



ECZ

IN PERSPECTIVE

News about the Examinations Council of Zambia

Issue No. 24

July to December 2025



ECZ HOSTS 50TH GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE

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The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) was established by an Act of Parliament Number 15 of 1983 which was repealed and replaced with the ECZ Act Number 3 of 2023 with a mandate to set and conduct examinations and award certificates to successful candidates.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

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Dear Reader,

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter. We appreciate your continued support and for always finding time to read this publication by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ).

In this edition, we showcase our various innovations, activities and programmes implemented in the period July to December 2025. Therefore, take time to read through all the articles in order to get valuable information on the happenings in Zambia's educational assessments through the ECZ.

Of great significance is our hosting of the 50th International Association for Educational Assessment Conference in Zambia, a prestigious gathering of education assessment bodies, experts, researchers, policy makers and education support businesses. We hosted this Conference at the backdrop of the continued confidence that the world places on Zambia and its efforts towards running credible assessments that meet international standards. It gave Zambia an opportunity to be placed in the limelight in its education at the very time when it had just started implementing its competence-based curriculum.

In this period covered by this publication, we implemented various innovations whose information we share in detail.

We are also sharing in this edition information on the abolished Junior Secondary School Examination and what the road ahead looks like without these examinations, enhanced payment systems for ECZ Services and changes in the requirements for registration of candidates as well as the ECZ Legacy during its time of holding the secretariat role for the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA).

We remain positive that this publication will impact you and those around you positively and help you make positive decisions.

Enjoy reading.

Nicolas Nkhuwa
Public Relations Manager
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Thank you for Supporting us through this Transformative Path

Dr Michael M. Chilala

We are pleased to share with you the developments in our organisation, over the period July to December, 2025. This period was eventful, as it was marked with serious milestones in our quest to efficiently and innovatively conduct educational assessments and award certificates of comparable international standards.

First and foremost, we conducted the General Certificate of Education (GCE), Junior Secondary External (JSE), Primary School Leaving (PSL), Junior Secondary School Leaving (JSSL), and the School Certificate (SC) examinations, leakage free. The examination results were processed and released timely, as per schedule. This was important to ensure that the learners who were progressing to Form 1 and Grade 10 opened with the rest of the learners without losing learning time, while those wishing to pursue University education also had an opportunity to apply, and if accepted, proceed into university without having to wait for a year.

On the sides of the 2025 examinations, we continued developing the Assessment Schemes, School Based Assessment Guidelines and Test Frameworks for the 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF). By the end of the year, we had made so much progress to assure the Zambian populous that the new examination system would be ready by end of the first quarter of 2026.

At the continental level, as Secretariat, we provided leadership to ensure that the Continental Assessment Framework for Africa (CAF-Africa) was finalised and launched by the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA). On behalf of the AEAA Executive Committee, we worked with the AU, UIS, ADEA, CESA, LEARN, the Global Education Monitoring Report, Stellenbosch University, and other partners to ensure the CAF-Africa was developed and eventually launched at the AEAA Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in August, 2025, and by the Africa Union (AU) in September, 2025. Among other documents we spearheaded to develop were the first ever AEAA Constitution, AEAA Charter, AEAA 2025 – 2029 Strategic Plan, and the draft AEAA Standards for Assessment Bodies. Our tenure as AEAA Secretariat ended at the General Assembly held in Addis Ababa, in August 2025.

At the global level, our tenure as Member of the Board of Trustees (BoT) of the International Association for Educational Assessment

(IAEA) ended on 31st December, 2025. During our tenure, we had served in the Audit Committee of the IAEA and finally hosted the jubilee conference, the 50th Conference of the IAEA in September, 2025 in Livingstone. We are proud to have been part of the team that developed the IAEA Standards for Assessment Bodies, which were launched by the IAEA in 2024.

In terms of large-scale assessments, we conducted the Zambia Education Enhancement Project (ZEEP) Base - line and End - line surveys. We also collected and processed data for the Teacher Proficiency Development Index (TPD) study, and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2025 study.

From the ICT innovations front, we are once again proud to announce the completion of our in-house developed processing system, to replace our legacy processing system. We managed as per our plan, to parallel run the processing of the 2025 school certificate results, as a practical test of our newly developed processing system. We are happy to share that with the new processing system, we were able to complete all the processes in 48 hours, which took us about 10 days to complete with our legacy processing system, showing serious gains in efficiency. Further, the results from the new processing system were comparable to those from the legacy processing system we have been using over the years.

The new processing system is integrated to the new Online Candidate Registration System (OCRS), which we deployed for registration of the candidates for the 2026 ECZ examinations, which has enhanced features to enhance quality assurance through family involvement in the confirmation of the candidate details, and face capture to enhance security.

We thank all our stakeholders for the invaluable support rendered to the ECZ during our various undertakings and engagements.

Allow me once again, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, to invite you to our Issue No. 24 of the ECZ Newsletter, covering the period July to December 2025, for you to appraise yourselves and walk with us in this transformative path. Remember, we are always happy to receive feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Enjoy the journey!



ECZ Hosts 50th Global Educational Assessment Conference

By Editorial Team

The global limelight was on Zambia in September 2025 as Zambia hosted a prestigious gathering of educationists, policy makers, researchers, education service providers among other key stakeholders.

The hosting of such a magnificent event came at the time when Zambia's education was just transitioning from the 2013 curriculum which was outcome based to the 2023 curriculum which is competence based.

Under the theme "Assessment Agility: Navigating Rapid Educational Transformations", the 50th Conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) saw experts brought under one roof at the beautiful Avani Victoria Falls Resort, in Livingstone from 21st to the 26th September 2025.

More than 250 delegates from 35 countries around the world attended the conference.

The Conference was officially opened by the Minister of Education, Honourable Douglas Sykalima. Among the delegates present during the official opening ceremony were His Royal Highness Senior Chief Mukuni of the Toka-Leya people; the President of the IAEA, Dr. Mafu Rakometsi; the Board Chairperson of, Examinations Council of

Zambia Prof. Frank Tailoka; the Executive Director – Examinations Council of Zambia, Dr Michael Chilala; the District Commissioner for Livingstone, Mrs. Eunice Nawa; and the Mayor of Livingstone, Ms Constance Muleabai.

In his opening remarks, Honorable Sykalima said Zambia could not have hosted the annual conference at a better time than when the country was developing a new educational assessment framework and system. He noted that the dialogue from the conference would form part of the important input into the country's assessment reforms.

Further, Mr. Sykalima stated that in a world where educational landscapes were shifting at an unprecedented speed, driven by technological innovation, social demands, and evolving learner needs, systems of assessment needed to not only keep pace, but also lead the way. The Minister indicated that the rate and extent to which teaching, learning and the environment were changing posed a challenge which demanded that the educational assessment systems must be agile. He noted that in doing so, the systems would be responsive to diverse learning environments; inclusive of varied learner capabilities, profiles and pathways; technologically empowered and independent; and ethically grounded to ensure fairness and transparency.

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“With these characteristics, the assessment systems will continue to assure the educational systems that the assessment results will continue to be valid, reliable and relevant for social and economic development,” Honourable Syakalima said.

ECZ Board Chairperson, Professor Frank Tailoka, appreciated the Minister of Education for supporting the hosting of the conference. Professor Tailoka noted that the conference theme resonated well with ECZ which had begun implementing Competency-Based Assessment (CBA) and had embarked on reforming assessment systems to align them with the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) and Competency-Based Education (CBE). One way this had been done was through capacity building of ECZ employees and stakeholders.

