

Ten reasons a student's name could be missing from the graduation list

Are you sure your child is studying?

By Benjamin Sabila

Parents and relatives of Cliff Atugonza (not real name) knew that he had been studying. He was given all the money he needed, from tuition, hostel fee and money for upkeep (regularly). He went to the university at the beginning of every semester and returned home after four months. After three years of studying, his family knew it was time to prepare for graduation.

Atugonza was asked whether he had excelled in his academics and he responded in the affirmative. Three weeks to graduation day, his parents informed close relatives to prepare for the 350km-journey to Kampala for the 'big occasion'. They even bought two goats to celebrate 'the arrival of our son' from his academic journey.

Sitting in Freedom Square, to their utter shock, they discovered that their son's name was not on the graduation list.

They could not believe that they had been fooled by their son for all these years.

His faculty later told the parents that he had studied only for one year. They had no records for the other two years.

Some parents have gone through the same experience while others will soon be hit with the same news in the coming months or years. So, why was your child's name not on the graduation list? What can you do to avoid the same dilemma?

At Makerere University, a total of 14,895 students received their awards in different academic disciplines, while 53 of them were removed from the graduation list following allegations that their marks were altered.

Why would a student's name be missing from the graduation list?

BLIND TRUST

In Uganda, many join university between 18 and 20 years. At

this age, most parents believe their children are old enough to take care of themselves with minimum of no supervision.

In many cases, most parents especially those who are busy or live in rural areas, find it inconveniencing and costly to follow up the progress of their children. They disburse all the monies necessary without asking for accountability.

Peter Emalu, a parent with three children at Makerere University, says: "When I give my children tuition fees, I demand bank slips and result slips of the previous semester before paying for the next." He adds that without checks and balances, children will do whatever they want.

TUITION

A registrar at one of the schools at Makerere who preferred anonymity, says many students do not graduate because they have not cleared tuition.

"Many students come from humble backgrounds and,

cannot find tuition in time. So they end up missing exams, hence they fail to graduate."

"However, some students use school fees for other purposes. I have received countless complaints from parents who say they have been giving their children all the monies they need, only to be told their child has no record showing that they have been studying," he says.

"Disappointed parents have been flocking my office to find out why their children are not on the graduation list. Such problems can be fixed early if parents monitor the progress of their children," he says.

RETAKES

A retake is a when a student has to sit a particular paper again, having failed in the first attempt. The pass mark for most papers at university is 50%. This means that if they failed a paper in the last semester of their course, or if they have spillover retakes from previous semesters, they will have to wait for one year they do the retake(s).

"A student who has a retake cannot graduate. Some students get retakes because do not read. Others fail to sit for tests, exams or do their coursework," the registrar says.

Josephine Arionget, a secretary in the admissions office at Kyambogo University, says the situation is made worse by the fact that some students fail after retaking.

SICKNESS

Arionget also adds that she has seen cases where students do not graduate because they were sick.

"Some students fall sick during the school year and are unable to study. Others are faced with life-threatening complications such as cancer, heart and kidney problems and are hospitalised for long periods, thus missing classes and consequently exams."

MISSING MARKS

The deputy registrar at Makerere, Charles Sentongo, says this is one of the leading reasons why students do not graduate.

"Missing marks is an epidemic at Makerere. This is due to many reasons — some lecturers travel without handing over students marks and some students are too lazy and do not verify their results when the provisional lists are released. Some students' records are also at times wrongly entered into the system and it is up to the student to

verify.

"Some of the students do not sit for the exams at all and claim that they sat, yet there is no record of proof showing otherwise," he adds.

In this case, such students cannot be allowed to graduate.

'MARRIAGE' AND WORK

The registrar says due to lack of parental guidance and monitoring, some students get 'married' while at university.

"Some students get girlfriends and boyfriends and cohabit. This distracts them from achieving academic excellence. Some even become mothers and fathers without their parents' knowledge," he says, adding that some students get jobs and begin making money, which excites them and clouds their academic vision.

Arionget advises that students should not forget their studies even after they have chosen to cohabit.

"After 18, students are free to make whatever choices they want. However, it is necessary for them to prioritise," she says.

DRUGS AND GAMBLING

The availability of drugs and alcohol to students is another huge factor.

