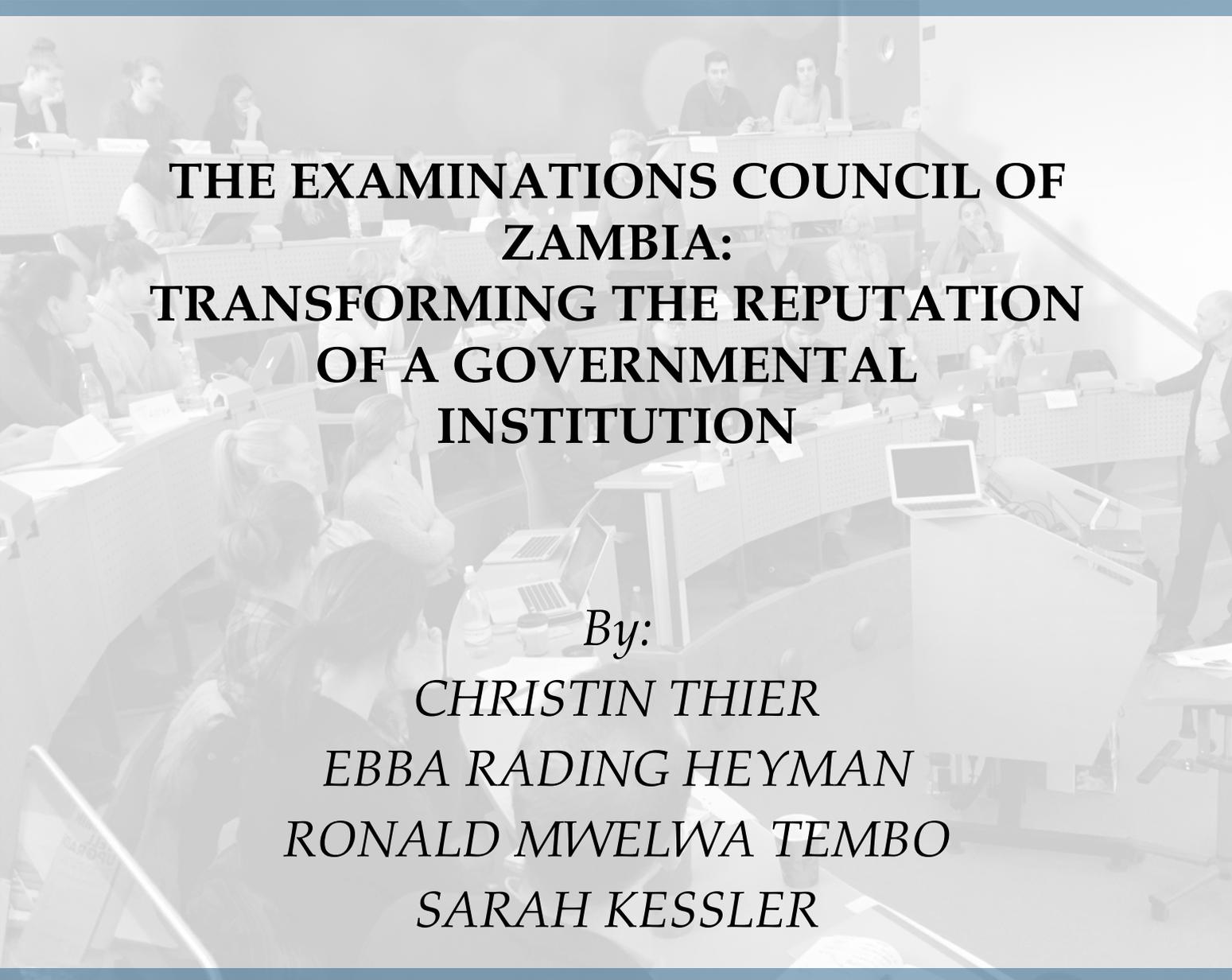


CORPORATE BRAND MANAGEMENT
AND REPUTATION

MASTER CASES



**THE EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF
ZAMBIA:
TRANSFORMING THE REPUTATION
OF A GOVERNMENTAL
INSTITUTION**

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Student Case Papers

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Corporate Brand Management and Reputation: Master's Cases

The "Corporate Brand Management and Reputation: Master's cases" is a case series for applying the case method of teaching and learning in higher education. The cases are relevant to brand strategists in private and public sector organizations, as well as academics and students at universities, business schools, and executive education.

