

**MINISTRY OF HEALTH COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
GENDER ELDERLY AND CHILDREN**

HEALTH LABORATORY PRACTITIONERS COUNCIL



PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS GUIDELINES

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1 INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

In Tanzania, Medical Laboratory Training is provided by public and private institutions. The regulating bodies for these trainings are National Council of Technical Education (NACTE) for non-degree programs and Tanzania Commission of Universities (TCU) for degree courses. On the other hand, Health Laboratory Practitioner's Council (HLPC), is the legal authority to register (by Act 22 of 2007CAP.48) every medical laboratory practitioner who wishes to practice in Tanzania mainland. It is an offence for a medical laboratory practitioner to practice without being registered by the Council.

Although all Certificate and Diploma programmes follow a curriculum prepared by Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) and certified by NACTE, there is no regulatory mechanism to ensure whether the competences prescribed have been achieved by the graduate. On the other hand, laboratory training programmes under the Universities once registered by TCU, there is no mechanism to monitor and ensure that the candidate has the required competences as per the existing consumer's demand.

Currently, there are 4 universities that offer both Diploma and Bachelor degrees in Medical Laboratory courses. And five universities that offer certificate and diploma only without Bachelor. For certificate level, twelve (12) colleges that offer Certificate only and thirty 13 colleges offer Certificate and Diploma in Medical Laboratory Science. MUHAS, UDOM, Singida Medical training center and Tanga Collage Allied Health Sciences are public institutions. In private sector, there are a total of 30 training institutions at certificate and/or diploma without degree programs. It is anticipated that the number of private training centres will continue to increase with time. The factor behind the mushrooming of these institutions is population increase that also causes increase in demand for manpower for this rare profession as number of hospitals, health centres and dispensaries also increase. By June 2019, the total number of health facilities in the country was 7546.

Due to this mushrooming of training institutions and the compromise that has been observed in terms of teaching infrastructure and inadequate human resource, poor

performance of some candidates qualified in these institutions or from institutions outside the country; the Council has received a number of complaints from various stakeholders regarding poor performance of basic laboratory investigations by laboratory graduates. In some occasions, the Council has observed incompetent practitioners who have been registered but cannot satisfy the client's need.

The need to regulate the medical laboratory practitioner in this country is also underlined by the fact that there are several graduates from Medical Laboratory institutions outside the country who come back home to practice medical laboratory profession, as well as foreigner medical laboratory professionals who wish to work in Tanzania mainland and therefore need to be registered. The Council needs to be satisfied with the competences of such professionals before registering them.

This calls for a need to have an efficient and well organized regulation of practice through a defined mechanism that will be applicable to any laboratory professional that need to practice in Tanzania on permanent basis. This is in line with requirements in other countries where professionals are registered after passing a Council's professional examination.

In order to standardize the training of Medical Laboratory Practitioners and ensure that training platforms in the country conform to high standards and be comparable to their peers in the regions, HLPC introduces a medical laboratory profession qualifying pre – registration profession examination that will be conducted before receiving full registration. The purpose of these examination is to evaluate the knowledge and competence skills of Health laboratory practitioners in applying laws, Ethic and code of conducts to ensure that they will be able to provide good laboratory practices in all sections of laboratory services.

NB: According to the Regulation of July 2010, it is a requirement for a registration that the applicant has:

- a) Passed the prescribed examination, and
- b) Served under a prescribed training contract.

2 EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

Professional Examination for all graduates of Technician certificates, Ordinary Diploma and Bachelor degree in Medical Laboratory Sciences, shall be held at a time determined by the Council. The examination shall be conducted 12 months after attained provision registration license (PRP).

Candidates who failed examination on the first sitting shall be required by the Council to re-sit for examinations when next offered. Council shall not conduct special examinations outside the regular examination schedule. Council shall conduct supplementary examination if necessary.

3 ELIGIBILITY OF CANDIDATES FOR PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION:

Candidates with the following criteria will be eligible for Professional examination;

1. Successful completion of Medical Laboratory Sciences from an academic institution recognized by NACTE or TCU or any relevant regulatory bodies of their respective countries.
2. The Candidate must submit a certificate and academic transcript as evidence of successful completion of the Medical Laboratory Sciences Training profession from the respective recognized training institution.
3. The candidate must have the Council's provisional registration Practitioner (PRP) that spans for at 12 months before sitting for professional examination.
4. The Registrar may bar any candidate from being registered for examination where the Registrar or the Council is not satisfied that the candidate has completed satisfactorily the recognized program or has ethical or professional issues that need to be addressed.

