languages may only be offered if the school can make an arrangement for the allocation of additional time to the allocated 27,5 hours.

Table 2: General Education Subjects

Subjects	Organising Field
Official Languages (Afrikaans, English, IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, SiSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga)	Communication Studies and Language
Language with status of Official Language (South African Sign Language Home Language)	Communication Studies and Language
Natural Sciences	Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
Mathematics	Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
Social Sciences	Human and Social Sciences
Life Orientation	Human and Social Sciences
Technology	Engineering and Technology
Creative Arts	Culture and Arts
Economic and Management Sciences	Business, Commerce and Management Studies

2 The list of subjects will be updated from time to time based on the needs of the sector.

14. Concessions

14.1 Concessions for immigrant learners

- 1 An immigrant learner must offer two required official languages as contemplated in paragraph 12 and comply with School-based assessment of both official languages offered.
- 2 An immigrant learner registered for the GEC must:
 - a) pass one of the required two official languages on at least First Additional Language level and obtain a rating of Moderate Achievement (Level 3) in that language; and comply with certification requirements as contemplated in paragraph 14.
- 3 An immigrant learner may offer his or her home language in lieu of one official language, provided that it is an officially approved non-official language, provided further he or she complies with the qualification and certification requirements as contemplated in paragraphs 12 and 14 of this document.
- 4 To be classified as an immigrant learner, such a learner must be in possession of:
 - i. the relevant official documentation issued by the Department of Home Affairs; and
 - ii. the relevant official documentation issued by the school where the learner entered the South African school system for the first time.

14.2 Concessions for learners who experience barriers to learning

- 5 The following concessions may apply to learners who experience the following barriers or any other barriers that impact on a learner's learning-
 - a) a deaf learner must offer the two required official languages as contemplated in paragraph 12;
 - b) he or she must pass one of the required two official languages on at least First Additional Language level and obtain a Moderate Achievement (Level 3) in that language;
 - c) an Elementary Achievement (Level 2) in the second official language; and
 - d) Comply with other certification requirements as contemplated in paragraph 14.
- 6 Learners with communication and language impairments, e.g. aphasia and dyslexia must also meet the requirements as set out in *subparagraph 3* above.
- 7 White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001), guides policies related to learners experiencing barriers to learning.

15. Certification requirements

- 1 Subject to the provisions of section 17A (6) of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, Act No. 58 of 2001, and subject to paragraph 12 (Qualification requirements including Rules of Combination) of this policy, a GEC shall be issued to a learner who has complied with the following certification requirements.
 - (a) Fulfilled requirements of School-based assessment
 - (b) Offered nine (9) subjects as listed in *the programme requirement* and have complied with the promotion requirements in eight (8) of the subjects, provided the School-based Assessment component of the ninth subject has been completed.
 - (c) Adequate Achievement (Level 4) in one language at Home Language level.
 - (d) Moderate Achievement (Level 3) in the second required official language at First Additional Language.
 - a. Moderate Achievement (Level 3) (40%-49%) in South African Sign Language at Home Language level, if offered by Deaf learners
 - (e) Moderate Achievement (Level 3) in Mathematics.
 - (f) Moderate Achievement (Level 3) in any three (3) of the other required subjects.
 - (g) At least an Elementary Achievement (Level 2) in any two (2) of the other required subjects.
 - (h) Deaf learners, who do not offer South African Sign Language at Home Language level, may obtain an Elementary Achievement (Level 2) (30—39%) in one of the two required official languages as above.
 - (i) The norm for repetition is stipulated in *paragraph 31 of the Admission policy for ordinary public schools, Government Notice 2432 in the Government Gazette, Vol. 400, No. 19377 of 19 October 1998*. The norm for repetition is one year per school phase where necessary. Multiple repetition in one grade is not permissible.
 - (j) A learner may only be retained once in the Senior Phase in order to prevent the learner being retained in this phase for longer than four years.
 - (k) The Department of Basic Education and other relevant assessment bodies will manage learner progression in Grade 9 (the GEC year). The application of progression shall be guided by National Policy pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement, Grades R -12.

- (l) The application of progression in the Grade 9 year will be aligned to the policy framework requirements of learners pursuing academic, vocational or occupational institutional pathways.

CHAPTER 3

Curriculum and Assessment

16. Curriculum Overview

- 1 The GEC is underpinned by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Grades R to 12, which represents a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools. It is the curriculum that underpins the various programmes followed in each Grade from Grades R – 12, and comprises of:
 - a) the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for all approved subjects;
 - b) the National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12 (NPPPR); and
 - c) the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12.

