

1,000 varsity courses rejected

By Conan Businge

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has rejected over 1,000 academic programmes submitted for approval by various universities and other institutions over the last three years.

The council says some of the universities and institutions' programmes were wanting and in some cases, the institutions did not have capacity to run them.

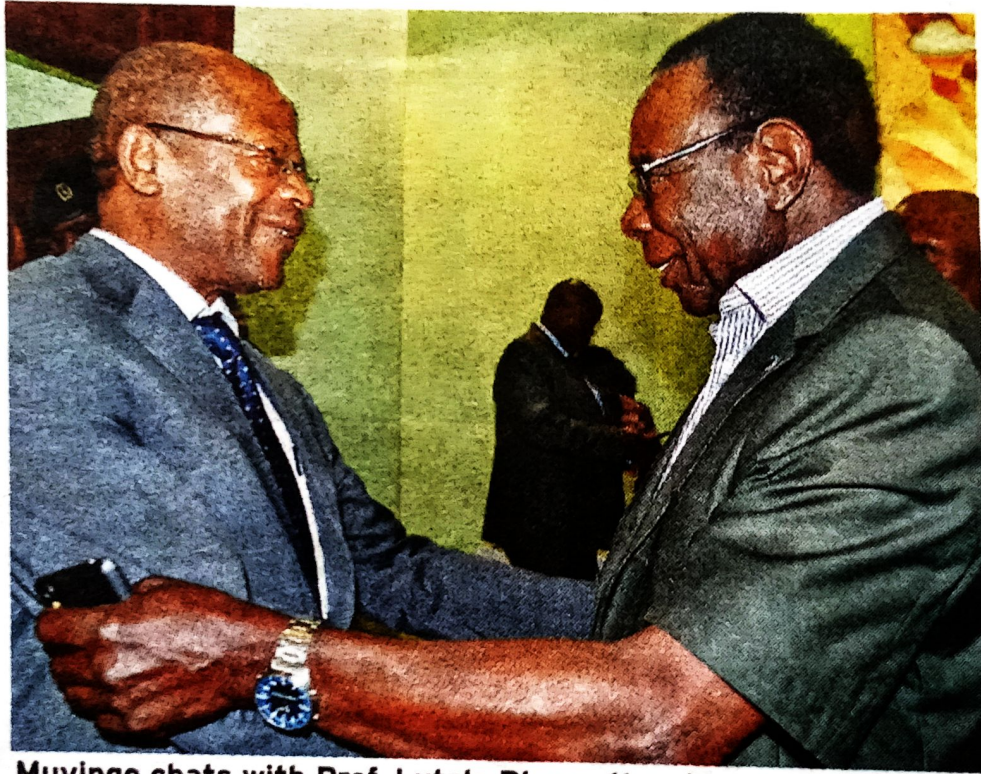
The rejected programmes include both new and old ones that have been running in some of these universities and institutions.

The development was revealed at the launch of a new report on the state of higher education in Uganda at Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala.

The report shows that out of the 1,474 programmes received by the NCHE for review, only 471 (31.9%) were cleared. This means that 68.1% of the submitted courses were found wanting.

Alongside the report, NCHE released a tracer study on selected public and private universities in the country.

The law mandates NCHE to accredit all academic and professional programmes before they are taught in higher education institutions.



Muyingo chats with Prof. Lutalo Bbosa, the vice-chancellor of Team University during the NCHE seminar at Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala, yesterday. Photo by Ronnie Kijjambu

Diplomas, bachelors, postgraduate diplomas and masters' programmes are accredited for five years, while doctorate of philosophy (PhDs) degrees are accredited for 10 years.

The state minister for higher education, Dr John Chrysostom Muyingo, who officiated at the

launch of the report, explained that the periodic reviews are meant to help them keep abreast with new trends.

"The accreditation process also involves the verification of institutional facilities to establish their adequacy for proposed programmes," he said.

The NCHE, however, was hesitant to release a detailed list of the rejected programmes, since some institutions have appealed and others are trying to upgrade their facilities.

The new NCHE executive director, Prof. Mary Okwakol, said: "We could not have them accredited and so we asked the universities to go back and prepare themselves better."

Muyingo explained that some universities failed to hire "competent curriculum developers" for their academic programmes.

"It is not surprising that we have a high number of youths with degrees but jobless, given the irrelevant courses they study. Restricting the accreditation of certain courses makes sense. We do not want parents to blow their hard-earned money on paying for useless courses," he said.

"The fundamental factor for the progress of our country lies in the production and we must re-engineer our human resource to effectively respond to this reality," Muyingo added.

He also said all universities and the Government need to invest heavily in research, as a way of supporting industrial growth.

He said an institution does not deserve to be called a university if it does not conduct research.