

MUST rejects Masaka Nursing School affiliation request

By Davis Buyondo

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The university's quality assurance team visited the school's premises in 2018 to inspect it as part of the process



The Masaka School of Comprehensive Nursing principle, Mark Kalanzi, addressing guests at Friday's graduation ceremony. Photo by Davis Buyondo

At least 252 students of Masaka School of Comprehensive Nursing (MSCN) on Friday received their diplomas and certificates in nursing, comprehensive nursing and midwifery.

Those however hoping to upgrade to a nursing degree will have to look far beyond Masaka district for an appropriate university for the programme.

MSCN was meant to roll out the programme in 2018 after getting an affiliate university. However, Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) turned down the institution's request.

Mark Kalanzi, the MSCN Principal, explained that they wrote to the university in 2017 expecting a positive response, only to be told to wait.

According to Kalanzi, the university's quality assurance team visited the MSCN premises on November 30, 2018, to inspect it as part of the process.

However, they have since waited for feedback from the officials in vain, causing more delays and frustration among parents and students.



Some of the people who graduated from the school. Photo by Davis Buyondo

After waiting for so long in vain, Kalanzi explained that they had to opt for an alternative route.

“We are now pushing the process through the ministry of education and sports,” he said.

At least 116 students graduated at diploma level in 2017 with many expecting to continue and pursue a degree but their hopes were dashed.

Maureen Nandu, one of the graduates, was preparing to enrol for the degree program in 2018 but she lost hope due to the delayed process.

She added that her parents were willing to pay for her degree at MSCN but the process flopped.

Denis Lukaaya, the MUST spokesperson, confirmed the fate of the students but did not divulge much concerning the application that was made.

Lukaaya said the only site where MUST is running an affiliate program of a nursing degree is at Jinja School of Nursing where the program runs for a period of two years.

Safinah Kisumusene, the Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET) commissioner is one of the initiators of the idea to have a nursing degree at MSCN.

She noted that the program is important for nursing and midwifery diploma holders to upgrade in order to offer more professional services.

She advised MSCN administrators to find an affiliate university and further emphasised e-learning degree programs for nurses and midwives, saying they are very convenient for both employers and the workers.

However, Kisumusene said BTVET will only wait to endorse the memorandum between MSCN and any university that will accept the affiliation application.

“We are not supposed to force the affiliation process. We will only wait for MSCN to complete its process for us to approve it,” she said.

However, Alex Kakooza, the Permanent Secretary in the education ministry told *New Vision* that the ministry does not agree that MSCN should offer a degree programme in the meantime.

“As a ministry, we have not agreed to it,” he said.

MSCN is a government founded health training institution established in 1946. It started enrolling nurses for training at certificate level in 1966. It later offered certificates in comprehensive nursing and then at diploma level in 1992.

Currently, the institution offers diplomas in comprehensive nursing both direct and by extension and diplomas in midwifery and general nursing.