

EDUCATION | Ministry working with engineers' body to ensure those affected by closure of universities graduate, says Kaimenyi

Engineering students to repeat courses

Tough times for learners as regulator moves to ensure quality training

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Engineering students in public universities will have to repeat some subjects the industry regulator is dissatisfied with before they can graduate.

This is among the "mitigation measures" the Engineering Board of Kenya (EBK) and the universities are discussing to ensure the gaps in training as identified by the regulator are addressed.

The board had declined to approve some courses due to what it termed as universities' lack of capacity to train, there by putting careers of thousands of engineering students, some of them awaiting graduation, in jeopardy.

This effectively means that the students will take longer to complete their degrees programmes, which in turn translates to additional costs. An engineering degree course takes up to five years.

Yesterday, both Education Cabinet Secretary Jacob Kaimenyi and EBK registrar Nicholas Mulinge said talks were on to determine how the quality of training of the engineers will be improved.

"We've looked at the areas that need improvement and the universities have given a timeline when they can meet the demands," Mr Mulinge said.

"Students will have to resit certain units before we can accredit those degree programmes to ensure they are fully prepared for the industry."

He emphasised: "Public safety must be prioritised in training and the re-evaluation is not to hurt the students. It is not our intention to keep the students in the universities longer than they expected but it is important that we remain firm to ensure our graduates are properly trained."

Several universities, among them Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Technical University of Mombasa, Dedan Kimathi, Kenyatta and Masinde Muliro had all been closed following students protest after EBK declined to



BACKGROUND

Genesis of training crisis in universities

The Engineering Board of Kenya refused to accredit some courses in public universities citing the institutions' lack of capacity to train. However, after talks with the Education ministry and universities' officials, the board has agreed to accredit the courses but the students must redo certain units the regulator is unhappy with before they graduate. The accreditation of engineering courses controversy led to student unrest and closure of some universities.

approve some engineering courses.

Prof Kaimenyi (left) said his ministry was working with the engineers' board to ensure students affected by the closures graduate once the matter is resolved.

He said Higher Education Principal Secretary Colleta Suda was chairing a technical committee of public universities vice-chancellors to find more ways on how the issues raised will be addressed.

The Engineers Act (2011) mandates EBK to approve and accredit all programmes offered by public and private universities

University of Nairobi engineering students outside their lecture halls after refusing to take their end of semester exams on April 14 citing lack of preparedness.

JEFF ANGOTE | NATION

and other tertiary level institutions.

Only four public universities — Nairobi, Moi, JKUAT and Egerton — have been cleared to offer some courses in engineering.

At the UoN, only five courses, Civil, Agricultural, Mechanical, Electrical and Electronics and Electrical engineering, will be offered. Moi will offer 13 of engineering courses, among them Electrical and Communication, Civil and Structural, Textile, Chemical and Process and Production Engineering.

KU will offer five courses namely Civil, Electrical and Electronics, Energy, Mechanical and Manufacturing and Computing and Information Technology.

At JKUAT Marine Engineering and Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering are yet to be accredited although the principal of the College of Engineering

and Technology, Prof Bernard Ikua, said they had hired senior lecturers from the Netherlands, Korea and China to meet the quality demands.

Currently, the university offers Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Electronics, Mechatronics, Agriculture and Bio Systems Engineering.

Egerton will offer only one course— Agricultural Engineering. The principal at the College of Architecture and Engineering at the university, Prof Bernard Njoroge, said universities should stay ahead of the demands of the board by ensuring training was beyond reproach.

"Engineering courses have a huge implication on the lives of citizens, hence, the need to treat these courses with such seriousness," Prof Njoroge said. "There's a need for regulation and all institutions must be accredited," he added.



INVITATION TO TENDER FOR PROVISION OF INSURANCE SERVICES

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QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

Apart from the minimum registration proof, only firms meeting the criteria below as a minimum, which should be demonstrated by producing relevant evidence at the time of submission, will be considered.

- Valid Tax Compliance Certificate from KRA;
- Bid bond in form of an insurance or bank guarantee from a reputable and recognized financial institution of 2% of the quoted tender sum;
- Evidence of professional risks indemnity insurance (min 50 million for Brokers and 200 million for Underwriters).

Bidding documents with detailed specifications may be collected from the procurement office at the address below upon payment of non-refundable fee of KSh.2,000/= in form of a bankers cheque payable to Population Services Kenya. The bids, bearing the name of the tender and number, but without indication of Tenderer's name should be addressed to:

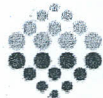
The Supply Chain Director
Population Services, Kenya
Jumua Place, Lenana Road
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Or be deposited in the Tender Box situated at Jumua Place on or before 24th November 2014 at 5pm.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Kurwitu Ventures Limited (Kurwitu) is pleased to announce that the Board of Directors of the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) has approved the listing of its 102,272 ordinary issued shares on the official list of the NSE under the Growth Enterprise Market Segment (GEMS). The listing and commencement of trading in Kurwitu shares at the NSE will be on 13 November 2014



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VCs deny offering sub-standard degrees

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CORRESPONDENT

Two vice-chancellors have defended their institutions against claims that some of the courses they offer are fake.

Masinde Muliro's Prof Fred Otieno, and his Maseno counterpart, Prof Dominic Makawiti, said the universities had made progress in the accreditation of the disputed courses and that they did not deliberately offer a raw deal to students as alleged.

At Masinde Muliro, an engineering programme has been suspended by the Engineering Regulatory Board (ERB) while Maseno's Pharmaceutical Science students demanded that the university registers the course with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board.

Prof Otieno told the *Nation* by phone Masinde Muliro was making substantive progress in registering the course. He accused the ERB of using a botched registration process that is harsh to the growth of institutions.

"The engineering council should know that there is something called developmental approach in which, schools should be given time, to steadily grow their ability as they monitor them."

He called on the board to give schools provisional accreditation for a certain period and a deadline to achieve all the given requirements to offer a programme.

Borrow the trick

"The government should find a way of streamlining the accreditation council to the international accord. I have been an adviser with the Engineering Council in South Africa and they are doing much better than we are in Kenya. We should borrow the trick," Prof Otieno said.

Prof Makawiti denied that they had failed to register the Pharmaceutical Sciences, saying the course is a basic science subject that does not require accreditation like Pharmaceutical technology which had to be recognised by the PPP.