

ECZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

News about the Examinations Council of Zambia

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ECZ 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan Launched Page 6 Candidates in Private Schools not Exempted from Examination Fees . Page 10 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) are as Useful as other Question Types. Page 12



The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) was established by an Act of Parliament Number 15 of 1983 with a mandate to set and conduct examinations and award certificates to successful candidates.

VISION

An Educational Assessment Body of Excellence

MISSION STATEMENT

To Efficiently Conduct Educational Assessments and Award Certificates of Comparable International Standards.

VALUES

Professionalism Integrity Accountability Innovativeness Teamwork

Disclaimer

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Dear Readers,

We continue to share information and news about the activities, programmes and policy changes in the administration and management of examinations in Zambia during the period July to December 2021.



This is our nineteenth (19th) edition newsletter. In this we highlight a number of issue such as the changes that have taken place in the award system for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) and the registration of candidates following Government pronouncement of free education in public and grant aided schools in Zambia.

We also show case the innovations we are implementing across the different levels of examinations. We installed state-of-the art technology to enhance assessment for learners with special educational needs.

Articles that one should not avoid to read include the one on the launch of the ECZ 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan which gives insight to what ECZ shall focus on in the next five years. Further, we have provided another detailed and well researched write up on why Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) are still considered a choice in assessment especially at Grade 7 level.

We also recognize that information is power. Therefore, this edition provides responses to some of the frequently asked questions. We have also continued to engage the media through our quarterly media briefings in order to create awareness of the various issues in assessments both locally and internationally as well as in the discharge of our mandate.

Interesting to note in this edition is the swift action that ECZ took working with the Ministry of Education and the District Education Board Secretary in Kitwe to arrest the fake conduct of the Grade 7 Composite Examination at a community school called True Vine Community School in Kitwe. We have covered this information on page 11.

As a good corporate citizen, ECZ took a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative with the support of a local Non-Governmental Organisation called My Zambia, My Responsibility in partnership with the Zambia National Commercial Bank and Vision Zambia Initiative who donated to ECZ 4,800 sanitary wear which are to be given to girls in examination classes.

With support from UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, we undertook large scale assessments across the country as a vital study in monitoring progress in terms of learning achievements based on policies and strategies that are put in place.

Having looked at the nature of the work we do, we also took time to understand the various risks that exist within and around us as an institution. We therefore, developed a policy and framework to manage

It is our sincere hope that you will find the content of this publication interesting, informative and educative.

Thank you and happy reading.

Nicolas Nkhuwa **Public Relation Manager Examinations Council of Zambia**

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Automation of Systems and Processes, as a way of Enhancing Efficiency and Effectiveness is our Focus



Dr Michael M. Chilala

We started the second half of 2021 on high alert, with the launch of the ECZ 2021 – 2025 Strategic plan. Our focus in the strategic plan is the automation of systems and processes, as a way of enhancing efficiency and effectiveness. We set for ourselves ten (10) strategic goals, to help achieve our Vision to be "An Educational Assessment Body of Excellence", through Our Mission which is, "To Efficiently Conduct Educational Assessments and Award Certificates of Comparable International Standards."

We then moved to conduct all the examinations leakage free, processed and released the results timely. One key issue during the second half of 2021 was the change of the rules governing the Award of the General Certificate of Education (GCE). Pursuant to international standards, the Council approved the introduction of a General Certificate of Education (GCE) which is a direct equivalent to the School Certificate (SC).

On the innovation front, we mainstreamed the Online Verification of Results System (OVRS), allowing institutions to verify results from the comfort of their offices. We integrated the candidate registration systems for GCE and Grade 9 external examinations with the Online Payment Gateway. This enabled the candidates to register for the 2022 examinations and pay online. With the introduction of the Free Education Policy, candidates in Government and Grant-Aided Schools were exempted from paying examination fees, while those in private schools were required to pay the fees at all levels, i.e. grades seven, nine and twelve. In response to the policy directives, we amended the OCRS to allow for payment of fees at all levels by candidates in private schools, and for Government and Grant – Aided Schools to register candidates without paying fees. We further procured and installed a Braille Embosser to enhance our capacity to internally

produce examination papers, and acquired two scanners to enhance our processing capacity of research and examinations data.

On the research front, we collected survey data for the National Assessment Surveys at grades five and nine. We are currently processing the data and looking forward to sharing the preliminary report by the end of the second quarter of 2022. During the same period, we participated in the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) study in partnership with the Education Data Project and commenced a study on the low candidature and poor performance of candidates in the Agricultural Science subject.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, we once again emerged successful, having planned to transform the ECZ operations through the 2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan, implemented the new structure of the ECZ to support the strategic plan, ran leakage free examinations and implemented successful innovations through the upgraded Online Candidate Registration System (OCRS) and the Payment Gateway.

As we continue with the reforms, we hereby encourage you all our partners and clients to continue following the developments and working with us. We hereby invite you to, once again, read our newsletter publications with interest, and to follow our activities through our website, our Facebook, Instagram and twitter accounts, to keep up-to-date with the development in the ECZ. We wish you a pleasant reading journey of our articles in this publication.

Rules for the Award of General Certificate of Education (GCE) Aligned to International Standards

The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) continues to promote the Zambian school qualification to make it comparable to international standards. This is done through its association to regional, continental and global education assessment bodies and other protocols on education assessment.

Over the years, the ECZ has continued on a path to improve both institutional operations and the administration and management of examinations in Zambia. From the journey started in 2012, reforms in the examination systems have successfully taken effect. ECZ has not only improved the efficiency in the conduct of examinations but has further implemented systems that have seen the reduction in examination leakages and other irregularities. This has brought much confidence to the assessment process.

In the year 2021, ECZ continued to align its assessment systems to international standards and best practices by amending the rules for the award of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) with effect from the 2021 examinations.

It is worth noting that in the past upto the year 2020, GCE was awarded to the candidates who entered and sat the School Certificate examination, passed one or more subjects, but failed to meet the standards for the award of the School Certificate. On the second criteria, it was awarded to candidates that entered and sat the General Certificate of Education examination and passed at least one subject.

This meant that under the previous conditions mentioned above, the General Certificate of Education only became equivalent to the School Certificate when the number of subjects and grades obtained met the standards for the award of a School Certificate.

However, this award system has greyed out of the international award system for equating the GCE results to a School Certificate. Therefore, the new conditions



"the General Certificate of Education obtained from the ECZ effective 2021 would be a direct equivalent of the School Certificate"

took effect with the 2021 GCE examination. The GCE will be awarded to a candidate who sits the School Certificate examination and passes one or more subjects, but fails to meet the standards for the award of a School Certificate, who later sits the GCE examination once or more times and passes the subjects, which when combined, the total number of subjects and grades meet the standards for the award of the School Certificate. On the second criteria, the award will be given to a candidate who sits the GCE examination once or more times, and passes the total number of subjects and grades that meet the standards for the award of the School Certificate.