"Some learners due to their new-found freedom and peer pressure are pushed into alcohol and drugs. This forces them into misusing tuition and resorting to crime. When one gets addicted to drugs, they will have to find ways to fan the habit — studies cease to be a priority," the registrar says. He adds that some students channel their school fees into sports betting to make quick profit, believing that they will make more money. If they lose the bet, everything comes crumbling down.

PARENTAL NEGLIGENCE

Arionget says: "Some parents do not take their roles seriously. They do not clear tuition on time and their children end

up missing exams and tests. When you send your child to university, it is important you give them all the requirements; otherwise they will be forced to look elsewhere for alternatives. Girls have sometimes had to look to sugar daddies for support in school."

She adds that some parents no longer give guidance and counselling to their children because they assume that they are already grown up. This leads students astray. Augustine Opolot, a parent who has seen four children through university, says: "When children join university, a distance develops between them and their parents. It becomes difficult for them to share experiences and this is not made easier when parents are poor role models and cannot rebuke their children in case they go wrong."

SEX FOR MARKS
Lydia Katushabe, a third year bachelor of arts in education student at Makerere, says some lecturers openly ask for sex in exchange for better marks.

"Some of my friends have got retakes because they did not accept advances from lecturers. This is a big trend in Makerere and some lecturers have been expelled and others suspended over the practice," Katushabe said.

DATA CHALLENGES

Samson Mutibwa, a student at Kyambogo University, says some of the challenges are beyond their control, especially regarding data entry at the university.

"Some errors such as wrongly entered data and failure of the lecturers to trace students' marks are beyond students' control," he says.



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 7072 Kampala Uganda
Website: <http://www.musph.ac.ug>



Tel: 256 414 543872
Fax: 256 414 531807

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT

CERTIFICATE COURSE IN WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Introduction

The demand for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services has increased in recent years particularly in local government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. As a result, many people have been employed to meet this need. However, most of them lack specialized training and skills in implementing WASH activities. It is against this background that Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH) developed a practical course tailored to meet the gaps in knowledge and skills among such cadres with limited training in WASH. The aim of the short course is to equip practicing individuals with appropriate attitudes, adequate skills and scientific knowledge for handling and managing duties and technical procedures in WASH. Competence areas of the course include WASH promotion, disease prevention and control, management and administration of WASH services in community, research and training.

Course Objectives

The course is intended to strengthen the capacity of practicing workers to successfully identify and manage WASH opportunities and problems by facilitating the acquisition of adequate knowledge and development of skills and attitudes through understanding and use of the 6 essential services of WASH. These are to: 1. Monitor WASH status to identify and solve community environmental health problems 2. Diagnose and investigate WASH problems and health hazards in the community 3. Inform, educate and empower people about WASH issues 4. Mobilize community partnerships and actions to identify and solve WASH problems 5. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal and population based WASH services 6. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to WASH problems.

Course Structure

The course is an 8 weeks programme of study. The participants will spend 4 weeks (full time) at MakSPH while 4 weeks will be spent at suitable work places / field sites. This is a day programme and examinations will be held in the last week of the course. The course will run from 26th June to 18th August 2017.

Who should apply?

1. Practicing officers in the WASH sector including those working in local government, NGOs or private sector.
2. Environmental Health workers who wish to broaden their knowledge and skills as a form of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) so as to be better equipped to implement WASH activities.

Entry requirements for admission to the course are Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) or its equivalent with at least 1 year working experience in WASH.

Tuition fees for the course

Ugandans: 900,000 Uganda shillings ;
Internationals: 500 US dollars

Deadline for receiving applications: 31st May 2017

Application procedure and deadline

1. The application forms can be picked from the Administrative Secretary in the Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health, Makerere University College of Health Sciences, School of Public Health, located at New Mulago Hospital Complex, Room 3. Application forms can also be downloaded from our website: <http://musph.mak.ac.ug/>
2. Once the forms have been filled and signed by the applicant, copies of the relevant academic transcripts and certificates together with a CV and recommendation letter from your employer should be attached and submitted to the address below.
3. Completed application forms can be sent by e-mail, air-mail or hand delivered.
4. Label the subject line of the e-mail, cover note, or envelope with "CWASH 2017" or deliver applications directly to:

Mrs. Irene Nassazi

Course Administrator, Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health, School of Public Health Makerere University College of Health Sciences, Room 3, ground floor, P.O. Box 7072, Kampala, Uganda
E-mail: inassazi@musph.ac.ug, Tel. +256771671354