ECZ Executive Director, Dr Michael Chilala, acknowledged and appreciated the support from the Minister of Education, the IAEA President, Board of Trustees and General Assembly, and the ECZ Board Chairperson. Dr Chilala informed delegates that the conference had come to Zambia amidst a lot of educational transformations which had seen the country implement the 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF) beginning from February 2025. A central feature of the reforms was migration from Outcome and Content - Based Education to Competency and Skills Based Education.

The Executive Director announced that Africa had for a long time participated in international assessments but had never had a continental assessment framework that the African Union could use for decision making. Dr Chilala, however, announced that Zambia, as AEA Secretariat, had been tasked to develop a Continental Assessment Framework which had since been launched in Addis Ababa at the 2025 conference for the Association of Education Assessment in Africa (AEAA). He was confident the outcomes of conferences such as the 50th IAEA Conference would help leave a better continent for posterity.

“With the development of the Continental Assessment Framework, and then this conference, we have an opportunity to develop a particular practice that will enable the continent generate data and be able to make decisions using that data,” Dr Chilala stated.

And President of the IAEA Dr Mafu Rakometsi appreciated the Zambian Government and the ECZ for welcoming the world and for its supportive leadership. Dr Rakometsi stated that the collective will



Dr Arnold Brouwer delivers a training in Competence-Based Assessment

to host the IAEA conference had kept the flame burning and offered nations an opportunity to inspire each other.

The 50th IAEA Conference had seven (7) key note addresses from Prof. Innocent Mutale Mulenga (Assistant Dean – Research, University of Zambia School of Education), Prof Vukosi Marivate (ABSA UP Chair of Data Science, University of Pretoria), Prof Sarah Howie (Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University), Prof Kazhila Chinsemu (Director-General, Higher Education Authority, Zambia), Prof Cally Ardington (Director – DataFirst, University of Cape Town), Dr Mary J. Pitoniak (International Educational Assessment Consultant) and Prof Dorothy Cynthia Nampota (Executive Director – Malawi National Examinations Board).

Presentations in the break-away sessions were made under six sub-themes namely, Curriculum Aligned Assessment Practices, Assessment for Learning vs Assessment of Learning, High Stakes Testing, Equity and Fairness, Technology Integration, and Assessment Literacy.

It can be said that Zambia through ECZ has continued to place its assessments systems in line with global standards. The conference provided a platform for knowledge exchange and institutional growth. Certainly, ECZ is set to become an educational assessment body of excellence with the amount of confidence that the world placed on the shoulders of this country.



Minister of Education, Hon. Douglas Syakalima, officially opens the Conference on behalf of the Republican President, Mr Hakainde Hichilema.



Minister of Education, Hon. Douglas Syakalima arrives at the conference venue.



Minister of Education Honourable Douglas Syakalima being welcomed at the conference venue



ECZ Board Chairperson Professor, Frank Tailoka delivering his speech at the conference



BOT members visit at the Chiefs Palace



Principal Planning Officer, Mr. Angel Kaliminwa chairing the conference proceedings



Cultural entertainment during the official opening



Dr. Michael Chilala presents a gift to the Guest of Honour



IAEA Board of Trustees visit at the Chiefs Palace in Livingstone



Presentations at the conference



Presentations at the conference



Media briefing about the conference



Some delegates during the conference



IAEA Board of Trustees pose for a photo during the conference

ECZ's Legacy as AEAA Secretariat (2018–2025): A Continental Journey of Leadership and Transformation



Dr Shadreck Nkoya

The period from 2018 to 2025 marked an important chapter in the history of both the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) and the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA). During this time, ECZ served as Secretariat of the Association, providing administrative, strategic and technical leadership that strengthened the AEAA's continental and international profile and contributed to the advancement of educational assessment across Africa. It is however, worthy to note that ECZ's engagement with AEAA predates its tenure as Secretariat. The first CEO of ECZ, Mr. Newton Mutanekelwa, and his successor, Mr. Chekani T. Sakala, were active participants in the Association and contributed to its growth and development. Their involvement laid the institutional foundation upon which the subsequent CEO, Dr. Michael M. Chilala, built on, in guiding ECZ's expanded leadership role within AEAA.

Prior to 2018

In the period preceding 2018, ECZ maintained active participation in AEAA Annual Conferences, contributing research papers and technical perspectives that strengthened best practices and advanced emerging knowledge and innovation in educational assessment. This sustained engagement led to ECZ assuming the Vice Presidency of the Association in 2013 and subsequently the Presidency in 2014, following its successful hosting of the 2014 AEAA Annual Conference.

During ECZ's presidency, the first-ever AEAA Strategic Plan (2015–2019) was developed. The Strategic Plan provided the Association with a structured institutional framework and a clear strategic direction to guide its growth and operations.

ECZ Assumed the AEAA Secretariat (2018)

The achievements attained by ECZ in discharging its assigned roles and responsibilities within AEAA strengthened

its standing among peer assessment bodies across the continent, paving way for its election as Executive Secretary of the Association in August 2018 at the AEAA Annual Conference in Lesotho. While AEAA held significant technical relevance, it operated with limited formal integration into continental education policy platforms. Upon assuming the Secretariat role, ECZ established clear strategic objectives aimed at repositioning the Association within Africa's evolving education governance architecture and strengthening its recognition at the continental level, particularly within African Union (AU) structures. Formalising and consolidating these institutional linkages became a central priority of the Secretariat.

To advance this objective, ECZ utilised AEAA meetings, including Executive Committee meetings, Annual General Meetings, training programmes and benchmarking visits sanctioned by the Association, as structured platforms for strengthening collaboration, improving coordination among member institutions and enhancing institutional alignment. These engagements were treated not merely as routine events, but as opportunities to advance governance, technical cooperation and shared standards across assessment bodies.

The 2019 Annual Conference in Abuja, Nigeria, hosted under the theme Innovations in Educational Assessment, reflected this renewed direction. However, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic shortly thereafter led to the cancellation of the 2020 and 2021 conferences, introducing a period of operational disruption and uncertainty for the Association.

Resilience Through COVID-19 (2020–2021)

Like many regional and international organisations, the operations of AEAA were significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The suspension of the Annual Conferences limited in-person engagement and reduced opportunities for direct collaboration among member institutions. These disruptions coincided with the conclusion of ECZ's first three-year tenure as Secretariat, at a time when a General Assembly could not be convened to formally consider renewal of the mandate.

During this period, ECZ continued to discharge its Secretariat responsibilities with the authorisation of the Executive Committee, ensuring continuity of operations and institutional stability despite the absence of physical meetings. The Secretariat adapted its coordination mechanisms by strengthening communication and collaboration through online platforms, enabling member institutions to remain connected and informed during the period of restrictions.

Reigniting the AEAA: Livingstone 2022

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in 2022, ECZ resolved to host the first post-pandemic physical AEAA Annual Conference in August 2022 in Livingstone, Zambia. The conference represented more than the resumption of in-person meetings; it signified the restoration of the Association's strategic direction and renewed commitment among member institutions to advancing educational assessment across the continent. During this conference, AEAA honoured the

“The First ever AEAA Strategic Plan was Developed”

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first CEO of ECZ, Mr. Newton Mutanekelwa, in recognition of his foundational role in the establishment and development of both ECZ and the Association.

The post-COVID period also marked a shift toward structured continental reform. Between 2022 and 2025, ECZ's strategic focus as Secretariat moved from institutional consolidation to addressing systemic challenges raised by member countries. These included fragmented assessment systems and limited comparability of learning data across Africa. Participation in international assessments remained low in several countries, regional assessments did not cover the entire continent, and national large-scale assessments operated independently, limiting cross-national comparison.

In response to these concerns, and following consultations in 2023, Zambia, in its capacity as Secretariat and with the support of partners including the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, led the development of the Continental Assessment Framework for Africa (CAF-Africa). The framework built on the Global Proficiency Framework while adapting it to African curricula and contexts. It aligned with the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) and supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 by strengthening evidence-based decision-making.

