



basic education

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TO: HEADS OF DEPARTMENT
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SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
DISTRICT DIRECTORS
CIRCUIT MANAGERS
AREA MANAGERS

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CIRCULAR 02 OF 2020

IMPLEMENTATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE AMENDED 2020 ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (GET) BAND (GRADES R-9)

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the 2020 academic year and as a result, the assessment needs to be revised for learners, given the phased-in approach and further contextual uncertainties regarding schooling. The best approach, seemingly, centres on maximising school-based efforts to utilise available resources, time and space to develop a plan for critical content, skills, values and attitudes for the 2020 academic year with a view to using part of the 2021 academic year to revise and remediate 2020 work.
2. This circular outlines the principles and procedures on the administration, moderation and quality assurance of Assessment for grades R–9, in light of the reviewed Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) to accommodate the adjusted 2020 academic year as specified in Circular S2 of 2020.
3. With regard to assessment, Circular S2 of 2020 highlighted the following key aspects:
 - 3.1 In line with the curriculum trimming and reorganisation, summative assessments in the ATP focuses only on key concepts and skills in the learning process while formative assessment is emphasised to ensure the mastering of concepts and skills. Therefore, in SBA, the focus is more on assessment for learning as opposed to assessment of learning to achieve the learning outcomes of each grade and subject. In this context, the national framework for curriculum recovery proposes a reduction in summative assessment to create space for more teaching time.
 - 3.2 The June examination was cancelled in all grades to allow for more teaching time. Schools will administer a formal assessment in Grade 4 to Grade 9 subjects at the end of terms 3 and 4 to identify the learning gaps for remediation in the current or subsequent grade.

4. In the remainder of the 2020 academic year, SBA must focus on formative assessment intimately linked to the process of teaching and learning. SBA, with an emphasis on formative assessment, must become the main tool to judge learner competencies in the classroom. The collection of evidence generated through both formative and formal summative tasks in the current grade informs the overall progression of a learner into the next grade.
5. To ensure that there is clarity and a shared vision on the implementation of assessment practices, a list of terms relating to formative and summative assessment has been included in **Annexure A** for reference.
6. **Principles that must be applied in conducting SBA for Grades R–9**

Maintain developmentally appropriate approaches to assessment in the Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phases.

6.1 Foundation Phase:

In the Foundation Phase SBA constitutes a 100% weighting, and it is achieved through continuous assessment practices. Assess learners in Grades R–3 continuously to monitor their progress and to make daily instructional decisions. The following characteristics of continuous assessment are important:

- a) Takes place over a period and is ongoing.
- b) Supports growth and development.
- c) Provides feedback from learning and teaching.
- d) Allows for integrated assessment.
- e) Encourages assessing a number of related concepts/content knowledge/skills within a single activity.
- f) Combines a number of different forms of assessment.
- g) Uses strategies that cater for a variety of learner needs e.g. LSEN, language, etc.
- h) Allows competence to be demonstrated in a number of ways.
- i) Is an integral part of teaching and learning.
- j) Is based on selected concepts/content knowledge/skills.
- k) Recording is against these concepts/content knowledge/skills.

6.2 Intermediate and Senior Phase (Grades 4–9):

The following characteristics of assessment are important:

- a) Ensure that there is only one formal summative assessment task that features in term 3 and term 4 per subject. In the case of Languages, due consideration should be given to the assessment of Reading Comprehension, Essay Writing and Transactional Texts. In the case of Social Sciences, the one formal summative assessment task applies separately to History and Geography.

- b) During all lessons, teachers must integrate formative assessment into the teaching and learning process. For effective formative assessment to be implemented during the lesson, teachers must:
- i. Ensure that ALL learners understand what they will be learning (i.e. lesson objectives or learning intentions), as well as what evidence will be required (i.e. assessment criteria) to demonstrate that learners have attained the lesson objectives.
 - ii. Prepare high-quality questions and activities before lessons in order to obtain evidence of learners' levels of knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to the lesson objective.
 - iii. Provide relevant and timely verbal and/or written feedback to all learners in a manner that provides learners with clear and learner friendly steps on how to improve their work. Assessment cannot be regarded as formative if evidence obtained is not used to support learners to improve their knowledge, understanding or skills.
 - iv. Teachers should be able to draw on different sources of evidence that include activities such as homework, classwork, remediation exercises, and all other appropriate formative assessments strategies to support learners. The focus here is on the depth of content, development of skills, and assessment to determine whether learning is taking place.
- c) Retain one oral assessment per term for Home languages and First Additional Languages. The focus should be on listening comprehension exercises rather than reading aloud exercises, debates, and dialogues, since learners will be using masks.
- d) Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs) and Physical Education Tasks (PETs), e.g. Life Skills in the Foundation Phase, should be shifted to term 3 and term 4, taking into account limitations of social distancing. In Creative Arts (in the Senior Phase), the number of PATs is two in term 3, but in term 4, there are no PATs and only a school based test on two art forms. In all other subjects there should not be more than one PAT assigned per term. In keeping with the COVID-19 social distancing regulations, assessment tasks should not require any learner to make physical contact with any equipment and apparatus.
- e) In subjects where the content in term 2 and remaining terms is dependent on term 1, a baseline assessment task will establish whether learners understand the concepts from term 1.
- f) For Grades R-9, there are no formally recorded term 2 assessments.

