

NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARD FOR CUSTOMS AGENT



**NOS.CA.01
FIRST EDITION**

APPROVING AUTHORITY

This National Occupational Standard (NOS) has been prepared and published under the authority of the Zambia Qualifications Authority Board on 16th May, 2024.

ZAMBIA QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

The Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) Act No. 13 of 2011 was enacted by the Government of the Republic of Zambia to ***“provide for the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework; establish the Zambia Qualifications Authority; provide for the registration and accreditation of qualifications; provide measures to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable; and provide for matters connected with, or incidental to the foregoing”***. Among other functions, ZAQA is responsible for ***determining national standards for any occupation***, through the various sector specific National Occupational Standards Development Teams (NOSDTs).

REVISION OF NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS

National Occupational Standards (NOS) shall be revised every 5 years, or whenever it is deemed necessary, by the issuance of either amendments or revised editions. It is important that users of the NOS ascertain that they are in possession of the latest amendments or editions.

NOS DEVELOPMENT TEAM RESPONSIBLE

This National Occupational Standard was prepared by the Transport NOSDT, upon which the following organisations were represented:

1. Compass Logistics Zambia (CLZ)
2. Driving Schools Association of Zambia (DSAZ)
3. National Airports Corporation Limited (NACL)
4. Road Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA)
5. University of Africa (UoA)
6. Zambia Air Services Training Institute (ZASTI)
7. Zambia Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport (ZCILT)
8. Bus and Taxis Owners Association of Zambia (BTOAZ)
9. Zambia School of Driving (ZSD)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Zambia Qualifications Authority would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of the following stakeholders that participated in the development of this NOS:

1. Col. Mr. Ernest Nyama (University of Africa)
2. Dr. Evans Mwamba (Road Transport and Safety Agency)
3. Ms. Hope Nkatya Kasese Kumalo (Driving Schools Association of Zambia)
4. Ms. Mambwe Mwewa (Zambia School of Driving)
5. Mr. Masiye Phiri (Zambia Air Services Training Institute)
6. Mr. Moses Mutelemba (National Airports Corporation Limited)
7. Mr. Peter Phiri (Zambia Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport /Bus and Taxis Owners Association of Zambia)
8. Mr. Rodgers Nkandu (Zambia Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport)
9. Mrs. Mutinta Siamatete Katambo (Compass Logistics Zambia)
10. Ms. Abigail Mumbi (Zambia Chartered Institute for Logistics and Transport)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	iv
JUSTIFICATION	iv
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	v
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	vi
1. OVERVIEW.....	1
2. SCOPE.....	2
3. PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES (VALUES, ETHICS AND ATTITUDES).....	2
4. UNITS AND ELEMENTS	2
5. EQUIPMENT, TOOLS, AND CONSUMABLE MATERIALS.....	18
6. DILEMMAS/CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES FOR A JOBHOLDER.....	18
6.1 Alternative Choices (Solutions) to Dilemmas and Complexities	18
7. WORKING CONDITIONS/ENVIRONMENT	18
8. PARTIES INVOLVED/INTERACTING WITH THE JOBHOLDER OR TRAINEE	19
8.1 Internal – Within the Organisation.....	19
8.2 External – Outside the Organisation.....	19
9. PHYSICAL DEMANDS ON THE BODY	19
ANNEX A	20
Criteria for Assessments based on this NOS.....	20
ANNEX B	21
NOS Version Control.....	21

FOREWORD

The Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Education established by ZAQA Act No. 13 of 2011 to ***“provide for the development and implementation of a national qualifications framework; provide measures to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable; and provide for matters connected with, or incidental to the foregoing”***.

Among other functions, ZAQA is responsible for ***“determining national standards for any occupation”***, through the various sector specific National Occupational Standards Development Teams (NOSDTs) with experts composed of representation from the appropriate authorities, government departments, consumer associations, regulators, industry, academia, and non-governmental organisations, etc.

This National Occupational Standard (NOS) has been developed by the Transport National Occupational Standards Development Team in accordance with the laid down procedures and guidelines of ZAQA. All users should ensure that they have the latest edition of this publication as the NOS are revised from time to time.

This NOS shall be used by, among others, industry, employers, quality assurance bodies, awarding and professional bodies, and education and training institutions, as a benchmark to identify training needs, develop job profiles/descriptions, develop curricula, and learning programmes in various sectors where the occupation exists. In the Transport sector, demonstration of competence against this NOS may be required in order to run a business or practice a craft or profession.

JUSTIFICATION

A Customs Agent is critical in the promotion of international trade by ensuring that regulatory compliance, facilitating the efficient and cost-effective movement of goods, managing risks, and contributing to national development and the growth and prosperity of businesses engaged in global commerce. Their expertise and services are essential for smooth operations of the international supply chains.

A Customs Agent's role is to oversee compliance of import and export activities with regards to customs regulations, to expedite the customs clearance processes, and to provide expertise in documentation, cost savings, and risk management to facilitate efficient and compliant international trade.

