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Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

APPROVAL OF THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR THE VERIFICATION OF STUDENT ENROLMENT IN THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
FOR VERIFICATION OF STUDENT ENROLMENT IN THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

AGSA	Auditor-General South Africa
CET	Community Education and Training
CET Act	Continuing Education and Training Act
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ID	Identity Document
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Year n-1	Last or previous academic year

PURPOSE OF THE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

1. The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to:

   1.1. Guide the process of verification of student enrolment data in Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges;

   1.2. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Head Office, Regional Offices and CET Colleges; and

   1.3. Prescribe the proportion of the sample size of student to be verified.

BACKGROUND

2. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has the legal mandate to support and perform oversight on CET Colleges in order to ensure a sound Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system. To this end, the DHET supports and monitors implementation of national policies, guidelines and development of plans and interventions aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of the system.

3. On an annual basis, the office of the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA) conducts an audit of performance information in order to determine the validity of the reported information and also verify the internal control mechanisms and compliance therewith by CET Colleges.

4. The SOP for the verification of students' enrolment is therefore critical as one of the steering mechanisms to set the standard and ascertain availability of enrolment data which is complete, valid, accurate and reliable.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

5. This SOP must be read in conjunction with the following legislative and policy documents:

   Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006)

   5.1. Section 41B (4) of the CET Act provides for the Minister to determine national policy for planning, provision, financing, co-ordination, management, governance, programmes, monitoring, evaluation and wellbeing of the community education and training system.

National Policy for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Education and Training Colleges (2016)

5.2. The *National Policy for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Community Education and Training Colleges* (M & E Policy) was developed with the objective to monitor, measure and evaluate the impact and the quality of access to and success in the CET programmes by adults, the not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and the out-of-school youths.

5.3. Paragraph 8.1.2 (b) of the M & E policy encourages colleges to have systems and procedures to deal with admissions (admission policy, admission/register/book, and evidence for placements), placing of all students, and total number of students for the year and an indication of the number of students younger than 19 years.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE VERIFICATION PROCESS

6. The verification process involves the department (both Head Office and Regional Office) and CET Colleges. The verification process must unfold as indicated below, with the role of each office specified:

6.1. **Head Office** is responsible for the determination of the verification process in the following procedure:

6.1.1. Develop and distribute enrolment verification documents;

6.1.2. Mediate the verification documents to regions and colleges;

6.1.3. Receive student enrolment schedule from colleges;

6.1.4. Determine the size of the sample and choose the sample to be verified;

6.1.5. Communicate the selected sample and timelines to the regions to conduct verification;

6.1.6. Receive completed instruments and findings; and

6.1.7. Consolidate and compile a national report for Director-General's approval.

6.2. **The Regional Office** is responsible for the actual verification in the following procedure:

6.2.1. Receive the enrolment schedule (excel spreadsheet) from Head Office for quality assurance in terms of completion and identify gaps that could impact on the sampling process, engage with colleges for correction where necessary;

6.2.2. Communicate the quality assured enrolment schedule back to the Head Office to choose the sample to be verified;

6.2.3. Receive the sample from Head Office and work out a schedule in agreement with the colleges;

6.2.4. Provide the college with the names of officials who will conduct the verification;

6.2.5. Verify student enrolment as per guidelines provided using the instrument provided by Head Office **(Annexure A);** and

6.2.6. Consolidate all verified data, complete the verification tool and submit the Excel Workbook and a Regional Office report to Head Office.

6.3. **The CET Colleges** are responsible for the availability of enrolment data in the following procedure:

6.3.1. Provide CLCs with admission forms and enrolment schedule to capture enrolment data;

6.3.2. Develop a management plan for submission of enrolment data by CLCs to colleges;

6.3.3. Receive, capture and collate a college database on an enrolment schedule provided by Head Office;

6.3.4. Store data and supporting documents from CLCs;

6.3.5. Submit the excel spreadsheet containing the student enrolment schedule to Head Office as per the submission date;

6.3.6. Avail the students records for verification in line with the chosen sample to the Regional Office;

6.3.7. Adhere to the verification schedule;

6.3.8. Give access to location (physical or electronic system) where and how registration documents are filed and stored; and

6.3.9. Be available on the day of verification for clarification of issues that may arise.

SIZE OF THE SAMPLE

7. The size of the sample is determined at **100** students per college across all programmes provided by the college. Head Office will extract the sample randomly from the student enrolment schedule submitted per college.

TIMEFRAME FOR VERIFICATION

8. The CET branch is expected to provide the Director-General with a verification report of **Year n-1** by end of November annually. It is therefore important that the following timeframes are annually adhered to:

   8.1. Issuing of a verification circular and mediation of verification instruments by Head Office must completed by end of April;

   8.2. The colleges must submit student enrolment schedule to Head Office by end of May;

   8.3. Regions must quality check the student enrolment schedule by end of June.

   8.4. Sampling and communication between Head Office and Regional Offices must be carried out by end of July.

   8.5. Verification process and reports by regions, must be completed and submitted by end of September.

   8.6. Verification reports must be signed-off by the Regional Manager.

CRITERIA TO BE USED DURING VERIFICATION

9. The ultimate goal of verification of student enrolment is to ensure that data is reliable for accountability and planning purposes. It is therefore important that the verification process is guided by a set criteria. The following criteria must be used to check and be referred to when compiling the regional report:

   Completeness

   9.1. During verification all relevant supporting student records must be present and all fields in the verification tool must be populated appropriately. A complete student record will consist of admission form, copy of ID/passport document, class attendance register for each programme and subject/ learning area enrolled for.