- 2 The NCS provides guidance for the management of school assessment and school assessment records.

17. The main purposes of the assessment

- 1 The overarching goal of the General Education Certificate is to improve the attainment of the learning outcomes in the General Education and Training Band. It is envisaged that this goal will be achieved through the achievement of following sub-goals:
 - a) To set standards of the desired competencies required after 10 years of formal schooling (Grade R-9);
 - b) To provide learners, parents and schools with information relevant to the learner on the pathway to follow;
 - c) To provide formal recognition and certify learners based on their achievement at the end of ten years of schooling.

18. Assessment structure

- 1 The GEC will be linked to the broader National Assessment Framework (NAF) of the Department of Basic Education.

- 2 To achieve the overarching goal and sub-goals, the GEC assessment will comprise three

major assessment components:

- a. Standardised external assessment in selected subjects;
 - b. School-based assessment; and
 - c. Aptitude (or Abilities) assessments linked to skills, knowledge, values and attitudes.
- 3 All assessments will be designed based on nationally determined standards that are derived from the NCS.

19. Standardised External Assessment

- 1 In the context of the GEC, the standardised external assessment refers to a curriculum achievement test, that is set outside of the school and based on defined curriculum competencies of the National Curriculum Statement.
- 2 Standardised External Assessment will consist of written standardised assessments that are:
 - a. externally set, and marked by an accredited assessment body and/or the Department of Basic Education and externally moderated by Umalusi. This will apply to the four fundamental subjects (Home Language, First Additional Language, Mathematics and Natural Sciences) plus one other subject on a rotational basis; and
 - b. externally set and administered by the accredited assessment body and/or the Department of Basic Education and marked by the individual schools based on nationally approved assessment marking guidelines and moderated by Umalusi. This will apply to the suite of four remaining subjects.
- 3 The assessment should accommodate the various learning needs and learning styles of learners with special education needs.
- 4 The standardised external assessment will constitute 60% of the final promotion mark.
- 5 The norms and standards to which all assessment bodies must give effect are stipulated in the policy document, *National policy and regulations on the conduct, administration and management of the General Education Certificate: A qualification at level 1 on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework of the NQF* (to be developed after the qualification has been registered). Assessment bodies are also required to adhere to the quality assurance directives issued by Umalusi in respect of this qualification.

20. School-based assessment:

- 1 SBA is conducted by teachers at schools or other sites of learning, in which the achievement of the learning outcomes will count towards the achievement of a qualification. SBA is a compulsory component of the promotion mark.

- 2 SBA must include a variety of assessment forms and it should attempt to assess knowledge and skills that cannot be assessed in an external standardised assessment. It will include Practical Assessment Tasks, projects, research assignments, and oral presentations. It will assess learning outcomes that need to be observed over an extended period and it will accommodate learners with special educational needs.
- 3 The school-based assessment must include both informal and formal assessment. The informal assessment will be part of the formative assessment used to continuously assess the learner to determine his progress towards the achievement of the learning outcomes. The formal assessment tasks are summative in nature and they are stipulated in the CAPS. These assessment tasks will be recorded for purpose of promotion and certification.
- 4 School-based assessment will focus on performance based assessment which will be linked to an Integrated Common Assessment Task (ICAT) with a theme that seamlessly integrates content and skills within a subject and also across selected subjects e.g. Entrepreneurship.
- 5 SBA will comprise assessment tasks that are set and marked by the teacher or the Practical Assessment Tasks that are set by the cluster or ICAT that are centrally set and marked by the teacher.
- 6 ICAT must be designed to achieve the following:
 - a. An integration of the outcomes to be achieved at the end of the GET in a way that reflects a comprehensive approach to learning and shows that the purpose of the qualification has been achieved,
 - b. Judgement of learner performance to provide evidence of applied competence or capability and
 - c. Facilitate the development of skills across subjects and show evidence of applied knowledge within different contexts.
- 7 The learner performance demonstrated in SBA will be recorded as formal assessment tasks and reported against the requirements for promotion.
- 8 These assessments conducted in respect of the GET must be subject to external moderation put in place by the Department of Basic Education, or relevant accredited assessment body.
- 9 The weighting of the SBA across all subjects will be 40%.
- 10 Umalusi will develop a quality assurance system that focuses on ensuring that the Department of Basic Education or the accredited assessment body, establishes appropriate moderation systems for SBA.