This NOS highlights the core knowledge, skills, competences, and personal attributes that Customs Agents must possess to be successful in their jobs.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Customs Agent
CS	Core Skills
HS Codes	Harmonised System Codes
INCO	International Commercial Terms
K	Knowledge and Understanding
NOS	National Occupational Standard
NOSDT	National Occupational Standards Development Team
OK	Organisational Knowledge
PC	Performance Criteria
PS	Professional Skills
RK	Regulatory Knowledge
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TK	Technical Knowledge
ZAQA	Zambia Qualifications Authority
ZQF	Zambia Qualifications Framework

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For the purposes of this NOS, the following terms and definitions shall apply:

Core Skills/Generic Skills: are a group of skills that are key to learning and working in today's world. These skills are typically needed in any work environment. In the context of the NOS, these include communication related skills that are applicable to most job roles.

Disability: is the physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Function: is an activity necessary for achieving the key purpose of the sector, occupation or area of work, which can be carried out by a person or a group of persons. Functions are identified through functional analysis and form the basis of the NOS.

Job Title: defines a unique set of functions that together form a unique employment opportunity in an organisation.

Knowledge and Understanding: are statements, which together specify the technical, generic, professional, and organisational specific knowledge that an individual needs in order to perform to the required standard.

National Occupational Standards (NOS): are statements of the standards of performance individuals must achieve when carrying out functions in the workplace, together with specifications of the underpinning knowledge and understanding. They are precise descriptions of what an individual is expected to be able to do in his/her work role.

National Occupational Standards (NOS) Code: is a unique reference code that identifies a NOS.

National Occupational Standards Development Team (NOSDT): means an established group of national stakeholders/experts responsible for the development of National Occupational Standards within a specific economic sector or occupation.

Occupation: is a set of job roles, which perform similar/related set of functions in an industry.

Organisational Context: includes the way the organisation is structured and how it operates, including the extent of operative knowledge that managers have in their relevant areas of responsibility.

Performance Criteria: are statements that together specify the standard of performance required when carrying out a task.

Scope: is the set of statements specifying the range of variables that an individual may have to deal with in carrying out the function which have a critical impact on the quality of performance required.

Sector: is a conglomeration of different business operations having similar businesses and interests. It may also be defined as a distinct subset of the economy, whose components share similar characteristics and interests.

Sub Sector: is derived from a further breakdown based on the characteristics and interests of its components.

Technical Knowledge: is the specific knowledge needed to accomplish specific designated responsibilities.

Unit Title: gives a clear overall statement about what the incumbent should be able to do.

Elements: set out competences the incumbent should possess to carry out the day-to-day activities.

1. OVERVIEW

This is an introductory section providing a summary and specific information or commentary about the content of the NOS, the targeted sector and occupation to help the user judge whether it is relevant to them.

NOS Code	NOS.CA.01
Occupation	Customs Agency
Job Title	Customs Agent
Job Description	A Customs Agent is responsible for ensuring compliance with customs laws and regulations for goods entering or leaving the country.
Job Purpose	The role of a Customs Agent involves facilitation of the movement of goods across Zambia's borders, while enforcing customs laws to prevent illegal activities, such as smuggling, tax evasion, and trafficking of prohibited items.
ZQF Level	6
Sector	Transport and Logistics
Sub sectors	Warehousing, Land Transportation, Courier and Mail Services, Air Cargo Operations, Logistics and Freight Forwarding.
Other Economic Sector(s) in which the Occupation is Practiced	Agriculture, Mining, Tourism, Manufacturing, Energy, Health, Education.
Other Similar Jobs that can be Performed in the Occupation	Customs Broker, Customs Controller, Logistician, Freight Forwarder, etc.
Minimum Educational Job Entry Qualification(s)	Diploma in Customs Clearing and Forwarding, Transport and Logistics, or related qualification.
Practising License Requirements (if any)	N/A
Training/RPL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness of the industry standards, and rules and regulations and their application. 2. Use of ICTs (internet, computer packages, email, computer Software and hardware necessary for the job, etc.) 3. Quality enhancement methods.
Minimum Job Entry Age	21 years
Prior Experience (Suggested)	N/A
Performance Criteria	As described in the Units under Section 4.

2. SCOPE

This NOS specifies the fundamental knowledge and understanding, skills and competences, and personal attributes that Customs Agents must possess to be successful in their jobs.

3. PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES (VALUES, ETHICS AND ATTITUDES)

The job requires an individual to:

- Uphold high ethical standards, and act with honesty and transparency, which are essential for building trust with clients and customs authorities.
- Possess keen eye for detail to ensure accurate and compliant documents.
- Fundamentally provide excellent customer service, be responsive to client needs, and keep clients informed of key policy issues.
- Provide clear and professional communication with clients, customs authorities, and other stakeholders.
- Adapt to changing regulations and effective problem-solving skills, which are key in navigating the complex customs clearance processes efficiently.
- Have deep respect for customs regulations and trade laws; compliance with these regulations is essential for maintaining good standing with customs authorities and clients.
- Be sensitive in international trade because Customs Agents deal with clients from various cultural backgrounds, and must respect the cultural differences that foster positive relationships.