The cases are written by groups of master's students as a course project. The specially developed case format is defined as: *"A management decision case describes a real business situation leading up to a question(s) that requires assessment, analysis, and a decision reached by discussion in class. The alternative approaches and recommendations from the class discussion are followed by a description of the choices made by the case company. This description is then discussed by the class."*

The student groups select the topics of their case providing updated and relevant insights into the corporate brand management. The cases can be used as "written cases" (handed out and read in advance, later to be discussed in class) and/or as "live case" (presented by the teacher following a discussion in class). Each case includes teaching notes, visuals with speaker's notes, learning objectives, board plans, and references.

The mission of the series is *"to develop cases for discussion providing insights into the theory and practice of corporate brand management and reputation, with the intent of bridging the gap between academic teaching and managerial practice."*

The series is a result of co-creation between students and teachers at the elective course Corporate Brand Management (BUSN35 – five-credit course/eight-week half-time studies), part of the master's program International Marketing and Brand Management at Lund School of Economics and Management, Sweden. The cases represent the result of the intellectual work of students under the supervision of the head of course.

Although based on real events and despite references to actual companies, the cases are solely intended to be a basis for class discussion, not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. The cases are free to be used and are to be cited following international conventions.

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**The Examinations Council of Zambia:
Transforming the reputation of a governmental
institution**

WRITTEN CASE

The authors prepared this case solely as a basis for class discussion and not as an endorsement, a source of primary data, or an illustration of effective or ineffective management. Although based on real events and despite occasional references to actual companies, this case is fictitious and any resemblance to actual persons or entities is coincidental.

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The Examinations Council of Zambia:

Transforming the reputation of a governmental institution

Martin Luther King, Jr once said, "Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle." The world today is undoubtedly contemporary with the business environment experiencing unceasing and policy fluctuations affecting operations of established public organisations - the Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ) is not an exception. If an organisation only does what has worked in the past, it will wake up one day and find that it has been passed by. Therefore, recognising the time for change is not only important for businesses, but also an essential ability required by governmental institutions such as the ECZ.

Introduction

Zambia is a country located in Southern Africa. Most of the 16 million inhabitants live in the area around Lusaka, Zambia's capital in the south-central part of the country. In 1964, Zambia declared its independence from Great Britain, which had colonised the country in the eighteenth century. Currently, more than half of the population live below the nationally recognised poverty line and there is a big wealth gap between rural and urban areas. Zambia's society can be described as collectivistic. People tend to form close long-term relationships with family and friends and loyalty is very important to them. Further, the Zambian society value traditions is very accepting of hierarchies and has a short-term approach to the future, indicating that in general people care more about instant gratification than long-term benefits. With 1.1% of the country's Gross Domestic Product, Zambia's government expenditure on education relative is among the lowest in the world (see **Exhibit 1**).

The Council was established in 1983. It is the governmental organisation responsible for the conduct of public school examinations and the awarding of educational certificates in Zambia. The ECZ has worked hard to build a reputation of high integrity and professionalism, which reflects on the Zambian education system not only nationally, but also internationally. The certificates are awarded to students who fulfil the requirements of passing the Zambian school examinations. With the certificates, students can reflect their learning achievements as well as validate their eligibility to attend university or college education.