21. Recording and reporting of learner achievement

- 1 Recording and reporting is based on the individual assessment tasks. Parents will be provided a progress report on the performance of the learner on a quarterly basis. A certificate will be issued at the end of the academic year to recognise competencies and skills of learners as at the end of grade 9.
- 2 The language in which recording and reporting is done should be in accordance with the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) as informed by the *Language-in-Education Policy* of 1997. In the case of dual medium schools, one of the languages used as LoLT should be utilised for reporting purposes, while the language of recording should be any of the languages used for learning and teaching.

22. Rating Scale

RATING CODE	ACHIEVEMENT DESCRIPTION	MARKS %
7	Outstanding Achievement	80 - 100
6	Meritorious Achievement	70 - 79
5	Substantial Achievement	60 - 69
4	Adequate Achievement	50 - 59
3	Moderate Achievement	40 - 49
2	Elementary Achievement	30 - 39
1	Not Achieved	0 - 29

CHAPTER 4

Accreditation

23. Minimum accreditation requirements for offering the GEC

- 1 A private assessment body that has an interest in conducting the external examinations of the GEC should meet all the accreditation requirements as set out in Umalusi's accreditation policy for assessment bodies, and be accredited by Umalusi to offer the GEC examinations.
- 2 Independent schools offering the GEC should meet all the accreditation requirements as set out in Umalusi's accreditation policy and be accredited by Umalusi to offer the qualification.

CHAPTER 5

Transitional Arrangements

24. Transitional arrangements

- 1 *The Policy for the General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework of the NQF* will commence on the day of its promulgation in the Government Gazette and becomes effective in public ordinary and special schools and those independent schools that offer the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*.
- 2 The General Education Certificate: ID No. 63289 was never implemented until it was deregistered in 2012, therefore the introduction of this policy is not envisioned to disadvantage any learner.

25. Short title and commencement

This policy is called the Draft Policy for the *General Education Certificate: A qualification at Level 1 on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)*, and will come into effect on the date of publication in a *Government Gazette*.

ANNEXURE A: ORGANISING FIELDS

No	Organising fields of learning
1.	Agriculture and Nature Conservation
2.	Culture and Arts
3.	Business, Commerce and Management Studies
4.	Communication Studies and Language
5.	Education, Training and Development
6.	Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
7.	Human and Social Studies
8.	Law, Military Science and Security
9.	Health Sciences and Social Services
10.	Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
11.	Services
12.	Physical Planning and Construction

ANNEXURE B: Approved Subjects

TABLE 1: OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Subjects	Subject Number
Afrikaans Home Language	13304511
Afrikaans First Additional Language	13314541
Afrikaans Second Additional Language	13354571
English Home Language	13304601
English First Additional Language	13314631
English Second Additional Language	13354661
IsiNdebele Home Language	13304691
IsiNdebele First Additional language	13314721
IsiNdebele Second Additional Language	13354751
IsiXhosa Home Language	13304781
IsiXhosa First Additional Language	13314811
IsiXhosa Second Additional Language	13354841
IsiZulu Home Language	13304871
IsiZulu First Additional Language	13314901
IsiZulu Second Additional Language	13354931
Sepedi Home Language	13304961
Sepedi First Additional Language	13314991
Sepedi Second Additional Language	13355021
Sesotho Home Language	13305051
Sesotho First Additional Language	13315081
Sesotho Second Additional Language	13355111
Setswana Home Language	13305141
Setswana First Additional Language	13315171
Setswana Second Additional Language	13355201
SiSwati Home Language	13305231
SiSwati First Additional Language	13315261
SiSwati Second Additional Language	13355291
Tshivenda Home Language	13305321
Tshivenda First Additional Language	13315351
Tshivenda Second Additional Language	13355381
Xitsonga Home Language	13305411
Xitsonga First Additional Language	13315441
Xitsonga Second Additional Language	13355471

TABLE 1A: LANGUAGE WITH THE STATUS OF AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE FOR THE PURPOSE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING AT A PUBLIC SCHOOL

Subjects	Subject Number
South African Sign Language Home Language	13305921

TABLE 1B: NON-OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Subjects	Subject Number
German Second Additional Language	13355701
Mandarin Second Additional Language	13356011
Serbian Home Language	13355731
Serbian Second Additional Language	13355761

TABLE 2: PHYSICAL, MATHEMATICAL, COMPUTER AND LIFE SCIENCES

Subjects	Subject Number
Natural Sciences	19351421
Mathematics	19331451

TABLE 3: HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Subjects	Subject Number
Social Sciences	16351261
Life Orientation	16341291

