



# **LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS RULES AND REGULATIONS**

## Table of Contents

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS .....	III
FOREWORD .....	IV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	VI
GLOSSARY .....	VII
INTRODUCTION .....	1
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ADMISSION OF CANDIDATES FOR LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS .....	2
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SECURITY PROCEDURES GUIDING THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION .....	2
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR CONDUCT AT THE EXAMINATION CENTRE .....	2
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ADMISSION OF CANDIDATES INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM .....	3
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS .....	3
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS .....	4
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PROGRESSION .....	4
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR APPEALS .....	5
APPEALS AGAINST EXAMINATION OUTCOMES .....	5
APPEALS AGAINST EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE OFFENCES .....	5
GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM .....	5
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PERSONAL BELONGINGS .....	6
RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES .....	7
BREACH OF THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION RULES AND REGULATIONS .....	7
CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY REQUIREMENTS BEYOND THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION .....	7
APPENDICES .....	9
APPENDIX 1: INFRINGEMENTS OF EXAMINATION REGULATIONS AND PRESCRIBED PENALTIES .....	9

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

- GCE - General Certificate of Education
- HPCZ - Health Professions Council of Zambia
- LEX - Licensure Examinations
- NRC - National Registration Card
- OSCE - Objective Structured Clinical Examination
- OSPE - Objective Structured Practical Examination
- ZAQA - Zambia Qualifications Authority

## **FOREWORD**

Health Professions Council of Zambia (HPCZ) has been active in working towards fulfilling its mandate of protecting the public. In an effort to be a leading Regulator of health care and training services for public protection, the Council administers licensure examinations to health professionals wishing to practice in Zambia.

Rules and Regulations have been developed to inform candidates of the standards, rules and policies guiding the licensure examination process. The Council is dedicated to ensuring that order is maintained before, during and after the examination period and to hold those in violation of the regulations set forth in this handbook accountable.

This handbook outlines the standards of behaviour expected of Licensure candidates, appeals process and disciplinary procedures to address misconduct. Licensure candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of this document, other official Council publications, as well as the Professional Code of Ethics.

This handbook was developed by the Council with the assistance of recognized experts from various health and training institutions. These experts and the Council may amend this document at any time without prior notice. Changes made outside the biennial approval process will be made available on the website: [www.hpcz.org.zm](http://www.hpcz.org.zm)

**Prof. Sekelani Banda**

**Board Chairperson**

**Health Professions Council of Zambia**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In order to sustain the core values of HPCZ - namely Integrity, Innovation, Service, Accountability, Excellence and Fairness - Licensure Rules and Regulations have been developed to provide a comprehensive guide to candidates on the licensure examination process.

These Rules and Regulations outline the responsibilities bestowed upon the candidates as well as examiners at various stages of the examination cycle. It also details the appeals processes and prescribed penalties for infringements of examination regulations.

As part of a quality assurance and improvement process, candidates are asked to complete an evaluation of the examination. This measure is useful in ensuring that the licensure examination is fair, credible and of a high standard.

**Dr. Aaron Mujajati**  
**Registrar**  
**Health Professions Council of Zambia**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## GLOSSARY

**Deferred Examination** – A Licensure Examination postponed to a later Licensure examination period on permitted grounds. A deferred licensure examination will mean Licensure fees will be transferred to the next examination.

**Examination-** A method of assessing the standard and/or the skills and knowledge level achieved by a candidate in a discipline and/or profession.

**Examiner** - A health professional who is accredited and appointed by HPCZ to assess the knowledge, skills and attitudes of a candidate to seeking or being considered for registration to practice in Zambia.

**Chief Examiner** - A health professional who is accredited and appointed by HPCZ to oversee the overall administration of the Practical/Clinical examinations

**Chief Invigilator** - A health professional who is accredited and appointed by HPCZ to oversee the overall administration of the Theory examinations

**Health Professions Education training** – A health professions training series that provides the examiner with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to appreciate the essence of learning, assessment and curriculum competences adherent in their role as an examiner.

**Marker** – is an appointed examiner by Health Professions Council Zambia to mark, score and grade the Licensure Examination.

**Moderator** – is an appointed examiner by the Health Professions Council of Zambia to provide a balanced, unbiased and objective view of the Licensure Examination

**Misconduct** – Any unacceptable/fraudulent act or deed that is against the rules and regulations

## INTRODUCTION

The Health Professions Council of Zambia is a statutory body established under the health professions Act No. 24 of 2009 of the Laws of the republic of Zambia. Pursuant to the provisions of this Act, part 11 section 4(k) states that the Council is mandated to do all such things as are necessary or incidental to the performance of its functions. In the exercise of this function under this Act, the Council has developed these guidelines as they are deemed necessary for conducting and managing the Licensure Examinations.