4 APPLICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION

1. There shall be special application forms to be filled by candidates who wish to sit for Profession Examinations. The form shall be downloaded through the HLPC web site (www.hlpc.go.tz) MOHCDGEC website and other relevant websites such as MeLSAT, APHTA, , etc. (see appendix)
2. The dully filled application form must be returned attached with certified academic certificates and transcript that should reach the HLPC office 3 weeks before date of examination. The council shall not accept any applications beyond the deadline dates.
3. The online application shall be done through the HLPC website (www.hlpc.go.tz) by following the instruction displayed in the website.
4. Candidate shall be registered and given examination number for professional examination only after successfully paid the non-refundable examination fee.
5. The Registrar shall notify the successful candidate on the dates and venue of professional examination 2 weeks before. The notification shall be through the HLPC website and other relevant websites.
6. All candidates, if accepted, shall conform entirely to professional All eligible candidates, shall read, understand and conform entirely to professional examination guidelines.
7. Candidate under disciplinary action by the employer, government or the Council or due to examination irregularity shall not be registered for professional examination until there is evidence that the case has been resolved.
8. Only candidate presenting with valid identification cards e.g NIDA , Divers License or passport bearing names appearing on the certified academic certificate shall be allowed to sit for the professional examination. Any candidate who postpones to sit for professional examination, shall notify the Registrar for postponement two weeks before the professional examination set date. All

candidates who will be accepted for the postponement shall be allowed to sit for the professional examination when next offered.

9. Any candidate who will not notify the registrar for the postponement of the professional examination, shall process a new application.

5 PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION FEE:

1. Tanzanian candidates shall be required to pay a non-refundable professional examination fee of TZS (150,000 Tshs) for Technician Certificate and Ordinary Diploma holder and 200,000Tshs for Bachelor Degree holders.
2. For non-Tanzanian candidates the professional examination fee shall be equivalent to 250 USD for every category of laboratory practitioner. The non-refundable fee shall be paid through Government Electronic Payment Gateway GePG by requesting control Number from the Registrar.

6 ISSUING OF CANDIDATE EXAMINATION NUMBERS

1. The Registrar shall issue examination number to candidates before sitting for professional examination. The Registrar shall also provide information about the regulation of examinations and the site/centres of professional examination to each registered candidate. The examination number shall be issued once, and if the candidate fails, he/she shall be required to use the examination number issued during the first sitting.
2. These fees will be revised from time to time, as the need arises. Information on the fees applicable for any given year will be obtained at HLPC website and other relevant websites

7 EXAMINATION FORMAT

The professional examination format shall be written and practical examination. The written examination shall comprise of four sections that are; multiple choice questions, true and false questions, matching items questions and short answer question. The practical examination shall comprise of two parts: part one shall comprise of 10 spot questions and part two shall comprise of three hands on questions.

8 CONTENTS OF PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS

Contents of professional examination shall comprise of the following:

1. General knowledge and skills on laboratory diagnostic practises. (e.g Malaria, HIV and TB testing including Quality Control)
2. Public health laboratory services (e.g. outbreak response, triple packaging and sample transportation, surveillance, biosafety and biosecurity)
3. Laboratory Quality Management (Laboratory Policy, Strategic Plan, work plan, assessment/auditing, bio-risk management, information management, inventory management, Equipment maintenance, Data analysis, Report writing)
4. Professional code of conduct and ethics
5. Quality Management Systems (e.g Quality Assurance, Quality Control, External Quality Assurances, Accreditation)
6. Relevant Forensic Pathology (e.g Mortuary safety, autopsy specimen collection and transportation, Dead body handling and preservation)
7. Haematology and Blood transfusion
8. Parasitology and Entomology
9. Microbiology and Immunology

10. Clinical Chemistry

11. Histopathology

12. Non communicable Diseases

9 EXAMINATION VENUE/CENTER

The Registrar shall decide the centres for professional examination and inform the candidate accordingly. For practical reasons, it is recommended that the centres shall be allocated in five zonal areas namely Eastern zone (MUHAS), Northern Zone (KCMC/Bombo), Lake Zone (BMC), Southern Zone (Mbeya), and Central Zone Dodoma (UDOM). Each candidate shall indicate 2 preference sites for the Registrar to consider for his/her professional examination centre. The final allocation for each candidate shall be decided by the Council.