TABLE 4: ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

Subjects	Subject Number
Technology	15351141

TABLE 5: CULTURE AND ARTS

Subjects	Subject Number
Creative Arts	11351171

TABLE 6: BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Subjects	Subject Number
Economic and Management Sciences	12351111

ANNEXURE C: Subject Coding for Assessment Purposes

Subjects

The subject codes for the subjects listed in Annexures A and B consist of eight digits that have the following meaning:

first and second digits: NQF organising field (up to two digits) (Table B1);
third and fourth digits: the subject groupings, as defined below (Table B2);
fifth, sixth and seventh digits: unique subject codes within each NQF organising field (subject grouping); and
eighth digit: NQF level of the subject.

Table B1 NQF organising fields as they relate to the subject coding system

Digit NQF Organising Field	
DIGIT	NQF ORGANISING FIELD
10	Agriculture and Nature Conservation
11	Arts and Culture
12	Business, Commerce and Management Studies
13	Communication and Language Studies
14	Education, Training and Development
15	Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
16	Human and Social Studies
17	Law, Military Science and Security
18	Health Science and Social Services
19	Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
20	Services
21	Physical Planning and Construction

Table B2 Subject Groupings

DIGIT	SUBJECT GROUP
30	Group A Official Languages at Home Language level

31	Group A Official Languages at First Additional Level
32	Group A Mathematical Literacy
33	Group A Mathematics
34	Group A Life Orientation
35	Group B Subjects
36	Subjects from other assessment bodies recognised by the Department of Basic Education to be offered as Group B subjects
37	Technical Mathematics

ANNEXURE D: International Comparability

National examinations or certification frameworks mark the end of an educational phase, and ongoing teacher assessment frequently determines student progression between grades. In many countries a qualification is offered at different periods in the system to include lower grades than grade 12 as in the South African system. To situate the GEC in the context of other international practices, the discussion focuses on the Junior Certificate offered in Ireland, Secondary School Certificate (SSC) offered in Pakistan and the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) offered in Singapore.

IRELAND

The **Junior Certificate**, is an educational qualification awarded in Ireland by the Department of Education and Skills to students who have successfully completed the junior cycle of secondary education and achieved a minimum standard in their Junior Certificate Examination. These exams are supervised by the State Examinations Commission. The objective of the Junior Cycle is to provide a well-balanced, general education suitable for pupils who leave full-time education at the end of compulsory schooling or, alternatively, who wish to enter on more advanced courses of study. The first Junior Certificate syllabus was introduced in 1989 and examined in 1992. A "recognised pupil" who commences the Junior Cycle must reach at least 12 years of age on 01 January of the school year of admission and must have completed primary education.

The examination is normally taken after three years' study in a secondary school. Typically, a student takes 9 to 13 subjects; including English, Irish and Mathematics as part of the Junior Cycle. The examination does not reach the standards for college or university entrance; instead, a school leaver in Ireland will typically take the Leaving Certificate Examination two or three years after completion of the Junior Certificate to reach that standard.

In the late 1990s, the Department of Education and Science began to review and replace many subject curricula, particularly those that were dated, such as History and Geography. In 1999, Civic, Social, and Political Education was introduced as a subject and made mandatory from 2000. Religious Education was also brought in. In 2002 a new Science course was introduced. The new course emphasised greater class participation and introduced the awarding of a percentage of marks for class practicals throughout the three years.

Courses are quite broad, for example, the Business Studies course covers business organisation, marketing, economics, accounting and several other areas. The same is also true of the Science course, which covers basic physics, chemistry and biology. A "recognised junior pupil" must undertake all the mandatory subjects and at least two of the optional subjects, except insofar as exemptions or exclusions apply. In certain types of schools, subjects in the optional grouping (or a selection from combinations of them) may, in fact, be mandatory, for instance, History and Geography are mandatory in certain types of schools. Most schools do not offer all the optional subjects but must offer all the mandatory and certain optional subjects.

For the Junior Certificate, students can take an examination subject at one of four levels. These are: Higher Level, Ordinary Level, Foundation Level or Common Level. Foundation

Level may only be taken in two subjects: Irish and Mathematics. The level taken at Junior Certificate may have bearing on the level taken in the Leaving Certificate; thus, for instance, a student who take an Ordinary level in the Junior Certificate and cannot take a Higher level in the corresponding Leaving Certificate subject.