The above change was announced to the public during a media briefing held at the ECZ Headquarters in Lusaka on 29th October, 2021 by the ECZ Director, Dr Michael M. Chilala. In his statement, Dr. Chilala announced that the General Certificate of Education obtained from the ECZ effective 2021 would be a direct equivalent of the School Certificate. He further clarified that

candidates that shall sit the School Certificate examination and pass one or more subjects, but fail to obtain the School Certificate shall be awarded a Statement of Results (SOR) and in the same manner, candidates that sit the GCE examination and fail to meet the new standards for the award of the General Certificate of Education will also be awarded a Statement of Results.

ECZ is ensuring that the Zambian School qualification continues to be a universal currency which gives those that obtain it any currency in the world depending on who their employee is. It is therefore, added that when the subjects and grades on two or more Statements of Results meet the standards for the award of the General Certificate of Education, candidates will be allowed to merge the statements through an accumulation process at any of the ECZ Service Centres while candidates who obtained the GCE results during the 2020 examinations or before are free to accumulate their results following the current GCE accumulation rules.

ECZ 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan Launched

By Nicolas Nkhuwa



"A vision without a plan is just a dream and a plan without a vision is just drudgery."

- Dan MCCARTHY

As the adage goes – failing to plan is planning to fail. At corporate level, having a definite plan that guides the institution in its current and future achievements is anchored in a document called the Strategic Plan.

ECZ took a rigorous consultative process to develop its strategic plan for the period 2021 to 2025 having all categories of stakeholders. What is worth noting was that this strategic plan was developed internally through the Planning Unit under the Research, Planning and Information (RPI) Department within the ECZ

Speaking at the launch ceremony held on Thursday, 28th July 2021 at the ECZ Headquarters in Lusaka, the Council Chairperson, Professor Frank Tailoka who spoke virtually, presented the strategic direction of the ECZ for the next five years focusing on the Vision-"An Educational Assessment Body of Excellence" and the Mission –"To efficiently and innovatively conduct educational assessments and award certificates of comparable international standards."The core values – Professionalism, Innovativeness, Accountability, Integrity and Teamwork. He further underscored the situation analysis giving ECZ an edge in the assessment business.

"We have thoroughly investigated our position in this business of educational assessment and we are able to spot important aspects, happenings and adversaries in our business." he said.

Professor Tailoka was also quick to state

"ECZ management to develop and implement a robust monitoring of the Strategic plan"

that ECZ shall only provide to its clients and stakeholders the best. Highlighting the goals as below:

- Enhance research and consultancy to service the ECZ and stakeholders;
- Align assessments to the demands of local and international education systems;
- Enhance security in the development and management of assessments;
- Develop and enhance physical and ICT infrastructure;
- 5. Strengthen corporate governance;
- Attain financial sustainability;
- 7. Enhance Human Capital;
- 8. Enhance automation of internal processes and operations;
- 9. Enhance quality assurance;
- 10. Strengthen communication and public relations.

The Council Chairperson concluded his speech with a charge on the ECZ Management to come up with detailed action plans to achieve the strategic goals. He quoted from Management expert Dan MCCARTHY who said; "A vision without a plan is just a dream and a plan without a vision is just drudgery."

The guest of honour – Permanent Secretary (Technical Services), Dr Jobbick Kalumba expressed no doubt that the ECZ strategic plan will deliver on its goals based on its past achievements. "Allow me to spot that some of the aspects of this strategic plan which are in line with the desire of the Ministry of General Education include broadening of the implementation of School Based Assessments and enhancing the capacity of educational institutions to conduct School Based Assessment." he said.

Dr Kalumba also said "The integration of SBA and Examinations has already started and I am glad to note that it will be enhanced." "The Strategic Plan also pledges to reform school examinations." ECZ plans to introduce 'A' level examination among other plans that are in line with e-government

such as introduction of E-assessment, E-examinations and E-marking. The Strategic Plan also points out key issues to be addressed such as the competence test and strengthening participation and conduct of national and international assessments in order for the education system to benchmark with its continental and global peers.

He encouraged ECZ Management to develop and implement a robust monitoring of the Strategic Plan to avoid having a document that would end up gathering dust.

And ECZ Director Dr Michael M. Chilala who spoke at the same event stated that Management was confident of succeeding and delivering on the 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan having scored a number of successes in the previous plan. "going forward, we pledge to continue building on the successes we have scored." he said.

The ECZ has moved from being perceived as a closed institution over the years to



an institution delivering on its mandate while ensuring an innovative, effective and efficient assessment system giving confidence of the qualification awarded to those that successfully obtain it.

The Strategic Plan Committee Chairperson, Mr Angel Kaliminwa thanked all stakeholders for having participated in the development of the ECZ Strategic Plan and notably expressed his gratitude to the Management Development Division (MDD) of Cabinet Office, Ministry of National Development Planning (MNDP) and Smart Zambia Institute (SZI). In his remarks, he lauded the Ministry of Education (MoE) as having been an all-weather parent that provided policy

direction as well as material and financial support.

The launch ceremony was attended by various cooperating partners, government bodies, ECZ employees and the Media.







"Management is confident of succeeding and delivering on the 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan having scored a number of successes in the previous plan"

ECZ Trains Provincial Education Stakeholders in OCRS

By Editorial Team



Improving examinations administration and management through technology

1st October 2021 was a day set aside for the training of stakeholders in the use of the OCRS. With improvements to the system, it was vital to continue raising awareness of the different modules that had be adjusted in the system.

Staff from different departments within the ECZ took turns to explain the modules in the system as a way to ensure uniformity in its use and as well as build capacity in the stakeholders at provincial level going forward.

The concerns from the stakeholders were dealt with during the training and confidence given that this was the way to go in bringing efficiency and effectiveness in the administration and management of the examinations in 7ambia

Of notable change was the integration of the system to the payment gateway, a fees collection system that allowed candidates to pay examination fees directly to ECZ without having to take cash to the school. Further, the reduction in the use of paper and the pre-registration of candidates were among some of the inclusions in the system.

The ECZ underscores one of its corporate values -Innovativeness to champion process implementation and in addressing the inefficiencies around different operational stages. Hence, the OCRS will continue to receive attention and to be improved in order to deliver on the local and internal demands in assessment that ECZ superintends on.



Candidates in Private Schools not Exempted from Examination Fees

The 2021 National Budget Speech delivered on Friday, 25th September, 2021 by the Minister of Finance and National Planning, Dr. Situmbeko Musokotwane made a historical announcement to the implementation of free education in Zambia. The announcement to abolish the payment of examination fees in public and grant aided schools.