   Integrity

   9.2. The verification process must be conducted in compliance with high standards and good practices. Values and related practices that maintain users' confidence in the organisation producing the statistics and ultimately in the statistical product.

Reliability

9.3. Reliability will determine the ability of an organisation to collect and manage data so that the same level of data quality is consistently achieved. Therefore, report must be a reliable source document for preparing the publication on Statistics on Post-School Education and Training (PSET) and for audit and planning purposes.

Validity

9.4. The reports and the excel spreadsheet must be accurate and yield same results even when verified by the Internal Audit of the department or the AGSA.

Timeliness

9.5. Timeliness determines whether the data being reported on still carries the desired relevance at the time of reporting. The report must bear relevance to the data management processes within the PSET system.

REPORTING ON VERIFICATION FINDINGS

10. Each Regional Office must compile a report in accordance with '**ADDENDUM 1**' detailing the criteria set in this SOP, the observations, findings and challenges encountered during the verification process. The reports must also contain recommendations for improvement of data management systems, reporting as well as admission and attendance practices.

11. The Regional Office must also provide the report to the college management through the regional manager.

12. The report must be narrative, with the completed verification instrument (excel workbook) as an attachment.

13. The report must reach Head Office by end of September annually. Head Office must consolidate the reports from the regions and submit to the Director-General by mid-October annually for approval.

14. The report shall also serve as a source document to compile the annual CET system performance report.

ANNEXURE A: COMPLETION OF THE VERIFICATION TEMPLATE

15. The following steps are to be followed when completing the verification instrument:

STEP 1: Source document verification – student was registered and enrolled

Proceed to verify that registration forms are available for the sampled student records. Also verify that the relevant source documents are attached.

Note: 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Comments are essential for clarification, especially when recording '0'.

If information cannot be verified, it is recorded as an error – i.e. '0'.

T1 - Verify and check the following:	
(i)	The admission/registration form is provided for the record
(ii)	A certified copy of ID or passport is attached to the admission form.
(iii)	The ID or passport number on the form corresponds with attached ID or passport copy.
(iv)	Student name/s and surname correspond with attached ID or passport copy.
(v)	The admission form is signed (manual or electronic) by the student.

STEP 2: Verify the accuracy of the enrolment

Proceed to verify the accuracy of the captured student enrolment in the college student enrolment schedule. The table below reflects the set-up on sheet 2 of the workbook and must be recorded there.

Note: 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Comments are essential for clarification, especially when recording '0'.

If information cannot be verified, it is recorded as an error – i.e. '0'.

T2 – Verify the capturing of the enrolment in the student enrolment schedule:	
(i)	The ID or passport number captured in the student enrolment schedule corresponds with the student ID/passport number on the copy.
(ii)	Student name/s and surname captured in the student enrolment schedule correspond with student details on the admission/registration form.
(iii)	The same ID or passport number has not been issued different student numbers.
(iv)	Identify whether any changes/amendments to student enrolment data were documented and effected in the college student enrolment schedule.
Note: In case there were not any changes, record '3' = NOT APPLICABLE.	

STEP 3: Verify student attendance

Proceed to verify the attendance of the 100 students in attendance records. The attendance registers/records can be selected as deemed appropriate. The table below reflects the set-up on sheet 2 of the workbook and must be recorded there.

Note: 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Comments are essential for clarification, especially when recording '0'.

If information cannot be verified it is recorded as an error – i.e. '0'.

T3 - Verify the following **key details in the attendance records:**
(i) Student name/s and surname (and/or ID) appear in attendance registers/ records of **all the programmes and subjects/learning areas** that he/she was registered for. (ii) Attendance was recorded for the student in these registers. Note the practice of recording attendance – e.g. students sign. (iii) Student attended class 80% of the time or more. (iv) Student did not drop out or discontinue studies. (v) Should a student drop out / not complete the term of enrolment, the student record on the data system has been amended. **Note: In case there was no drop-out or discontinuation of enrolment, record '3' = NOT APPLICABLE.**

STEP 4: Verify management of student records

Request to be shown location where and how the registration documents are filed and stored. The table below reflects the set-up on sheet 2 of the workbook and must be recorded there.

Note: 1 = YES, 0 = NO

Comments are essential for clarification, especially when recording '0'.

If information cannot be verified it is recorded as an error – i.e. '0'.

T4 - Record the following **after observing such** (be it through physically checking the filing and storing facilities or discussing the filing and storing plan):
(i) There is a system in place for filing and storing student records. (ii) Admission forms are filed appropriately (e.g. per enrolment period or academic year). (iii) Admission forms could be retrieved for the requested sample testing. (iv) There are no admission forms that have not been properly filed and stored (lying around, unattended to).