

Govt probes KIU medical students

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KAMPALA. The ministry of Health has asked Education ministry officials to inquire into the quality of training received by medical students at Kampala International University (KIU).

Dr Diana Atwine, the Health ministry permanent secretary, said they had received several concerns from different clinicians across the country about the skills of the private university's medical graduates.

"We gave notice to the ministry of Education about what clinicians complained about and asked them to verify together with [Uganda] Medical Council," Dr Atwine said by telephone yesterday.

The current concerns echo those of the East African Community (EAC) Medical and Dental Practitioners Boards and Councils in 2016, which reported that the number of trainees at the university was overwhelming and quality of the graduates was questionable due to limited training facilities and staffing gaps.

The institution admits about 500 medical students trained on its Bushenyi and Kampala campuses.

Dr Annet Kezaabu Kasimbazi, the university vice chancellor, said Dr Atwine is acting on "baseless allegations" propagated by politicians intent on smudging the reputation of the institution.

"She knows exactly what is happening. Those allegations have come up since we started training clinical officers at bachelor's degree level," Dr Kezaabu said, adding: "These were formerly medical assistants in the health structure but now their concern is whether the clinical officers, who are degree holders, are above or not the medical officers."

The vice chancellor said no formal communication has been made to the university about the planned inquiries and the only relevant government documentation they have is a National Council of Higher Education letter, approving the now impugned courses.

MEDICAL COUNCIL'S TAKE

Criteria. Dr Katumba Sentongo, the registrar of the Uganda Medical and Dental Practitioners Council, said the investigations would involve verifying whether KIU meets the acceptable student-to-lecturer ratio for the medical academic programmes. "We are waiting for a go-ahead from the ministry of Education, which is supposed to provide us with the list of the medical students at the university, and study the numbers, because it is the only way we can verify whether they meet the acceptable standards," he said.