4. UNITS AND ELEMENTS

This National Occupational Standard is divided into 5 Units, representing the tasks that a jobholder should undertake in his/her day-to-day work. Each unit is further broken down into elements depicting the number of activities to be carried out for the successful execution of a particular task.

UNIT 1 [This Unit covers the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent for the collection of information for customs clearances]

Unit No.	01
Unit Title	Collecting Information for Customs Clearances
Description	This Unit describes skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent in collecting, analysing, and interpreting information collected from customers for the purposes of customs clearances.
Scope	This Unit covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect customer and consignment information. • Evaluate and analyse information for data capturing. • Coordinate with customers for other requirements.
Performance Criteria (PC) with respect to the Scope	
Element	Performance Criteria (PC)
Collect Customer and Consignment Information	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC1. Determine specific information and documentation needed for the customs clearance processes of cargo, considering the nature of the cargo, consignments, and relevant customs regulations.</p> <p>PC2. Interact with shippers, buyers, forwarding agents, and other relevant parties to request for and gather the necessary documents, such as invoices, bills of lading, packing lists, permits, and certificates.</p> <p>PC3. Ensure all collected documents are complete, including the required and necessary sections, signatures, and supporting information.</p> <p>PC4. Gather all required documents within the specified timeframes to prevent delays in the customs clearance processes.</p>
Evaluate and Analyse Information for Data Capturing	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC5. Check the collected documents accurately that they reflect the details of the imported cargo and adhere to customs requirements.</p> <p>PC6. Organise the collected documents and maintain accurate records for reference and ease of retrieval.</p> <p>PC7. Confirm the collected documents align with the legal and regulatory standards, including trade agreements and customs laws.</p>
Coordinate with Customers for Other Requirements	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC8. Conduct thorough reviews of the assembled documents to identify discrepancies or missing information.</p> <p>PC9. Collaborate effectively with relevant stakeholders to address any issues or discrepancies, ensuring timely resolution of document-related concerns.</p> <p>PC10. Provide feedback and updates to shippers, buyers, and other stakeholders regarding the status of document collection and other additional requirements.</p>

	PC11. Safeguard confidentiality and security of collected documents and sensitive information in compliance with data protection regulations.
Knowledge and Understanding (K)	
A. Organisational Context (knowledge of the company/ organisation and its processes)	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>OK1. Customs regulations and procedures specific to Zambia, which includes knowledge of import/export restrictions, tariffs, and customs forms.</p> <p>OK2. Requirements for different types of imported, exported or transit cargo, including invoices, bills of lading, packing lists, certificates of origin, and any other additional documentation stipulated by customs authorities.</p> <p>OK3. Types of cargo being imported/exported/transited, including its nature, value, and other specific requirements related to its handling and clearance.</p> <p>OK4. Organisational procedures for collecting, organising, and maintaining documents, including record keeping and data management.</p>
B. Technical Knowledge	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>TK1. Usage of computers for electronic documentation of information.</p> <p>TK2. Usage of company software to manage and update documentation/reports.</p> <p>TK3. International Commercial Terms (INCO Terms) and terminologies used in import, export, and transit of cargo.</p>
C. Regulatory Context (knowledge of rules and regulations)	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>RK1. Road Traffic Act.</p> <p>RK2. Customs and Excise Act.</p> <p>RK3. Public Roads Act.</p> <p>RK4. Data Protection Act.</p> <p>RK5. National Road Fund Act.</p> <p>RK6. Other relevant regulations and trade agreements.</p>
Skills (S)	
A. Core Skills/ Generic Skills	<p>Writing Skills</p> <p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS1. Understand and use legal and technical terminology correctly when preparing documents and reports related to customs regulations and trade agreements.</p> <p>CS2. Communicate effectively via email and other forms of correspondence.</p> <p>CS3. Complete various forms accurately.</p>

	Reading Skills
	The individual on the job must be able to: CS4. Read English CS5. Interpret documents provided for the required customs clearances.
	Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking skills)
	The individual on the job must be able to: CS6. Listen attentively and interpret communication/ instructions from the customer, supervisor, and other co-workers. CS7. Convey information clearly and concisely to all stakeholders.
B. Professional Skills	Decision-Making
	The individual on the job must be able to: PS1. Assess the urgency of the shipments and determine whether immediate action is necessary, considering potential delays in the customs clearance processes.
	Plan and Organise
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS2. Plan work and organise required resources in coordination with all relevant stakeholders.
	Customer Centricity
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS3. Contact the importers/exporters to request for missing or clarifying information, ensuring a customer-friendly and collaborative communication style.
	Problem Solving
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS4. Resolve any issues identified during the information collection processes, deciding on the appropriate courses of action to ensure smooth customs clearance.
	Analytical Thinking
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS5. Evaluate critically information received from various stakeholders, ensuring clarity and understanding while identifying potential discrepancies or areas requiring further clarification.
Critical Thinking	
The individual on the job should be able to: PS6. Analyse the submitted information to identify gaps or discrepancies that may hinder the customs clearance processes.	

