

Health

Competency

Ethics

Assessment for laboratory professionals set for October

By Cecilia Okoth and John Semakula

Beginning October 1, fresh allied health graduates in Uganda will have to undergo a compulsory competence assessment before being registered for practice.

According to the registrar of the Allied Health Professionals Council (AHPC), Patrick Mpiima Kibirango, the assessment is intended to check on the graduates' competence.

Allied health professionals include medical laboratory technicians, dental hygienists, dietitians, medical technologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, radiographers, health information managers, respiratory therapists and speech language pathologists.

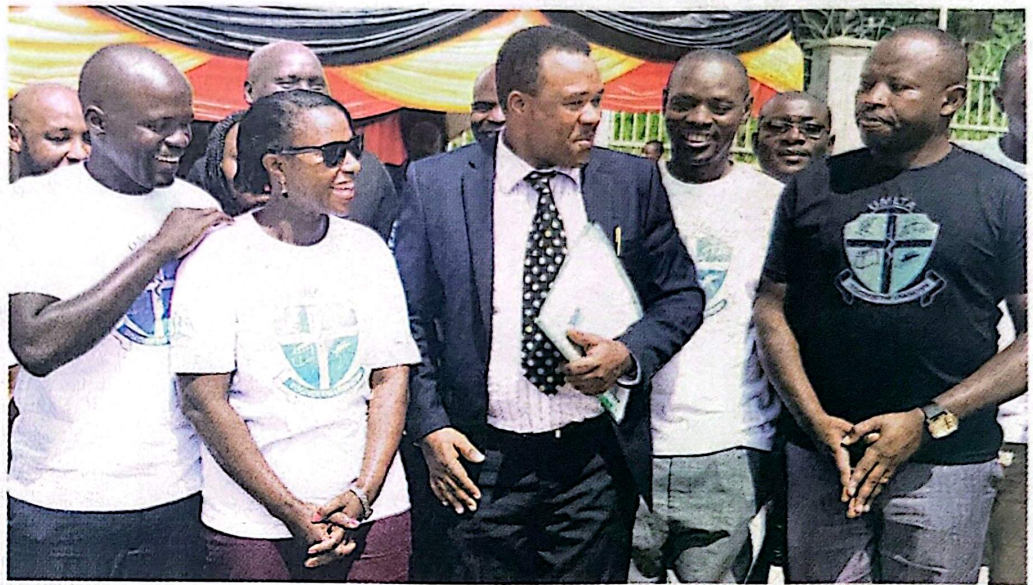
Uganda has 11,438 registered allied health professionals as of yesterday, according to the AHPC website.

"Previously, AHPC has been registering everyone who presented their genuine academic documents to start practising," Mpiima said.

He also noted that the move is in response to the public outcry about incompetent health practitioners and those who are unethical.

Mpiima made the remarks while speaking at the launch of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for members of the Uganda Medical Laboratory Technology Association (UMLTA) at Butabika, Kampala yesterday.

The council was established by an Act of Parliament to regulate, supervise and control training, practice and other related matters of allied health professionals.



Muruta with training team members at the launch of the continuous professional development for laboratory professionals yesterday. Photo by Miriam Namutebi

The move to assess health professionals is in response to the public outcry about incompetent health practitioners and those who are unethical.

WHY ASSESS?

New Vision has learnt that fresh graduates will be attached to hospitals across the country under tight supervision of experienced

medical personnel to prove their competence.

"Those who will fail the practical course will be left to continue with the competence assessment until their supervisors have approval of them," Mpiima said.

The training, organised by UMLTA, is intended to improve laboratory professionalism given key role in disease detection and follow-up of treatment outcomes in hospitals and health centres.

This year's development programme is mainly on Hepatitis B, customer care and ethics and professionalism. According to UMLTA president, Brenda Mushabe, Hepatitis B was

considered because it is a major health problem in Uganda, with a prevalence rate of 10% (affecting 3.5 million Ugandans).

According to Mushabe, the programme will be rolled out to the 112 old districts and that 20 laboratory practitioners from each district will benefit from the training.

The changes were applauded by the assistant commissioner for national disease control at the health ministry, Allan Muruta, who said they were timely.

Muruta assured the council of the support of the Ministry of Health in their endeavours to ensure quality of medical services in the country.