The purpose of conducting Licensure Examinations (LEX) before registering health professionals on either Provisional or Temporary register is to:

- i. Enable the Council identify qualified professionals with sufficient knowledge and basic minimum competencies to practice their profession in Zambia.
- ii. Determine whether the training previously received by the person applying for provisional or Temporary registration is equivalent to that recognized by the Council
- iii. Assess whether the applicants of Provisional and Temporary registration certificates possess such knowledge and training as may be prescribed
- iv. Identify Training Institutions that fail to adequately prepare students for service in a particular health profession (according to part iv of the principle Act section 34 (2) The Council shall withdraw the approval of a training programme, where it determines that:-
  - (a) the training programme no longer meets the requirements of this Act;
  - (b) the graduates of the training programme consistently fail to meet the standards required by their health profession.

Therefore, these Examination Rules and Regulations are meant to guide the conduct of candidates, examiners and invigilators before, during and after the Licensure examination process. This handbook further guide the users on the LEX structure, Eligibility, authority, progression criteria, Appeals and professional misconduct at the exam centre or in the exam room. These rules and regulations consists of thirteen sub categories and these are:

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## **1. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ADMISSION OF CANDIDATES FOR LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS**

1.1. Candidates eligible to sit for LEX shall possess an HPCZ Index Number and a primary qualification in a health-related field registrable with the Council.

1.2. To be admitted for LEX, candidates must submit the following documents to HPCZ:

### **1.2.1. Locally trained candidates:**

- a) LEX application form as prescribed
- b) Certified copy of professional certificate/transcript of final results,
- c) Certified copy of NRC/ passport/ drivers licence,
- d) Certified copy of Grade 12 certificate or its equivalent
- e) Proof of payment of LEX fees

### **1.2.2. Foreign-trained candidates:**

- a) LEX application form as prescribed
- b) Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) verified documents
- c) Certified copy of passport/NRC/ drivers licence,
- d) Certified copy of GCE O' level certificate or its equivalent
- e) Proof of payment of LEX fees

## **2. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SECURITY PROCEDURES GUIDING THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION**

- 2.1.HPCZ shall maintain strict confidentiality and security of the LEX Materials at all times.
- 2.2.Stringent security measures, as stipulated in subsidiary guidelines, shall be put in place to ensure that the integrity of the LEX is always maintained.
- 2.3.All LEX materials shall be the property of the HPCZ and protected by applicable copyright laws and regulations. Any person found in possession of LEX materials without authority from HPCZ shall be liable for prosecution in accordance with the laws.
- 2.4.LEX shall be conducted at centres approved and accredited by HPCZ.
- 2.5.Candidates shall only be permitted to write the LEX at the examination centre at which they are registered. In the event that the candidate wishes to change their choice of examination centre, the candidate shall apply in writing to the Registrar before the end of the registration period. The request to change examination centre is subject to approval.
- 2.6.Security personnel and invigilators are authorized to physically search candidates before being allowed into the examination room.