UNIT 2 [This Unit covers the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent for Tariff classifications and duty calculations]

Unit No.	02
Unit Title	Classifying Tariffs and Calculating Applicable Duties
Description	This Unit describes the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent to accurately classify goods according to the Harmonised System (HS) codes, and calculating duties, taxes, and other fees based on the declared value and classification of the goods.
Scope	This Unit covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classifying tariffs accurately. • Calculating duties and taxes. • Demonstrating transparency and proper documentation. • Examining regulatory alignment.
Performance Criteria (PC) with respect to the Scope	
Element	Performance Criteria (PC)
Classifying Tariffs Accurately	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC1. Classify goods accurately using the Harmonised System (HS) codes, considering their nature, characteristics, and intended use.</p> <p>PC2. Ensure the chosen HS codes are precise and reflect the true nature of the goods.</p>
Calculating Duties and Taxes	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC3. Calculate duties, taxes, and other fees using computerised customs management systems based on the declared values and the established HS codes, ensuring adherence to customs regulations.</p> <p>PC4. Ensure transparent and precise duty and tax calculations, accounting for applicable duty rates and tax formulas.</p>
Demonstrating Transparency and Proper Documentation	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC5. Provide clear explanations to importers and exporters regarding the derivation of duties and taxes.</p> <p>PC6. Verify details of tariff classifications and duty calculations are accurately documented in the customs declarations.</p>
Examining Regulatory Alignment	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC7. Demonstrate knowledge of changes in customs regulations, trade agreements, and product specifications that may affect tariff classifications and duty calculations.</p> <p>PC8. Demonstrate awareness of the impact of regulatory changes on classifications and calculations.</p>

Knowledge and Understanding (K)	
A. Organisational Context (knowledge of the company/ organisation and its processes)	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>OK1. Customs regulations, including tariff classification requirements.</p> <p>OK2. HS codes and their role in tariff classifications.</p> <p>OK3. Duty and tax calculation methods.</p> <p>OK4. Customs laws and regulations related to tariff classifications and duty calculations.</p> <p>OK5. Significance of precise and transparent duty and tax calculations.</p>
B. Technical Knowledge	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>TK1. Tariff classifications and duty calculations.</p> <p>TK2. Customs regulations affecting tariff classifications and duty calculations.</p> <p>TK3. Duty and tax calculations.</p> <p>TK4. Sources for staying updated on customs laws and international trade practices.</p>
C. Regulatory Context (knowledge of rules and regulations)	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>RK1. Road Traffic Act.</p> <p>RK2. Customs and Excise Act.</p> <p>RK3. Public Roads Act.</p> <p>RK4. Data Protection Act.</p> <p>RK5. National Road Fund Act.</p> <p>RK6. Other relevant regulations and trade agreements.</p>
Skills (S)	
A. Core Skills/ Generic Skills	Writing Skills
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS1. Write in English (at least at a working level).</p> <p>CS2. Prepare and provide clear and simplified tax computations and details to stakeholders/co-workers.</p>
	Reading Skills
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS3. Read English.</p> <p>CS4. Interpret documents provided for the required customs clearances.</p>
	Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking skills)
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS5. Listen attentively and interpret communication/ instructions from the customer, supervisor, and other co-workers.</p> <p>CS6. Convey information clearly and concisely to all stakeholders.</p>

B. Professional Skills	Decision-Making
	The individual on the job must be able to: PS1. Make decisions on whether to proceed with the clearance, request additional information, or initiate further scrutiny based on the gathered insights.
	Plan and Organise
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS2. Plan work and organise required resources in coordination with all relevant stakeholders.
	Customer Centricity
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS3. Have intent to satisfying requirements.
	Problem Solving
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS4. Address conflicts and discrepancies effectively.
	Analytical Thinking
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS5. Review all available information related to the shipments, including documentation to gain comprehensive understanding of the cargo.
Critical Thinking	
The individual on the job should be able to: PS6. Conduct risk assessments to identify potential issues or discrepancies that may arise during the clearance processes.	

