

One examination body to set all business, technical exams

By Conon Busenge

All students doing tertiary business, technical and vocational courses, with the exception of midwifery and allied professional, must sit examinations set by one government assessment body, the Solicitor General has advised.

The specified assessment body is Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB). The courses in question are the diploma and certificate ones.

"The power to assess Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVE) students, except for midwifery and health professional courses, is with UBTEB," guides the Solicitor General, in a letter sent to UBTEB and ministry top officials.

This development comes into effect, at a time the Government has scrapped one-year education certificates.

Legal guidance

The Solicitor General legal guidance implies that students in institutions which are



Students taking vocational courses on diploma and certificate level shall be assessed by UBTEB

awarding certificates and diplomas without being

assessed by UBTEB risk having their qualifications

nullified. This means that unlike universities which set their own examination and issue academic papers, students in all other business and technical tertiary institutions students must sit national examinations set by UBTEB.

Of the 500 institutions which are supposed to be examined by UBTEB, records show that only 444 are under this docket. This implies that thousands of students could be attaining academic qualifications that may be nullified in future.

UBTEB, under the BTVE law, is mandated to streamline, regulate and co-ordinate examinations and awards in the Business and Technical profession in Uganda. A number of institutions have over time not been doing exams set by UBTEB, especially that it is newly created.

Past legal experience
In 2012, the Solicitor General advised that tertiary institutions had to sit the national examinations set by UBTEB.

This followed UBTEB's request for legal interpretation from the Solicitor General, as to whether public institutions of higher education other than public universities are subject to undertake examinations of UBTEB.

At the time, UBTEB examinations had a disagreement with Bukalasa Agricultural College and Fisheries Training Institute; who had rejected sitting for

exams set by the new board.

The Solicitor General advised that under section 1 of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (as amended), a tertiary institution, is defined as "any public or private institution, school or centre of higher education other than a university, one of the objectives which is to provide post-secondary education offering courses of study leading to the award of certificates or diplomas and conducting research and publishing."

The Solicitor General's office says: "Even if it is implied that conducting examinations is part of the functions of the said academic board, it should be noted that under section 31 of the business, technical, vocation education and Training Act, 2008," it is provided that UBTEB would take over the powers of UNEB. It states that:

"On commencement of this Act, the Uganda National Examinations Board or any other board that has its function the conducting of technical examinations shall cease, in a phased manner, to conduct examinations covered by Uganda Vocational Qualification Framework."

The creation of UBTEB is under the BTVE law, the Solicitor General advises. At the time, the Solicitor General advised that Bukalasa Agricultural College and the Fisheries Training Institute fall under the category of institutes to UBTEB subjected to examinations.

Expert view

Prof. Abdu Kasozi, the former executive secretary for National Council for Higher Education and now a researcher with Makerere Institute of Social Research, says: "The Solicitor General's ruling is good. Just like doctors are examined by doctors, so should experts in assessment be left to handle this assessment, to ensure that all students are on the same pace of learning."

"We should have one examinations agency handling all examinations bodies," Kasozi adds.

He said these agencies include Uganda National Examinations Board, Uganda Allied Examinations Board, Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examinations Board and Uganda Allied Examinations Board.

Patrick Kaboyo, the head of the Association of Private School headteachers, says: "This move will assure the public of quality education."

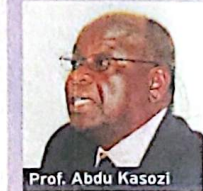
He says this would eliminate the issue of pre-entry examinations in universities. "To ascertain if the students have attained the required competency levels."

He, however, says Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) should not just focus on certification and assessment, "But also on apprentice and internship for students in the concerned tertiary institutions."

The executive secretary, Onesmus Oyesigye says the Business Technical and Vocational Education and Training (BTVE) Act of 2008 saw UNEB hand over its mandate in vocational and technical schools to UBTEB and this should be followed.

More so, Kasozi feels the law, requiring all business, technical tertiary institutions to sit one examination is the right move to take.

"We believe the framers of the law were right and the concerned tertiary institutions need to in line," he adds.



Prof. Abdu Kasozi

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