

UBTEB champions exam innovations

By Martin Kitubi

Over the years, students in public and private institutions have complained of receiving transcripts with errors.

According to the Uganda Business and Technical Examination Board (UBTEB) such mistakes arise from training institutions registering candidates for the national examination manually.

Errors on transcripts also arise from individuals, including teachers, students and parents filling a single examination form.

"We send examination forms to institutions and they are required to fill them. However, we have faced a challenge, where names are wrongly spelt and yet there is no room for correction," Dr Wilfred Karukuza Nahamya, the UBTEB deputy executive secretary, says.

Online registration

Nahamya, who is in charge of examination management, says UBTEB introduced online registration to curb errors.

Online registration, which started with this November examinations, gives room for UBTEB and training institutions to correct all errors, including names and the entire biodata of the candidate.

The new registration exercise started in all institutions, with the exception of technical and community polytechnic schools,



Nahamya says online registration is on. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo

which normally sit exams in May.

Why care?

According to UBTEB, the move will minimise cases of extortion of money by either training institutions or students from their parents.

"Several parents and students had fallen victim, where institutions claim to have registered students for an examination yet it would not be true. Once you register online, you receive instant feedback, confirming receipt of the money," Nahamya says.

He adds that it will prevent students overcharging parents for the examination fee, which has been a common practice in training institutions.

"Starting next year, all institutions

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OVER 360
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will be allowed to make submissions online," Nahamya says.

Registering online will increase convenience within training institutions, which were previously required to travel long distances to Kampala and submit examination forms at the UBTEB headquarters.

"It was costly for training

institutions from west Nile and Karamoja regions in terms of transport, accommodation and food. We believe such costs will be minimised," Nahamya says.

UBTEB also plans to introduce a Short Message Service (SMS) format for registration.

What principals say

Gertrude Abalo a principal at the Fisheries Training Institute in Entebbe, applauds UBTEB for introducing online registration.

"We are receiving all required forms at once and its time-saving," she says.

Patrick Behayo, the principal of Uganda Co-operative College, Tororo, says UBTEB should include a system that only provides forms needed for the registered courses at each institution.

"For starters, the innovation is good for us, but it has several files and it slows the computer. But we have registered over 70 candidates," Behayo says.

On exam malpractice

The examination body has tightened examination security to combat any plans or cases of examination malpractices and leakages.

Right from the setting and printing of the exams, UBTEB's senior consultants and chief examiners are not allowed to carry any material or mobile gadgets into the consultation rooms. They are also all subjected to checking to and from the room by Police.

During examination time, UBTEB

Establishment of UBTEB

UBTEB was established in 2008 by the BTJET Act and operationalised in 2009 by the statutory instrument.

The regulations in the BTJET Act mandate UBTEB to streamline, regulate, coordinate and conduct credible examinations and award certificates and diplomas in business, technical and vocational training in Uganda.

It is the only recognised technical, business, vocational and specialised awarding body in Uganda, examining over 96 accredited programmes.

has increased the levels and number of supervisors, including invigilators, covert scouts and centre supervisors at each examination center.

With over 472 institutions and 360 examination centres across the country, supervisors are deployed according to the number of candidates.

UBTEB also deploys an area coordinator mandated to monitor all examination centres in a given area, according to the number of Police stations.

Nahamya says that since the inception of UBTEB, the institution has not registered examination leakages but that once reported, culprits, including teachers and supervisors are de-registered.