KAMPALA, Kampala International University (KIU) has been cleared to teach Bachelor of Clinical Medicine and Community Health programme which has been a point of contention.

Dr Alex Kagume, the executive director of National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), confirmed the course was accredited in May after reviewing the university curriculum and being convinced that KIU has the resources to sustain the teaching.

"If another university has what it takes—such as resources, staff, equipment and curriculum—it can also apply and get accreditation for the course. We don’t accredit all the universities at once," he said.

The accreditation makes KIU the first Ugandan university to teach Clinical Medicine and Community Health at degree level. Other universities teach the course at diploma level.

Clinical officers are trained to diagnose a patient based on physical examination.

Dr Mouhamad Mpezahimigo, the vice chancellor of Kampala International University, said they will admit 100 students for each of the August and January intakes and have received regional endorsement by the East African Community following an inspection on July 1 and 2.

"There are no other issues with the Bachelor of Clinical Medicine and Community Health. They (the students) will be registered ...," Dr Mpezahimigo said yesterday.

One of the students, Mr Nicholas Emusu, who graduated from the course last year, said they still face a challenge of finding employment without a practising licence from the Allied Health Professional Council.

"We can’t get employment in either public or private institutions without a practising licence. When you get these small jobs, they exploit you," Mr Emusu said.

Mr Patrick Muinda, the Ministry of Education spokesperson, said a course is only recognised after accreditation by NCHE, meaning those degrees awarded earlier could be null and void.

However, Dr Mpezahimigo insisted the previous graduates will be issued with practising licences by the Allied Health Professional Council.

Background

When contacted Mr Brahami Muziige, who is in charge of quality assurance in Education and Training at Allied Health Professional Council, declined to clarify whether the affected graduates will be given practising licences.

"I have a list of 60 clinical medicine students. Are you one of the graduates? Are you one of the graduates?" Dr Muziige asked.

Last year, KIU came under criticism for teaching unaccredited courses which could render the respective academic certificates illegal and unrecognised for employment or further studies.

Some of the students pursuing the contested courses also demonstrated at the university campus in Kampala, demanding explanation from the administration about the fate of their degrees. The university had earlier insisted they had submitted all their programmes to NCHE for review, but could not say whether the courses had been accredited.

According to the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, no university or tertiary institution offers courses that have not been approved by NCHE.