CAF-Africa represented a coordinated continental effort to generate reliable, high-quality and comparable data on learning outcomes. It provides African countries with a structured approach to harmonising assessment practices while maintaining national relevance. The framework received endorsement from AEAA, the African Union and international partners, and was officially launched on 25 August 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the 41st AEAA Annual Conference under the theme Transforming Educational Assessment: Towards Quality Learning and Informed Decision Making. The launch marked an important milestone for the Association and strengthened the capacity of African countries to monitor learning outcomes, improve accountability and enhance the credibility of their assessment systems.

During the same period, ECZ, as AEAA Secretariat, led the development of the AEAA Strategic Plan (2025–2029), facilitated the drafting of the Association's first Constitution, and oversaw the revision of

the AEAA Charter to strengthen governance structures. ECZ also led the development of the Continental Assessment Standards for Africa (CAS-Africa), which aim to promote greater standardisation of assessment processes and quality assurance practices among assessment bodies across the continent. Together, these initiatives strengthened AEAA's institutional framework and supported its mandate within Africa's evolving education governance landscape.

A Lasting Legacy

ECZ's tenure as AEAA Secretariat from 2018 to 2025 was characterised by institutional strengthening, policy repositioning, continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic, and leadership in advancing continental assessment reform. This period saw the development of the first AEAA Strategic Plan, the drafting of the Association's Constitution, the revision of the AEAA Charter, the formulation of the Continental Assessment Standards for Africa (CAS-Africa), and the development and launch of the Continental Assessment Framework for Africa (CAF-Africa). It also included the development of the second Strategic Plan (2025–2029) and deliberate efforts to strengthen AEAA's engagement within African Union structures.

Collectively, these initiatives strengthened the Association's governance framework, clarified the AEAA strategic direction, and enhanced its technical relevance within Africa's education policy landscape. The period also demonstrated the Association's ability to maintain continuity of operations during a global crisis while sustaining reform momentum once normal operations resumed.

As the Secretariat tenure concludes, ECZ acknowledges the collaborative efforts of member institutions and partners that made this progress possible. Zambia's stewardship of the Secretariat contributed to reinforcing institutional systems, improving coordination among assessment bodies, and advancing the use of reliable and comparable learning data across the continent. The outcomes of this period represent not only institutional progress for AEAA, but also a meaningful contribution of ECZ to strengthening educational assessment systems in Africa.

“Coordinated the Development and Launch of the Continental Assessment Framework for Africa -CAF Africa”

Stakeholders Engaged on Critical Assessment Information

...As ECZ Hosts Media Breakfast Meeting

By Angela Mwandu



The need for information on assessments conducted by the ECZ is vital for stakeholder's decision making and development. As such, ECZ organised a media breakfast meeting on 22nd July 2025 at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in order to share pertinent information regarding its operations and policy changes that affect both stakeholders and the institution.

The concerns over the fate of the Junior Secondary School learners who did not perform well in the 2025 Junior Secondary Examinations was one of the main topical issue that ECZ sought to provide light on. This follows the pronouncement by Government to abolish the Junior Secondary School Leaving Examination (JSSLE) and the Junior Secondary External Examination (JSEE) following the implementation of the 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework (ZECF) signifying that the last examinations to be conducted by the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) at this level would be in 2025.

During the meeting, the Minister of Education, Honourable Douglas Syakalima, MP spoke to the media in attendance and assured the affected learners, parents and guardians that learners who did not perform well during the 2025 Junior Secondary examinations had an option of either starting Form 1 in 2026 to write the School Certificate Ordinary Level examination in 2029, or to proceed and write the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination upon their reaching 16 years of age and obtaining the Zambia National

Registration Card (NRC), which is the required identity for the GCE examinations.

The Minister explained that these candidates would not have any advantage because they would take the same four years inclusive of 2026, before they could write the School Certificate examination on the 2013 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework in 2029.

"Considering that the number of years they would take is the same as those starting Form 1 in 2026 and writing the School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination in Form 4 in 2028, it would be advantageous for them to take the option of Starting Form 1 in 2026 and write the School Certificate Ordinary Level Examination in Form 4 in 2029," Mr. Syakalima said.

With the implementation of the 2023 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework, Government announced that the 2025 Junior Secondary External and Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations would be the last as the 2025 Form 1 pupils would be in Form 2 in 2026, and as such, would not need to write an examination. Since the standards are set on the internal examination and applied on the external examination, the Junior Secondary External (Grade 9 External) examination cannot be conducted in 2026.

The meeting also communicated information on the preparations that ECZ was putting in place for the 2025 ECZ Examinations, informing the media and stakeholders about the preparations for hosting the 50th Conference of the International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) and enhancing service delivery through the ECZ Self-Service Portal, an online platform for service provision.

The meeting also shared critical updates on the activities and plans that were being implemented to fully actualise the 2023 education curriculum.



Media Breakfast meeting at Mulungushi International Conference Centre

ECZ Makes Radical Change in Optical Mark Read (OMR) Processing, Enhancing Efficiency and Reducing Costs

By Editorial Team

Under thematic area number 4 of the 2021–2026 Strategic Plan, the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) strives to attain Operational Efficiency. In living up to this demand, ECZ is improving systems and processes.

In the administration of examinations, the key stage is processing reliable and valid examination results which comes at a high cost. Therefore, the Council has sought to invest in new technologies that offer efficient and cost-effective methods for operations. ECZ has commenced the use of the Remark Software for Multiple Choice response capturing and Image Scanning. The use of Remark software is cost effective as the OMR cards are locally designed by ECZ and has smoother procurement processes compared to the one where cards design is outsourced before being received by ECZ and distributed to examinations centres.

This strategic move reflects the Council's commitment to modernisation and sustainable operations. Unlike using special scanners that only read custom paper type, image scanners provide multiple output file formats, including Remark Extended image files, CSV and text formats. Additionally, they can read all Answer Cards whether shaded using ink or pencil. This flexibility significantly enhances data management, processing speed and storage.

A key advantage of image scanning technology is its ability to capture the entire image of each response sheet. This feature strengthens quality assurance as captured Answer Cards can be visually reviewed before final processing.

Cost-effectiveness is another major benefit. Image scanners are significantly cheaper to procure compared to special scanners that are job specific or sensitive to paper type. This creates the potential for ECZ to gradually increase the number of scanners deployed, thereby improving overall throughput and reducing long-term scanning and processing examination results timelines.

Additionally, downtime with image scanners is generally limited to routine maintenance of components such as rollers and paper separators, supporting operational continuity. While careful attention is required during error management and rescanning, the system provides clear error indicators that support accurate correction. The ECZ ensures all operators are well trained in the use of this equipment.

Overall, the adoption of image scanning technology positions ECZ to enhance efficiency, strengthen quality assurance, reduce operational costs, and modernise examination processing. Through such continued efforts, ECZ will emerge as an assessment body of excellence and as an institution where other countries will benchmark with in the near future.

ECZ Takes Corrective Measures and Suspends Five (5) GCE Centres

Qualification integrity remains at the core of the functions of the ECZ to ensure that all administered assessments result in better opportunities for those that sit these assessments. Therefore, no room is left for fraud to take root in the assessments as doing so would be a direct assault to their product which is the certificates awarded to the candidates.

As an assessment body, ECZ has built systems for detecting fraud and any vice of examination malpractice before, during and after the examinations. In 2025, the ECZ, suspended the Examination Centre Status for five (5) General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examination Centres for malpractice recorded at the centres during the 2025 GCE Examination. The suspension extend to a period of two years from 2025 to 2027, meaning the affected centres would not present candidates at this level until 2028.