10 APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS, MODERATORS AND INVIGILATORS

The Registrar shall appoint examiners, moderators and invigilators for professional examination:..

1. Minimum qualification for examiners: – Examiners should have a Medical Laboratory Technology knowledge at least one stage above of the examinee (e.g. A Diploma holder can examine a Certificate candidate and Bachelor degree can examine both Diploma and Certificate).
2. Selection of examiners – Examiners shall be selected by the Registrar, basing on the academic qualification and working experience as a Medical Laboratory practitioner.
3. Invigilators appointed shall have clear understanding of rules and regulations pertaining professional examination invigilation.

4. The Registrar shall notify by writing all examiners, moderators and invigilators two weeks before professional examination set date.

11 RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPILER AND INVIGILATORS

11.1 COMPILER:

1. To compile professional examination papers following the recommended format.
2. Compile two sets of professional examination, one set to be conducted and another set to be reserved
3. To prepare professional examination according to number of candidates per respective examination center.
4. Shall make sure the professional examination papers and practical materials are well packed and secured to observe security and safety.
5. Shall make sure the professional examination and practical material arrive at the examination center 2 days before the examination set date.

11.2 INVIGILATORS:

1. Shall inspect candidates for any unauthorized materials in the examination room.
2. Shall supervise professional examinations conducted at the examination centre.
3. Shall mark the answer scripts, score and submit the summary of professional examination results to the Registrar.
4. Shall submit the professional examination papers, answer scripts and Examination Control Sheet to the Registrar immediately after completion of examinations.
5. Shall furnish the Registrar with a written report on the supervision and conduction of the professional examinations.

12 SELECTION OF CHIEF EXAMINER OF PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS:

1. The Registrar shall appoint the chief examiner for the professional examinations basing on the recommended academic qualifications and experience.
Honorarium for examiners – The member who will examine shall be paid subsistence allowance according to the government regulations.
2. Honorarium for supporting staff – They shall be paid subsistence allowance or allowance according to the government regulations. The number of supporting staff shall be on a ratio of one to ten candidates depending on the number of candidates registered for professional examination at the respective examination center.

13 INSTRUCTION TO INVIGILATORS/EXAMINERS

13.1 Before the Examination:

1. Invigilators shall report to the examination venue at least thirty five minutes before the start of the examination paper.
2. Invigilators shall be provided with the following items by the Chief Examiner appointed by the Registrar:
 - a) Sealed envelopes containing question papers that must be personally collected by Chief examiner at least thirty minutes before start of the examination.
 - b) Invigilators shall ensure that ONLY ONE answer book is provided for each candidate unless the instructions on the question paper requires otherwise. The answer book must be filled before any additional answer book is provided.
 - c) Question papers and any other material prescribed in the instructions (e.g. log-tables, charts etc.) should be set out by the invigilators with the help of the

Chief Examiner shall ensure that bags, books, mobile phones, attach cases, papers and other related items are left outside the examination venue.

- d) Invigilators shall admit candidates to the examination venue twenty minutes before the start of the examination and they should ensure that they take the right places.
- e) Shall make announcements of any relevant information or instruction regarding to the examination process.
- f) Invigilators shall not admit any candidate to the examination venue after 30 minutes of examination start..

13.2 During the Examination

1. During the examination, invigilators shall ensure that candidates are provided with any additional requirements (e.g. scripts, blotting-paper, log-tables etc.). Candidates may be permitted to do rough work on the left hand pages of the script on the understanding that this is crossed out after the end of the examination. No candidate should be permitted to leave his/her place during the examination except to leave the examination venue.
2. Any candidate who violates the regulations and instructions governing the professional examinations, especially by unfair practices such a copying from or communicating with other candidates shall be reported immediately to the Chief Examiner who will inform the Registrar immediately.
3. Once a candidate is found with unauthorized materials in the examination venue, the invigilator shall ask the candidate to sign on the examination irregularity form (**FORM No HLPC_05**) to confirm that they are his/hers. However, the candidate shall be allowed to continue with examination.
4. . A written report attached with fully detailed irregularity form shall be sent to the Registrar who will submit to the Education and training Committee for discussion. The Committee will submit the recommendation to the Council for final decision.

