

Education council to regulate university admissions

By Martin Kitubi

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is to regulate the number of students enrolled per course.

This will affect both private and government universities as well as technical and vocational institutions which are licensed and accredited by NCHE.

The move is aimed at encouraging practicals at universities.

This was revealed by Saul Waigolo, the NCHE spokesperson, yesterday during the opening of the Ninth East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Forum, at Imperial Golf View Hotel in Entebbe municipality.

The forum will run for three days

Under the new arrangement, all universities applying for renewal or new licences will be required to give details of available facilities and the number of students expected for each course.

University/higher learning institutions are required to renew their licences every five years.

Waigolo said NCHE has realised that many university graduates do not have hands-on experience due to inadequate equipment.

"Universities are admitting for the sake of making money not skilling. We believe that the new cap will address the

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challenge," he said.

Adequate equipment

According to NCHE, the equipment must be adequate for the number of students admitted for courses, particularly ICT, medical,

journalism, engineering, accounting and marketing.

Institutions without adequate equipment will not have their courses accredited.

Under the current arrangement, the number of students expected per course is not a major concern. The emphasis will be on facilities, lecturers, well-stocked library, laboratories, among others.

Waigolo said NCHE will be sending a team to all universities or technical institutions to inspect and record the amount of equipment against the target students.

However, he told *New Vision* that NCHE has not yet communicated to institutions about the new measure.

Uganda has 52 universities, both private and public, eight other degree awarding institutions as well as over 200 other tertiary institutions.

Over the years, enrolment has increased to about 250,000 students in higher education.

However, the quality of graduates is wanting according to the education ministry permanent secretary, Alex Kakooza.

Kakooza, who was the chief guest at the function, said universities must look at skilling as opposed to theory and passing.

Prof. Alexandre Lyambabaje, the executive secretary of Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), said unlike



Alex Kakooza

technical institutions that have few students and limited equipment, universities have bloated numbers.

"From 1960 to 1990s, universities were churning out better graduates because only few students qualified to join. The liberalisation of education has made it easy for any to obtain a degree even without attaining skills," he said.