By this, fees would be paid by candidates at GCE and Grade 9 External as charged during the 2021 examinations while candidates in public and grant aided schools at Grade 7, 9 and 12 would not pay the usual examination fees but instead the Government would remit the fees directly to the ECZ for candidates.

As for candidates in private schools, those in Grade 7 are expected to pay K60 per candidate, at Grade 9 Internal K160 per candidate and at Grade 12 K440 per candidate as examination fees using the payment gateway, a fees collection system integrated with the registration system (OCRS) for the 2022 examinations and beyond.

Following this announcement, the ECZ as an assessment body made adjustments in its operations and systems to allow for the implementation of this change. With effect from the 2022 examinations, the registration which commenced on 10th December 2021 done through the Online Candidate Registration System (OCRS) at all levels, ensured the registration was integrated to this policy change.

The registration of candidates therefore was set to run from Monday, 20th December 2021 to Monday, 28th February 2022. Further, the ECZ has dispatched to all schools the guidelines for the registration of candidates to all the Provinces and Districts.

Private schools shall continue to pay the announced examination fees and ECZ will endevour to sensitize the public on the fees and any adjustments that may arise from time-to-time.

ECZ Intervenes with Special G7 Examination at

True Vine Community School in Kitwe

By Nicolas Nkhuwa



Pupils who were faked to sit for a Grade 7 Examination at True Vine Community School in Kitwe for over 2 years, sat for a special Examination sanctioned by the Examinations Council of Zambia and the Ministry of Education. A total of 13 pupils were allowed to sit this special examination.

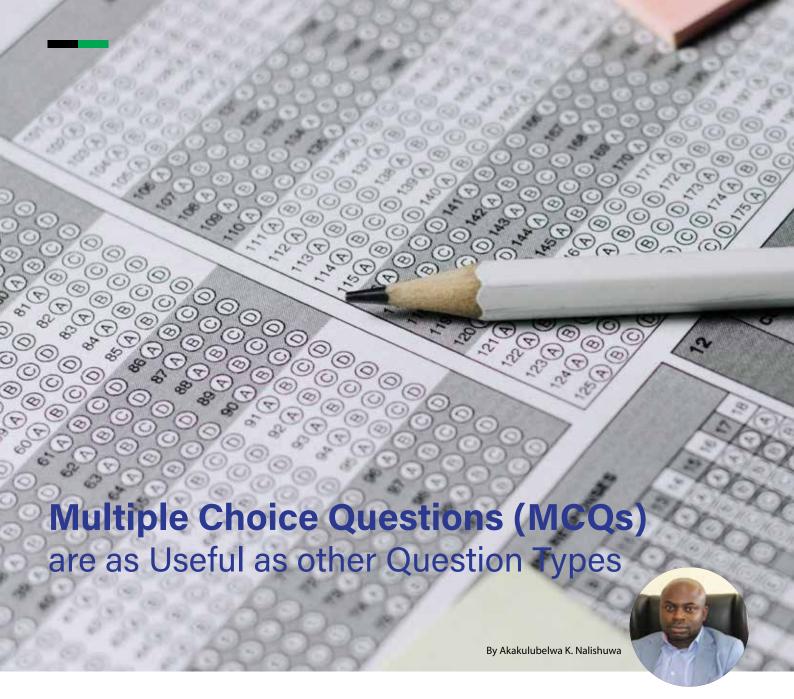
The special examination was conducted from Thursday, 25th to Sunday, 28th November 2021 under strict supervision from both ECZ and the Ministry of Education.

Meanwhile, the District Education Board Secretary -Mr Christopher Nyungila warned school authorities

that such illegalities will not be allowed in his District Commissioner -Mr Lawrence Mwanza thanked ECZ for facilitating the examination and according a chance to the pupils to sit the examination.

The ECZ further warns individuals that are in the habit of perpetuating examination malpractice including the situation at True Vine Community school to desist. ECZ calls on all stakeholders to remain vigilant and report all cases of malpractice to the nearest Ministry of Education offices, Police or by calling the ECZ toll free line 8383.

"ECZ calls on all stakeholders to remain vigilant and report all cases of malpractice"



Year in year out, largely around the period of the release of the Grade 7 Composite Examination results, the erroneous mix-up of progression and pass rates by cross sections of the public has not only led to calls for the abolishment of the Composite Examination but, that Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) are no longer effective in the 21st century. The arguments have been that MCQs do not only fail to accurately discriminate learners' performance but, promote rote learning, a practice that Beard and Wilson, (2015, p. 38) viewed to extend teaching and learning to only receiving, memorizing and repeating what has been deposited in learners by teachers. The key question is, is the narrative that MCQs are no longer effective and fit the yester centuries, spot-on?

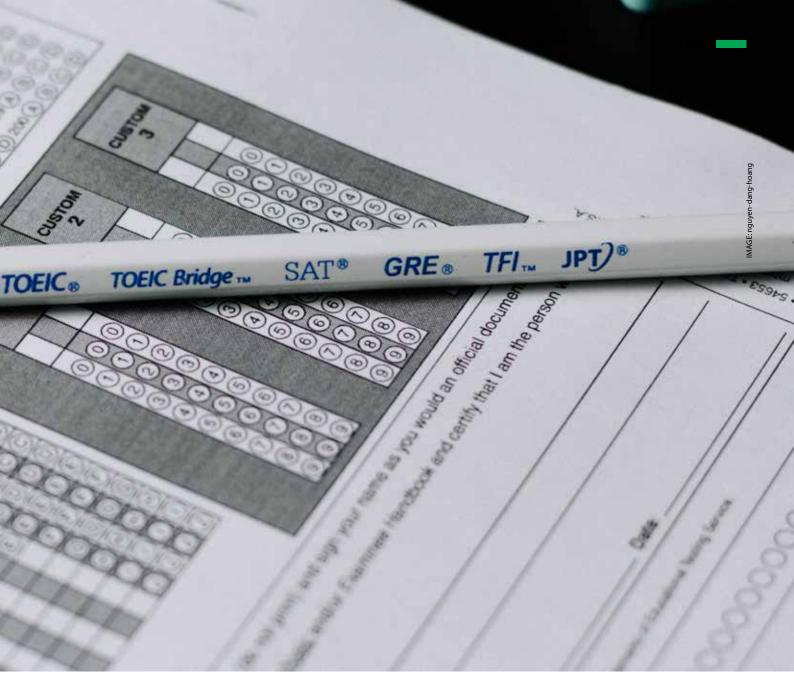
As a researcher and student of educational research, the search for answers to the above question, drew me to empirical evidence,

"evidence that is derived from actual experience (observed and measured) rather than theory or belief", (Penn State University Libraries, 2021, n.d.). One source for such evidence is scholarly or academic Journals. An online search led to several articles among them, an article by McDermott, Agarwal, D'Antonio, Roediger & McDaniel (2014) based on a study of Short Answers (SAQ) and Multiple Choices (MCQ) questions. The study, over two school calendar years, carried out in a traditional classroom, 4 experiments that examined the effectiveness of SAQs and MCQs in promoting retention of learnt information in Science and History at grade 7 and 11-12 levels respectively, using regular curriculum content and instructional methods that included a mixture of teaching and assessment of learners (using SAQs and MCQs) with corrective feedback on one hand and on the other, teaching and repeated restudying (Revision) of targeted facts without learners being assessed. Learners that were assessed were subjected to 2 or 3

weekly assessments before they sat for the end of term tests.