5. The invigilators shall not leave the examination venue but adhere to the invigilation requirements instead.

13.3 At the End of the Examination

1. Invigilators shall not permit candidates to leave their places before their scripts have been collected. Candidates who wish to leave the examination venue before the end of the examination time shall hand over their scripts to the invigilator before leaving the examination venue.
2. No candidate shall leave the examination venue during the last 30 minutes of the time allocated for the examination except in case of emergency. *At the end of the examination period invigilators shall instruct the candidates to stop writing and then collect all the answer scripts.*
3. Invigilators shall enter the number of examination scripts collected from the candidate on the attendance/script control sheet provided by the Examination Officer at the time of collecting the examination papers.
4. All answer scripts and signed attendance sheets shall be handled over to the Chief Examiner at the end of examination sessions.
5. The Chief Examiner shall submit to the Registrar all marked and un-marked answer scripts, written summary report of the examination session (on FORM No:) and all extra examination paper.

NOTE:

Cases of illness shall be reported to the Chief Examiner as soon as possible.

Any candidate who deliberately do not appear for the professional examination after being verified without compelling reason(s) shall be considered to have failed the said examination.

14 INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. The candidate shall have to appear for verification at the examination centre one day before commencement of examination.
2. Candidates shall make sure that they have been issued with Examination Number for the examination before start of examination.
3. Candidates shall acquaint themselves with the seating arrangement for their respective examinations in advance.
4. Candidates shall be advised to be at the examination venue at least thirty minutes before the commencement of the examinations.
5. Candidates shall only be admitted by the invigilator to the examination venue 30 minutes before the examination start.
6. Candidates are not allowed to enter in the examination venue with unauthorized material (Mobile phones, computers, word processing electronics devices and anything of that nature).

15 CONDUCT OF EXAMINATION

1. The professional examinations shall be conducted separately within two days and each paper shall carry 100% marks.
2. Professional examination shall be conducted under the control of the Registrar or such other officer of the Council as the Registrar may appoint.
3. The examiners for professional examinations shall be appointed by the Education Committee and be approved by the Council.
4. The Registrar shall appoint a Chief Examiner at each examination Centre who will be the custodian of all examination papers before, during and after examinations are completed.

5. The Registrar shall have powers to issue such instructions, notes or guidelines to candidates, invigilators and examiners of professional examinations as he/she shall deem appropriate for the proper, efficient and effective conduct of such examinations.

16 EXAMINATION IRREGULARITIES

The Council may impose such a lesser penalty on a candidate found guilty of commission of an examination irregularity, depending on the gravity of the facts or circumstances constituting the offence, as the Council may deem appropriate.

17 PUBLICATION OF EXAMINATION RESULTS

1. The Registrar shall submit the professional examination results to the training and education committee for discussion and submit to the Council for approval.
2. The professional examination results shall be published by the Registrar within one week after approval. The publication of professional examination results shall be done through HLPC websites and other relevant public and private websites

18 AWARDS:

1. The percentages of the total marks awarded for written and practical examinations in any subject or course shall be determined by the Council on the recommendations of the Education and Training committee of the council.
2. **Awards** –The candidate shall be declared as PASS be eligible for Full Registration Practitioner by the HLPC after scoring above the pass mark of 70% in practical examination and 60% in theory examination paper. Failure to attain the required pass mark, the candidates shall be declared as FAIL and shall have to re-sit the failed examination paper when next similar examination offered.

19 APPEALS FOR PROFESIONAL EXAMINATION RESULTS

1. Any candidate who is not satisfied with professional examination results will have to appeal to the Registrar within two weeks after publication of the professional examination results.
2. Candidates appealing for the professional examination results shall write a letter to the Registrar and pay a non-refundable fee of **TSH 20,000/=** and present an electronic receipt of the said payments.
3. The Registrar Shall submit the appeal to the Education and Training Committee.
4. The candidate shall receive feedback of the appeal from the Registrar after the Council's decision on the presented appeal agenda by the Education and Training Committee.
5. The council shall not attend to any candidates' appeal that has no evidence of the non-refundable payments.

20 DISPOSAL OF EXAMINATION ANSWER BOOKS AND OTHER SCRIPTS

Unless otherwise retained by the Council for archival purposes, all used examination answer books/transcripts shall be destroyed after the expiry of 12 months following final decision of the Council on the examination concerned.


Mary Faustin Mtui
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