The centres whose examination centre status were suspended include Chowwe Day Secondary School GCE (Code: 6295) of Kalumbila District and Kabanda Secondary GCE (Code: 6209) of Mwinilunga District both from North-Western Province. Others are Kampampi GCE (Code: 2627) of Nchelenge District in Luapula Province, Yolo Secondary GCE (Code: 1696) of Nakonde District in Muchinga Province and Twatotela GCE (Code: 9057) of Lusaka District in Lusaka Province.

ECZ also nullified examination results affecting 1,654 candidates in various subjects linked to the GCE centres whose examination centre status had been suspended. Furthermore, the Council nullified examination results affecting 151 candidates from Mungwi and Kaputa Districts in Northern Province and Chama District in Eastern Province, who sat the 2025 Junior Secondary External Examination.

The decision to nullify the examination results is in line with Section 26 (5) of the ECZ Act Number 3 of 2023 which empowers the Council to nullify examination results where it is satisfied that the examination results were obtained fraudulently or the candidate engaged in examination malpractice.

Following the suspension, the Council cautioned all Examination Centres to refrain from practices which promote examination irregularities before, during or after the conduct of examinations. The ECZ instead, encouraged Examination Centres to adhere to the Guidelines for the Administration and Management of Examinations to promote the smooth and credible conduct of all examinations administered by the Council.

ECZ remains committed to the conduct of credible assessments that are of comparable international standards and will take every measure within the law to protect the integrity of its assessments.



“Unlocking Zambia’s Potential” at Higher Education Indaba

By Mweemba Milimo



The Examinations Council of Zambia was among the institutions that exhibited at the Higher Education Indaba held in Livingstone from 8th to 10th October, 2025 under the theme: “Unlocking Zambia’s Potential Through New Investments in Quality Higher Education”.

The Higher Education Indaba was held to bring together a dynamic mix of stakeholders, ranging from academics, researchers and policy makers to industry leaders, education managers and students to explore practical strategies for driving excellence in

higher education. This event was aimed at identifying solutions to the higher education challenges in the country and the economy at large. Further, the event aimed to discuss and foster new investments in quality higher education to unlock Zambia’s potential.

Minister of Education, Honourable Douglas Syakalima officiated at the event which attracted over 200 leaders from higher education institutions, industry, government, civil society and cooperating partners.

The Examinations Council of Zambia used the event as an opportunity to showcase its services and share information about the Self-Service Portal. The aim was to create awareness to more stakeholders including those at the higher education level, who mostly are recipients of products that ECZ channels out. This information was vital for

the audience that gathered to discuss higher education challenges and development strategies for Zambia to unlock its potential.

ECZ continues to look at such events as stages for continued awareness on its innovations and improved service delivery.

Evidently so, this event has enhanced the institutions promotion of the SSP as well as collaboration with various stakeholders.

Representatives from the Research Planning and Information (RPI) Department, Public Relations Unit (PRU) and Certification Department attended to more than one hundred clients and answered queries about the Self-Service Portal and other issues relating to the institution.

Mobile Money and VISA Integrated to ECZ Online Services

During the course of 2025, the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) continued on its’ journey to innovate by linking the e-Certificate and Self-Service Portal to the payment gateway. This integration makes it easier for clients to pay for ECZ services within the comfort of their home or work spaces. The integration was successfully rolled out in October, 2025.

WHAT NEXT?

1. All payments will now be made and processed securely in real time through ECZ digital payments gateway.
2. No bank deposits are required to pay for ECZ Services. No need to deposit

any funds through the bank in relation to the services clients wish to access online.

3. Cash payments are no longer available.
4. Payments methods available include Mobile Money (Airtel Money, MTN Money, Zamtel Kwacha), VISA and Master Card.

The ECZ remains committed to providing services efficiently. Stakeholders are appreciated for their unwavering support throughout the institution’s digital transformation journey.



Online Results Confirmation System (ORCS): A Landmark Innovation by the Examinations Council of Zambia

By Beulah Mofya



In its quest to modernise operations and ensure transparency, the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) has introduced the Online Results Confirmation System (ORCS). This cutting-edge digital platform is designed to address the growing need for quick, secure, and reliable confirmation of academic qualifications. As an essential tool for institutions, employers and other stakeholders, the system represents a significant step forward in the fight against academic fraud and in promoting trust in Zambia's education sector.

What is the Online Results Confirmation System (ORCS)?

The Online Results Confirmation System is a web-based platform developed to enable organisations and institutions to confirm the authenticity of academic qualifications issued by the ECZ. The system is tailored for use by employers, universities, colleges, government agencies and any other body that requires confirmation of a candidate's academic credentials before making key decisions such as employment or admissions.

How the System Works

Using the ORCS is simple and user-friendly. Institutions can access the system by registering and creating an account on the ECZ's official website. Once registered, they can log in and submit confirmation requests securely. The process involves the following steps:

Account Registration: Institutions are required to register on the platform by providing their details, including the type of institution, contact information and authorisation documents.

Submission of Confirmation Requests: After creating an account, institutions can upload the academic details (e.g., examination number, candidate information, etc.) of the individual whose qualifications they wish to verify.

Processing and Feedback: The ECZ processes the request, cross-checking the submitted details with its database. Once confirmed, the institution receives an official response indicating whether the qualifications are authentic or not.

Online Payment Integration: The system is integrated with an online payment gateway, allowing institutions or individuals to pay for confirmation services instantly, making the process seamless and efficient. Some of the available payment modes include mobile money and VISA.

Key Features of the ORCS

Secure Login System: The platform uses advanced encryption and secure login protocols to protect sensitive institutional and candidate data.

Real-Time Access to ECZ Database: Institutions can confirm qualifications directly against the ECZ's official database, ensuring accuracy and reliability.

Automated Processing: The system is designed to handle confirmation requests quickly, significantly reducing the time it takes to confirm the authenticity of academic records.

Audit Trail: Every confirmation request is logged, creating an audit trail that institutions can make reference for accountability purposes.

User-Friendly Interface: The system is intuitive and easy to navigate, ensuring that even users with minimal technical skills can operate it effectively.

Benefits of the Online Results Confirmation System

Combatting Academic Fraud: The ORCS is a powerful tool in the fight against fraudulent academic qualifications. By directly linking to the ECZ's database, it ensures that only authentic certificates and qualifications are confirmed.

Enhanced Efficiency and Cost Effective: The system significantly reduces the time it takes to verify academic records. What once required weeks can now be completed in a matter of hours or days. The system eliminates the need for physical visits to ECZ offices, saving institutions money and time. Additionally, the integration of online payments simplifies the transaction process.

Improved Decision-Making: For employers and academic institutions, having access to confirmed qualifications ensures more informed decision-making when hiring staff or admitting students.

Transparency and Accountability: With an automated and traceable process, the ORCS promote transparency in confirming qualifications, leaving little room for manipulation or errors.

Accessible Nationwide

The system can be accessed from anywhere in Zambia with an internet connection, making it especially beneficial for institutions

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Transforming Human Resource Management Through HRIMS

By Angela Mwandu

In today's fast-evolving digital landscape, public institutions in Zambia are increasingly embracing technology to enhance efficiency, transparency and service delivery. In line with that, the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ), as a key pillar in Zambia's education sector, continues to demonstrate its commitment to innovation through the adoption of modern systems. One such system, the ECZ plans to adopt, is the Human Resource Information Management System (HRIMS).

What is HRIMS?

A Human Resource Information Management System (HRIMS) is an integrated digital platform designed to manage and streamline human resource functions. It enables organisations to store, process, and analyse employee data in a centralised and secure environment. The ECZ is in the process of migrating from its current system to the HRIMS.

Why HRIMS Matters for ECZ

For an institution like the Examinations Council of Zambia, which operates at a national scale and coordinates critical examination processes, effective human resource management is essential. HRIMS provides a structured and efficient approach to managing personnel across its various departments.

