

National News

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The latest development has left potential students crying foul after failing to meet the requirements threshold.

BY PHILIP WAFULA

The Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB) has set new conditions for students joining institutions for diploma and certificate courses. UVTAB is the body responsible for the assessment and certification of competences obtained through formal and informal Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET).

The new regulations require that students have obtained two principal passes and one subsidiary to qualify for a diploma course, or passed five subjects, including English and Mathematics, for a certificate.

"...A person will be eligible for admission to a TVET Craft Certificate programme if that person holds a Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) with at least credits in core subjects, and passes in supporting subjects, including Mathematics and English, obtainable at a single sitting..."

"A person shall be eligible for admission to a TVET diploma programme if that person holds a Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) with two principal passes in the core subjects," the new regulations, contained in the TVET (minimum requirements for admission to TVET providers (2026), read in part.

Previously, one was required to have obtained one principal pass and two subsidiaries to pursue a Diploma, and should have passed any five subjects at Ordinary Level (O-Level) to qualify for a certificate.

The latest development has left potential students crying foul after failing to meet the aforementioned requirements threshold, parents threatening to petition the Solicitor General, and affected institutions labouring to explain that the directive isn't an internal decision.

Mr Sam Bamukyaye, a former lecturer at Kyambogo University, said he learnt of the decision when he went to the Hotel and Tourism Training College (HT-

Vocational schools tighten entry rules



Mr Isaac Obulejo (centre) with trainees at his furniture workshop in Laropi Town, Moyo District, on July 12, 2024.
PHOTO/FELIX WAROM OKELLO

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

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Meanwhile, vocational institutes have over the years recorded significant growth in enrolment as learners and parents recognise the value of practical skills.

TC) in Jinja City this month to enrol his daughter for a diploma.

"I requested forms and was asked about my daughter's performance; when I said she had scored one principal pass, I was told that the guidelines had changed. What this means to me as a parent is that my daughter is a failure and cannot continue," Mr Bamukyaye

said on Wednesday.

He added: "According to the new Ordinary Level curriculum, there is no failure, indicating that all children can do something; but when it comes to Mathematics and English, does it mean that failing Mathematics makes you a fool? Is it a criterion for eliminating some people?"

"For Advanced Level (A-Level), one must have two principal passes; I think this is affecting lower institutions. Universities admit you with one principal pass for a diploma course, yet other (lower) institutions want two principal passes. Such changes will force many learners to drop out."

Mr Isaac Mutebe, another parent who is a welder, said he wanted his son to pursue similar interests after he didn't perform well in last year's Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) examinations.

"My understanding is that President Museveni's directive is to help in skill-ing our children, but when you turn around and ask for a certificate, one needs to have passed Mathematics and English. Do you know how many people fail those subjects, yet they are good at hands-on skills?" he said.

Mr Mutebe added: "President Musev-

eni meant skill, not qualifications. The entire development is confusing and ambiguous. I don't know who is behind all these changes, which are affecting all TVET institutions countrywide."

Ms Aidah Naigaga, another parent, was distraught after her daughter was also reportedly told that HTTC had turned down her admission because she failed Mathematics.

"She has since been pleading with me to go and plead with the administration to rescind their decision because she has, for the past two years, desired to study at that institution," said Ms Naigaga.

Mr Daniel Kazungu, the HTTC public relations officer, said at least 200 students have been turned away from the institution, and fears that unscrupulous institutions will use this as a chance to fleece unsuspecting parents and students.

"After students feel they have been rejected in institutions of their choice, they will go to private institutions that will wrongly admit them against set requirements," he said.

A principal at one of the VTET institutions, who declined to be named for "fear of being misconstrued as one who is opposing a government position," warned that the development will see a surge in dropout rates.

"Remember, TVET education has been a pathway for parents and students who don't have the money to pursue university education, and the requirements have been minimal. Now, with the new requirements, it means the majority will miss out," he said.

The principal added: "What is disturbing is that universities, including public universities, admit diplomas with one principal pass and two subsidiaries, and that is the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) standard and set regulation. So, it means the new law contradicts the one set by NCHE. There will be so many ruined aspirations and careers."

When asked for the rationale of the new guidelines and their possible implication in the education sector, especially for operations of VTET institutions, the UVTAB communications officer, Mr Narasi Kambaho Anyijuka, said he was yet to internalise the regulations.

"I have not read them properly," Mr Anyijuka said, promising to delegate one of the principals to address the matter, which he hadn't done by press time.