The ECZ is increasingly struggling with different kinds of school examination malpractices, thus affecting the ECZ's credibility as an operating organisation conducting these examinations. The different malpractices include, but are not limited to, copying, illegal assistance, collusion, smuggling in of unauthorised materials, and impersonation. Furthermore, ECZ's certificates have been forged by people using them in the application processes. Over the course of the previous years, numbers of examination malpractice cases, as well as forged certificates, have risen, reaching its highest ever peak this year (2013). These issues have several effects on the ECZ's reputation. This case is about the ECZ's operational problems and their imminent loss of control regarding their institutional reputation, which is closely connected to the reputation of the whole educational system and the country as a whole.

Background and History of the ECZ

After declaring her independence from Great Britain in 1964, Zambia was able to establish its own public examinations and processes at all levels almost 20 years later: Through an Act of Parliament of the Republic of Zambia, the ECZ was established in 1983 to set and conduct school examinations and award certificates to successful candidates. Over the years, the Council has established a credible examination system and continues to deliver on its mandate of administering public examinations at primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Zambia. The ECZ has overtime grown both professionally and in capacity. Today, the Council consists of 136 highly dedicated employees with different professional qualifications and experience. The number of students taking the ECZ examinations have grown tenfold since 1987.

Structure and Responsibilities of the ECZ

The ECZ is an integral part of the Ministry of General Education in Zambia, which is an essential part of the Zambian government. The Ministry of General Education is part of the governmental Cabinet, which is headed by the country's president (see **Exhibit 2**). The ECZ consists of the Council, which holds the policy-making authority, the Committees, which is a board of independent members overlooking the Council's action and the Secretariat, which holds the implementation

power. The ECZ operates in five departments namely Administration, Finance, Information Technology, Research and Test Development and Examinations Administration (see **Exhibit 3**).

The responsibilities of the ECZ include the conducting of examinations, processing of results, awarding of certificates and diplomas, as well as relevant administrative and educational tasks (see **Exhibit 4**). The Zambian government is hierarchically structured and processes are undertaken in an extremely bureaucratic way. Elections take place every five years, with the next general elections approaching in 2016.

The Challenges

The growth of the country and number of examination centres have brought challenges for the ECZ in conducting public examinations. Despite international recognition and reputation of qualifications by the Council, examination malpractices have increasingly become a perennial problem, which is afflicting the educational system in Zambia. These malpractices include copying, assistance, collusion, smuggling in of unauthorised materials and impersonation. Worse still, another problem has occurred for the ECZ: people forge their certificates, resulting in numerous fake certificates being used for the application processes in university admissions, employment or political office. For instance, the Electoral Commission of Zambia's Chairperson, Esau Chulu, said that they have been presented with forged certificates by aspiring political candidates who were participating in the elections. Mr Chulu further said that this development is alarming and that they have contacted the police for further investigations. The Lusaka Police Commissioner, Nelson Phiri, stated that the law will deal firmly with these people presenting fake certificates, since forging a document is an offence. Zambia currently is one of the countries with the highest number of reported cases of examination malpractices in the Southern African region.

The ECZ has worked hard to build a good reputation. It has been rewarded with several national awards recognising their efforts to enhance the role, professionalism, image and visibility of Zambia's public service. Examination malpractices, together with the forging of certificates, are critically damaging the ECZ's reputation of the qualifications conferred by the Council. Since the ECZ as part of the Ministry of Education is a governmental institution, this is threatening to reflect negatively upon the entire educational system as well as the country's reputation. Up until now, the reputational problems of the ECZ and the Ministry of General Education remain within the country borders. The Zambian School certificates are recognised nationally as well as internationally and students retain all possibilities to study abroad. However, the developing issues are likely to spill over borders, causing the international reputation of Zambia's educational qualifications and possibly even African education to drastically decline.

Over and above this, the University of Cambridge Examinations Syndicate from the United Kingdom is steadily capturing a significant portion of the market share of

high school examinations taken in Zambia, because of its internet-enabled examinations, which are mostly free from irregularities. Due to the fact that most of the examination centres in Zambia are not connected to the internet yet, this makes it impossible for the ECZ to introduce online examinations in all the public schools. This is a major challenge which the ECZ is facing.