7. The end-of-year assessment for Grades 4 to 9

The following principles apply to the conduct of the end-of-year assessment:

- 7.1 In all subjects, a school-based test replaces the end-of-year examination. All learners in a grade take the school-based test in a subject. When different teachers within the same school teach the same subject in a particular grade, teachers must collaborate to create one test for all the classes in that grade. The school-based test covers work from term 3 and term 4. The school-based test is set and managed at the school level with appropriate measures to ensure fair and credible assessment practices.

- 7.2 The ATPs include a dedicated testing period in the fourth term. The school-based test constitutes the one formal task for the fourth term.
- 7.3 The school-based test will carry a reduced weighting and time allocation. Hence, the focus of the school-based test should be on subject content, skills, values and attitudes. In this assessment, not all content and aspects of a subject are included with priority given to those aspects considered core for progression into the next grade.
- 7.4 The DBE will issue further guidelines on the setting, marking and moderation for the school-based tests later in the year.

8. Failure of a School to complete the summative tasks as outlined in Annexure B, due to Valid Reasons

In cases where a school is unable to complete the summative tasks as outlined in **Annexure B**, due to legitimate reasons emanating from the rotational model of school attendance or school closure due to detection of infections, approval must be obtained from the District Director to omit the summative assessment task and compute the SBA marks based on the reduced number of tasks. The code “-1”, must be captured on SA-SAMS for this specific task, and the school must be able to provide written confirmation from the District Director, during the monitoring and verification process.

9. Learners not attending school due to co-morbidities or any other reason relating to COVID-19

In cases where learners are not attending school due to COVID-19 related reasons, but are subjected to home learning, under the guidance of the parent, the assessment requirements for the remaining duration of the academic year must be communicated to the parent in writing, well in advance of the scheduled assessment. The school must accommodate the learner for the specific summative assessments at the school, taking into consideration the specific circumstances of the learner.

10. Revised weightings

Based on the above principles, adjustments to the current weightings of SBA and the end-of-year school-based test will be effected for the 2020 academic year. This adjustment is only applicable to the 2020 academic year.

- 10.1 The SBA for Foundation Phase (Grades R-3) remains unchanged at 100%. For the Foundation Phase, the calculation of the final progression mark is obtained from terms 1, 3 and 4 as no marks are calculated for term 2.
- 10.2 The revised weighting for SBA in Grades 4-9 counts 80% of the final progression mark. The 80% weighting will comprise all assessment tasks conducted in term 1 and term 3. The increased weighting of 80% for SBA will ensure that the teachers' ongoing assessment in the classroom plays

a more important role than the final end-of-year school-based test in determining whether the learner should be promoted to the next grade.

10.3 The school-based test will carry a weighting of 20% in Grades 4–9.

10.4 The revised weightings will be calculated automatically on SA–SAMS and schools are not expected to make changes to the original individual task weightings. An example of the revised weightings in the Senior Phase (Grade 7) is illustrated below.

	Subject	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Grade 7	Mathematics	Tasks 1–2 completed	No formal assessment	One summative assessment task	School-based formal test
	Weighting	80%			20%

10.5 The structure of the SBA and school-based test per subject and grade are summarised per phase in **Annexure B**. The breakdown of the 80% across term 1 and term 3 for different subjects is reflected in the revised ATPs.

11. School reports

11.1 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.

11.2 The results of the school report should include relevant information on learners' specific strengths and weaknesses that teachers in the subsequent grade can use for remediation purposes.

11.3 Report cards are to be generated for term 3 and term 4.

12. Quality assurance of SBA; monitoring and support to schools

12.1. Moderation systems for formal tests must be strengthened at the school level to ensure the quality of summative assessment is of an appropriate standard.

12.2. District and provincial officials should support teachers with exemplars of formal assessments through electronic platforms or in hard copy format.

13. Compliance with COVID–19 Occupational Health and Safety Requirements

13.1 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 component.

13.2 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.

14. Use of SA-SAMS in the capture and computation of SBA and final marks

14.1 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.

