

Email from Edward French to David Adler, John Aitchison and Patrick Baloyi

21 August 2017,

Dear David, John, Patrick

After months of SAQA-style delays and muddle it looks as though the site visits and verification exercise are off this year. On the one side the delays have meant that the DBE's contract with Morvest would have to be extended - something the DBE is not willing to do. This made the timing impossible. On the other, Joe has made a big thing of the auditor's mention that many qualified people were found in the last year's KRG.

A couple of weeks ago Joe asked Patrick "what the use of the site visits and moderation had been if it didn't pick up this fact". To support Patrick in a meeting with Joe after this, I wrote:

From the very start of the SAQA moderation of KRG there was an awareness that some candidates were well above literacy level.

This matter has been raised in most if not all of the reports.

1. From the beginning it was essential to be clear that we were moderating results, NOT evaluating KRG. There were political and other sensitivities about this. The moderation was concerned only with the quality of the marking, and it was put repeatedly that the focus was on answering whether the portfolios reflected competence at ABET Level 1 in literacy and numeracy REGARDLESS of who wrote the portfolio.

2. Later a verification component was added. Here the concern was the authenticity of the portfolios and whether they reflected the actual competence of the learner involved - i.e. whether the learner could do the tasks completed in the portfolio in an independent test. At no stage was the question of whether the learner was already competent before KRG relevant to the process.

2. Nonetheless, it was noted that some candidates had primary or even secondary education. When this matter was looked into (as an aside) it was found that:

a) The candidates with higher levels had reasons for wanting to be in KRG: they had not used literacy for 30 or 40 years; they wanted to learn literacy in English; the other content of KRG was still of interest to them.

b) Although the intake data in KRG was very difficult to access, the matter was lightly investigated in the SAQA process. Three years ago a careful look at the issue showed that it was on a small scale; two years ago it did seem that whole groups were over-qualified, but the evidence was hard to assess; in the last year the impression was reported that voluntary

educators might be feeling the need to pack their classes with adults who were already literate.

3. It cannot be sufficiently emphasised that this matter was drawn to the attention of the DBE, the Minister, the auditors or whoever might have read the SAQA report - as a matter of courtesy - BUT was not the responsibility of the SAQA quality assurance process.

I didn't mention in this note that I had publicly stated my concern about this in a meeting with the DBE, including Marongwa and Jody Cedars. Marongwa agreed that there was a problem, which she attributed to the ageing of the programme.

Patrick used these points, but not the text itself as far as I know, in his meeting with Joe.

Now, in response to a pressing request from the DG of the DBE about the progress with their contract of a couple of months ago, Joe has written in an sms to DG which the DG has forwarded to Patrick (wheels within wheels).

"DG we trying to sort the contract with the service provider ASAP.

We are not going to do site visits. It does not make sense to do it. We have found that 131k people did a prior qualification before KRG including first degrees. This was meant to be picked up by the site visits. We will not use other means to prior learning achievements."

Patrick awaits Joe's response.

FYI

Ed