Key Benefits of HRIMS Implementation

- 1. Improved Efficiency and Productivity**
HRIMS reduces reliance on manual processes, allowing HR personnel to focus on strategic functions rather than administrative tasks.
- 2. Enhanced Data Accuracy and Security**
By digitising employee records, the system minimises errors and ensures that sensitive information is securely stored and easily retrievable.

3. Streamlined Payroll and Benefits Management

Automated payroll processing ensures timely and accurate salary payments, statutory deductions, and benefits administration.

4. Effective Leave and Attendance Management

Employees can apply for leave electronically, while supervisors can review and approve requests seamlessly, improving accountability and planning.

5. Better Decision-Making

With real-time data and reporting capabilities, management can make informed decisions regarding staffing, training and workforce planning.

6. Strengthened Transparency and Accountability

HRIMS promotes fairness and consistency in HR processes, reinforcing trust within the institution.

Supporting Institutional Excellence

The planned integration of HRIMS in ECZ operations is expected to align with the Council's broader vision of leveraging technology to improve operational effectiveness. By modernising HR processes, the ECZ intends to enhance its ability to attract, retain and develop a competent workforce dedicated to delivering credible examination services.

Conclusion

Once implemented, the HRIMS will not merely be a technological upgrade. It will be a strategic investment in people, processes and performance. For the Examinations Council of Zambia, it will reinforce a commitment to excellence, efficiency and innovation in supporting Zambia's education system.

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in remote areas that previously faced challenges in verifying qualifications

The introduction of the Online Results Confirmation System is a testament to the ECZ's commitment to leveraging technology to enhance service delivery. Zambia, like many other countries, has faced challenges with fraudulent academic qualifications, which undermine the credibility of its education system and the competence of professionals entering the workforce. The ORCS not only addresses this issue but also aligns the ECZ with global best practices in education management. Additionally, the system strengthens Zambia's education sector by fostering trust among stakeholders. Employers can now confidently hire candidates knowing their qualifications have been confirmed and academic institutions can ensure they admit students with genuine credentials.

By promoting transparency, efficiency and accountability, the system is setting a new standard for service delivery within the ECZ. As more institutions adopt the platform, the impact of this innovation will be felt across all sectors of the economy, contributing to a stronger and more credible education system in Zambia.

The ECZ'S Confirmation System is a groundbreaking initiative that addresses a critical need in today's fast-paced, digital world. It not only simplifies the confirmation process but also ensures that Zambia's academic qualifications remain credible and trustworthy. As the system continues to gain traction, it is poised to become a cornerstone of the ECZ's efforts to modernise and enhance its operations, benefiting institutions, employers and the nation as a whole.



PHOTO



Chipata College of Education 8th Graduation Ceremony



ECZ collaborates with Education Broadcasting Services on the 2023 curriculum implementation roadmap



ECZ Director - Certification Dr Kunda Kuku on ZNBC Radio 2 discussing the Abolishment of the JSSL Examination



ECZ Director - Test Development, Mr. Albert Siamunko during an interview at ZNBC



ECZ Executive Director Dr Michael Chilala addresses the media on the new registration requirements



ECZ Meeting with Ministry of Justice at Reddy Convention Centre



ECZ officers undertake cleaning work at Kalingalinga Clinic



ECZ submits paper on ramification on GLOBAL CONVENTION of HE QUALIFICATIONS



Learners visit the ECZ stand at the Trade Fair in Ndola



ECZ Top Management at Parliament Buildings after presentation of paper to Committee on Education Science and Technology



Members of the Education Broadcasting Services pose for a photo with the ECZ Executive Director after a recording



Minister of Education announces the 2025 GCE and JSSLE Results



Officers celebrate Independence at ECZ



Staff at the Agricultural and Commercial show in Lusaka

How Well Can 15 Year Old Students Apply Knowledge and Skills? ...as Zambia Participates in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

Examinations Council of Zambia not only conducts examinations, it also plays a key role in research and development that helps to understand policy implementation as well as drive decision making.

As a country that is keen to seeing its education system grow and match up to international standards, ECZ through its vast experience and expertise has been conducting studies at various levels with the support of cooperating partners on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Zambia. ECZ has delivered on many fronts in this area of research and development.

This is why in 2025, under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Zambia through the ECZ participated in the Programme for International Students Assessment -PISA. The PISA study aims at assessing how well 15-year-old students can apply their knowledge and skills in reading, mathematics and science in real world situations. Over 100 countries and economies are taking part in PISA 2025, with only four (4) being African countries.

To ensure effective participation in this programme, ECZ trained 60 Test Administrators and 220 School Coordinators before embarking on the data collection exercise in 221 sampled schools across the country.

As an assessment body, ECZ remains optimistic to the study results in order to appreciate the level of competencies and abilities our students in this study age will exhibit in comparison to other participating countries in applying reading, mathematics and science knowledge for real-life problem solving.

In moving forward, we are focusing on the year 2026 when ECZ hopes to have the final study results launched in all participating countries. This will help underscore efforts in education policy formulation, implementation, transformation and help countries to prepare such learners for their future that stimulates economic progress.





ECZ Showcases Climate Adaptation Approaches in Educational Assessments at 97th Agric Show

By Editorial Team

The Agricultural and Commercial Show is an annual premier event that brings together the business community from both public and private sector, service providers, experts and citizens for six days to share best practices, exhibit organisational growth and leadership, promote business as well as collaboration among different industry players.

ECZ was among the organisations that participated at the event in 2025 held in Lusaka under the theme: **Adapting to Climate Change**. Our theme interpretation focused on “Minimising Climate Change Shocks on Assessments through Innovative Approaches”.

The ECZ exhibition focused on how climate change continues to affect educational assessments. Floods, drought, crop failure and pests, blown off roofs from school infrastructure, washed out bridges and water shortages are among the most common climate change events which affect educational assessments. Further, the exhibition showed how these led to disruptions to testing, increased hunger, low levels of literacy, absenteeism, poor results and consequently, underdevelopment of the country.

Efforts by ECZ to minimize climate change shocks

Some of the interventions ECZ has put in place to contribute to

efforts to minimise climate change shocks include supply change approaches for continuous and smooth provision of assessments, question paper remodeling (answering provisions within examination question paper), decentralised service offices across the 10 provinces of Zambia and the e-Certificate system launched. ECZ is looking ahead to have e-assessments and e-marking. Currently, the paper generated from examinations is recycled using appropriate paper recycling companies, partnerships with banks, mobile network operators and other stakeholders including training of stakeholders such as examiners in our new climate resilience initiatives.

ECZ may face the challenges arising from climate change and recognises that these will continue to exist. As an institution, we are adapting our operations to ensure continued provision of assessments to support the growth of Zambia’s education system with resilience.

The 97th Agricultural and Commercial Show took place from 30th July, to 4th August, 2025. Clients and stakeholders were also provided with an opportunity to access various services during the event. This was a chance to on-board them to the various online systems that ECZ has built to enhance service delivery.





Culture Celebration and Community Service mark Zambia's 61 Years at ECZ

As part of celebrating 61 years of the country's Independence, members of staff at the Examinations Council of Zambia conducted a cleaning exercise at Kalingalinga Clinic In-Patient Department. With a strong belief that a clean space is a cornerstone for good human health and livelihood, the members of staff geared up in work suits to contribute to the clinic's efforts in health care delivery. The cleaning exercise was guided by the principles of shared responsibility, civic duty and a demonstration of the continued commitment to national duty and service delivery for the people of Zambia.

