Mariam Walusimbi, the chairperson of Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examination Board, handing over the results to Muyingo on Friday. Photo by Karim Ssozi

Minister urges medical institutions to do more

By Nelson Kiva

Medical institutions have been asked to nurture quality and capable personnel who will deliver quality health services.

The state minister for higher education, John Chrysostom Muyingo, said he was concerned by the few distinctions scored in the June, 2019 Uganda nurses and midwives semester examination results released on Friday.

The executive secretary of the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examinations Board (UNMEB), Hellen Kataratambi, said a total of 6,551 candidates sat this year's examinations in February compared to 5,116 last year.

Kataratambi said 4,445 (67.9%) of the candidates were female, while 2,106 were male.

Despite the improvement in performance, Muyingo was concerned by Kataratambi's report that there were only 256 distinctions in certificate programmes, representing a 4.2% pass rate. For diploma courses, only 26 (6%) of the total 432 candidates got distinctions.

However, for Kataratambi, the distinctions were a milestone compared to last year when only 45 distinctions were registered in certificate programmes and none in diploma courses.

The diploma courses were in comprehensive nursing, nursing, midwifery and mental health nursing. Certificate courses were in midwifery and mental health nursing.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Kataratambi attributed the improvement in performance to the introduction of competency-based curricula.

Kataratambi said 4,196 candidates in certificate disciplines passed with credits, representing 68.6%, passes were 1,231 (20.1%), upgraded 246 (4%), while unpresented 190 (3.1%). The credits in diploma programmes were 91, passes 243, ungraded (47) and unpresented 25.

Kataratambi attributed the improvement in performance to the introduction of the semester system of assessment and competency-based curricula, which has helped tutors and students to be focused in teaching and learning respectively.

"Issuance of examination guidelines by UNMEB to training institutions has further guided on the proper implementation of the nursing and midwifery curricula," she said.

Kataratambi added: "Emphasis of continuous assessment to contribute 40% of the candidates' final score has enhanced attendance of lectures, exposure to skills laboratories and practicum sites for skills acquisition."

She, however, attributed the failures to late payment of school fees which disrupt students' concentration. Kataratambi also also decried a shortage of tutors in relation to enrolled students.

UNMEB reported that only one student at Ngora School of Nursing pursuing a certificate in nursing was found with unauthorised materials in an examination room.

Muyingo warned the institutions against refusing students to sit exams over school fees, insisting that the Government pays for most of the students.

He asked the commissioner in charge of business, technical, vocational education and training, Hajat Safina Musene, to urgently address cases of indiscipline in some nursing and midwifery institutions.