UNIT 3 [This Unit covers the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent regarding managing customs clearances and coordination]

Unit No.	03
Unit Title	Managing Customs Clearances and Coordination
Description	This Unit describes the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent for the essential responsibilities related to managing customs clearance processes for goods entering or leaving the country, and effectively coordinating with various stakeholders involved in the clearance processes.
Scope	<p>This Unit covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing paperwork and formalities essential for customs clearances. • Ensuring accurate and timely management of customs clearance documentation. • Ensuring accuracy and completeness of import/export/transit documents. • Effectively managing and discussing with multiple stakeholders, including importers, exporters, shipping companies, government agencies, and customs officials, to ensure smooth operations.
Performance Criteria (PC) with respect to the Scope	
Element	Performance Criteria (PC)
Managing Paperwork and Formalities Essential for Customs Clearances	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC1. Handle and organise all necessary customs clearance paperwork, ensuring all required documents are collected and prepared for submission.</p> <p>PC2. Prioritise the paperwork to ensure the most critical documents are processed efficiently.</p> <p>PC3. Maintain an organised and easily accessible system for storing and retrieving customs clearance documents.</p>
Ensuring Accurate and Timely Management of Customs Clearance Documentation	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC4. Submit customs clearance documents within the specified timeframes, preventing any unnecessary delays.</p> <p>PC5. Confirm all submitted documents are complete, accurate, and in compliance with the customs regulations.</p> <p>PC6. Implement systems for tracking and monitoring submission deadlines to ensure timely compliance.</p>
Ensuring Accuracy and Completeness of Import/Export/Transit Documents	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC7. Review all import/export documents with meticulous attention to detail, checking for accuracy and completeness.</p> <p>PC8. Identify discrepancies or missing information in the documents and take appropriate steps to rectify them.</p> <p>PC9. Ensure all import/export documents are in full compliance with customs regulations and contain accurate information.</p>

<p>Effectively Managing and Discussing with Multiple Stakeholders</p>	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC10. Establish clear and effective lines of communication with importers, exporters, shipping companies, government agencies, and customs officials.</p> <p>PC11. Coordinate all parties involved in the customs clearance processes to ensure smooth and efficient operations.</p> <p>PC12. Resolve any and all issues or disputes that may arise during the customs clearance processes through effective communication and coordination.</p>
<p>Knowledge and Understanding (K)</p>	
<p>A. Organisational Context (knowledge of the company/ organisation and its processes)</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>OK1. Customs laws and regulations, including customs clearance requirements.</p> <p>OK2. Customs documentation and import/export/transit forms.</p> <p>OK3. Importance of effective communication and coordination in customs operations.</p>
<p>B. Technical Knowledge</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>TK1. Customs clearance procedures.</p> <p>TK2. Customs documentation requirements and processes.</p> <p>TK3. Identifying and resolving discrepancies in import/export/transit documents.</p> <p>TK4. Communication and coordination.</p> <p>TK5. Resolving issues related to customs clearances and regulatory compliance through effective communication.</p>
<p>C. Regulatory Context (knowledge of rules and regulations)</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>RK1. Road Traffic Act.</p> <p>RK2. Customs and Excise Act.</p> <p>RK3. Public Roads Act.</p> <p>RK4. Data Protection Act.</p> <p>RK5. National Road Fund Act.</p> <p>RK6. Other relevant regulations and trade agreements.</p>
<p>Skills (S)</p>	
<p>A. Core Skills/ Generic Skills</p>	<p>Writing Skills</p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS1. Understand and use legal and technical terminology correctly when preparing documents and reports related to customs regulations and trade agreements.</p> <p>CS2. Communicate effectively via email and other forms of correspondence.</p> <p>CS3. Complete various forms accurately.</p>
	<p>Reading Skills</p>
<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS4. Read English.</p>	

	CS5. Interpret documents provided for the required customs clearances.
	Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking skills)
	The individual on the job must be able to:
	CS6. Listen attentively and interpret communication/ instructions from customs authorities.
	CS7. Convey information clearly and concisely to all stakeholders.
B. Professional Skills	Decision-Making
	The individual on the job must be able to:
	PS1. Resolve all issues identified during the clearance processes, deciding on the appropriate course of action to ensure smooth customs clearance.
	Plan and Organise
	The individual on the job should be able to:
	PS2. Plan work and organise required resources in coordination with all relevant stakeholders.
	Customer Centricity
	The individual on the job should be able to:
	PS3. Manage relationships with customers with the intent of satisfying their expectations of smooth customs clearance processes.
	Problem Solving
	The individual on the job should be able to:
	PS4. Resolve any conflicts with customs authorities.
	Analytical Thinking
	The individual on the job should be able to:
PS5. Analyse and convey necessary information to the stakeholders and carry out remedial action.	
Critical Thinking	
The individual on the job should be able to:	
PS6. Analyse the relevant steps to take in ensuring accurate clearance procedures and compliance.	

