



EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA

2021 SECOND QUARTER MEDIA BRIEFING ON ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EXAMINATIONS

**STATEMENT BY
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ECZ – DIRECTOR**

Friday, 23rd July 2021

- **Assistant Directors Present;**
- **Members of Staff Present;**
- **The Media,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I welcome you all here and those following us via our Facebook, for the second quarter media interaction. Today, Friday 23rd of July 2021, we hold our Second Quarter Media Briefing on Administration and Management of Examinations in Zambia.

Our quarterly briefings are meant to provide insight on what the Examinations Council of Zambia is doing as per our mandate, every quarter.

May I remind you all that in our first quarter briefing held on 20th April 2021, we highlighted the Decentralization of ECZ Operations; Verification of Results; 2021 Examinations Time Tables; Dispatch of 2019 Certificates, the 2021-2025 ECZ Strategic Plan, among others.

Today, we shall talk about the 2021 GCE and Grade 9 External examinations, ongoing research activities, 2020 examination review meetings, training of examiners, Online Verification of Results (OVRs) and MOU with the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECoL).

The 2021 GCE & Grade 9 External Examinations

As you may be aware, the 2021 GCE and Grade 9 External Examinations started on Monday, 19th July 2021 and shall end on Friday, 30th July 2021.

As we entered into this year 2021, it was not clear how Examinations would run bearing the increasing numbers of COVID-19 positive cases.

We must say that, it involved strategic decision making, planning and consultation with various stakeholders for the GCE and Grade 9 External Examinations to be allowed under the difficult times we live in. We are now 5 days into the examinations and currently, our teams are on the ground ensuring the smooth conduct of examinations.

Our monitoring teams, working with the Ministry of General Education and security agencies, have managed to fish out those that have been found writing or attempting to write the examinations on behalf of others. Those found wanting are being detained in various police stations and cases are being prepared for prosecution. I wish to sternly warn the general public to desist from engaging in any form of examination malpractices. Those found wanting will be dealt with in accordance with the law. The numbers of cases of examination malpractices will be reported once the examination is over and the results have been processed.

On-going Research

We are currently engaged in two studies with support from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics. First is the *COVID-19: Monitoring the Impacts on Learning Outcomes (MILO)*. This study will measure the long-term impact of COVID-19 on learning; evaluate the effectiveness of alternative learning methods used during school closures and determine ways to remediate the learning disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for the future. Other African countries involved at Kenya, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Burundi. We are proud to conduct this study on behalf of the Ministry of General Education, Government and the country at large, as the study will provide the much necessary information to guide decision making on education and learning, considering the COVID-19 pandemic. We shall share the outcomes of the study, once the study is completed.

Second is the *Policy linking research project*, which is about linking the national assessments (Zambia) to the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF), which describes the Global Minimum Proficiency Levels expected of learners at grades one to nine, in reading and mathematics. It involves reviewing the different national assessment results within the country, comparing assessment results across countries and reporting on the global learning outcome indicators, including Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 4.1.1 (a, b, and c). Once again, we are happy to do this on behalf of our country and we shall share the outcomes of the research project once it is completed.

The 2020 Examinations Review Meetings

In the quarter under review, we undertook to review the conduct of the 2020 examinations. This was meant to learn lessons that would inform decision making for the future, including the 2021 examinations. We started with an internal review meeting, which was followed by provincial review meetings in all 10 provinces. Arising from the meetings, the following notable resolutions were made:

- increase bandwidth so as to enhance efficiency of the Online service delivery by the ECZ;
- upgrade the online candidate registration systems to allow for self-registration by candidates;
- schools and colleges to adhere to set deadlines for candidate registration and other activities without fail;
- bring on board the other banks and mobile network operators for efficient use of the payment gateway for collection of fees;
- restrict the number of candidates for examination centres on the candidate registration system to eliminate crowding in centres;

- provinces, districts and schools to enhance invigilation in schools to curb the cases of assistance that are on the increase;
- all players to adhere to the Guidelines for Administration and Management of Examinations in Zambia.

Arising from the resolutions, we are happy to announce that in addition to payments through VISA, Zanaco and Zamtel (Zamkwacha); we have signed agreements and added Atlas Mara, Airtel Money and MTN Money to the Online Payment Gateway, reviewed the Guidelines for Administration and Management of Examinations in Zambia, upgraded the Online Candidate Registration System and continued to work with our Internet Service Providers to increase bandwidth and operate at an increased uptime.

We therefore wish to caution all members of the public, schools and examination centres that we shall have no intention of extending the candidate registration periods in future, once set. Since we shall open the 2022 candidate registration system in October 2021, we urge all those who wish to write school examinations in 2022 to register before end of December, 2021. Please note that the Examinations Council of Zambia does not process results for unregistered or illegal candidates. Candidates must follow all the instructions as failure to do so is tantamount to failing the examination.

Training of Examiners

In order to enhance the quality of marking, the ECZ trained 636 Teachers in marking of the School Certificate Examinations scripts. The training was a capacity building strategy to enhance education service delivery. We trust that the training will impact positively the teaching and learning in schools.

Online Verification of Results

As stated in the previous briefing, we provided for Online Results Verification (ORV) for Institutions to verify the results for their employees or students at a much affordable fee of K20 per verification. We are happy to announce that so far, twelve (12) institutions have come on board to use this system, with a total of 10,866 verifications done online. In these times of COVID-19, the ORVS was handy as it has eliminated physical contact of clients in our officers, thereby reducing the spread of the virus. We continue to encourage more institutions, both public and private, to come on board so that together we can stamp out cases of qualifications fraud.

Accreditation of Lesotho School Certificate

Lastly but not the least, we would like to inform the members of the public that we are in discussions with the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECoL) who expressed interest to Accredite their Senior Secondary Education examination with the ECZ. We had meetings from 20th to 22nd June, 2021, at which we agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Accreditation of the Lesotho Senior Secondary Education qualification to ECZ, and to jointly develop Advanced or 'A' Level qualification, which will be Accredited to ECZ as well. So far, we have information that authorities at the ECoL have considered the Management recommendation and we will receive official communication on the matter, soon. We will keep you informed on the matter as it unfolds.

With these remarks, I thank you for listening and God Bless you all.