

Makerere redesigns journalism course

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and Martin Kitubi

Makerere University is set to redesign its journalism programme to suit the needs of the dynamic market, authorities have revealed.

The move, which will see new programmes introduced, according to Dr Adolf Mbaine, the acting head of the journalism and communications department, will reduce the duration of the four-year bachelor of journalism and communication (BJC) course to three years.

The new programmes, which include two bachelor's and two master's courses include, bachelor's of journalism and multimedia and a bachelor's in public relations and communication.

The master's courses include master's of arts in journalism and media studies as well as a master's of arts in strategic communication.

Currently, students under the BJC programme specialise in their fourth year of the academic journey. However, with the new courses, students will specialise from the start.

"The industry recommended that students should specialise early in order to understand content," Mbaine said.

In addition, he said the department has developed a new curriculum, where all courses will have economics and business journalism.

According to Makerere's department of journalism and communication, the new programmes are awaiting approval by the University Senate.

If they are approved this year, the 2020/2021 intake is expected to start with the new arrangement. The changes, Mbaine said, will not affect continuing students.

Ass. Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi, the dean at the school of languages, literature and communication at Makerere University also supported the move.

He said: "Education is dynamic, we have moved from traditional media;



Mbaine, Mushengyezi and the head of communications and international relations at Makerere University, Dr Mohammed Kiggundu, observing the programmes to mark 30 years of journalism and communication. Photo by Ramadhan Abbey

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that is print, television and radio. We are now talking about online media. This explains why we are introducing new courses."

Mushengyezi said, the emergence of social media, blogs and websites has forced the university to have new courses on board.

They made the remarks yesterday while addressing journalists on the coming 30 years of journalism celebrations at Makerere University.

30 years of journalism

This month, Makerere University will mark 30 years since the introduction of the bachelor of arts in journalism in East Africa.

What started as a programme under the department of literature, has since grown into a full department, commanding one of the highest enrolment at Makerere University.

According to records, 20 students (18 Ugandan and two Tanzanians) were the first to have been enrolled for the journalism programme. Today, over 100 students enrol for (undergraduate, master's and PhD) every year.

"We have produced some of the region's best journalists. Makerere has over years trained journalists from Kenya, Tanzania, DR Congo, South Sudan, among others," Mbaine said.

As part of the celebrations, the university has organised activities throughout the week.