UNIT 4 [This Unit covers the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent in conducting risk assessments and compliance]

Unit No.	04
Unit Title	Conducting Risk Assessments and Compliance
Description	This Unit describes the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent in their pivotal role in safeguarding the integrity of the customs processes, preventing illicit activities, and promoting adherence to international trade standards.
Scope	<p>This Unit covers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess risks to identify potential smuggling activities or customs violations. • Employ various tools and methods to inspect cargo and detect concealed or prohibited items. • Ensure goods comply with import/export restrictions, licensing requirements, embargoes, and trade agreements. • Guarantee compliance assurance. • Employ awareness of changes in customs regulations and international trade practices.
Performance Criteria (PC) with respect to the Scope	
Element	Performance Criteria (PC)
Assess Risks to Identify Potential Smuggling Activities or Customs Violations	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC1. Perform comprehensive risk assessments on incoming and outgoing cargo to identify potential indicators of smuggling activities or customs violations.</p> <p>PC2. Evaluate the risk factors associated with cargo, considering factors such as their origin, destination, and nature of goods.</p> <p>PC3. Implement risk assessment procedures that enable the identification of high-risk cargo for further scrutiny.</p>
Employ Various Tools and Methods to Inspect Cargo and Detect Concealed or Prohibited Items	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC4. Utilise specialised tools, such as X-ray machines, scanners, sniffer dogs, and other inspection methods to thoroughly examine cargo.</p> <p>PC5. Assess cargo inspection results to detect concealed or prohibited items effectively.</p> <p>PC6. Ensure inspection methods are consistently applied and result in the accurate detection of concealed or prohibited items.</p>
Apply Knowledge to Verify Goods Comply with Import/Export Restrictions, Licensing Requirements, Embargoes, and Trade Agreements	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC7. Validate all imported and exported goods adhere to import/export restrictions, licensing requirements, embargoes, and applicable trade agreements.</p> <p>PC8. Identify non-compliance issues and take necessary actions to rectify them in accordance with customs regulations.</p> <p>PC9. Implement measures to guarantee that goods are compliant with all relevant regulations and agreements.</p>

<p>Guarantee Compliance Assurance</p>	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC10. Uphold compliance with customs laws, regulations, and international trade agreements by regularly auditing and assessing compliance measures.</p> <p>PC11. Identify and address compliance issues and violations promptly and effectively.</p> <p>PC12. Monitor and ensure customs clearances and trade activities are consistently conducted in compliance with all relevant legal requirements.</p>
<p>Employ Awareness of Changes in Customs Regulations and International Trade Practices</p>	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC13. Monitor and track updates and changes in customs regulations, trade agreements, and international trade practices.</p> <p>PC14. Assess the impact of regulatory changes on customs operations and risk assessment processes.</p> <p>PC15. Proactively adapt to new regulations and practices by implementing necessary adjustments and keeping stakeholders informed.</p>
<p>Knowledge and Understanding (K)</p>	
<p>A. Organisational Context (knowledge of the company/organisation and its processes)</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>OK1. Customs laws, regulations, and risk assessment techniques.</p> <p>OK2. Import/export restrictions, licensing requirements, embargoes, and trade agreements.</p> <p>OK3. Importance of risk assessments and compliance in customs operations.</p> <p>OK4. Knowledge of the significance of staying informed about customs regulations and international trade practices.</p>
<p>B. Technical Knowledge</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>TK1. Proficiency in conducting risk assessments.</p> <p>TK2. Knowledge of risk assessment tools and inspection methods.</p> <p>TK3. Ensure trade compliance with applicable laws and agreements.</p> <p>TK4. Familiarity with tools and methods used for inspections.</p> <p>TK5. Knowledge of sources for keeping updated on customs laws and international trade practices.</p>
<p>C. Regulatory Context (knowledge of rules and regulations)</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>RK1. Road Traffic Act.</p> <p>RK2. Customs and Excise Act.</p> <p>RK3. Public Roads Act.</p> <p>RK4. Data Protection Act.</p> <p>RK5. National Road Fund Act.</p> <p>RK6. Other relevant regulations and trade agreements.</p>

Skills (S)	
A. Core Skills/ Generic Skills	Writing Skills
	The individual on the job must be able to: CS1. Write in English (at least at a working level). CS2. Prepare and provide clear and simplified instructions and details to stakeholders and co-workers.
	Reading Skills
	The individual on the job must be able to: CS3. Read English. CS4. Interpret documents provided for potential discrepancies.
	Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking skills)
	The individual on the job must be able to: CS5. Listen attentively and interpret communication/ instructions from the customers, supervisor, and other co-workers. CS6. Convey information clearly and concisely to all stakeholders.
B. Professional Skills	Decision-Making
	The individual on the job must be able to: PS1. Weigh the urgency of the situation against the risks involved, making swift decisions that balance trade facilitation with regulatory compliance.
	Plan and Organise
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS2. Plan work and organise required resources in coordination with all relevant stakeholders.
	Customer Centricity
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS3. Propose solutions that meet regulatory requirements while expediting the clearance processes for customer shipments.
	Problem Solving
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS4. Resolve any conflicts that may arise.
	Analytical Thinking
	The individual on the job should be able to: PS5. Evaluate potential risks associated with shipments, considering factors, such as their origin, historical data, and compliance with regulations.
Critical Thinking	
The individual on the job should be able to: PS6. Analyse discrepancies, considering potential risks, and deciding whether further inspection or clarification is necessary to ensure compliance.	

