

decided to scrap the provision. Under the new regulations, for a health trainee to write the final examinations, they must have passed all the previous papers and with no pending retakes.

For candidates with retakes, they will be required to first sit the retakes before they are registered as candidates for the final examinations.

The new measures were announced on Saturday by Dr Alfred Driwale, the chairperson of the Uganda Health Professions Assessment Board (UHPAB), the body which assesses nurses and midwives, as well as allied health technicians.

"Students with retakes will not sit for the final examinations like it has been. Some people have requested that we maintain the status quo, but no. We have to reform this," he said.

Driwale added: "To the students, if you have retakes, you will not be presented to sit for the final examinations."

WHY NOW

Driwale explained that the ban on candidates with retakes from writing the final examinations is intended to streamline the sub-sector.

The old practice, he said, was confusing because one would have a certificate for final examinations, but with gaps on the transcript for the retakes of the previous years.

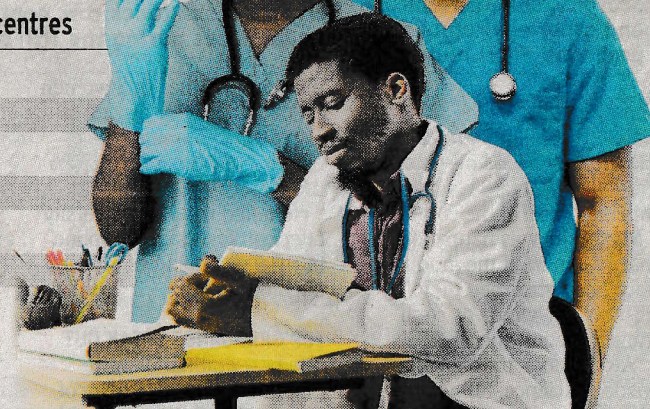
He said this caused a challenge that many students would instead join the world of work after completing the final examinations, without sitting the retakes.

"Now we want to heal that. If a candidate has any retakes, they will not be registered for final examinations. This will force them to complete the retakes first, and then sit for the final papers in the subsequent examination when

candidates sitting at 68 centres

4,317 personnel deployed:

- Supervisors
- Monitors
- Invigilators
- Assessors
- Security officers



An invigilator checking the identity of the nursing and midwifery candidate recently. Students will be required to do all their retakes before sitting the final exams

ON FEES BALANCE

Hellen Mukakarisa Kataratambi, the UHPAB executive secretary, directed health training institutions that no registered candidate should be chased away due to fees balance.

Instead, she said, the health training institutions will be at liberty to withhold the results until the balance is cleared by the respective students.

"Allow them to sit. You may withhold their results until financial issues are resolved, no trainee should be denied access to assessment," she said.

offered," Driwale said.

"It has been a major challenge especially for the allied health candidates. We want only candidates without

any backlog to sit for the final examinations, get a complete certificate and later join the world of work," he added.

That is not all. Retakes

among finalists has been a great challenge to the health training examination board, because it clogs the examination timetable and makes it expensive to supervise candidates.

In the ongoing examinations, UHPAB has been forced to make several adjustments in the timetable because of the several continuing students who have retakes in the previous semesters.

This category of students had several papers colliding with each other, forcing the board to undertake adjustments and push some forward.

EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE

The board has warned that any form of examination malpractice, including an attempt to participate in the vice, will be punishable.

If a candidate is found with a written cheat, with answers or questions for a number that did not come in the final examination, this will be treated as an attempt to engage in malpractice and the candidate will be punished.

Initially, such candidates would be pardoned by the examinations security committee during the hearing of cases.

Additionally, when

system due to retakes.

"It has been a challenge on the system. Such candidates stay longer. Because they are within the school, they eat on the little space that should have been taken up by new students.

However, to implement the new regulations, Mbabazi asked for more time of up to two semesters for the health training institutions to clear the backlog and start afresh.

"We can even start with the first-year students because the students with retakes are many and we would need some time to clear them out of system," she said.

Harriet Kwagala, the principal of Butabika School of Psychiatric Nursing, said the challenge is with allied health institutions, but supported the move.

"That practice was with allied health and not the nursing schools. But I would support the ban because it will make the students work hard and pass these examinations," she said.

"It will also reduce on the dropouts and have only candidates that have indeed completed and passed all the examinations sit the finals."

an irregular incident or assessment malpractice is recorded, persons involved will be forced to make a handwritten statement that will be attached to the incident report.

These will also append their signatures on the confiscated material where applicable.

"The incident report form, statement, exhibits and other related materials should be placed in an envelope labelled 'incident report', sealed and put in any of the assessment bags," the new guidelines on malpractice indicate.

Dr Safina Kiisu Musene, the commissioner for health education and training at the Ministry of Health, warned stakeholders against examination malpractice, saying the penalties are harsh.

These protocols aim at safeguarding the integrity of the assessment and producing the best candidates not just for Uganda, but the global market.

NEW PENALTIES

According to the new law,

principals of private and public health training institutions will face five years in jail or a fine of up to shroom if found culpable of examination malpractice.

Under the law, any person who, with intent to fail or pass a candidate, alters the work, data, information, scores or marks of candidates, will face harsh penalties.

Lecturers, students and examiners involved in malpractice will also face the same fate.

The law states: "A person who, while engaged as a supervisor, invigilator, scout, monitor or special needs support personnel, negligently allows or fails to stop unauthorised assistance from being given to a candidate, commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding five thousand currency points or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both."

A currency point is equivalent to sh20,000. This implies that the offenders will pay shroom.