14.2 In response to the COVID-19 review the following principles should be applied for capturing of marks:

- a) All term 1 SBA marks must be captured.
- b) The 2020 June Examinations are excluded across all Grades (4–9) from SBA and a code of “-1” to be captured for all learners.
- c) A code of “-1” to be captured for original CAPS tasks that were not to be administered in 2020.
- d) SA-SAMS version 20.0.0 will be issued to schools, and it will make provision for changes in the “fixed” assessment totals, adjusted weights and a function to add “-1” to a whole group of learners.

14.3 A guideline with instructions for all subjects will be made available in due course.

15. 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.

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



MR HM MWELI
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 09/07/2020

ANNEXURE A: LIST OF TERMS

1. Formative Assessment– refers to a wide variety of methods that teachers use DURING lessons to:
 - a) Obtain evidence of what learners know, understand and can do with regard to the content covered; and provide meaningful feedback as quickly as possible to learners.
 - b) Adjust their teaching to address the specific learning needs of learners. Marks are not awarded for formative assessment although teachers may keep informal notes to monitor learners' progress. Formative assessments help teachers identify concepts and processes that learners are struggling to understand, concepts and skills they are having difficulty acquiring, or learning standards they have not yet achieved so that adjustments can be made to lessons, instructional techniques, and academic support for learners' learning better.

2. Summative Assessment– refers to a wide variety of methods that the teacher uses in a planned and systematic way AFTER completion of a lesson or a unit of learning to obtain evidence of what learners know, understand and can do. An end-of-term test, assignments or projects are examples of summative assessment. Results of summative assessment can be recorded and may be used for promotion and progression purposes.

Teachers can also use results of summative assessments in a formative manner. For example, teachers can analyse the results of tests to determine what areas learners need more support in and remediation can be done before new content is introduced.

3. Baseline Assessment– refers to assessment conducted by the teacher to determine whether learners have the minimum levels of knowledge, understanding and skills required BEFORE introducing new lessons/concepts.

4. School-Based Assessment– includes formative and summative assessments utilised by teachers and schools in the classroom to support teaching and learning.

5. School-based Test – refers to a test developed by the teacher to determine learners' levels of knowledge, understanding and skills and administered in a systematic manner.

6. Moderation– a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end/a systematic series of actions directed to some end.

ANNEXURE B: SUMMARY TABLES ON ASSESSMENT FOR THE GET

TABLE 1: 2020 GRADES R–3 REVISED PROGRAMME OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE FOUNDATION PHASE

SUBJECT	GRADE	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
Home Language; First Additional Language; Mathematics; Life Skills	R	Continuous SBA	No Formal Assessment	Continuous SBA	Continuous SBA
	1	Continuous SBA	No Formal Assessment	Continuous SBA	Continuous SBA
	2	Continuous SBA	No Formal Assessment	Continuous SBA	Continuous SBA
	3	Continuous SBA	No Formal Assessment	Continuous SBA	Continuous SBA
WEIGHTING		100%			

TABLE 2: 2020 GRADES 4–6 REVISED PROGRAMME OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE INTERMEDIATE PHASE

SUBJECT	GRADE	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
Home Language & First Additional Language	4	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	Oral; Task (Response to texts)	School-based test: Oral component + Response to texts + Literature
	5			Writing; Test (Response to texts)	
	6				
Mathematics	4	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	5				
	6				
Natural Science and Technology	4	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	5				
	6				
Social Science Geography	4	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	5				
	6				
Social Science History	4	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	5				
	6				
Life Skills	4	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	Project: PET; CAT	School-based test (CAT included)
	5				
	6				
WEIGHTING		80%			20%

TABLE 3: 2020 GRADES 7–9 REVISED PROGRAMME OF ASSESSMENT FOR THE SENIOR PHASE

SUBJECT	GRADE	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3	TERM 4
Home Language & First Additional Language	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	Oral Task; Literature test	School-based test: Oral component + Response to texts + Literature
	8				
	9				
Mathematics	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	8				
	9				
Natural Science	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	8				
	9				
Social Science Geography	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	8				
	9				
Social Science History	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	8				
	9				
Economic Management Sciences	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	8				
	9				
Technology	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Summative Assessment Task	School-based test
	8				
	9				
Creative Arts	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	One Practical Assessment Task per Art Form.	School-based test: Two Art Forms
	8				
	9				
Life Orientation	7	All Tasks completed	No Summative Assessment	Project; PET	School-based test (including PET component)
	8				
	9				
WEIGHTING	7-9	80%			20%

NOTES ON TABLES:

- All term 1 Tasks should have been completed.
- Apart from the Languages and Life Skills/Life Orientation, each subject has a maximum of one summative task per term.
- There will be no mid-year examination or formal assessment in term 2.
- All subjects to have a school-based test in term 4.
- The contribution of SBA in terms 1 and 3 is 80% and school-based test in term 4 will contribute 20% towards the final mark for Grades 4–9.