UNIT 5 [This Unit covers the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent in record keeping and continuous learning]

Unit No.	05
Unit Title	Record Keeping and Continuous Learning
Description	This Unit describes the skills and knowledge required by a Customs Agent that encompass maintaining accurate records of all transactions, including customs declarations, shipping documents, and correspondence; staying updated on changes in customs laws, regulations, and international trade practices.
Scope	This Unit covers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining records. • Managing documentation. • Applying regulatory awareness. • Guaranteeing compliance assurance.
Performance Criteria (PC) with respect to the Scope	
Element	Performance Criteria (PC)
Maintaining Records	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC1. Record and catalogue all customs transactions accurately, ensuring records are complete and organised for easy retrieval.</p> <p>PC2. Conduct audits and assess the completeness and accuracy of the transaction records, and addressing all discrepancies or missing information.</p> <p>PC3. Demonstrate the ability to systematically maintain and update records of all customs transactions, including customs declarations, shipping documents, and correspondence.</p>
Managing Documentation	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC4. Collect, organise, and store customs declarations, shipping documents, and correspondence in a manner that contributes to efficient customs operations.</p> <p>PC5. Verify completeness and accuracy of documentation, addressing all issues promptly.</p> <p>PC6. Demonstrate proficiency in managing and maintaining records of customs documents, ensuring compliance with legal requirements.</p>
Applying Regulatory Awareness	To be competent, the individual must be able to: <p>PC7. Monitor and track updates and changes in customs laws, regulations, and international trade practices.</p> <p>PC8. Assess the impact of regulatory changes on customs operations and documentation requirements.</p> <p>PC9. Adapt to new regulations and industry practices, demonstrating commitment to staying informed and compliant.</p>

<p>Guaranteeing Compliance Assurance</p>	<p>To be competent, the individual must be able to:</p> <p>PC10. Uphold compliance with record keeping requirements, ensuring all records are maintained in accordance with customs regulations and legal standards.</p> <p>PC11. Identify and address non-compliance issues or discrepancies in documentation.</p> <p>PC12. Monitor and ensure all records are consistently maintained in full compliance with relevant legal requirements and industry standards.</p>
<p>Knowledge and Understanding (K)</p>	
<p>A. Organisational Context (knowledge of the company/ organisation and its processes)</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>OK1. The importance of meticulous record keeping.</p> <p>OK2. Knowledge of the significance of staying updated on customs laws and international trade practices.</p>
<p>B. Technical Knowledge</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>TK1. Proficiency in record keeping.</p> <p>TK2. Usage of company software to manage and update documentation/reports.</p> <p>TK3. Knowledge of sources for staying updated on customs laws and international trade practices.</p>
<p>C. Regulatory Context (knowledge of rules and regulations)</p>	<p>The individual on the job must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>RK1. Road Traffic Act.</p> <p>RK2. Customs and Excise Act.</p> <p>RK3. Public Roads Act.</p> <p>RK4. Data Protection Act.</p> <p>RK5. National Road Fund Act.</p> <p>RK6. Other relevant regulations and trade agreements.</p>
<p>Skills (S)</p>	
<p>A. Core Skills/ Generic Skills</p>	<p>Writing Skills</p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS1. Write in English (at least at a working level).</p> <p>CS2. Prepare and provide clear and simplified instructions and details to stakeholders and co-workers.</p>
	<p>Reading Skills</p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS3. Read English.</p> <p>CS4. Interpret documents for continuous learning.</p>
	<p>Oral Communication (Listening and Speaking skills)</p>
<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p> <p>CS5. Listen attentively and interpret communication/ instructions from the customers, supervisor, and other co-workers.</p>	

	<p>CS6. Convey information clearly and concisely to all stakeholders.</p>
<p>B. Professional Skills</p>	<p>Decision-Making</p>
	<p>The individual on the job must be able to:</p>
	<p>PS1. Ensure decisions align with ethical and regulatory standards.</p>
	<p>Plan and Organise</p>
	<p>The individual on the job should be able to:</p>
	<p>PS2. Plan work and organise required resources in coordination with all relevant stakeholders.</p>
	<p>Customer Centricity</p>
	<p>The individual on the job should be able to:</p>
	<p>PS3. Manage relationships by prioritising the needs and satisfaction of importers, exporters, and other stakeholders.</p>
	<p>Problem Solving</p>
<p>The individual on the job should be able to:</p>	
<p>PS4. Resolve any conflicts within the stakeholders.</p>	
<p>Analytical Thinking</p>	
<p>The individual on the job should be able to:</p>	
<p>PS5. Analyse and convey to the supervisor and carry out remedial actions.</p>	
<p>Critical Thinking</p>	
<p>The individual on the job should be able to:</p>	
<p>PS6. Ability to concentrate on tasks at hand and complete them without errors.</p>	

5. EQUIPMENT, TOOLS, AND CONSUMABLE MATERIALS

These include, but not limited to:

Equipment and Tools:

Computers and peripherals, communication devices, safety gear, storage and filing systems, office supplies, vehicle and transportation, cargo inspection equipment, etc.