The Basic Teachers Union of Zambia (BETUZ) Secretary General, Christopher Simukonda, argues that students lack of engagement in their studies, makes them dependent on cheating to pass school examination. In contrast, many students feel forced to cheat on examinations or forge certifications, because they do not feel appropriately prepared. Further, their teachers are often overwhelmed by the curriculum and interpret it in their own way. Hence, educational standards are very different between schools. This becomes especially clear when comparing student's performance between public and private schools: the pass rate on the final examinations for students from private schools are close to 100%, whereas only 60% of students from public schools pass the final examinations. Most students realise the problem of varying standards and lacking education and therefore feel that it is necessary to obtain the certificates illegally to be able to attend higher education.

Students take their tests in local examination centres, which receive the examination documents per post and store them locally. Currently, each examination centre has the power to decide how the examinations are stored, handled and conducted. In many cases, there is a big time span between theoretical and practical examinations, leaving much time for students and teachers to steal and leak examination information. Since not every office has internet access, communication is difficult amongst stakeholders in case there is an irregularity detected in the process.

Although being publicly discussed and raising media interest, the government's willingness to act upon these issues remains low. The ECZ as a central institution within the Ministry of General Education has recognised the importance of change in order to ensure a prosperous future for Zambia and safeguard its educational reputation both nationally and internationally. If they fail to reverse this alarming trend (see **Exhibit 5**), Zambia's academic qualifications will run the risk of losing credibility, which will have huge damaging consequences for the country as a whole.

Taking the role of ECZ board members, how would you answer the following question...

What can the ECZ do in order to transform its corporate brand reputation?

Exhibit 1 Government expenditure on education, 2008 total (% of GDP)