The study revealed the following interesting findings.

- SAQs and MCQs produced equivalent effects on learners' performance in the end of term tests and that, it did not matter whether the weekly assessments question formats matched that of the end of term tests. What that implies for example is that, learners were able to answer correctly end of term short answer questions, even when they had encountered the same questions in formats of multiple choice during the weekly assessments.
- Classroom assessments with feedback of the correct answers, enhanced learners' performance in the end of term tests better than repeated restudying of targeted facts (Revision).
- 3. It did not matter whether the end of term tests questions had the same



wording as the weekly assessments for learners to have correctly answered the questions

4. It did not matter whether the grade level was lower (g7) or higher (11 & 12) or whether the subject was Science or Social Science (History) for the equivalent effect of both MCQs and SAQs to be seen in the performance of learners in the end of term tests.

Looking at the findings above, it is evident that the study disagrees with the 'not effective' narrative of MCQs. The findings revealed that MCQs were as effective as SAQs be it at different grade levels or subjects. The study further brought out key findings whose implications touch on the effective implementation of School-Based Assessments (SBA). That, regular assessment of learners enhances the quality of classroom experiences and learners' capability to retain learnt information. This finding is a plus to SBA and directly petitions teachers to not

only conduct SBA for the sake of ECZ marks but for close monitoring and improvement of learners' learning experiences. Teachers are implored to take assessment as a routine inalienable practise, similar to how measurement of body temperature, weight, height and blood pressure at health facilities is a must and first to do activity before a patient is attended to. However, teachers should be wary of the pitfall of subjecting learners to continuous testing.

It is essential therefore, that any assessment of learners that is done, is followed by corrective feedback. It is critical however, to note that feedback such as 'Work Harder', 'Pull up your socks' 'Excellent', 'Keep it Up!', or 'The sky is the limit', among many other (de)glorifying teachers' comments, is not educative and/or corrective in nature. Educative and/or corrective feedback is "timely, sensitive to individual needs and is about giving learners' explanations on what they did correctly and/or incorrectly", (Teachthought, 2021).

Furthermore, and drawing from the finding that repeated restudying of targeted facts was not as effective as regular assessment with corrective feedback, teachers are urged to ensure that revision exercises do not substitute assessment of learners. Administering of assessments to learners, be it MCQs or any other as question formats (as MCQs are as useful as other question types), should be part and parcel of an effective teacher's routine practices.

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Understanding Your Digital Foot Print

Did you know that whatever you do online creates what is known as digital foot print? Yes, the world has now moved to doing everything using computer systems. But what really isn't talked about is the fact that we are creating tones of records that are shared via an array of devices and eventually what we take as emails, messages and files are actually creating a digital foot print.

Basically this goes far to documents we author and everything we share online. But how does this affect us?

In answering the question, we need to ask ourselves if we are sending or exchanging authentic and safe to consume materials that would not haunt us in the future or even something that will not infringe on other people's rights. A digital foot print will include the websites you visit.

It is important to understand what you are sharing and what you are creating when you use digital platforms including social media. Be responsible.





Enhancing Capacity ECZ Installs Braille Embosser and Scanner Machines

To improve assessment of candidates across the different learners with special needs, the ECZ has continued to adopt technologies that are in line with modern assessment demands. Having travelled miles in implementing a number of examination reforms, the ECZ has added to its scores the installation of a new braille embosser.

This is a way in which assessments for candidates who are visually impaired will receive the much attention and quality, reliability and validity of the examinations. Further we have acquired scanners to enhance our processing capacity for research and examination data.

It is however noted that such installations come at a great cost. Therefore, ECZ has taken time to build capacity within its staff in order to manage and use such innovative and costly systems to deliver on its goals.

As ECZ, we are strategically positioning ourselves to be indeed an educational assessment body of excellence as our vision states.





PHOTO



ECZ Management pose for a photo after the donation of Sanitary Towels by My Zambia, My Responsibility, ZANACO and Vision Zambia Initiative at the ECZ Headquarters in Lusaka.



ECZ gets representation at the Zambia Public Relations Association CEO's Forum at Pamodzi Hotel in Lusaka



ECZ Public Relations Manager (R) - Mr Nicolas Nkhuwa with Dr Kunda Kuku (L) - Assistant Director Certification after a radio Programme on Serenje Radio FM



 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{ECZ}}$ staff on the guest welcoming desk during the launch of the $\ensuremath{\mathsf{ECZ}}$ Strategic Plan



Planning and Budget workshop at QT Lodge in Chilanga District

FOCUS



Management Policy development workshop in Chilanga District



ECZ Maintenance Officer mounting a suggestion box at one of the ECZ Service Centres





ECZ officiates at the Marshill College of Education Teacher's graduation ceremony in Mansa



Employees pose for a photo after the fire safety training at ECZ Headquarters in Lusaka



On 18th November 2021, the ECZ received a donation of Sanitary Towels to be distributed to Girls in Examination Classes from My Zambia My Responsibility (MZMR), ZANACO Plc and Vision Zambia Initiative.

ECZ Top Management lead by the Director Dr Micheal M. Chilala received the donation on behalf of the ECZ.

A total of 100 boxes of sanitary towels as an initial consignment were received targeted at 5000 girls in examination classes across the country.

ZANACO Plc CEO Mukwandi Chibesakunda, MZMR Founder -Chisoma Lombe, Executive Director MZMR -Chola Lungu and Vision Zambia Initiative represented by Namutila Sindila presented the donation to ECZ at its Headquarter in Lusaka.

ECZ Director expressed gratitude to the donors and for considering ECZ as a partner in alleviating challenges faced by girls in schools noting that the challenge is quiet huge and requires putting efforts together.

"The gesture will go a long way in mitigating challenges associated to menstrual hygiene

for girls." Dr Chilala said.

Speaking at the same receiving ceremony, ECZ Deputy Director – Mr William Kapambwe also took time to thank MZMR, ZANACO and Vision Zambia Initiative with words of Dalai Lama who said that "The root of all goodness lies in the soil of appreciation for goodness." His gratitude towards this donation was reencored in an African proverb which pointed to the combined efforts of extending support to communities that "It takes a village to raise a child".