Raw Materials and Consumables:

Customs declaration forms, document authentication tools, office consumables, cleaning supplies for equipment maintenance, safety equipment consumables, etc.

6. DILEMMAS/CHALLENGES AND COMPLEXITIES FOR A JOBHOLDER

Customs Agents face challenges related to complex and evolving customs regulations, risk assessments, cargo inspections, and conflict resolution. Balancing trade facilitation with security concerns, adapting to changing technologies, and staying up-to-date with multi-lateral trade agreements are ongoing complexities. Ethical dilemmas, ethical standards, and the need for continuous learning add to the challenges Customs Agents encounter in their roles.

6.1 Alternative Choices (Solutions) to Dilemmas and Complexities

Alternative solutions for Customs Agents include, embracing advanced technologies, providing comprehensive training, fostering collaboration with stakeholders, implementing ethical guidelines, and monitoring global economic trends. These measures can help Customs Agents navigate dilemmas and complexities more effectively in their roles, etc.

7. WORKING CONDITIONS/ENVIRONMENT

Customs Agents typically work in various environments, including offices, customs warehouses, seaports, airports, and border crossings. They may work indoors, outdoors or in field settings. The working conditions can vary from routine office work to physically demanding cargo inspections, often subjected to changing weather conditions. Customs Agents may also be required to work irregular hours, including nights and weekends, to meet operational demands and ensure the smooth flow of trade.

8. PARTIES INVOLVED/INTERACTING WITH THE JOBHOLDER OR TRAINEE

8.1 Internal – Within the Organisation

Customs Agents interact with various internal stakeholders within their organisations, including; customs clearance teams, management, and support staff. They collaborate closely with their colleagues to ensure efficient customs operations, exchange information about cargo, and resolve compliance-related issues. They may also work with legal and administrative departments to address regulatory concerns and internal audits. Effective communication and teamwork among internal parties are crucial for the smooth functioning of customs operations.

8.2 External – Outside the Organisation

Externally, Customs Agents engage with a wide variety of stakeholders. These include; importers and exporters, shipping companies, government agencies (such as customs authorities and border control), and customs officials in other countries. Customs Agents facilitate trade by coordinating with importers and exporters to ensure compliance with regulations and proper documentation. They liaise with shipping companies to verify cargo details and monitor shipments. Additionally, Customs Agents collaborate with government agencies to meet security and regulatory requirements, and they work closely with customs officials in other countries to coordinate the movement of goods across borders. Strong external partnerships and effective communication are vital for successful customs operations.

9. PHYSICAL DEMANDS ON THE BODY

- Prolonged periods of standing or walking during cargo inspections.
- Lifting and handling of heavy packages and cargo.
- Use of manual tools and equipment for cargo examination.
- Exposure to varying weather conditions, including; heat, cold, rain, and wind.
- Frequent bending, reaching, and stretching while inspecting cargo.
- Extended periods of sitting while working at a desk or computer.
- Physical fitness and stamina required for thorough cargo inspections.
- Frequent use of personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, helmets, and safety vests during inspections.
- Potential exposure to hazardous materials, necessitating safety precautions.

ANNEX A

Criteria for Assessments based on this NOS

A.1 Guidelines for Assessment

A.1.1 Criteria for assessment for curricula and learning programmes based on this NOS will be created by curricula and programme developers, and each Performance Criteria (PC) will be assigned marks proportional to its importance in the NOS. Curricula and programme developers will also lay down proportion of marks for theory and practical skills for each performance criteria, giving more weight to practical skills.

There shall be allocated 'Total Marks', which will be the sum of all marks in each Unit, distributed across the number of PCs in that particular Unit. The 'Out of mark will be the mark allocated to each PC, which will be shared between theory and skills practical assessments.

A.1.2 Individual awarding/assessment bodies, or institutions and other users of the NOS, will create unique question papers for the theory part and evaluations for the skill practical part for their respective candidates.

ANNEX B NOS Version Control

This Annex gives details necessary for the tracking of the NOS versions based on the number of revisions.

NOS Code	NOS.CA.01		
ZQF Level	6	Version Number	01
Sector	Transport	Date of Approval	May 2024
Sub Sector	Freight and Forwarding	Date of Last Review	N/A
Occupation	Customs Agency	Date of Next Review	May 2029

*“You learn,
We Standardise”*

ZAMBIA QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Finsbury Park, Ground Floor, Kabwe Roundabout
P.O Box 51103, Lusaka, Zambia

+260 211 843 050 // +260 963 922 730
+260 956 037 185 // +260 972 559 301

info@zaqa.gov.zm
www.zaqa.gov.zm

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/zambia-qualifications-authority/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ZAQA2016/>