Zambia celebrated 61 years of Independence under the theme, "61 Year of Peace and Unity: Building a Resilient and Prosperous Zambia". During pre-Independence week, the members of staff participated in activities aimed at promoting unity and celebrating the country's rich cultural heritage. Staff members wore chitenge attire and brought various traditional foods to work and shared a meal as part of the independence anniversary celebrations.

ECZ Honoured with the Records and Archives Management Excellence Award

By Mwamba Lesa – Chintima

The Examinations Council of Zambia was honoured with the Records and Archives Management Excellence Awards by the Library and Information Association of Zambia (LIAZ) at its Annual General Conference and Gala Dinner in Livingstone.

The award was presented to ECZ as it had demonstrated outstanding commitment to advancing Records and Archives Management in Zambia. ECZ has constantly upheld excellence in the handling,

preservation and governance of records, ensuring integrity, transparency and accountability in its operations.

Over the years, ECZ has gone beyond compliance by actively contributing to the growth of the profession. The Council has been a consistent participant in national conferences, professional forums and capacity building programs. Through sharing experiences, delivering presentations and championing best practices, ECZ has played a visible role in shaping the professionalisation of records and archives management across the public sector.

This recognition stands as testament to the dedication of ECZ staff and Management, whose collective efforts continue to position the institution as a leader in information governance. The Council remains committed to continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that its records and achievements in management systems, support effective service delivery in Zambia educational sector.

Eswatini Applauds Zambia's Strides in Education

By Nicolas Nkhuwa



The Kingdom of Eswatini has lauded Zambia for the significant progress being made in the education sector. Visiting Eswatini Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Training, Ms. Nanikie Mnisi, has described Zambia's Education initiatives as a model worth emulating.

Ms. Mnisi, who led a delegation of educators on a benchmarking mission to Lusaka, last August, made these remarks during a courtesy call on Education Minister, Hon. Douglas Syakalima. She expressed deep appreciation for the strides Zambia has made in enhancing education delivery.

"There is a lot that the Kingdom of Eswatini has to learn from Zambia. We are here to understand how Zambia's key education bodies such as the Teaching Council and Teaching Commission of Zambia function, so we can replicate the successes back home." Ms. Mnisi said.

The Eswatini delegation, was in the country to explore frameworks to support the establishing of Eswatini Council of Educators and took time to engage with several Zambian institutions such as the Teaching Council of Zambia, the Examinations Council of Zambia and the Zambia Qualifications Authority.

Hon. Syakalima welcomed the team warmly, emphasising the importance of African-led collaboration and knowledge exchange.

"As Africans, we have the potential to resolve our own challenges. It is only through mutual consultation and benchmarking that we can embrace best practices and strengthen our systems," Hon. Syakalima said.

And Permanent Secretary for Education Services, Dr. Kelvin Mambwe, affirmed Zambia's commitment to sharing its education strategies and innovations, saying Zambia remained ready to support its neighbours in nurturing quality education systems across the continent.



2025 Junior Secondary External (Grade 9 External) And General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) Examination Results

A total of 138,152 candidates registered for the 2025 Junior Secondary External Examination. Among the registered candidates, 59,656 (43.18%) were male and 78,496 (56.82%) were female. Of the 138,152 registered candidates, a total of 130,615, representing 94.54 percent, sat the examination. Of the 130,615 candidates who sat the examination, a total of 36,049 candidates, representing 27.60 percent, sat for six or more subjects.

Furthermore, out of the 36,049 candidates that sat for six or more subjects, 8,552 (23.72%) obtained Certificates, 19,718 (54.70%) obtained Statements after passing in at least one but fewer than six subjects required to make a certificate, while 7,779 (21.58%) failed the examination.

In terms of overall performance, out of the 130,615 candidates that sat the examination, 102,271, representing 78.29 percent, passed in at least one subject while 28,344, representing 21.70 percent, did not pass any subject they had entered for, and therefore, failed the examination. This is taking into consideration that candidates for this examination can sit for a minimum of one subject.

Performance analysis by subject revealed that the highest mean score was recorded in Art and Design (72.16%), while the lowest was recorded in Religious Education (21.15%), a trend which is similar to the 2024 Junior Secondary External Examination results.

All in all, as was the case in 2024, more female candidates had registered and sat the 2025 Junior Secondary External Examination than their male counterparts

As for General Certificate of Education (GCE), a total of 149,240 candidates entered for the 2025 Examination, representing a decrease by 0.46 percent from the 149,920 candidates who had entered for the same examination in 2024. Of those that entered for 2025 GCE examination, 48,093, representing 32.23 percent, were male and 101,147, representing 67.77 percent, were female. Out of

the 149,240 candidates who entered, a total of 136,455, representing 91.43 percent, sat the examination. Of the 136,455 candidates who sat the examination, 42,619 (31.23%) were male while 93,836 (68.77%) were female. Of the 136,455 candidates that sat the 2025 GCE examination, 15,331 sat for 5 or more subjects.

Meanwhile, a total of 12,785 candidates, representing 7.89 percent were absent from the 2025 GCE Examination, comprising 5,474 (42.82%) male and 7,311 (57.18%) female candidates. The 2025 GCE absenteeism rate showed an increase of 0.68 percentage points from 7.89 percent recorded in 2024 to 8.57 percent in 2025.

Out of the 136,455 candidates that sat the examination, 117,301 representing 85.96 percent passed in at least one subject, while 19,154 (14.04%) failed the examination, after not passing all the subjects they sat. Compared to 2024, the pass rate decreased by 1.42 percentage points. Out of the 15,331 candidates that sat for five (5) or more subjects, 3,990 candidates representing 26.03 percent obtained the General Certificate of Education, which is equivalent to a School Certificate. A total of 10,431, representing 68.04 percent, obtained Statements, while 910, representing 5.94 percent, failed the examination.

Both the Junior Secondary External (Grade 9 External) and the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations were conducted without any leakage of question papers. However, other forms of examination malpractices, involving collusion, assistance, and smuggling of unauthorised materials into the examination rooms were reported. Specifically, a total of 17 cases of suspected examination malpractices were reported during the 2025 Junior Secondary External Examination while a total of 479 cases were reported during the 2025 General Certificate of Education (GCE) examination.

**“Examinations
were
Conducted
without any
Leakages...”**



From 55.89 Percent to 72.25 Percent Pass Rate - JSSLE

The 2025 Junior Secondary School Leaving (Grade 9 Internal) Examination recorded a 16.36 percent increase in the pass rate from 55.89 percent in 2024 to 72.25 percent in 2025.

The significant improvement in the performance of candidates in 2025 is attributed to the Government's policy decision to abolish automatic progression and to allow only learners with the requisite competencies to proceed to secondary school, as well as to the various interventions and inputs implemented by the Government and its partners.

According to the Ministry of Education, this good performance provides further support for the policy decision to abolish the Grade Nine Examination, suggesting that learners who pass the Primary School Leaving Examination have the competencies required to progress to secondary school and complete four years of learning before sitting the School Certificate Examination.

Candidature

In terms of candidature, a total of 303,674 candidates entered the 2025 Examination, representing a decrease of 6.59 percent compared to 2024. Of the total 303,674 candidates who entered, 144,976 (47.74%) were boys while 158,698 (52.26%) were girls. Out of the 303,674 candidates who entered the examination, 285,634 sat the examination. This represented an increase of 1.44 percentage points from the 93.16 percent recorded in 2024. Out of the 285,634 who sat the examination, 136,035 (47.63%) were boys and 149,599 (52.37%) were girls.

A total of 18,011 candidates were absent, bringing the 2025 national absenteeism rate to 5.94 percent. This indicated a decrease of 0.90 percentage points from 6.84 percent in 2024. Of the 285,634 candidates who sat the 2025 Junior Secondary School Leaving Examination, 206,357 candidates (72.25%) obtained certificates.

