

Authorities say the adjustment of Makerere's graduation calendar is meant to avoid a clash with the busy election period.

BY DAMALI MUKHAYE

January at Makerere University is usually a beehive of activities, with jubilant students draped in gowns pose for photographs across the campus as they count down to their long-awaited graduation.

Between January 13 and 17, the Freedom Square at the top university in the country is normally filled to capacity, with thousands of graduands, parents and guardians thronging the iconic grounds, while nearby business owners selling gowns, suits and offering photography services reap big from the season.

By this time of the year, anxiety among final-year students would typically be at its peak, attire purchased, photo shoots booked and celebrations planned.

However, this year, the story is different as graduands, parents and business operators will have to wait a little longer after the university management and council resolved to push the graduation ceremony to next month due to the national election calendar.

The vice chancellor, Prof Barnabas Nawangwe, told *Daily Monitor* yesterday that the graduation will now run from February 24 to 27.

Polls: Makerere varsity postpones graduation



The pioneer class of the Master's in Strategic and Corporate Communication pose for a photo ahead of their graduation on January 17, 2025. PHOTO/SYLVA KATUSHABE

The deputy chief of public relations, Ms Eunice Rukundo, explained that despite the extension, the university is on course to hold its 76th graduation ceremony.

"Traditionally, Makerere has held its graduations in January. For instance, the 75th graduation was conducted from January 13 to 17, 2025. However, the 76th graduation will be held from February

24 to 27, 2026," Mr Rukundo said.

She stressed that this adjustment has been made to accommodate the upcoming general election.

Last minute preparations

Mr Rukundo added that the preparations for the graduation ceremony are underway. "Official communication, in-

cluding the graduation programme, will be issued within the course of this month to inform the public and enable all participating stakeholders to prepare adequately," she said.

The revelation comes barely three days to the start of the national elections, which kick off on Thursday with the presidential and parliamentary polls.

These will be followed by subsequent electoral activities for other categories of leaders across the country in line with the national electoral roadmap.

The adjustment of Makerere's graduation calendar is, therefore, meant to avoid a clash with the busy election period, which is expected to attract heightened security, traffic, and nationwide mobilisation.

Makerere is not the only institution whose schedule has been affected by the electoral roadmap.

Some sources indicated that several NGOs and private entities have to date not reopened after the Christmas break, with some employees saying their workplaces will resume full operations only after the elections are concluded.

Likewise, a number of people who travelled upcountry for Christmas have not yet returned, with many indicating they will come back after the polls.

Meanwhile, although the elections have affected the graduation dates, the reopening dates for continuing students remain unchanged. Prof Barnabas Nawangwe said continuing students will report back on January 24.

Makerere usually passes out more than 13,000 students including those of its affiliation institute, Makerere University Business Schools (MUBS) based in Nakawa, Kampala.