## **3. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR CONDUCT AT THE EXAMINATION CENTRE**

- 3.1.Candidates shall be at the LEX centre one hour before the official start time of the examination.
  - 3.2.Candidates shall be permitted to enter the Examination Room up to THIRTY MINUTES (HALF AN HOUR) after the start of the examination. Candidates who fail to arrive at the Licensure Examination room at the required time will not be provided with extra writing time.
  - 3.3.Candidates who arrive at the LEX Centre more than THIRTY MINUTES (HALF AN HOUR) after the start time shall not be permitted entry to the Examination Room. The official result will indicate NOT EXAMINED.
  - 3.4.In the presence of the candidates, the Chief Invigilator/Invigilator shall inspect and ensure the seal on the LEX package containing examination materials is intact before opening the package.
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- 3.5.A candidate who is admitted to the Examination Room and completes the registration process but does not attempt or complete the LEX shall be considered to have participated in the examination. The candidate's answer booklet will be marked and a result given.
- 3.6. Candidates shall not commence writing or designate any answers to questions on the LEX answer booklet prior to the announcement of the start of the examination.
- 3.7. Candidates shall not communicate or attempt to communicate with each other in whatever form during the examination.
- 3.8. Candidates shall not create a continuing distraction by sound, movement or odour, which disrupts the concentration of other candidates in the examination hall.
- 3.9. Candidates shall not be physically or verbally abusive towards an Invigilator.
- 3.10. Candidates shall comply with requests or instructions made by an Invigilator including, but not limited to, a request to leave the Licensure Examination Room.
- 3.11. In the event of a disruption or an emergency of any kind, candidates shall be instructed by the Invigilator(s) to immediately stop working and appropriate instructions given.
- 3.12. A candidate who conducts themselves improperly shall be directed to leave the Examination Room and their LEX shall be declared null and void. Improper conduct includes, but not limited to the following: drunken or disorderly state, acting under the influence of intoxicating substance, violence, harassment, and use of abusive language.
- 3.13. Candidates shall not be permitted to leave the Examination Room THIRTY (30) MINUTES from the start of the LEX and THIRTY (30) MINUTES before the end of the examination.
- 3.14. Notwithstanding 3.13 above, candidates who have handed in their Examination answer booklet and materials may exit the Examination Room before the end of the examination but shall not be permitted re-entry into the Examination Room.
- 3.15. At the end of the LEX, candidates shall leave all Examination materials provided in the examination Room.
- 3.16. In an event where a candidate falls ill during LEX and is unable to continue with the examination, a medical report shall be obtained by the candidate and presented to the office of the Assistant Registrar Examinations at HPCZ. The Chief
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Invigilator shall provide a written report to support the candidate's application for a deferred examination.

#### **4. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ADMISSION OF CANDIDATES INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM**

- 4.1. To be admitted into the examination room, the candidate shall present:
  - a) A valid identification document (NRC/Passport/Driver's Licence)
  - b) A valid examination permit issued by HPCZ.
- 4.2. If a candidate forgets a valid identification document prescribed in 4.1., other relevant photographic identity document will be accepted subject to verification by the Chief Invigilator.
- 4.3. Any candidate that fails to present the requirements in 4.1. and 4.2. shall not be admitted into the examination room.
- 4.4. A candidate shall not falsify or misrepresent information required for admission to the examination room.
- 4.5. A candidate shall not impersonate other candidates or have an impersonator take any part of the LEX on their behalf.
- 4.6. A candidate shall not be permitted to be accompanied by friends, relatives or children into the examination room. Physically challenged candidates who require assistance to access the examination room may be assisted by the Invigilators.
- 4.7. To be admitted into the examination room, the candidate shall satisfy the necessary security procedures enforced by the Council at the Examination Site.

#### **5. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS**

- 5.1. The seating arrangement in the examination room shall be not less than one (1) square metre between candidates.
- 5.2. Candidates shall sit at a desk that has been assigned to them by the Invigilator.
- 5.3. Candidates shall display his/her photo identification card (e.g. NRC, Driver's license or Passport) at the top right corner of the examination table (or whichever corner is closest to the aisle) throughout the sitting of the LEX.
- 5.4. The LEX candidate number shall be indicated on top of each page of the Examination Answer Booklet provided.
- 5.5. Candidates shall not write answers on any paper other than the answer booklet provided. All rough work shall be done on separate sheets of paper provided.

- 5.6. The Chief Invigilator shall ensure that the LEX for the same profession takes place at the same scheduled time of the day at all centres.
- 5.7. A candidate wishing to use the public convenience facility during the written examination shall obtain permission from the Invigilator and must be escorted to the facility.
- 5.8. Candidates shall not continue writing or otherwise alter any answers to questions on the LEX materials after the announcement of the end of the examination.

## 6. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

In addition to general regulations governing written examinations, the following shall apply to practical examinations:

- 6.1. Candidates shall be permitted to bring with them food or snacks in the holding room but shall not be permitted to enter the examination hall with the same.
- 6.2. Once admitted to the holding room, candidates shall not be permitted to exit the room until the end of their practical examination or with permission/instruction from the Invigilator.
- 6.3. In case of open-book practical examinations, a candidate shall not be permitted to borrow reference materials or implements from another candidate.
- 6.4. In case of Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) and Objective Structured Practical examinations (OSPE), the examiner shall instruct the candidate to immediately stop undertaking the task specified at the respective station after allocated time has elapsed and move to the next task.
- 6.5. Upon exiting the practical examination room, candidates **shall not communicate in whatever form** with other candidates waiting to be examined (No phones and any electronic device allowed in the practical holding venue)

## 7. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PROGRESSION

- 7.1 A candidate shall be required to pass BOTH the written and practical LEX to be considered for a license by HPCZ. The written and practical LEX shall be considered as separate examinations with equal weighting.
- 7.2 A candidate shall be permitted to attempt LEX four (4) times only. However, the fourth attempt shall be attempted three (3) years after the third attempt.