The final examination takes place after three years of the course, in early June. The exams can take the form of written papers, aural exams, practical exams (for example, in Music, 25% of the final result is based on a performance and skills test in front of an examiner) and marks from course work assignments. In the Junior Certificate candidates have the option of answering either in Irish (only if they have been in the Irish stream) or in English, except in the case of the subjects Irish and English and questions in other language subjects.

Students who face disadvantages (e.g. suffer spelling problems caused by dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, or other disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder or ADHD) are given concessions.

Junior Certificate results are not a prerequisite for the Leaving Certificate, so that all students may continue to their next year of education no matter what their results.

In late 2009 the Irish Government considered for a short period of time to completely scrap all Junior Cert examinations permanently. However, later on, the government agreed to not scrap the Junior Certificate and instead, introduced curriculum reforms which extended from 2014 to 2019. Pilots of the new system have been underway for three years. It is expected that the full Junior Cert will be revised into the Junior Cycle Student Award by 2022.

Pakistan

There are two major external examinations leading to certification in Pakistan: the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) at the end of Classes 9 and 10, and the Higher Secondary School Certificate after Class 12. Class 9 examinations are called SSC part-1 and class 10 examinations are called SSC part-2. The students are awarded a certificate upon completion of SSC part-2. A child enters into the SSC level after successful completion of the middle school. The secondary school examinations have a dual function: to gain certification for the purposes of securing employment, and to enable admission to higher levels of education. Students passing the Secondary School Certificate examinations are expected to exhibit good verbal and written communication. Mostly, such school leavers are employed as junior staff in various public sector departments, in the police or the army, in agriculture or industry (e.g., hospitality and transport), or enter self-employment.

The SSC examinations are conducted by government boards, officially known as Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education, or simply BISE. Every province has its own boards stationed in main districts of the provinces.

The curriculum in 10th grade is divided into different streams; Sciences, Arts, Humanities and Vocational/Technical. Upon completion of grade 9, students are expected to take a standardised test in each of the first part of their academic subjects. They again take tests of the second parts of the same courses at the end of grade 10. The curriculum usually includes a combination of eight courses including electives (such as Biology, Chemistry, Computer and

Physics) as well as compulsory subjects (such as Mathematics, English, Urdu, Islamic studies and Pakistan Studies).

Students then enter an intermediate college and complete grades 11 and 12. Upon completion of each of the two grades, they again take standardised tests in their academic subjects. Upon successful completion of these examinations, students are awarded the Higher Secondary School Certificate (or HSSC).

Singapore

The Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) is an annual national examination that is taken by candidates at the end of their final year of primary school education, in Singapore. Introduced in 1960, the PSLE has undergone many modifications over the years. In the 1960s and '70s, changes to the PSLE system were mainly concerned with providing alternative educational pathways to pupils who failed the examination. In the '80s and '90s, the focus shifted towards fine-tuning the PSLE grading system so that pupils would enter the most appropriate secondary-level academic stream. From the 2000s onwards, the PSLE framework was further reviewed to de-emphasise competition and encourage the holistic development of children. In August 2005, an overseas version of the PSLE was launched. Known as the Singapore International Primary School Examination (iPSLE), it was developed for pupils of overseas primary schools that followed a curriculum similar to that in Singapore.

PSLE is also used to assess the suitability of students for secondary education and places them in one of three 4-year secondary school programmes that will match their learning pace, ability and inclination. The Primary School Leaving Examination is administered by the Ministry of Education and taken by all students. In March 2018 the call for the removal of the PSLE was rejected in Parliament. It was cited as a "useful checkpoint" in a child's education journey.

The examination tests students' proficiency in the English language, their respective mother tongue languages (typically Chinese, Malay, Tamil), mathematics and science. The format of the examinations within the PSLE has been revised consistently throughout its history to suit the Ministry of Education's policy. On 13 July 2016, the Ministry of Education officially announced the latest revision to the PSLE Scoring System. The aggregate score for the PSLE was replaced with wider scoring bands from 2021. Scores reflect students' own level of achievement, instead of comparing them to their peers, thus allowing students to focus on their own learning outcomes.

The outcomes of PSLE are considered when allocating admissions to preferred secondary school.

In conclusion, the discussion presented above shows that the awarding of a General Education Certificate to learners at the end of the compulsory 10 years of formal schooling is comparable with countries that recognise the need for external examinations and certification at different levels of the schooling system. It is evident from the different countries that the aspirations of the GEC, which include streaming learners into different learning and career pathways, also form the basis of developing qualifications for primary and junior secondary education elsewhere.

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