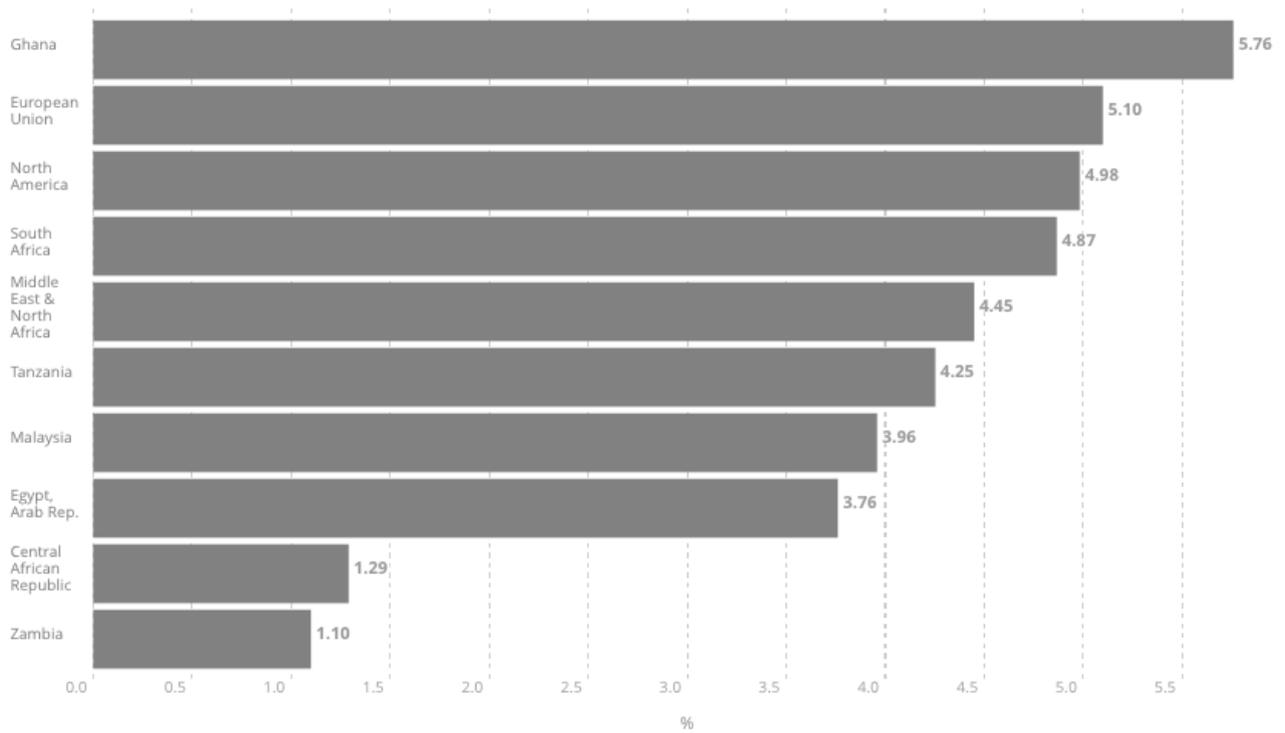


Exhibit 2 Integration of the ECZ within the government of Zambia

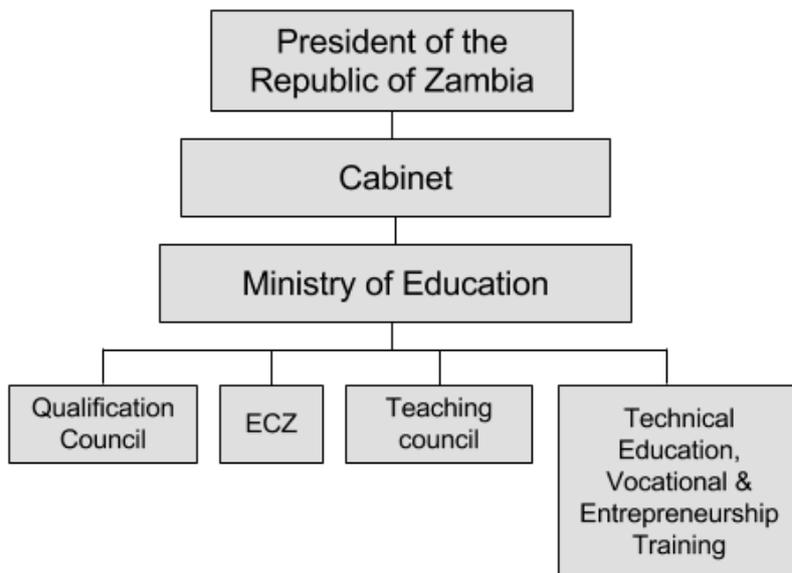
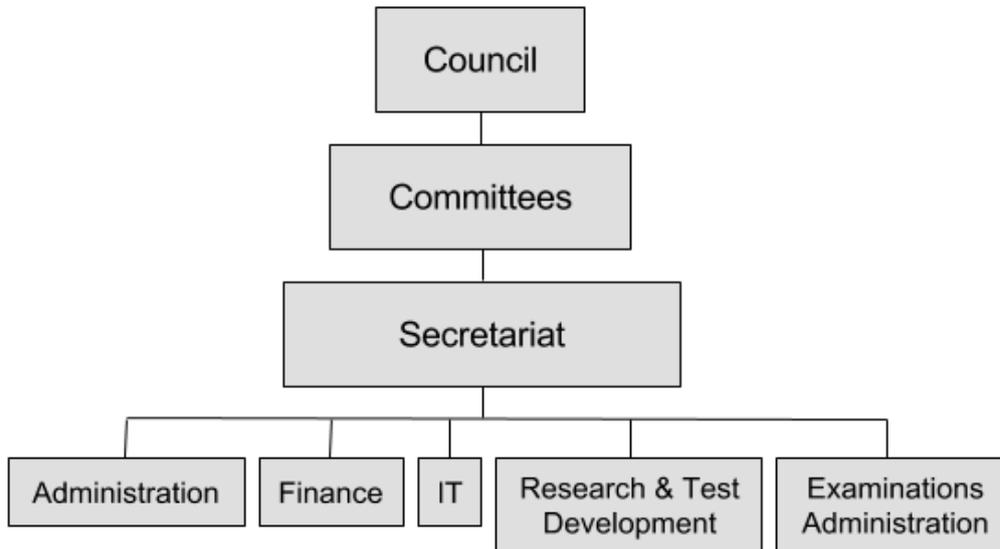