Further, a total of 72,321 candidates representing 25.32 percent obtained

statements. In comparison to 2024, the number of candidates who obtained statements in 2025 decreased by 11.07 percentage points from 36.39 percent in 2024. Meanwhile, a total of 6,956 candidates (2.44%) failed the examination. More boys, 3,772 (2.77 %), than girls, 3,184 (2.13%), failed the examination.

Performance Analysis

Analysis of performance by sex showed the following:

More boys (72.30%) than girls (72.20%) obtained certificates. This situation is similar to 2024, where more boys than girls got certificates. It is also worth noting that more girls (25.68%) than boys (24.93%) obtained statements. This was the same in 2024. The proportions for 2025, however, decreased for both girls and boys by 12.16 and 9.83 percentage points.

Examination Security Heightens: Candidates Portrait and Birth Certificate Required for Examination Registration

By Nicolas Nkhuwa



Our Goal to be “An Educational Assessment Body of Excellence” is not just a sentence of words we have written in our strategic documents. We are undertaking careful and well-planned initiatives to live up to this vision.

Through our digital journey to enhance service delivery, institutional capacity and operational efficiency, ECZ is adding more features to ensure security of systems and data integrity is sustained for current administration of examinations and for future demands. This is more of taking a risk-based approach to our sustainability journey.

The candidate registration for 2026 examinations commenced on 10th November, 2025 and saw a new requirement for all candidates intending to write Primary School Leaving Examination (Grade 7), School Certificate (Grade 12) and the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examinations to provide a portrait picture and a birth certificate. Though not mandatory in 2026, future registration will demand this as a mandatory requirement to enhance the data integrity of our assessment data and management thereof.

The system shall provide fields for capturing the following information for all candidates at all examination levels:

- A portrait of a candidate, which must be uploaded into the OCRS during registration;
- Candidate’s birth record or birth certificate number
- Parent’s or guardian’s email address or phone number, or both

Once the candidate is registered, a verification link will be sent via email and SMS to parent’s or guardian’s email address and phone number and the candidates’ for entry details confirmation. The school, candidate and parent or guardian of the

candidate for the Primary School Leaving Examination shall have access to the system to verify candidates’ entry details.

Rationale Behind the New Requirements Portrait of a candidate

Once taken, the portraits of candidates will appear on the examination registers. Previously, only the National Registration Card (NRC) was needed for GCE candidates to register. However, some would tamper with the image and replace it to enable other people write the examination for them. This contributed to the rise in examination malpractice cases through impersonation.

Therefore, the inclusion of a portrait in the 2026 Candidate Registration process is a security feature aimed at fighting examination malpractices. However, it must be clear that we have not introduced “facial recognition technology” in the upgraded Online Candidate Registration System (OCRS). The system merely captures the candidate’s portrait as part of the candidate’s bio data.

Going forward, plans are on adding the portrait on the certificate and also securing the image with encryption.

“Improving Data Integrity in Assessment”

Candidate’s Birth Record or Birth Certificate Number: What you Need to Know

For enrollment at Grade 1 (one), parents and guardians are requested to provide birth records or certificates as this a requirement by the Ministry of Education.

Thus, provision of a birth record or birth certificate number when registering for 2026 examinations is part of collective efforts to have data integrity as candidates need to meet the prescribed number of years of primary education before they write the Primary School Leaving Examination.

Parent’s or Guardian’s Contact Details

This provision was added to shift the verification of candidates details from the ECZ and schools to the parents and guardians in a bid to reduce requests for name amendments. Over the years, parents and guardians have been appealing to the ECZ to change subjects that candidates were registered for; to correct spellings on names and in some cases, to change names even after candidates were given the opportunity to verify their details. These appeals are usually accompanied by claims that either the schools or the ECZ entered wrong details for the candidates.

By shifting the verification of candidates details from the ECZ and schools, parents and guardians now have the opportunity to verify candidates details before their registration is confirmed. This is expected to reduce name amendments and change of name requests which is against policy guidelines.

The new requirements indicated above have been circulated to all Provincial Educations Officers, District Education Board Secretaries, Heads of School Certificate Examination Centres and Heads of Primary School Examination Centres.

The Examinations Council of Zambia Act No. 3 of 2023: A Legal Commentary

By Benjamin Kasweka Esq.



The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) was originally established under Act No. 15 of 1983, later amended by Act No. 33 of 1993 and Act No. 13 of 1994, collectively codified as Chapter 137 of the Laws of Zambia. These statutes served their purpose at the time, providing a legal framework for the regulation and administration of examinations in Zambia. However, with the passage of time, significant societal, economic and technological changes rendered certain provisions obsolete and inadequate to address contemporary challenges.

In order to ensure justice, equity and efficiency in the administration of examinations, Act No. 15 of 1983 was repealed and replaced by the Examinations Council of Zambia Act No. 3 of 2023. The new legislation introduces modernised provisions that reflect the evolving needs and aspirations of the Zambian people thereby strengthening governance, promoting fairness, and enhancing accountability in the education sector.

Stringent and Salient Provisions of Act No. 3 of 2023

Given the breadth of the Act, this commentary highlights selected sections that create offences and prescribe penalties for their commission or omission.

1. Section 8: Prohibition of Operation of Examination Centres Without Accreditation

Section 8(1) provides that:

“A person shall not operate an educational institution as an examination centre without accreditation by the Council.”

This provision criminalises the unauthorised operation of examination centres. Section 8(2) stipulates that any person who contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence and is liable, upon conviction, to a fine not exceeding **five hundred thousand penalty units** (equivalent to ZMW 200,000.00, given that one penalty unit equals K0.40), or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or to both. This measure ensures that only duly accredited institutions administer examinations, thereby safeguarding the integrity of the examination process.

2. Section 21 Disclosure of Interest in Examinations and Examination Materials Section 21(1) imposes a duty on persons engaged in the conduct of examinations to disclose any direct or indirect private interest in examination materials or information. Failure to disclose such interest constitutes an offence. Although the Act does not expressly prescribe a penalty for this offence, the Anti-Corruption Act No. 3 of 2012 provides guidance. Specifically, Section 28(2), when read together with Section 41 of the Anti-Corruption Act, criminalises willful failure to declare interest, punishable by imprisonment for a term of up to **fourteen years**. This provision underscores the importance of transparency and impartiality in the administration of examinations.

3. Section 22 Examination Malpractice

Section 22(1) and (2) criminalise acts of examination malpractice. The penalties have been significantly enhanced when compared to previous legislation, reflecting the gravity of the offence and its detrimental impact on the credibility of the education system. A person convicted under this section is liable to a fine not exceeding **three hundred thousand penalty units** or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding **three years, or to both**. This provision demonstrates the Council's commitment to deterring malpractice and preserving the sanctity of examinations.

The ECZ Act No. 3 of 2023 represents a progressive and robust legal framework designed to address contemporary challenges in the administration of examinations. By repealing outdated provisions and introducing stringent measures, the Act enhances accountability, transparency and fairness in the education sector.

The highlighted provisions prohibition of unaccredited examination centres, mandatory disclosure of interest and strengthened penalties for examination malpractice reflect the Council's resolve to uphold the integrity of Zambia's examination system. Collectively, these measures ensure that examinations remain credible, equitable and aligned with modern standards of justice and governance.

Ultimately, Act No. 3 of 2023 is not merely a statutory reform; it is a reaffirmation of Zambia's commitment to quality education, integrity and the rule of law.

End of Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations: What the Public should Know

By Chiwama Bright, M.



Following the introduction of the 2023 Competency Based Curriculum by the government through the Ministry of Education, the education structure of the education system in the country has been adjusted from a 4-7-2-3 to a 3-6-4-2.