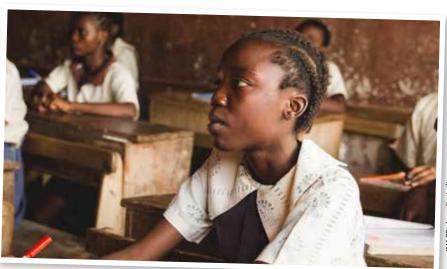


IMAGE: doug-linstedt

ECZ Partners with MoE and UNICEF

to Conduct the National Assessment Survey

By Shakazo Mzyece and Nicolas Nkhuwa

The National Assessment Survey (NAS) is a large scale assessment different from high stake examinations that are conducted at the end of a learner's academic period. NAS is conducted every 2 to 5 years. Since 1998, the NAS has been conducted to monitor progress in terms of learning achievements based on policies and strategies that are put in place.

Further, the conduct of NAS validates the ECZ mandate as enshrined in the ECZ Act No. 15 of 1983 whose other function is to conduct relevant research in examinations. As an educational assessment body going by the vision of ECZ, skilled staff within the ECZ under the Department of Research, Planning and Information led the survey and use of various matrix to interpret data for this survey and then prepare reports for various stakeholders.

It is key in policy formulation and points stakeholders to focus on specific areas in the education sector that are not assessed through high stake examinations. Its nature is on assessing the system so as to influence policy. ECZ Senior Research Officer – Shakazo Mzyece speaking to trainees during the National Assessment data collectors training of trainers at Kubulonga Girls in Lusaka

With support from cooperating partner such as UNICEF Zambia, ECZ conducted a training of assessors from 20th to 22nd October, 2021 to equip data collectors with skills and techniques for data collection. Among the participants were the Provincial Resources Coordinators (PRCC), District Resource Coordinators (DRCC) and staff from ECZ that facilitated the training.

The training was held in three (3) venues: Kabulonga Girls Secondary School in Lusaka which had participants from Eastern, Southern, Central and Western Provinces. The Kabwe training had participants from Northern, Lusaka and Muchinga Provinces while the Kitwe training had Luapula, Copperbelt and North-western. These training took place simultaneously.







By Risk Focal Point

"A step to effective risk management"

Running a successful institution requires a resolve to deal with risks that come at different levels. Some may be small while others may be adverse if they happened. Whichever the case, the risk possesses a major drawback to the normal and efficient function of an institution and its business processes.

To mitigate against such risk, the ECZ has gone ahead to develop the risk management policy, framework and register. The ECZ took a 10 days' workshop in November 2021 which was held at QT Lodge in Chilanga District to identify risks and to cap them in a register, framework and policy to guide the institution on the ways to manage risks. This was done under the guidance of the Ministry of Finance, risk department that provided officers to the development process.

For the process to be effective and cover all corners of the ECZ, officers from departments

and units within ECZ were appointed as Risk Focal Point Persons with a Risk Champion forming a team that would drive the agenda of risk management and report to the Director as shall be prescribed.

The rigorous development process ensured that work in the ECZ was scrutinized to identify all possible risks, identified the level of risks in terms of its impact and outlined possible mitigation measures to the identified risks. The process also stated the risk appetite for ECZ.

Guided by the ISO 3100, the process made sure that all aspects of risk management were taken into consideration. That is to look into the responsibilities, treatment and review process among others.

The documents developed are due to be presented to the Council in the first quarter meeting of 2022.

PLANNING AND BUDGETING WORKSHOP IN PICTURES











- Members of Staff from the Research, Planning and Information Department (RPID) discussing their annual work plan and budget. In picture, Mr Moonga Hakalyamba-Principal Research Officer and Mr Simwinga Simwinga-Senior Research Officer.
- Assistant Director Finance discusses the Information and Communication Technology Department (ICTD) annual work plan and budget with Assistant Director ICTD-Ms Christine Simfukwe and ICT Specialist- Quality Assurance-Mr Sande Mvula
- 3. Mr Martin Muchimba verifies Unit budgets and work plan
- 4. ECZ Council Secretary-Mrs Teza N. Musakanya discussing the annual work plan and budget with Senior Human Resource Officer-Mrs Honester Kabanda
- 5. Members of the Finance Department consolidating Departmental Budgets. In picture, Mrs Funny Phiri Chanda and Mr Fanwell Katele

ECZ Conducts 2021

GCE and Grade 9 External Exams Leakage Free



On 17th September 2021, the Minister of Education, Honourable Douglas Syakalima, MP announced the 2021 Grade 9 External results to the public at a joint meeting of the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) and other education stakeholders held at Chamba Valley Hotel. The Minister also announced and congratulated the ECZ and the entire Ministry of Education for the good work to seal examination paper loop holes.

And speaking at the same meeting, ECZ Director, Dr Michael M. Chilala said ECZ remains committed and resolute to executing its mandate and to serve the Zambian people.

Results continue to be accessed through the SMS Results Release System (SRRS) only on ZAMTEL and MTN mobile networks while the Electronic Statement of Results (e-SOR) are made available within 7 days from the official date of announcement on the e-Statements Portal through the ECZ website.

Similarly, 4th November 2021, the Minister announced the GCE results at the Ministry of Education Headquarter in Lusaka.

The announcement of results continues to show commitment by the ECZ to deliver on its mandate amidst challenging times owing to the global COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted the school calendar across many countries.

"The interventions put in place by the government to ensure continued teaching and learning took place gave us a challenge to prepare assessments for all those in examination classes." He said.

Highlights of the 2021 GCE & G9 External Examinations Results

Grade 9 External Examination

Candidature

A total of 121,726 candidates registered for the 2021 Grade 9 External Examination, out of whom 56,184 (46.16%) were boys and 65,542 (53.84%) girls. This showed a decrease by 5,435 (0.43%) from the 127,161 candidates who entered for the same examination in 2020; Out of the 121,726 candidates who registered for the 2021 Grade 9 External Examination, 37, 050 (30.44%) had entered for six or more subjects, while the rest entered for five or less subjects;

Out of the registered candidates, a total of 115,227 candidates sat for the 2021 Grade 9 External Examination, of whom 52,948 (45.95%) were boys and 62,279 (54.05%) girls;

Performance

Of the 115,227 candidates who sat the 2021 External Examination, 99,447 (86.31%) passed the examination. A candidate who passes one or more subjects passes this examination, considering that some candidates only entered for five or less subjects;