Exhibit 3 The Governance Structure of the ECZ



1.0. The Council

The Council (Board of Directors) is the supreme policy making body of the ECZ and consists of 15 members. The members of the Council are representatives from various education stakeholder groups and comprise professionals with different academic qualifications and work experience.

2.0. Committees of Council

The Council operates through a committee system to ensure that policy directives are implemented accordingly. There are 8 Council Committees and each with Council members as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson and maximum of 8 non-council members. The Committees are as follows:

Basic Education Committee

The Basic Education Committee is charged with the responsibility of presiding over the Grade 7 composite Examinations and the Junior Secondary School Leaving (JSSL) or Grade 9 Examinations. It presides over the approval of examination markers, conduct of examination, examination timetables, examination results and formulates regulations to govern examination centres among others.

School Certificate Committee

The School Certificate Committee presides over the Joint School Certificate and General Certificate of Education Examinations on behalf of the Council. The Committee approves examination centres, timetables, examination results and above all ensures effective conduct of examinations at this level.

Teacher Education Committee

The Committee presides over the conduct and administration of Primary Teacher's Diploma Course (PTDC) and Early Childhood Teacher's Diploma Course (ECPTDC) Examinations on behalf of Council in accordance with the ECZ Act.

Technical Education Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TEVET) Committee

The Committee is in-charge of the TEVET Examinations. With the change in government policy, the Committee presides over the implementation of the agreements for the transfer of TEVET programmes to the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA).

Security Committee

The Security Committee is mainly charged with the responsibility of developing and overseeing the implementation of Guidelines for the Administration and Management of public Examinations in Zambia. The Committee focuses on logistical issues in relation to examinations to ensure that the examination papers are secure and the examinations are conducted in line with the existing regulations.

Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee is responsible for considering appeals from candidates following nullification of their examination results owing to them engaging in examination malpractices. The Committee comprised 4 members from the ECZ Council.

Audit Committee

The Committee is responsible for ensuring that integrity and accountability exists in the utilisation of Council resources and conduct of Council business throughout its governance structure.

Finance and Administration Committee

The Finance and Administration Committee is responsible for the consideration of Management Accounts, Human Resource and staff matters on behalf of the Council.

3.0. Secretariat

The Secretariat is in charge of the daily administration of the ECZ. Management headed by the Chief Executive Officer, provides leadership in policy interpretation and implementation of all day to day activities of the ECZ. Management is divided into two main categories: Top Management and Senior Management. Top Management comprise the Director, Deputy Director and Council Secretary. On the other hand, Senior Management comprised Top Management, 5 Assistant Directors from the Research and Test Development, Examinations Administration, Information Technology, Administration as well as Finance and Accounts Departments. Through the departments, the Council implements its mandate to enable it to achieve its mission and vision.

Exhibit 4 Responsibilities of the ECZ

Responsibilities of the ECZ	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducting examinations ● Processing the results ● Awarding certificates and diplomas to candidates who pass examinations conducted by the council ● Carrying out relevant research in examinations ● Formulating syllabuses for examinations; promoting the international recognition of qualifications conferred by the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advising public institutions on the development and use of systems of testing or examining ● Approving/rejecting appointments of examiners ● Organising and arranging training courses of examiners, markers, supervisors, invigilators and other persons connected with examinations ● Inviting any person or body in or outside Zambia to assist the Council in the conduct of examinations

Exhibit 5 Trends in Examination Malpractices (2001 to 2013)