By implication, Early Childhood Education (ECE) has been reduced from 4 years to 3 years while primary education level has been reduced from 7 years to 6 years. The secondary education level has been restructured and increased from 5 years to 6 years to accommodate 2 years of A-Levels.

Thus, learners will be provided with 4 years of ordinary secondary education (O-Level) and 2 years advanced secondary level (A-level). Notably, forms have replaced grades at secondary school level.

Consequently, automatic progression from primary school to secondary school has been abolished together with the Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations (i.e. both Grade 9 Internal and Grade 9 External Examinations).

Yes, you read that right, the 2025 Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations would be the last owing to the change in the education structure of the country.

The main question that the public is asking is what happens then if a learner does not pass the Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations in 2025?

A learner who does not pass the Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations in 2025 will have two options going forward.

Option 1

Repeats to Form 1 and sit the Form 4 School Certificate Examinations in 2029

The entry qualification for sitting the Form 4 School Certificate Examinations will be a full 2023 and 2022 Primary School Leaving Examinations Certificate.

Will the examination numbers from the 2023 and 2022 Primary School Leaving Examinations be valid for entry at Form 4 despite having been used at grade 9 in 2025? Yes!

For example, the life cycle of the 2023 Primary School Leaving Examinations numbers is basically 7 years counting from 2024, with the 5 years secondary school system under the old education structure, the first year of sitting the School Certificate Examinations would be in 2028 with two additional years 2029 and 2030 of use for repeating candidates who will have not attempted the 2028 School Certificate Examinations.

Thus, for repeating candidates from the 2025 Junior Secondary School Leaving Examinations to Form 1(2026) by the time these candidates will have reached Form 4, their examination numbers would still be valid for entry at Form 4 in 2029 and 2030 depending on the candidate's progression in school.

Additionally, the 2023 Primary School Leaving Examination numbers would only be valid for use in 2030 if the candidate does not attempt to sit the School Certificate Examination in 2029.

Furthermore, if there are any candidates that may have written their Primary School Leaving Examination in 2022 but failed to pass the Junior Secondary School Leaving Examination in either 2024 or 2025, such candidates can still repeat to Form 1 and would have the last chance to use their 2022 examination numbers for entry at Form 4 in 2029 School Certificate Examinations.

Option 2

Candidates that may not be interested to repeat to Form 1, these can take the option to proceed to the Grade 10 in 2026 under the Open Learning Classes and sit for the General Certificate of Education Examinations in 2028 provided they would have attained the age of 16 years and will be in possession of the National Registration Card

Remember with the General Certificate of Education Examinations, prospective candidates are required to present their National Registration Card, portrait and make the prescribed examination fees to the Examinations Council of Zambia.

Candidates can enter as many subjects as they can manage.

New Exam Processing System

By Christine Simfukwe - Director ICT

The Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) processing system is an in-house developed solution designed to replace the legacy FAIM system, which was an off-the-shelf platform. The new system provides a secure, integrated and automated framework to manage the full examination lifecycle, including candidate registration, data capture, validation, processing, results computation, certification and dissemination.

Unlike the legacy system, the in-house solution is tailored to ECZ's specific operational requirements, allowing greater flexibility, scalability, and control over examination processes. It incorporates robust validation rules, access controls, audit trails and role-based permissions to ensure data integrity,

confidentiality and compliance with ECZ policies.

The system reduces manual interventions and integrates seamlessly with complementary platforms such as the Online Candidate Registration System (OCRS). It produces reliable outputs, including candidate records, examination results, reports and certificates, enabling timely decision-making and service delivery.

Overall, the new ECZ processing system strengthens operational efficiency, enhances data accuracy and security and ensures a sustainable, scalable platform that supports ECZ's mandate of delivering fair, transparent and credible examination services.



Anger Management in the Workplace: A key to Professional Growth

By Mwamba Lesa - Chintima

The workplace is a multicultural setting where people from various backgrounds work together every day to accomplish shared objectives. It is normal for frustrations to occasionally surface due to varying personalities, demands and expectations. On the other hand, improperly controlled anger can result in disagreements, strained relationships and decreased productivity. It is critical that institutions develop the abilities necessary to handle difficulties in a composed and productive manner. It is important to cultivate skills that allow employees to respond to challenges calmly and constructively. The skills may include but not limited to:

Understanding Anger

Anger is a normal human emotion and reaction to unfairness, threat or frustrations. Anger in itself is not bad, what matters is how one chooses to express it. When uncontrolled, anger can manifest in unprofessional behavior such as shouting, hostility or withdrawal which undermines teamwork and damages workplace harmony. However, when anger is managed, it can be a tool for problem solving and positive change.

Identifying anger triggers

Identifying what triggers, one's anger is very important as it brings about effective steps in managing it and have best ways to control it. In most workplaces, that triggers anger is excessive workloads, poor communication, unfulfilled expectations or feeling undervalued. By understanding what sparks frustrations, employees can foresee the problems and create more constructive reactions instead

of acting on impulse by knowing what causes them to become frustrated.

Techniques for Controlling Anger

The following practical steps can help in keeping emotions in check

1. Pause and Reflect – before reacting to any threat, frustration or unfairness, take a deep breath and collect your thoughts.
2. Communicate Respectively – express your concerns calmly, clearly and

professionally, focusing on the issue at hand and not an individual you are angry with.

3. Take Short Breaks – briefly stepping away from the tensed situation can help restore composure.
4. Seek Solutions and not Blame – always channel your energy towards resolving the issue at hand instead of dwelling too much on the problem.
5. Practise Empathy – understanding another person's perspective can reduce tension and build stronger relationships.

Creating a Positive Workplace

Institutions recognise that emotional intelligence is as important a technical skill. Respect, cooperation and open communication are the cornerstone of a workplace culture that reduces needless conflict and promotes employees' wellbeing. The Human Resource Department must be dedicated to offering advice and wellness programmes that provide staff members the skills they need to manage stress and emotions.

In conclusion, the goal of anger management is to constructively channel emotions rather than express them. We may transform frustrating circumstances into learning opportunities by exercising self-control, polite speech and solution focused thinking. It is therefore important that all employees pledge to establish a work atmosphere that fosters peace, teamwork and excellence.



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Mr. Carter Hamweendo
**Senior Examinations Specialist -
Natural Science Education**
with effect from 28th July, 2025.

CONGRATULATIONS



Mr. Henry Mutati
**Bachelor of Information and
Communications Technology with
Education.**

NEW APPOINTMENTS



Mrs. Banji Milumbe Shakubanza
Manager-Risk
with effect from
1st October, 2025.



Mr. Mweemba Wilber Hachiita
Manager-ICT Systems
with effect from
1st October, 2025.





Mr. Clement Kaula
Senior Applications Developer
with effect from
1st December 2025

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1. The Examinations Council of Zambia was established by an Act of **Parliament** Number 15 of 1983, Chapter 137 of the Laws of Zambia which was repealed and replaced by Act Number 3 of 2023.
2. For replacement of a lost or damaged Grade 12 certificate, a client will need to produce: A Police Report, Sworn in **Affidavit**, Copy of lost certificate or letter from the school
3. From 2018 to 2025, the ECZ served as **Secretariat** for the Association for Educational Assessment in Africa (AEAA).
4. **Zambia** hosted the 50th IAEA Golden **Jubilee** Conference in Livingstone from 21st to 26th September, 2025.
5. The **Competency**-Based Curriculum (CBC) was launched by the Ministry of Education in 2025.
6. When handling name amendment queries, the ECZ does not change names on certificates, but ONLY corrects **misspelt** names.
7. One of the new requirements in the 2026 candidate registration for examinations is: **Portrait** of the candidate.
8. **Impersonation** is a form of examination **malpractice** involving one sitting an
9. examination for another person.



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Examinations Council of Zambia

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