Of the number of candidates that passed, 10,687 (9.27%) obtained the Junior Secondary School Leaving Certificate after passing in six or more subjects; 88,760 (77.03%) candidates obtained Statements after passing in five or less subjects. A total of 15,780 (13.69%) completely failed the examination after failing to pass in any of the subjects they had sat for. The 2021 Junior Secondary School Certificate pass rate represented an increase of 1.9 percentage points from 7.37 percent recorded in 2020. When desegregated by gender, a higher proportion of boys (9.59%) obtained the Junior Secondary School Leaving Certificate than Girls (9.0 %). On the other hand, a higher proportion of girls (14.28 %) failed the examination than of boys (13.0 %). The results are consistent with the trends of the 2019 and 2020 similar Examination;

The subject percentage mean scores ranged from 25.96 percent in Mathematics to 57.23

percent in Silozi. Performance in Integrated Science increased from 35.5 percent in 2020 to 36.84 percent. Performance increased in Religious Education by 4.26 percentage points, Social Studies by 0.87 percentage points and Business Studies by 7.18 percentage points in 2021. On the other hand, performance decreased in Agricultural Science by 1.06 percentage points, Computer Studies by 5.31 percentage points, Design and Technology by 3.52 percentage points, and Art and Design mean scores declining by 5.77 percentage points.

Absenteeism

Of 121,726 candidates who registered for the 2021 Grade 9 External Examination, 6,499 were absent representing a national absenteeism rate of 5.34 percent. Of the absent candidates, 3,236 were boys and 3,263 were girls. The 2021 national absenteeism rate represented a decrease by 3.65 percentage points from 8.99 percent in 2020.

Examination Malpractices

There were no reported leakages of examination question papers during the conduct of the Grade 9 External Examination. Although there were no leakages, fifty (50) individual and two (2) whole centre cases of suspected examination malpractice were reported. The two whole centre cases involved 202 candidates, giving a total of 252 candidates, suspected to have been involved in examination malpractices. The Examinations Council of Zambia withheld the results for the candidates involved until resolved by the appropriate Committees of Council.

General Certificate of Examination – GCE

Candidature

A total of 133,470 candidates registered for the examinations, reflecting an increase of 12.89 percentage from the 118,225 candidates who had registered for the same examinations in 2020. Of the 133,470 registered candidates, 43,254 (32.41%) were male and 90,216 (67.59%) were female.

124,171 (93.03%) out of the 133,470 registered candidates, sat for the 2021 GCE examination, this represents a marginal increase of 0.33 percentage points from candidates that sat for the examination in 2020

A total of 9,299 candidates were absent from the examination, giving a national absenteeism rate of 6.79 percent. This represented a marginal decline of 0.37 percentage points from 7.34 percent in 2020. A higher proportion of males (9.09%) than that of females (5.95%) were absent from the examination.

Out of the 124,171 candidates that sat the examination, 39,323 (31.67) were male and 84,848 (68.33%) were female.

Performance

Out of the 124,171 candidates who sat for the 2021 GCE examination, a total of 4,496 (3.62%) obtained GCE Certificates which are equivalent to the School Certificate. Out of the 39,323 males that sat for the examination, 1,618 (4.11%) males obtained the GCE Certificate, while out of the 84,848 females that sat the examination, 2,878 (3.39%) obtained the GCE certificate.

A total of 102,715 (82.72%) of the candidates that sat the examination obtained the GCE Statement of Results, comprising 32,688 males and 70,027 females. 16,960 candidates failed the 2021 GCE examination, giving a national failure rate of 13.66 percent. The national failure rate has increased from 10.50 percent in 2020.

Examination Malpractices

Similar to the Grade 9 External examination, there were no reported leakages of examination question papers, during the 2021 GCE examination. However, one hundred and three (103) cases of suspected examination malpractices were reported during the conduct of the 2021 GCE examination, mostly being impersonation and assistance in nature.

Strategic Human Resource Management

A Driver to Attaining ECZ Strategic Goals

By Nicolas Nkhuwa

In the past, human resource was mainly considered as administrative in nature, dealing with employee contracts, recruitments and dismissal of those that went against the company's procedures. Nonetheless, HR now deals with a magnitude of issues ranging from performance appraisals, career development, and employee welfare and staff retention.

A lesson for HR managers worldwide is that an organisation is as good as its employees. Meaning that, the better the staff are taken care of, the better their commitment and passion to work is driven.

This article highlights the journey ECZ has undertaken to ensure that the human resource is positioned in a way that strategically will deliver on the goals on the institution.

Following an extensive evaluation, the ECZ built a new structure which was approved by the Council to see it being implemented in August 2021.

The new ECZ structure took effect, having reduced the total establishment from 334 positions with some that were never filled to 197. The reduction however, did not result in any job losses as the Council was very aware to ensure employees were well taken care of as an asset for the institution.

Arising from the implementation of the new structure, it was now clear that performance management would take effect come January 2022.

"ECZ is certain that this new structure will deliver on the promises that have been outlined in the Strategic Plan for the period 2021 to 2025"

In this journey, ECZ has ensured a culture of transparency, innovativeness, teamwork, integrity and professionalism as corporate values that anchor the way employees handle work and relate to foster the goals for the next five years.

It is now evident that, having employees' aligned to the future success of the organisation has everything to do with the process of engagement to drive acceptance, building a picture and sharing the vision with everyone.

How well employees are integrated into the system and culture that the new structure must begin to drive hinges on the supervision and monitoring of activities. ECZ has demonstrated to the rest of institution that so much can be achieved when employees are carried into the vision.

The process of drawing up the new structure took a deep introspection of roles and how

they fit in to the overall business of the institution. The relationship that each role has with others and value that is derived from each. Therefore, new role profiles were developed or streamlined against the units and departmental functions. Duplication of duties or roles was eliminated and the structure was made more open to see the supervision lines and reporting sides. By this, the work flow would be predictable and easily followed up, making it efficient and effective. Some officers were realigned from service centres to the head office, under which they were to support the function of the ECZ in a more focused way based on the new work demand that had been birthed towards making ECZ an educational assessment body of excellence.

There was renaming of role titles, staff shifting departments or unit and the separation and creating of new departments such as the Test Development as a baby of the Research and Test Development Department whose name has also changed to Research, Planning and Information.

A company that is people-centric and places employees at the center of strategy development and implementation as well as decision making will spur productivity in the organisation and this is what ECZ is doing in the structure review.

ECZ is certain that this new structure will deliver on the promises that have been outlined in the Strategic Plan for the period 2021 to 2025 having skilled human resource at the centre of its projected success and deliverables.













