

**MINISTRY**

**PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Department of Public Works l Central Government Offices l 256 Madiba Street l Pretoria l Contact: +27 (0)12 406 1627 l Fax: +27 (0)12 323 7573

Private Bag X9155 l CAPE TOWN, 8001 l RSA 4th Floor Parliament Building l 120 Plain Street l CAPE TOWN l Tel: +27 21 402 2219 Fax: +27 21 462 4592

 [www.publicworks.gov.za](http://www.publicworks.gov.za)

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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1993 [NO.** **NW2228E]**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.: 19 of 2021**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 27 AUGUST 2021**

**DATE OF REPLY: 13 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**1993. Ms S J Graham (DA) asked the Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure:**

(1) Whether, with reference to the SA Council for the Project and Construction Management Professions registration for Health and Safety Officers, Managers and Agents exams and interviews, persons who have failed the exam (a) are entitled to (i) view their exam paper in order to determine where they went wrong and (ii) an explanation as to where they failed and (b) have to pay the full exam and/or interview fee again to rewrite the exam; if not, what is the position in each case; if so, what are the relevant details in each case;

(2) what (a) are the costs to the council for each exam sitting and (b) is the breakdown of the specified costs;

(3) whether the council will be providing on-line examinations in the future; if not, why not; if so, on what date? **NW2228E**

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**REPLY:**

**The Minister of Public Works and Infrastructure**

The information that I have received from the SACPCMP in response to the question is as follows:

1. (a) (i) Candidates who want to view their examination script are at liberty to apply to

view their scripts.

(ii) Candidates will know which questions they got right or wrong when they view their script and that should assist them to go back to the drawing board to fix their mistakes.

(b) Candidates who failed examination or interview are required to pay the full fee to rewrite.

 (2) (a) The cost of examinations includes hiring venues, marking, moderating, storage and logistics of managing the entire examination process by the appointed service provider. This should be understood in the context of the Council being a self-funding entity. For business sustainability, the administrative cost of all of the Council’s processes must be recovered.

(b) The breakdown of the costs will reflect in the annual report for the 2020/21 financial year, which will be submitted to Parliament together with audited financial statements.

(3) The Council has determined that examinations should be delivered online and urgently, spurred on by the constant disruptions to examinations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions. However, security considerations necessitated the Council to investigate options to ensure that examination and interview security are not compromised. The Council has had a breach of its examination administration in the past, which was plagued with security vulnerabilities and corruption, where examination papers were leaked and also on social media platforms, in some cases, sold online. It is important that the Council, when it transfers its examination administration to an online system, ensures that it is secure and make breaches of the past impossible to repeat.

The Council had to ensure that it explores all the avenues required to enhance examination security including preventing the leaking of examination questions, which is paramount, given the high stakes nature of the examinations. The following aspects are being considered and finalised:

• Development of an online examination platform;

• Protecting the examination process through virtual proctoring software;

• Creating accessibility to the online examinations;

• The new logistical hurdles occasioned by the transition to a different delivery mode; and,

• The financial impact of moving examinations online – to ensure that there is no exorbitant increase in cost that must be transferred to applicants.

The timeline for the launch of online examinations has been determined as follows:

• The development of the online examination platform will be finalised and tested within four (4) weeks.

• Supply Chain Management (SCM) processes for procuring of a virtual proctoring service provider will commence after the budget review in October 2021.

• Once a virtual proctoring service provider is appointed, it will require approximately four (4) to six (6) weeks to set up the proctoring environment and integrate with the Council’s examination platform.

• The Council is most likely to be able to launch its online examinations in November 2021.

• Management will require approximately six (6) months to develop a plan for creating accessibility to its online examinations, through amongst others, partnering with service providers or institutions who have suitable computer facilities, disturbance free environments and secure Internet.