NOTE: HPCZ does not provide results or outcomes by telephone, e-mail, or fax to anyone. The scoring process is not expedited or accelerated for any individual or group.

## **8. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR APPEALS**

### **8.1. Appeals against Examination Outcomes**

8.1.1. Where a candidate is not satisfied with the verdict or outcome of the LEX, he/she may appeal in writing to the Registrar within ten (10) working days from the time of receiving the decision.

### **8.2. Appeals against Examination Malpractice Offences**

8.2.1. Where a candidate is being investigated for possible examination malpractice, his/her script shall be marked all the same but the result shall be withheld until investigation is completed and the case disposed of.

8.2.2. The Training and Examinations Committee of HPCZ shall hear and determine any case, appeal or complaint pertaining to Examination Malpractice and shall have the power to do any of the following in the case of a candidate being found guilty of an examination offence:-

- a) Disqualify the candidate from sitting any LEX for such period as may be prescribed.
- b) Nullify any results which the candidate may have been credited with in the particular LEX in respect of which an offence has occurred whether this was in the written examination or the practical examination, respectively.
- c) Recommend to the Registrar such disciplinary action as the nature of the offence may require (Appendix 1).

8.2.3. Any candidate penalized under these regulations above shall have the right to appeal in writing to the Registrar, not later than ten (10) working days after the receipt of the official notification of the penalty. The Registrar shall within 48 hours transmit such an appeal to the Training and Examinations Committee of HPCZ.

## **9. GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM**

9.1. A candidate shall work independently during the examination. A candidate shall not aid or attempt to aid another candidate.

- 9.2. Candidates shall not bring into the examination room any written, printed or other unauthorized materials.
- 9.3. Candidates shall not be allowed to take out of the LEX examination room, any materials provided by HPCZ, including but not limited to, answer booklets, study materials, rough notes/papers, textbooks, binders, LEX scan sheet, calculator, pencils, eraser and feedback form.
- 9.4. Medications shall not be allowed in the examination room. Candidates who may need to take medication during exams shall notify the Council at least seven (7) days before the scheduled examination.

## **10. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

### **10.1. Personal Belongings**

- 10.1.1. To ensure the security of the Examination room, outerwear (including coats, jackets and hoodies), hats, scarves and gloves, or any other personal items that may be deemed inappropriate shall not be permitted in the Examination room.
- 10.1.2. Before a candidate is allowed into the licensure examination room, an inspection of personal items shall be conducted by invigilators or authorized security personnel. Any unauthorized items or materials shall be confiscated.

### **10.2. Permissible Items**

- 10.2.1. Sweets (food for diabetics). It must be noted, however, that diabetic candidates are permitted to eat during the examination only if required for medical reasons.
- 10.2.2. Pencils, Pens and calculators were allowed

### **10.3 Prohibited Items**

- 10.3.1 Food and drinks
- 10.3.2 Mobile phones
- 10.3.3 Dictionaries
- 10.3.4 Any notes or texts, unless permitted in the rubric.
- 10.3.5 Pencil cases
- 10.3.6 Any kind of wrist watch

## **11 RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

### **11.3 Medical Condition before a Scheduled Licensure Examination**

**11.3.1** Where a candidate provides valid proof of incapacitation to sit for a scheduled LEX due to an ailment supported by a medical report/sick note authenticated by a registered medical practitioner, the candidate may apply for a deferred examination for that particular LEX, subject to approval by the Council.

### **11.4 Bereavement**

11.4.1 Where a candidate suffers a bereavement involving a member of their immediate family, the candidate may apply for a deferred examination for that particular LEX, subject to approval by the Council.

## **12 BREACH OF THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Candidates who are admitted to the Licensure Examination must abide by the Licensure Examination Rules and Regulations. Any breach of the Rules and Regulations herein may lead to any of the following:

12.3 Preparation of a written report on the conduct of the candidate and its provision to the HPCZ for investigation.

12.4 Initiation of legal proceedings by the **LEGAL UNIT** of HPCZ against the candidate for damages.

12.5 Pursuit by the HPCZ of any other legal remedies available to it.

## **13 CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY REQUIREMENTS BEYOND THE LICENSURE EXAMINATION**

13.3 By participating in the LEX, candidates, examiners and invigilators should ensure the following:

13.3.1 The LEX materials remain the exclusive property of the Health Professions Council of Zambia.

13.3.2 The confidentiality and integrity of the LEX is to be maintained at all times.



- 13.3.3 The LEX materials shall not to be reproduced through memorization or any other means, including but not limited to postings regarding the examination content or answers on the Internet.
- 13.3.4 Information related to the LEX content shall not be provided to any individual who may take the LEX.
- 13.3.5 LEX content shall not to be shared with any individual, organization or agency, unless by express permission from the Council.