A CONVERSATION WITH THE ECZ CHAIRPERSON PROFESSOR FRANK TAILOKA



By William M. Kapambwe Deputy Director –ECZ

The Deputy Director Mr William M. Kapambwe held a conversation with the Chairman for the Examinations Council of Zambia, Professor Frank Tailoka and sought to get some information on the Professors' profile and views on his vision for the ECZ and other contemporary assessment and examination matters. Amongst many issues the conversation dealt with his personal, educational and professional background as well as his work with the ECZ Council, achievements, challenges, ECZ Printing, Grade 7 non-fail exams, A-levels, malpractices, Teacher Education Exams, SBA, ECZ Strategic Plan, ICT, marking arrangements and use in exams and Free-education.

Personal Background

Professor Tailoka was born on 13th September, 1960 in Mufulira. He went to Mufulira Mine School and Thangata Primary School. His secondary education was undertaken at Butondo Secondary School and after his Form Five he attended the six months military training at Kafue National Service Centre.

Educational Background

Professor Tailoka obtained his Bachelor of Science in Natural Sciences – in Mathematics from the University of Zambia. His Masters of Science in Mathematics was obtained from the Washington State University in the USA sponsored by the USAID. His Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Statistics and Operations Research was obtained from the University of Essex, Colchester in England. For his PhD he developed a Model to speed up the model selection procedure developed by Edward – Havra'nek, the title for the thesis was: "An efficient strategy for the selection of acceptable multiple regression models".

Professional Background

Professionally, Professor Tailoka has been an accomplished academician who has lectured at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the CBU in courses



such as mathematical analysis, engineering mathematics, statistics and operational research.

At the CBU he held various positions such as Dean of School of Business (1998 – 2003); Dean School of Mathematics and

Natural Sciences (2009 – 2016); and acted as Deputy Vice Chancellor. From 12th August 2017 he was Director Mukuba University till he became Vice Chancellor in 2021. He has published and authored eight books altogether at all levels of the Zambian education system.

Work with the ECZ Council

Professor Tailoka has worked with the ECZ as an Examiner (Marker). From 2010 to December 2012 he was the Vice Chairman of the ECZ Council and Chairman for the Finance and Administration Committee.

Key achievements at the ECZ as Chairman

According to Professor Tailoka, he considers "Providing strategic leadership and good corporate governance to the Council" as his main achievement as the ECZ Chairperson.

Key Challenges at the ECZ during term as Chairman

Professor Tailoka identified four main challenges encountered during his tenure. The first is the need to reduce malpractices to less than zero having already eradicated the exam leakage cases. The second challenge experienced has been the need to raise sufficient funds to enable the ECZ run independently. The third challenge has been the need to establish a local ECZ Printers to print the examination papers locally. And lastly, the fourth challenge is the need to introduce online marking and computer-based testing.

Professor Tailoka's Proposals to Resolve the Challenges

In the light of the existing challenges, Professor Tailoka Proposes four strategies to help ECZ resolve the challenges.

The first proposal is to have an amended ECZ Act which should have powers to punish culprits involved in the malpractices and stiffer penalties should be meted to the would be offenders.

The second proposal presented by Professor was the engagement of stakeholders to provide seed money for viable investment to support the ECZ. The professor suggested that the stakeholders should be engaged to invest in the ECZ to procure a 'state of art Printing Press which could service the ECZ and be run on commercial business basis.

Professor Tailoka spoke passionately on the need to urgently more towards the introduction of computer-based testing and online marking. He said that the computer-based testing could first start with the Grade 7 examinations. The Professor however, cautioned and advised that the prerequisite for computer-based testing would be required such as good communication network in all parts of the country. He pointed out that since there is already computer studies in schools, computer labs can be used as test centres for learners. The ECZ should be well prepared in terms of

equipment and human resource. Professor Tailoka further intimated that a needs assessment could be done in the first year to ensure availability of equipment at the ECZ and testing centre in the second year computer-based testing should commerce as a Pilot-test before rolling the programme out.

Vision for the ECZ as Chairperson

Professor Tailoka's vision of the ECZ is for the ECZ to be "a centre of excellence in the provision of quality assessment second to none in the region and of comparable international standard."

External Printing of the Examination Question Papers versus Local Printing

Professor Tailoka is of the view that the country could resort to local printing of examinations if security measures were put in place and latest technology to handle coding of papers according to centres and packing of materials were acquired which could reduce human handling of examination papers.

Grade 7 Non-Fail Examinations

Professor Tailoka explained that he does not support a non-fail examination. He said that he was averse to carrying passengers who are not competent in the 3 Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic). He proposed that the most important thing would be to have a system which enables education to identify the different learners' talents and then channel or nurture them in their areas of strength.

Emerging widespread 'Assistance' Malpractices

Professor Tailoka bemoaned the persuasive occurrence of malpractices in the nature of 'Assistance' in the last three years during examinations after the eradication of leakages. He strongly felt that it should be eradicated at all cost and if not arrested, it would destroy the nation.

Introduction of "A" Levels in the Zambian Education and Assessment Systems

Professor Tailoka considers the proposal to introduce "A" levels in the Zambian Education system as an excellent one as it would enable learners to focus on the core subjects which are key and relevant in their career progression.

Different Institutions Examining and Certifying Teacher Education Diploma Examinations

With regard to different institutions examining and certifying for Teacher Education Diploma examinations, Professor

Tailoka felt that the proliferation of exam bodies for one exam erodes standards in the teaching profession and it should not be continued. The better solution, Professor advised, would be for the Ministry of Education to develop a common Entrance examination into the Teaching Profession testing the most important elements/ standards of the profession. Another alternative would be for the Directorate of Standards to enforce inspection to ensure the examinations standards are adhered to.

Free Education and Removal of Examination Fees

The Professor hailed the government for a very good idea as long as the ECZ is properly funded by the government. He was of the view that the ECZ should be funded in the same way the Bank of Zambia is funded bearing in mind that a good assessment is the bedrock of an effective education system which ultimately churns out the quality human resource who are the drivers of the country's economy.

Introduction of School Based Assessment (SBA)

Professor Tailoka considers the introduction of SBA in examinations as a good idea and advises that it can be strengthened by enhanced monitoring of its administration and management so as to sustain the standards and quality.

Organisation of Markings Sessions: Centralised marking versus Decentralised marking

Professor Tailoka is an advocate of decentralised marking as long as the markers are well trained and registered to the ECZ. With the current changes of candidates not writing their names but their examinations numbers on the examination scripts, and since even the regions in Zambia are heterogenous by compositions, the decentralised marking could prove to be cost effective and save funds for other activities.

Last Words

Professor Tailoka advised that the ECZ should make sure that whatever was being implemented was in the strategic plan and the budget is followed strictly. He also observed that staff motivation was key for achieving smooth and effective operations at the ECZ.

Staff Development



Mr Albert S. Siamunako

He was appointed as Assistant Director in-charge of the Test Development Department effective 1st November 2021.

He takes up the new role with a wealth of knowledge having saved at different levels in the ECZ starting off in August 2005 as Senior Examinations Specialist for Geography & Religious Education in the then Academic Department. He later was appointed as Head of the Grade 7 section alongside being the secretary of the Basic Education Committee of the ECZ. Mr Siamunako has served as Principal Examinations Officer-Processing and Certification and has acted as Assistant Director Examination Administration. He has also served as Principal Examinations Officer-Logistics.



Mr. Nicolas Nkhuwa promoted as Public Relations Manager



Mrs. Dorothy N. Katuta promoted as ICT Security Specialist



Mr. Sande Mvula appointed as ICT Specialist-Quality Assurance



Mrs. Prisca Mgogo Michelo promoted as Senior Exam Officer – Certification



Mr. Esau Manganipromoted as
Examinations Officer –
Certification



Mr. Kennedy Lungu promoted as Senior Examinations Officer - Certification



Mrs. Abigail M. Banda promoted as Personal Secretary-Council Secretary's Office



Mr. Raymond Mulele appointed in lateral position as Examinations Officer – Processing



Ms. Rosemary Mwanamambo promoted as Office Attendant



Fidelis Moonga Makala – AHCZ

Fidelis was admitted to the Bar on 19th October 2021 as an Advocate of the High Court of Zambia upon passing the Legal Practitioners' Qualifying Examination at the Zambia Institute of Advanced Legal Education (ZIALE). On 11th April 2021 he received a Master of Laws (Commercial Law) from the University of Zambia during the 50th Graduation Ceremony.

Fidelis holds other qualifications among them a Bachelor of Laws (UNZA); Master of Commerce in Business Strategy/Organization and Management Studies (Australia School of Business – UNSW); Master of Business Administration (Maastricht School of Management/ESAMI); Bachelor of Arts Degree (CBU); Diploma in Business Administration (CBU); and Diploma in Project Management (Cambridge University).



Sylvia C. Miyoba Ng'ambi

Studied Master of Science in Procurement and Logistics at the Zambia Centre for Accountancy Studies University (ZCAS).

Graduated with a Merit

Council Bids Farewell

to Officers who Retired

The following officers retired from the Council after attaining their retirement age respectively:



Mr. Bwalya Baldwin Lumbuka: Retired on 16th September, 2021. Mr Lumbuka served as Driver at the Headquarters in the Administration Department.



Mrs. Shillah Noole Zimba: Retired on 21st September, 2021. She served as Human Resource and Development Officer in the Administration Department.



Ms. Exildah Mulenga: Retired on 1st November, 2021. She served as Senior Examinations Specialist in the Test Development Department.



Mr. Moffat Mwale: Retired on 6th June 2021. Mr Mwale served as Assistant Examinations Officer at Kitwe Service Centre under the Certification Department.

Your Questions

ANSWERED

ECZ endeavors to provide information and responses to questions on examination issues and various services provided. Messages are responded to under this page to offer an opportunity for many to get a response on similar questions they may have

Question: I did Grade twelve certificate replacement but up to now I have not received my certificate what is happening? How can replacement take this long please do something I need my certificate.

Response: Thank you for the message. Kindly be advised that according to our service charter, we have committed to issue a duplicate certificate within 15 working days. Once you submit your request and the certificate is ready, our staff in service Centres do get in touch with all clients to inform them of the readiness of their certificate. Perhaps you were contacted and your lines was off as this has been the case for many. However, you will do well to visit our service Centre to collect the certificate which must be ready by now.

Question: I want to do name correction. How much and what are the requirements? my Grade 12 certificate has an initial which is not on my NRC? Please help.

Response: First and foremost, according to the guidelines for the administration and management of examinations in Zambia and as a standard world over, adding or removing a name on a certificate is not allowed. Secondly, ECZ provide a period of five months for correction of misspelt names immediately results have been announced by the Minister of Education.

Question: Please ECZ, why are some schools charging tuition fees at their school even if you just want to write examinations there and do tuitions somewhere else?

Response: We appreciate you for your message. Kindly be advised that the supervision of schools lies squarely under the Ministry of Education. Therefore, ECZ does not have any mandate to direct schools on this particular issue raised. Our advise is that you visit the District Education Board Secretary's Office in your area to address this matter.

Question: When are the 2020 GCE Certificates going to be

Response: The ECZ is committed to issuing certificates to all deserving Candidates. As a standard, the process to print certificates commences after the five months period given for candidates to submit queries (if any) on the results has elapsed. ECZ will proceed to produce the certificates and dispatch to the schools through the Provincial Education Office. For the 2020 GCE Certificates, the five months period elapsed on 31st May 2021. Therefore, counting nine months from this date according to our service charter, the certificates will be ready and dispatched in the first quarter of 2022.

Question: ECZ how much is the date stamp for certifying G12 results?

Response: Thank you for your message. Kindly be advise that you do not pay for a date stamp. The verification process we undertake is extensive and thorough to ensure correctness and the genuineness of the records. Therefore, When you submit to us your results, the stamps are at the tail end of the verification process and act as proof of the verification.

Question: Should I pay examination fees to the school?

Response: Payment of examination fees done through the payment gateway system that has been integrated with the online candidates registration system (OCRS). Therefore, a candidate has the option to use mobile money services and VISA services to pay examination fees or still visit designated banks to make payment. This system automatically allows one to confirm and to pay the correct fees as charged by the ECZ.

ECZ Gets Kudos

Pupils at True Vine Community School Allowed to Sit for G7 Examinations.





Bashi Natasha Mwalula. C

That's very good news, all the best to all grade 9 pupils.

Agness Kalale Mwape

I applaud u ECZ for giving a chance to those

Wow, thanks for making those G7 write their examination.

Thumbs up to you for coming to the aid of those innocent children.

Tasila Mwenda Muchindu

Good to know that the G7's were given an opportunity to write the examination. Great iob ECZ

Jœ ßlöggs Thë Kîñg

Thank you, am very pleased that those children have been given a chance. ECZ, you have done the needful.

Elizabeth Mutimba

All the best to all the students job well done for giving a chance to the grade 7's who were faked an exam. Kudos Examination Council of Zambia.

Ackim Tembo

You really did a good job for those grade 7's. Their future was at stake.

CONTACT US

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Next to District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) Offices Munkoyo Street, Kabwe, Zambia

Contact: (+260) 974-147-566 / 761-460-147

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MPIKA SERVICE CENTRE

Farmers Training Centre (FTC), Mpika P.O. Box 450271 Mpika, Zambia Contact: (+260) 950-222-445/ 960-428-486/ 976-699-058

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KASAMA SERVICE CENTRE

Ituna Secondary School, Opposite Kasama Radio Station Kasama-Mungwi Road, Kasama Contact: (+260) 794-692-393/ 973-166-942

SOLWEZI SERVICE CENTRE

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