**13.4 Disclosures by Personnel of Council:**

- 13.4.1 No person who is officially engaged as an examiner, supervisor or invigilator of the LEX shall in connection with an examination, knowingly or recklessly disclose to any unauthorized person the contents of such examination paper, draft examination paper or paper containing instructions.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Infringements of Examination Regulations and Prescribed Penalties

A Candidate who commits the following irregularities or mal-practices shall have penalties meted out against him/her as follows:

*Table 1: Offences, Actions, Penalties and Authority*

<b>Offence</b>	<b>Action by Chief Invigilator/Examiner</b>	<b>Penalty</b>	<b>Authority to issue Penalty</b>
Sitting contrary to seating plan, intentionally.	Assign candidate to correct seat	Strict verbal warning	Invigilator
Being in possession of prohibited item(s) before the commencement of the Examination	Confiscation of items	Strict verbal warning	Chief Invigilator
Refusing to comply with Invigilators/Authority's instructions to be searched	Invigilator requests assistance from another Invigilator. Candidate prevented from entering or removed from the examination.	Candidate removed from Examination Hall	Chief Invigilator
Receiving/giving assistance by exchange of Examination material and implements	Immediate expulsion of the candidate(s) from the examination hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Nullification of the candidates result in the LEX being examined	Training and Examinations Committee
Writing on the desk, clothing or any other part of the body before the start of or during the examination	Immediate expulsion of the candidate(s) from the examination hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Nullification of the candidates result in the LEX being examined	Training and Examinations Committee
Disorderly conduct likely to disturb other candidates in the examination.	Immediate expulsion of the candidate(s) from the examination hall. Chief Invigilator	Nullification of the candidates result in the LEX being examined and	Training and Examinations Committee

	completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	suspension from the subsequent LEX for one (1) year.	
Possession of prohibited item(s) during the Examination	Immediate expulsion of the candidate from the Examination Hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Nullification of the candidates result in the LEX being examined.	Training and Examinations Committee
Taking out of the LEX examination hall, any materials provided by HPCZ	Confiscation of materials. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Nullification of the candidates result in the LEX being examined.	Training and Examinations Committee
Commencing to write or designate any answers to questions prior to the announcement of the start of the examination	Transmits candidates Answer Booklet for marking but indicates the offence on Answer Booklet and completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Nullification of the candidate(s) results in the particular LEX being examined	Training and Examinations Committee
Continuing to write an answer or perform a task after the Invigilator has announced the expiry of time	Transmits candidates Answer Booklet for marking but indicates the offence on Answer Booklet and completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Reduction of candidate's marks by 20%	Training and Examinations Committee
Communicating with another candidate in the examination hall	Immediate expulsion of the candidate(s) from the examination hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Nullification of the candidate(s) results in the particular LEX being examined	Training and Examinations Committee
Communicating in whatever form with other candidates	Chief Invigilator completes an incident	Nullification of the candidate(s) results	Training and Examinations Committee

waiting to be examined	report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	in the particular LEX being examined	
Being found in possession of any written, printed or other unauthorized materials in the examination hall	Immediate expulsion of the candidate from the examination hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Nullification of the candidate(s) results in the particular LEX being examined	Training and Examinations Committee
Being found in possession of pre-written answers or materials for the LEX being examined	Immediate expulsion of the candidate(s) from examination hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Disqualification from the LEX	Training and Examinations Committee
Aiding or attempting to aid another candidate	Immediate expulsion of both candidates from examination hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Disqualification from the LEX	Training and Examinations Committee
Impersonating a candidate	Immediate expulsion of the candidate from examination hall. Chief Invigilator completes an incident report counter-signed by another Invigilator.	Disqualification from the LEX and debarred from applying for any LEX. Refer matter to Legal Unit of HPCZ.	Training and Examinations Committee
Other offences incidental to or of similar nature and Intensity			Training and Examinations Committee

Failure to comply with the above provisions will be considered as a breach of examination regulations and appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken.